

Methodology of 21st century brand-building



Bylssa Sikiti da Silva

7 Oct 2010

In this global interactive age, where all the power lies with the consumer, companies spend billions of dollars on TV ads every year to create awareness about their brands. The truth is, as US-born Prof Tom Duncan put it, everything remains the same because many ads have less impact and less emotion, therefore fail to convey the right message to consumers. He was speaking last night, Wednesday, 6 October 2010, at the Faculties of Humanities of the University of Johannesburg.

The University of Denver and University of Colorado lecturer said positioning (competitive difference), promise (benefit), performance (confirmation), personality (relevant image, emotion) and permanence (strategic consistency) are the brand's five Ps that must form the basis of a brand willing to take on this century's challenges.

Strong brand message

He pointed out that commercial ads must be emotional and dependable enough to send a strong message about the brand. Failure to do so, he warned, may render many brands emotionally flat, dull, boring and therefore confusing.

"Keep in mind that a brand is intangible, organic (must be nurtured and fed), and its perception result from a bundle of 'brand' experiences. Also keep in mind that awareness, consistency, image, association and position are the links that create a customer-brand relationship.

"I know that you know it, but do you practise it?" he asked.

Prof Duncan teaches at the Daniels College of Business (Denver) and at the School of Journalism and Mass Communications in Colorado.

"Emotion is very important"

"Emotion is very important. Companies successful in creating functional and emotional bonding have 84% chance (vs 30%) to retain their customers and 82% chance (vs 16%) of success at cross-selling," he said, quoting from the Ogilvy findings on Annual BrandZ loyalty survey.

Unpacking what he called the 'Bill of Customers' Rights', he said: "Respecting customers' rights is a strong emotional message. Customers have the right to contact a company 24/7, and be able to talk to a company representative with enough authority to make a decision."

He launched a scathing attack on companies that send junk mails and spam emails to customers, and make 'intrusive' phone calls to their customers.

Still lecturing on the Bill of Customers' Rights, he said: "Customers are right 95% of the time. For the other 5%, they have the right to a sensitive and empathetic explanation of why they are not right."

What a brand does for an organisation

"You know what a brand does for an organisation?," he asked. "It creates brand equity (corporate brand and product equity), communicates 'brand' information, protects investment in research and development, adds value to physical product, and transforms organisations and products."

Furthermore, Prof Duncan reminded businesses about the need to create a message strategy that includes a mission which demonstrates good corporate citizenship, and then be able to market that mission.

"Every business should begin with a mission. If done properly, sales and profit will follow," he said, quoting from Peter Drucker. "Corporate social responsibility is what separates a company from a brand," he added.

Prof Duncan said there should be a difference between cause marketing and mission marketing. He explained: "Cause marketing has low impact on corporate culture, is seldom product-related, has a short-term competitive advantage, is local, adds value to customers, and is exploitive of current events."

Mission marketing

On the contrary, he said mission marketing enriches corporate culture, has integrity, is product-related, is corporate-driven, is related to experience, is global, and adds value to all stakeholders.

On managing the brand, he said CEOs have the duty to champion brand promotion and optimisation. "CEOs who do not properly manage their brands are neglecting their fiscal responsibility," he said.

"Ensure strategic consistency with your brand. Have one voice and one look, have a brand vision because it provides consistency, manage customers expectations not customers themselves (use a customer-friendly CRM). Meeting expectations adds values but exceeding expectations generates referrals," he advised.

Always remind yourself of the four types of brand contacts, he said, citing marketing communication, intrinsic, stakeholder-created and the unexpected.

"Duty to identify all the negative"

"All the communicators have the duty to identify all the negative messages about the brand, and sit down with complainants to solve problems."

He said brand needs to be nourished and fed. "If you do it in the right way, there is no way the brand is going to die. Everything an organisation does, or sometimes does not do, can send a brand message," he concluded.

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

- Angola tense as journalists, protesting youth targeted by government - 1 Nov 2011
- Managing promotional resources: are TV broadcasters getting it right? - 1 Nov 2011
- Mbalula vs the media: privacy, dignity vs public interest - 31 Oct 2011
- Multimillion-rand Motorola Razr marketing campaign - 28 Oct 2011
- [Tech4Africa] Power failures, low bandwidth? Try cloud computing - 28 Oct 2011

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>