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**Rene Lacerte** • Oct. 01, 2009

*From the Oct. 2009 Issue*

Please join me in a thought experiment. Think of the name of your favorite restaurant. Just think of the name. Try not to think about the food, the service, the ambiance or the dessert. For me, it is impossible to keep it just to the name. As soon as I think of the [Flea Street Café](#), I can't help but think of all the attributes (tasty, organic, caring service, friendly) that make it a great place to eat and my favorite in the bay area.

A brand is not about logos and colors; it's about what people think about when they hear a company name. Marketing professionals try to influence that with colors, logos and other techniques, but ultimately the brand is considerably more complex and is built over time. And in the case of accounting firms, the brand of the company is the brand of you. So with that in mind, what is your brand? What would customers say if I asked them what you stand for? And how would you like them to answer that question? And finally, what is the best way to go about building the brand of you?

You may not be asking these questions or know the answers right now, but you should. If you aren't directing and influencing your customers and prospects, they will determine your brand attributes. You cannot afford this. In the age of technology and outsourcing, your biggest advantage is you.

Every interaction with a customer informs and affects your brand image. When the

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