INSIDE: MAKING MENTORSHIP MATTER

QUARTERLY

MarketingNews

AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION AMA.ORG WINTER 2022

The Power of a Strong Brand Name

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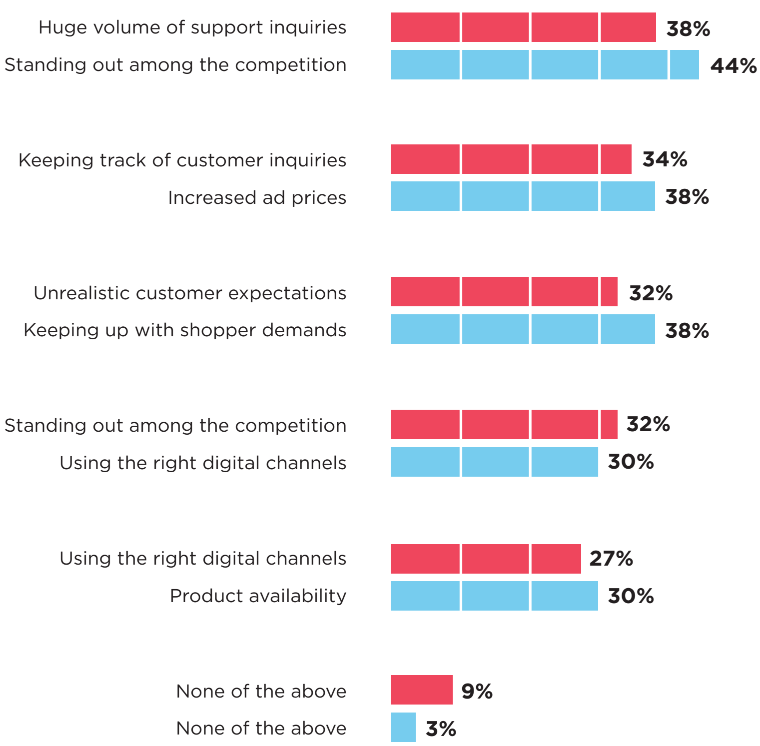
Customer Experience and 2022 Predictions

>90%

Customer Demands on the Rise
Over 90% of study participants believe that customer demands will increase or stay the same in 2022.

Which of the following challenges or issues do you face each holiday season? Check all that apply.



Google Business and SMS are the top channels customer support and marketing teams will adopt in 2022.

GOOGLE BUSINESS

Customer support

32%

Marketing

34%

SMS

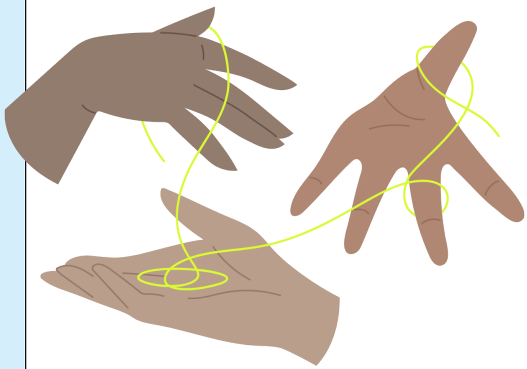
Customer support

32%

Marketing

24%

Most teams have limited or no visibility into customer interactions across platforms.

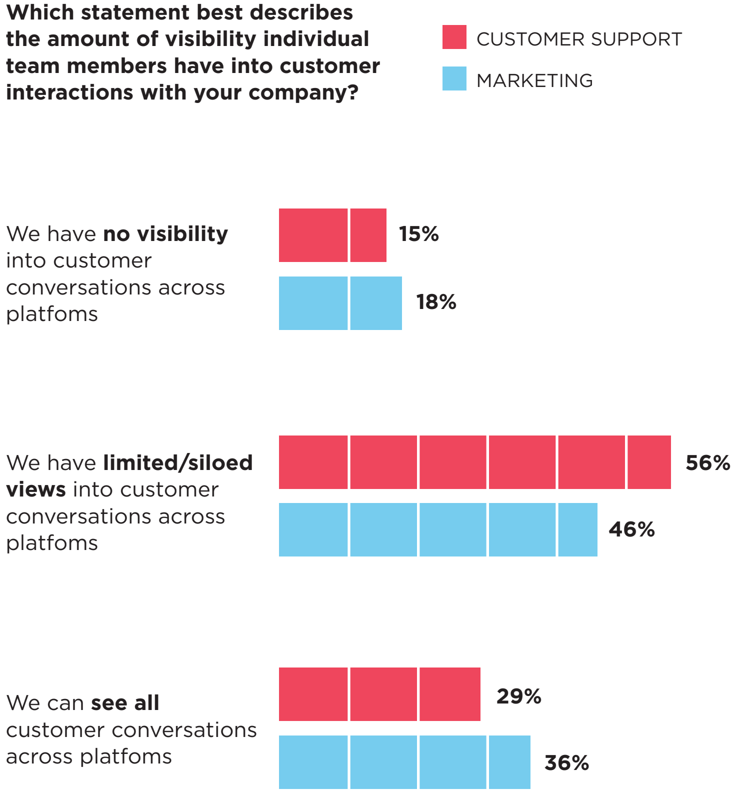


11%

16%

Only 11% of customer support and **16%** of marketing teams report complete unification across all channels.

