

How Can You Lure Consumers Into Loving Your Brand

Our starting point is to be clear as to what we mean by "love for a brand". The love of a brand is more similar to the love of ice-cream than the love for a spouse. Love for a brand is actually a strong feeling of anticipation for something good, pleasant or beneficial that we believe with great certainty that we will get from the brand. It is the anticipation for good experiences, pleasant sensations or positive emotions. Consumers love the M&M chocolate candies, buying at IKEA, driving a BMW, using a Nokia telephone or searching for information in Google, exactly because of the focused and intensive anticipation which they enthusiastically describe as "love". But we, as professionals, need to understand what is behind the verbal descriptions of consumers, so that we will be able to stimulate such feelings. To stimulate anticipation for benefit is a more approachable task than to "stimulate love".

How do consumers "fall in love" with a brand Structurally, it happens in the same process as people falling in love with people. Let me describe how this happens. We all have beliefs as to what will satisfy our needs, what will be good for us and will make us happy. In many cases we are not aware of them or are only partially aware. Often they are not phrased in words, but exist in fleeting images and scenarios that we experience by imagination. They form our pre-disposition to desire. When a brand succeeds in being perceived by us as a tangible realization of our abstract beliefs regarding what will be good for us (the pre-disposition) - the anticipation that the brand will be good for us is the result. The brand is thus perceived as an

opportunity to achieve the benefit that we have in our imagination. This is also what happens when we are seduced or fall in love with a partner, and this is also where the similarity between love for a brand and love as the basis for a relationship between people, ends. We anticipate that the brand will be good for us and therefore we want it. The commitment that we have towards people and the mutual pact that exists in relationships can never be formed towards a brand. How do we create the "Click" The process of developing a brand starts with an insight. To reach such an insight we must unearth and interpret the non-conscious set of rules that constitute the pre-disposition of the consumer. There are advanced research tools that help identify this set of rules. They require psychological expertise and advanced interviewing skills and thus they are not commonly used by research firms (The tool that I personally use is called ForeSearch). The insight is only the beginning of the process. We use this to guide the creative process by which we devise a new concept for providing the consumer with a benefit that realizes his pre-disposition. This concept is the basis for the brand.

How to influence the intensity of love The more the benefit of the brand is perceived as important and as rare, so will the emotions be stronger. Then there's the question of how far can the brand be trusted to supply such a benefit in a good and consistent manner. Good management can guarantee the second factor. A brilliant strategy is needed for the first factor. How can you create an important and rare benefit What you are looking for is a

benefit that is intuitively important to the consumer, but not yet connected with your product category (I call this: Off-Core Differentiation). An example of this is the commitment at the heart of the strategy of The Body Shop chain of stores for the protection of the environment and helping the needy all over the world. In this way, successful brands enjoy immunity from imitation by competitors, as what they are doing seems so irrelevant to the category. The second rule is to supply this benefit in a new manner, unique and different from how it is supplied in other product categories. The benefit can be intangible Any off-core benefit is by definition an "added value" to the benefit stemming from the product itself, as the benefit from the

product itself is naturally on-core. The off-core differentiation that you adopt can be based on a benefit that is not tangible or experiential, but interpersonal, social or psychological. When De-Beers launched the brand "Right-Hand Ring" in 2003, they created a new instrument to achieve a social benefit. A woman can wear a "Right-Hand Ring" on her right hand of course, to signal that she is single, as opposed to a ring on your left hand, which signals engagement or marriage or simply a gift from her spouse (kindly note: in Eastern Europe, for example, the hand symbolism is reversed!). De-Beers created a symbol whose meaning is known to everyone through an extended advertising campaign, and as a result women can use it to send a message to their surroundings.

How will the consumer "discover" the brand It is easier for consumers to fall in love with a brand when they feel that "it comes from within them", as opposed to it being "sold" to them. The key to this is what I call "Electrifying Marketing" instead of "Satisfying Marketing". The usual marketing is "Satisfying Marketing" whose main objective is to please the consumer and satisfy him. In contrast, "Electrifying Marketing" promises surprise and excitement, plays hard to get, toys at the consumer and sets conditions and obstacles on the road to sweet satisfaction.

How will you turn your brand into a great show A good way to bring the brand's strategy to life is by using the tools of "Drama Theory". Furthermore, the success of a brand, which has an intangible value beyond the function of the product itself, depends on the consumer's willingness to accept something unreal as real, i.e. be in a trance (I call this "The Brand's Trance"). Drama has been known for centuries to put audiences into a trance where they allow themselves to be swept away by unrealistic plots. I usually begin the development of the creative approach for the brand's expression, presence and unfolding, with an analysis of the "Drama of the Brand". Every powerful brand provides the consumer with a benefit that he yearns for, and that is neither easy nor simple to achieve. The Drama of the Brand is the confrontation of two forces that occurs when the consumer attempts to achieve our brand's promised benefit, even before our brand is known to him. This analysis involves questions such as:

what happens to the consumer when he is trying to achieve the benefit in other ways What attempts and efforts does he make What is the result What internal and external difficulties does he encounter How do they manifest themselves How does he fail And then how does our brand help him in achieving the benefit he is seeking Such clarification raises all the necessary materials for "dramatizing" the brand in a way that generates inside the consumer an exhilarating feeling of "found it!"

About the Author

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