

# BRANDING!

...the growth of your company depends on it

## Let Go Of The Branch

Rule 33 of *The Ruthless Rules of Local Advertising* by Michael Corbett



A man was walking along the bank of a raging river. He suddenly stumbled into the water and grabbed a slippery tree branch that was hanging over the side of the bank. He couldn't pull himself toward the riverbank because of the force of the current working against him. Over and over the man yelled loudly for help.

After a seemingly endless period, a lone, powerful voice said, "I can help you." Our desperate friend was delighted to hear a voice answer his cries for help, though he could see no one. The voice said, "If you want me to save you, you'll have to trust me and do exactly as I say." "I'll do anything you say," said our friend. "Good," came the reply, and then the slowly but firmly spoken words, "let go of the branch and I'll save you."

The desperate man gave some very critical, very agonizing thought to this demand. In a few seconds he looked up toward the unreachable river bank and hollered loudly, "Is there anybody else around who can help me?"

There wasn't.

Often our traditions, beliefs, opinions, preferences, circumstances, and rules get challenged. For the most part, people choose to remain well inside their comfort zones. They resist having to choose something they aren't familiar with or don't have experience with, even if it means taking a bigger chance by not doing so. And so it is with a new advertising approach. You may have to let go of your own "branch" before putting what we've outlined so far into action.



If, as it was stated before, more than ninety percent of local business owners are disappointed with the results they get from their advertising, why do they continue writing or approving tired, ineffectual copy and buying arbitrary, impotent media schedules?

That kind of behavior reminds us of contemporary novelist Rita Mae Brown's definition of "crazy." "Crazy," she says, "is doing the same thing over and over while expecting a different result."

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