

Let's talk ice cream - Brand attachment vs brand loyalty

 By [Heidi Myers](#), issued by [Meltwater](#)

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When it comes to brand buzzwords, you've probably heard them all: brand engagement, brand development and brand loyalty, but have you heard of brand attachment? And, how is it any different from brand loyalty? Ultimately, in the same way that people can become attached to another person, they can also - for many reasons - become attached to a brand.

Let's put this into perspective and think about it in a way that every one can relate to – ice cream.

If you're an ice cream lover, you probably have a favourite brand that you normally buy and whether it is Haagen-Daz, Carte D'or or Ben & Jerry's, there is probably a reason behind your purchase (it could be the unique flavours or in some cases the creative product names).

So, whereas brand loyalty can, in many cases, be somewhat superficial, brand attachment delves further and creates a direct connection between the person and the brand. Brand attachment is usually formed around three key emotions: affection, connection and passion. When these three emotions are in play, it is highly likely that there is an attachment.

Whatever it is that attracts you to a brand to begin with, most likely, has to do with the way PR and advertising has served up the content about that particular brand. During this exposure to PR campaigns and ads, you are then brought into the three-step cycle of brand attachment: Advertising & Marketing to -> Brand Attachment to -> Financial Performance.

Let's make it real again for you... if you're heavily attached to Ben & Jerry's ice cream it leads to you buying it repeatedly and therefore improves their financial performance, even if only by a small amount per personal attachment. Multiply that by millions of customers (don't worry, you're not the only one who can't stop buying it), and the business bottom line is happily filled with engaged, repeat customers.

The good thing for brands and companies is that people with strong brand attachments also influence other people around them. So, in this sense, there are brand advocates that develop from their strong brand attachments. These fans or followers of the brand are not only around to stay, they're also bringing their friends along, increasing the customer base for the company.

Whether they do it knowingly or not, the base of many company strategies is with the ultimate goal of gaining prospects, keeping hold of existing customers and hopefully forming some level of brand attachment. When these attachments lead to direct publicity - say via retweeting a tweet – the reach of their original impression created by the brand extends. Therefore, once brand attachment is attained, it almost makes the advertising and PR much easier, right? Sharing these brand messages can be so effective, because the authentic customer voice resonates better with the end user.

Bottom line: find out what customers' passions, connections and affections are, and with that in mind, learn to target them and facilitate true brand attachment. Hopefully we'll soon be able to measure just how attached people are to their favourite brands, by mining and scoring or rating this attachment data via the impressions garnered and corresponding reactions from customers. This will help prove brand attachment is one way that all companies should strive for the optimum in brand reach: not only keeping their customers routinely coming back, but building lifetime brand ambassadors.

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