



Marketing Smart – July 2009

Do You Have the Guts to Build a Powerful Brand?

Look around you. Lots of companies make feeble attempts at developing a truly unique brand. They typically play it safe by using common language like “great customer service” or “high quality” without actually making a promise that is truly unique or culturally relevant to their audience. Anyone can make a weak promise. “Committed to quality service” isn't a brand promise; it's what you have to do to stay in business!

So how does a company create a powerful brand?

1. It has to be relevant

Real branding is culturally relevant. It anticipates or identifies cultural shifts happening in your market so that your brand can become relevant to your consumers. If your brand is not culturally relevant, then no one will ever care.

2. It has to be ownable

Anyone can make a weak promise. A successful brand makes a bold promise that is truly unique to you. In fact, it should be so unique that your competitors will have a hard time challenging you for this market position. We call this “owning your brand position.”

3. You have to have the guts

Real branding is having the guts to be different, the guts to take a different path than your competitors. A brand is something that is visceral, emotional and experiential. Compare how you feel when you hear the following brand statements... "great customer service" versus "when it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight." Which brand do you think had the guts to be different? And which brand do you think became famous?

Developing a powerful and famous brand is a coordinated process of digging deep into your company's soul to discover its true essence, understanding your market's current culture and then having the guts to express it in a unique and memorable way that will capture the attention of all.

Until next month...

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