Which statement best describes the amount of visibility individual team members have into customer interactions with your company?



23%

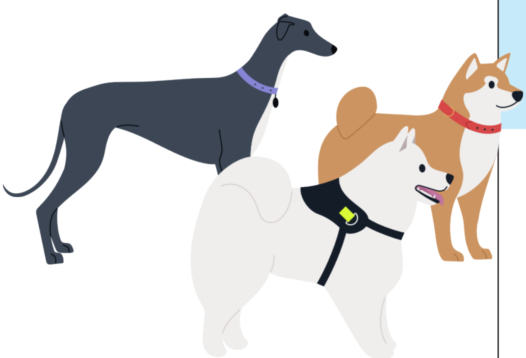
There is a wide range of maturity levels to the cohesion of businesses' omnichannel strategies. **Just 23%** of organizations have achieved a complete omnichannel experience strategy.

4x

Companies are **four times** as likely to report “extremely loyal” customers.

83%

83% of participants described their customers as “extremely loyal” with a complete omnichannel strategy.



8.5

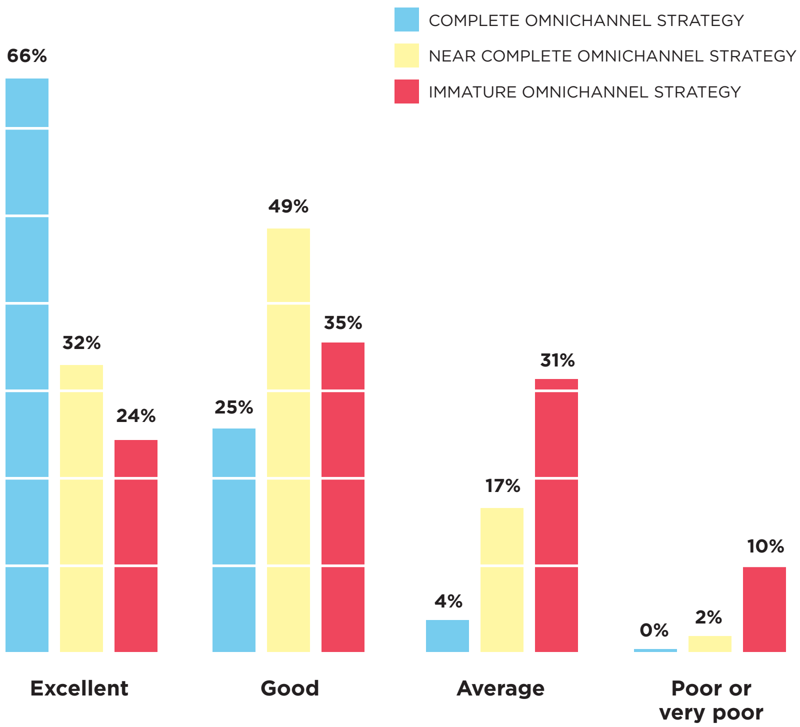
5.8

On average, companies that have implemented a complete omnichannel strategy had a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of **8.5**, compared to **5.8** for those who are less mature.

SOURCE: “THE STATE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BENCHMARK REPORT,” DEMAND METRIC & MITTO

Companies that have achieved a complete omnichannel strategy deliver better overall customer experience.

What statement best describes revenue growth at your company over the past 12 months?




Impact Tomorrow
AMA VIRTUAL TRAINING

What's in a Brand Name?

An analysis of what makes some brand names more effective than others

BY ROB MEYERSON | BRAND CONSULTANT AND AUTHOR, "BRAND NAMING: THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CREATING A NAME FOR YOUR COMPANY, PRODUCT, OR SERVICE"

Shakespeare's Juliet, who should know better than most that names can have life-or-death consequences, nevertheless poses her famous question in Act 2, Scene 2 of Romeo and Juliet: "What's in a name?" What is a name worth? Can a name add to or diminish the value of the person or thing it identifies?

The 16th-century star-crossed lover was referring to surnames—Montague and Capulet—but today, these questions are regularly asked of brand names. What's in a name like "Meta," "Kyndryl" or "Pearl Milling Company"? It's difficult—maybe impossible—to measure the exact value of a brand name, but ample evidence points to a name's ability to strengthen or weaken a brand, thereby having a tangible impact on the fate of a company or product.

Why do brand names matter?

We experience the influence of names in our everyday lives, not only in brand names, but in ordering food like Chilean sea bass (which sounds tastier than its original name, "Antarctic toothfish") or labeling about half of Americans "pro-life" (as opposed to "anti-abortion"). Brand names affect our perceptions in similar ways, but they're more than euphemisms. Consider the following three arguments for the importance of brand names.

