



# The Great Girl Guide Brand Challenge

*Ten Strategies for Getting in the Groove*

BY TONI E. RITCHIE

# WARNING!

Combustible material  
and exaggerated examples.  
Handle with open-mindedness  
and a sense of humour!

In the next while, if someone says you're "on-brand," celebrate! It's high praise, and you're getting it because you're being acknowledged as a Girl Guide Brand Builder. It means that, whether you know it or not, you're applying one or more of ten strategies for building our new, groov'n brand attitude. And that's WAY COOL, and way better than being labeled a "Brand Buster"!

Fortunately, it's pretty easy to be a Brand Builder. But first you gotta know the strategies. So check them out below. Some of you might recognize the examples from brand games presented at training sessions and other meetings since last autumn. Hyperbolic as some of these examples of Brand Builders and Brand Busters are, we hope they will reveal some helpful thoughts and give you a chuckle at the same time.

Find your own brand building and busting tendencies. Get rid of the busting ones tout de suite (everyone will have at least one). And when you discover some brand building ideas (everyone will find at least one), share them, tout de suite!

## I Put the girl first.

The girl is our most important customer. Really successful organizations never take their focus off their principal customer, no matter what they're doing. And they never forget which moments in their relationship with the customer are the most critical for building loyalty.

We all know that Girl Guides is a fun organization for girls aged 5-17 led by women who are young at heart. Our challenge is to never let process, policy or other adult preoccupations get in the way of delivering fun for the girls. Otherwise, our energy and passions get disconnected with what's important. Each of us should ask ourselves: Is what I'm doing right now helping to create an awesome, on-brand experience for the girls?

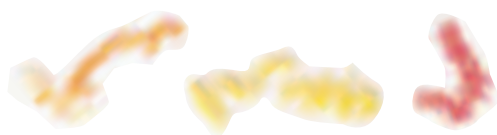
But what about our women Members? Aren't they important? Absolutely! They are our backbone. We can't grow without more wonderful Unit Guiders. So, they're vital to us. All that said, though, women Members are here to meet the needs of the girls. So, we should appreciate, reward and value them because they help us achieve our important goals for girls.

### Brand Building

- Transform the DC job from administrator to District/Unit Guider coach.
- Prioritize the weekly Guiding meetings as the pivotal moment-of-truth in our relationship with the girls.
- Re-deploy human resources from big events in favour of weekly meetings, which are our real playground.
- Gauge girls' interest in MEGA-events before deploying human and financial resources. Energy might be better spent getting more girls onto a campsite for a night or two.
- Remove barriers that stop adults from getting involved in Guiding.

### Brand Busting

- Protect management structures and hierarchy while Unit leadership and motivation suffers.
- Value administrative excellence above all else.
- Insist that ceremonies for girls glorify the officiating Commissioners.







# WARNING!

Combustible material and exaggerated examples.  
Handle with open-mindedness  
and a sense of humour!

## 2 Think like today's girl.

Know and understand today's girl by thinking as she does. You gotta walk, run or dance a few miles in the girls' shoes (even if they're four-inch platform sneakers!). The more we get into the girls' groove, the more in tune we'll be with creating activities girls will really want to be a part of. This is true for you, whether you're a Unit Guider, a Trainer, a PR or membership person or someone doing marketing and merchandising.

Take some time to find out about the world the girls live in. It's changed a lot! Commit yourself to staying in touch, because it's still changing! Demographers claim today that social generations are now only five years apart!

Discover what makes girls happy. Tune in to MuchMusic and YTV. Listen to the girls' favourite radio stations. Read some teen mags. Surf the Web and check out the girls' favourite URLs. Know who the girls' role models are. Spend some time in the shops where girls like to hang out. Check out their make-up, clothes and jewelry. Let them wear street clothes to a meeting or two. Our girls are very savvy and image-conscious even while they're still playing like kids.

Experience media the way they do. That means multi-task, girl. Do more than one thing at a time. (Hmmm... Think they learned it from us?) Linger after your "fine meal" at the mall's food

court or have a second cup of coffee at the donut shop. Listen to the kids talking around you.

