



Nicole Cannon,
Founder,
Pink Finance

Tickled *pink*

When Nicole Cannon founded Pink Finance, she knew the branding that would drive her new brokerage would need to be personal, not just corporate

.....

Big companies, as a rule, have big brands – Coca-Cola being the classic example.

Within the lending industry also, some of the larger groups – such as Aussie – have used highly professional branding and marketing campaigns to consolidate their successes.

But while branding is equally important for small brokerages, it has different role from the branding used by multinational corporations and other large organisations.

Establishing a personal, human connection with the client – as well as a point of differentiation – is key,

and Pink Finance, founded by broker Nicole Cannon, illustrates that function perfectly.

“I think it’s very important to have a personal brand,” Ms Cannon told *AdviseHer*. “There are so many different brokers in the industry and to set yourself apart you need to have a point of difference – something they can familiarise themselves with and remember and identify with.”

POINT OF DIFFERENCE

What sets Pink Finance apart is the brokerage’s commitment to the McGrath Foundation, which supports

breast care nurses in regional and rural Australia and educates young women about breast cancer.

Pink Finance brokers donate 10 per cent of their trail to the Foundation, allowing the charity to benefit from the clients’ custom but at no cost to themselves.

The group’s commitment is reflected in its branding, which is both personal and memorable – and particularly in its corporate colour (pink, of course!).

Passion has been the driving force behind Pink Finance’s creation. “I had an idea that I wanted to do something that was different and positive following the GFC, when there was so much negativity around,” Ms Cannon says. “I’ve always been passionate about the industry so I wanted to put the message out there that it can be positive.”

She came up with the idea for the

“You need to have a point of difference – something they can familiarise themselves with and remember and identify with”



brokerage in November 2008 – “in the middle of the night”.

“I’d been shopping at Woolies and saw that every aisle had something pink [in support of breast cancer],” Ms Cannon recalls.

“I bought products with pink and so I was not only getting a product but I was also giving back to charity. So, I thought, how could clients give back to a charity at no cost to them and also be part of my branding?”

DEVELOPING THE BRAND

By February 2009, she had developed a business plan incorporating the idea of brokers donating part of their trail to charity. She approached the McGrath Foundation (at the races) the following month, they met in April, signed a contract in May and Pink Finance was launched in July.

“It was a very busy six months between November 2008 and the

launch as I was still writing loans under my old brand,” she adds.

Ms Cannon explains that when she went to register the company name ‘Pink Finance’ she was surprised and delighted to find that while every other colour was taken, pink was still available.

“It’s an easy name to remember but the brand is also visual so you remember it using two senses,” she says. “You retain the name and the concept better.”

There is no doubt that Ms Cannon’s branding strategy has contributed to the success of Pink Finance. “I’ve been a broker for 10 years and I’ve got more traction in the past three than I did in the previous seven,” she says.

“I think it’s down to experience. I’ve learnt a lot and I can incorporate all of those things into a brand and something that I want to grow. Also, people want to give back [to the wider community] and spread the word.

“That’s been absolutely crucial to growing the brand.”

BROKER APPEAL

Pink Finance’s brand has also played an important role in attracting the right sort of staff: “The brand was critical to having these people come on board,” Ms Cannon says. “One person contacted me as a direct result of the brand and my connection with the McGrath Foundation. They wanted to do something to do with charity.

“Another one was a client of mine who was interested in becoming a mortgage broker. They loved the whole charity concept and really connected with the brand, the philosophy and the way I did business.

“The brand captures a unique group of people who want to give back.

“Automatically, you’re on the same wavelength and I think that’s really important, but it has to be for the right reasons.”

Pink Finance’s most recent addition, in Sydney’s inner west, launched on International Women’s Day, March 8.

Through the company’s brand, Nicole Cannon has been able to benefit both Pink Finance’s bottom line and the McGrath Foundation as well as enjoying a fulfilling professional role herself.

“I’ve created all my passions around me so I can just be who I am every single day of my work,” she says. “That’s made it more fun and a lot easier to do my business. It makes it easier for me to sell myself as well because I can promote myself and also promote the charity.”

This has naturally helped the way in which she is perceived by referral partners.

“The McGrath Foundation is one of Australia’s biggest recognised charities,” Ms Cannon says. “To have that on my website and linked to everything I do creates an instant perception of trust.” ♦

“I thought, how can clients give back to a charity at no cost to them and also be part of my branding?”