

Brand consistency: Taking marketing to a higher level

By Paula Sartini

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In the highly competitive business landscape where social media and customer experience are adding complexity to a global landscape, marketing needs to evolve.



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This is becoming more critical with the growing use of disruptive technologies which are changing the ways in which customers want to be treated. As such marketers need to adopt a more systemic approach within an organisation, focusing on the broader needs of the company and ensuring the delivery of consistent brand experiences at every customer touch point every time.

Traditionally marketing departments have focused most of their attention to advertising campaigns and marketing initiatives, but as customer expectations are changing, these elements are now falling within the broader sphere of branding and more attention needs to be placed on brand building and the customer experience. According to Ameyo, customer experience is the sum of experiences at every customer-company touchpoint measured throughout the customer lifecycle, this means that every interaction with every customer matters every time.



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A vessel for meaning and trust, fuelled by experiences

Branding has always been an important tool for business, it distinguishes one company from another and helps customers to choose a company that they can identify with. According to *The Physics of Brand*, a brand is a vessel for meaning and trust, fuelled by experiences. These experiences are growing in importance as customers demand the way in which they want to be treated and this is supported by research that was commissioned by RightNow, that found that 89% of customers stop doing business with a brand after a bad experience. As such greater attention needs to be paid to the brand experience at every customer touch point to ensure that the company is living up to the customer's expectations in every interaction.



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With branding at the centre stage, marketing has to evolve from fulfilling and advertising-focused role to a more strategic brand building role. This involves adopting a holistic approach that ensures consistent brand delivery at every customer touch point, ranging from recruitment advertisements through to the email communication with staff and customers. This is supported by research commissioned by Zendesk, which found that 87% of customers think that brands need to put more effort into providing more consistent experiences.



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More than this marketing also needs to focus on the broader needs of the company and develop a deeper understanding of issues that have previously fallen outside of the marketing remit. These include legal requirements such as governance and risk issues to trademarks and even IT issues such as the PoPI Act.

Gap between brand promise and customer experience

Marketing also needs to bridge the gap between the brand promise and the customer experience. This can only be achieved by developing a deeper understanding of the customer and determining what value means to them. Only once the company understands this can it deliver according to these needs and meet the customer's expectations.



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Once all of these elements have been considered, the strategy needs to be developed to ensure consistent brand building across all communications and with every target audience. To achieve this, marketing needs to take a seat at the boardroom table and work closely with the C-suite, getting both their input and buy-in on the brand strategy. Equally important is getting every single employee within the company to know and understand the brand so that they are able to deliver on it.

To help ease the process for employees to deliver a consistent brand experience, the marketing department needs to

implement technology solutions that simplify the way in which resources are developed, shared with and accessed by employees. These resources should ultimately improve the customer experience by delivering according to what the customers value the most such as quick turnaround time and consistently branded communications.

With customers driving the agenda in terms of the experiences they are looking for, marketing has to evolve to fulfilling a more strategic role within the organisation. At the same time, the brand needs to become part of the company's DNA and every employee must understand the role they play in delivering consistent brand experiences. In this environment, marketing will be able to move beyond policing the brand to focusing on developing innovative solutions and new ideas that meet their customer's expectations and contribute to the company's bottom line.

ABOUT PAULA SARTINI

With over 20 years' experience helping leading organisations overcome various business challenges, Paula understands the challenges that companies face in delivering a consistent brand experience and the impact this has on their bottom line. An analytical thinker that strives to solve business problems with innovative solutions, Paula believes that technology plays a major role in solving critical business and branding challenges. As such, she established BrandQuantum to help businesses overcome their branding challenges in the digital age.

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