Use music to connect. It's a big thing for this generation. (Well actually kinda like the generations that came before them, right?) If you don't know the new artists, get the girls to bring in a CD or two. Even if you do know the groups, let the girls bring their tunes to your meeting or a special event anyway. Don't worry, they'll still like singing camp songs, especially if they're leading them.

Understand the girls' expectations for your time together. They actually have pretty simple needs to feel happy. Make sure you meet these needs first, then fit your other goals around them. For instance, when you camp, you might find that the weekend will be a hit just because the girls are sleeping in a tent or hanging out with their friends. If you don't cover everything you planned, don't worry. If the girls have a great time, they'll come back to learn new skills another day.

### Brand Building

- Let the girls put on glow-in-the-dark nail polish. But don't tell them they'll see it in the dark! Let it be a surprise.
- Let them wear their flared and embroidered pants to your meetings. Reserve uniform pants for official nights.

### Brand Busting

- Introduce long, detailed lectures on latrine building and maintenance.
- Insist the girls wear full uniform at all meetings and events.

## 3 Create a product that's relevant to the girl.

Blend friendship, adventures and new activities in a "girls only" setting. Different girls are into different stuff. Our challenge is to be in sync with them – not to ask them to be in sync with us. Guiding helps girls learn self-confidence, respect, kindness, caring, sharing and a sense of responsibility. Our program is designed to give us a framework for this, but not to paint us into a corner. So, don't sweat it if someone wants to colour outside the lines. Use Guiding's basic toolkit of friendship, adventure and exciting activities. As long as we're giving the girls something that's relevant to their lives – stuff that's bold, active and fun – they'll enjoy themselves. We'll be on-brand and the girls will have a great time.

### Brand Building

- Hold a funky, flashlight dance party at camp. Dance with the girls.

### Brand Busting

- Ditch team activities.
- Require Units to create more solo challenges for the girls. It's easier for leaders to organize.
- Insist that written badge tests and strict standards be maintained.

## 4 Look and live the brand.

Be in sync with brand values, personality and spirit. We've gotta be the brand and lead by example. Our brand isn't just something we promise our customers and prospects. It's not just our program that should be fun, bold, active, real and spontaneous. We should be, too!

### Brand Building

- Use games to teach, rather than long presentations.
- Revamp newsletters. Nuke serious, "corporate" language and long sentences. Write with an active voice. Choose daring, descriptive words that

make people feel. Take pictures where the subject is close up, upside down or sideways. Use colour whenever you can!

- Wear flaming red-long johns and tall rubber boots to camp.

### Brand Busting

- Stand on the sidelines when the girls are playing.
- Introduce long, detailed lectures on latrine building & maintenance. (Yah, this is a really stinky idea to hit the buster list twice!)
- Sound really bored when you're telling the girls this is your fourth time doing storm drain stenciling.

## 5 Consistently create fun with a purpose.

"Fun with a purpose" is the market positioning that came from National's research with our current and prospective Girl Guides and their parents. It sets us apart from our competitors. It means that what Guiding does is offer fun stuff for girls, while helping them develop life skills.

### Brand Building

- Ask a Unit leader who isn't comfortable around the girls, but wants to help out, to support the Unit by doing the books. She might be thrilled!

### Brand Busting

- Create a Guide program that delivers fun with a purpose, but the newsletter telling parents about it puts them to sleep.

## 6 Let our purpose be quieter than our fun.

Allow girls to discover confidence, respect, kindness, responsibility, caring and sharing. But put the fun first! You can't instill values in girls who won't show up at meetings. They have to want to come to meetings first, and they won't come if it's not fun. Their parents want to know about our purpose, but they'll be the first to tell us that if their daughter isn't coming home happy, they won't make her come back.

### Brand Building

- Keep your laughter barometer well tuned, and if the girls aren't having a major giggle every week, make changes.

### Brand Busting

- Try to recruit girls by telling them Guiding is "character building."
- Encourage girls to work hard in Guiding; don't mention the fun.
- Promote only the higher purpose of Guiding.



