
Author Profile



***Branding Faith:
Why Some Churches and Non-Profits
Impact Culture and Others Don't***

By Phil Cooke

Questions and Answers with Phil Cooke

1. What's the inspiration for your book?

Perhaps thirty years of working in the media, and seeing just how badly Christians use it. We're telling the greatest story ever told, but if the culture isn't listening, we've failed. As one of the few working producers in Hollywood with a Ph.D. in Theology (a person CNN's Paula Zahn calls "rare") I realized that branding isn't about big business, corruption, or rampant consumerism, it's simply about telling your story more effectively. In a culture where we're bombarded with as many as 3,000 advertising messages a day, how do we get a faith or cause related message heard? In a culture of overwhelming choice, branding is the key to creating a compelling story about a person, product, or organization. While it may sound like heresy, when it comes to telling your story, in many ways what works for Nike, Starbucks, and Apple, can also work for a local church, religious organization, or non-profit.

2. Why are you so passionate about it?

I grew up as a preacher's kid in the South, and over the years I've seen all the misguided attempts of people trying to share their faith with the culture. We've tried gimmicks, entertainment, political power, criticism and boycotts, only to realize that as a result, the perception of Christianity is at it's lowest point in memory. We simply have to do a better job of sharing the faith that transformed the Western world, and that can transform lives today.

3. What is the story behind your book? What led you to write about this topic?

First, it's what I do for a living. Through my company, Cooke Pictures, I consult with some of the largest churches and ministries in the country, helping them use the media more effectively. Second, it's the focus of my blog at philcooke.com. And third, as a Christian myself, I've always had a passion about being a bridge to the outside culture.

4. Who is this book written for, and why will they be excited about it?

The first audience would be pastors, and ministry and non-profit leaders. Anyone who has the challenge of sharing their organization's story with the community, nation, or world through advertising, marketing, broadcasting, or new digital media possibilities. These principles can transform your profile in the community, your impact on an audience, your response, and even areas like fundraising. The second audience would be anyone who is interested in sharing your faith with a friend, co-worker, or family member. Whether you're talking over a cup of coffee, looking at millions of people through a

TV camera, or creating a home video on YouTube, these principles can dramatically impact how you present your message and the response you'll receive.

5. How would you like your book to impact the world?

Frankly, many of the “culture war” debates and discussions that fill the news aren't the most important cultural priorities for people of faith today. What is far more important is to understand and embrace the power of the media, and to use it to tell their story more effectively. In fact, the implications of these ideas spill over from religious media into non-profit and cause-related marketing. And my next goal is to help great causes use the media to tell their stories more effectively.

6. Anything unique or special about your book that you'd like to share?

There's more at stake here than most people realize. The culture wars between secular and religious ideals are tearing this country – and many parts of the world – apart. Unless we can learn to tell our story more effectively, people of faith will continue to be seen as out of touch and irrelevant. A religious voice in the public square needs to be worth listening to, and in a media-driven culture, it's not just about content anymore.

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