## 7 Align all activities to the brand.

Everything the organization does is an extension of brand values. This is about consistency of message and attitude. It challenges all of us to think about how we're delivering fun with a purpose. Is everything we do fun, bold and active, real and aimed at delivering fun with a purpose?

This means that our meetings with girls and Guiders, written newsletters, training programs, uniforms, cookie-selling strategies, stores, and everything else that touches our customers is going in the same direction and supporting the same image. Check out the new promotional materials shown on these pages. There's a new, groov'n brand attitude in Guiding today, and girls are going to love it!

### Brand Builders

- Introduce new uniform pieces that look like the girls' street clothing.
- Paint the store walls in psychedelic colours.

### Brand Busters

- Settle on boring, bland communication materials about an event because of a tight deadline.
- Erect razor wire fences to protect your area from the marauding GGC brand.
- Always protect the status quo.

## 8 Demonstrate the brand.

Excite people to get involved by demonstrating our "fun with a purpose." Don't just tell people that we are fun, active, bold and exciting. Show them. Just as you translate program into fun activities for the girls, do that when you talk about the brand. People want to be sold. They want to see our magic. So, put on a show! Get them excited about us!

### Brand Building

- Create an interactive Guiding display for a mall that let's non-Guiding girls do stuff to experience Guiding and not just read stuff about it.
- Adapt your program so the activities engage the girls' hearts, heads, hands and feet.

### Brand Busting

- Adopt "We don't do that," as your motto.



## 9 Sell "what's in it for them."

Persuade women and girls to join Guiding by promoting the benefits to them, not the benefits to the organization. Recruiting and retaining girls and women is as much about salesmanship as it is about anything else. We've gotta give people what they want and what they need. You won't sell a product by telling the customer how you'll benefit from the sale. You will by telling them how they'll benefit. Of course, there is some altruism involved in all volunteer work, but everyone needs a "WIFM" (What's in it for me?).

Guiding volunteers want (and get) an emotional payback from Guiding. We want to make a difference in the lives of the

girls. But, we also stay in Guiding because we're getting something out of it for ourselves, whether it's an expanded circle of friends, some balance in our lives, or some group experience with our own daughters. Ask yourself and other Guiders what payback they get, and use the answers (some of which might surprise you) to help intrigue and inspire other women to get involved.

### Brand Building

- Recruit dynamic women. Tell them they'll have a fantastic time.

### Brand Busting

- Try to recruit leaders by only telling them that we need them.



## 10 Spread the word.

Celebrate our brand and what it's about publicly. When was the last time you told a stranger you were in Guiding? Do the people you work with even know? Do you have an "I'd rather be Guiding" license plate holder? Is it on your car now? Do you keep a Guiding mug at the office? Do you tell people about the camping, rock climbing, storm drain stencilling and all the other cool stuff you're doing with the girls?

If we don't talk up Guiding, how will people know we're here? The more we talk about the fun things we're doing, the more we'll build the Guiding brand image, and the more we'll attract other women to

get a piece of the action for themselves and their daughters.

### Brand Building

- Get community press to cover your rock climbing night.
- Leave a phone greeting that tells people you're away at Guide camp, having an awesome time.
- Ask women you meet if they've ever been in Guiding. (Many women have told us that they'd volunteer if someone would just ask them to.)

### Brand Busting

- Sell Girl Guide Cookies as cookies, not as our fund raising method of supporting the women and programs that teach life skills to girls through fun programs and activities.

Can every Guider be a Brand Builder? Without question! Have fun building our new, groov'n brand. If these brand strategies inspire ideas or provoke questions or comments, please contact Georgia Guy, our Manager of External Relations at (416) 487-5281 or [guyg@girlguides.ca](mailto:guyg@girlguides.ca). Or e-mail me at [tritchie@sprint.ca](mailto:tritchie@sprint.ca). ☘

*Toni E. Ritchie is a writer, public speaker and marketing strategist in Toronto, Ontario. She works with the National marketing team and loves being a Guider with the 405<sup>th</sup> Toronto Guides.*