1. LANGUAGE IS POWERFUL

A recent study highlighted in The Wall Street Journal found that consumers feel they have more control over products whose names are easier to pronounce. Previous research has shown that people's perceptions and memories change when different words are used to ask about them. But most of us don't need empirical evidence of the power of language. We experience it regularly, in speeches, literary works and song lyrics. A company or product's name is its first and best opportunity to harness that power.

2. THE NAME OUTLASTS OTHER BRAND ASSETS

Ad campaigns, websites and even logos change over time. But barring a major problem—legal trouble, for example—a brand name typically stays the same for the life of a company or product. Getting the right name can be time-consuming and expensive, but think of it as an investment that will gain value over time. A boring, me-too name could undermine all your marketing efforts, while a name that sticks in customers' minds may boost the effectiveness of every marketing dollar.

3. THE COSTS OF GETTING IT WRONG ARE HIGH

To appreciate this final reason to value a good brand name, consider the opposite: a naming fail. These days, the media and general public love to hate brand names such as Quibi and Bodega. But the wrong name can lead to more than a few mean tweets and sarcastic headlines. More significant naming missteps can compel companies to rename due to legal challenges or recall products due to offensive meanings. Even if you're not convinced of the potential benefits of a good brand name, it's hard to deny the potential negative impact of the wrong name.

But what makes one name better than another? What determines how well a brand name will harness the power of language, ensure longevity and avoid the most common naming pitfalls?

The qualities of good brand names

Many branding agencies and consultants have attempted to list qualities of great brand names. But books, articles and social media posts that list "X principles of brand naming" usually overstate the case. For example, some say good brand names must be short. Brevity works, but so does "Rotten Tomatoes," which clocks in at two words, five syllables and 14 letters. Many lists will encourage you to prioritize a name with an available dot-com domain. But neither Tesla nor Twitch started out with their exact name-dot-com domains, and as of this writing, peloton.com belongs to a "drilling and well data software" company. (The fitness company can be found at onepeleton.com.) Other self-proclaimed experts will even go so far as to insist every great brand name must

More significant naming missteps can compel companies to rename due to legal challenges or recall products due to offensive meanings. Even if you're not convinced of the potential benefits of a good brand name, it's hard to deny the potential negative impact of the wrong name.

There are no silver bullets, magic formulas or mnemonic devices that will lead you to the perfect brand name. Instead, be sure to consider any name candidates through three lenses: strategic, creative and technical.

contain a K, such as "Kodak" and "Nike." Tell that to Apple, Amazon or the makers of Swiffer.

The truth is less satisfying: There are no silver bullets, magic formulas or mnemonic devices that will lead you to the perfect brand name. Instead, be sure to consider any name candidates through three lenses: strategic, creative and technical.

Great brand names are strategic

Not all brand names express relevant ideas. (What does "Virgin" have to do with a record shop, after all?) But when they do, those ideas should be meaningful—rooted in brand strategy, informed by a deep understanding of customers. Strategic names are also distinctive—they stand out against the competition—and adaptable enough to stretch as a company or product grows and changes.

Great brand names are creative

They not only sound good and look good (remember that most brand names wind up in logos), they're also memorable—arguably the most important characteristic of any brand. Memorability depends partly on context. What are competitor brands named? Names that resonate on an emotional level can also be easier to remember, and the structure of a name—repetition, alliteration, rhyming, and yes, brevity—can also heavily impact its memorability.

Great brand names must clear some technical hurdles

Finding a legally available name is increasingly difficult. It's a big part of why naming is so hard. As an experiment, pretend you're starting your own marketing agency tomorrow. Come up with three cool name ideas, then Google each one with a descriptor like "marketing agency" or "branding agency" and see whether someone's already using them for a similar company or product. Chances are your first three ideas—along with the majority of your first hundred ideas—will already be in use. In addition to a relatively low level of legal risk, the best names are linguistically viable, meaning they avoid problematic meanings, associations and pronunciations in relevant languages. And lastly, they're easy to spell and say out loud.

Importantly, the qualities listed above are not requirements for brand naming. Not all good brand names have all of these characteristics. And even the worst brand names will manage to cover some items from the list. (If nothing else, "Tronc," the abandoned rebrand of Tribune Online Content, is pretty distinctive.) Too much of what makes one name better than another depends on context. What's the name supposed to achieve? What are the competitors' names? Who's the target audience, and what will resonate with them?

Think of these three lenses and their constituent qualities not as a recipe for a great brand name, but as ways to evaluate name candidates or to inform a tough decision between two good name ideas.

How to find or create good names

Understanding the qualities of good names doesn't necessarily make it easier to find or create one. Most first-time namers assume the best approach to name generation is a group brainstorm—get a few smart, creative people in a room with stacks of sticky notes and permanent markers. But most of the best naming work is done individually, paging through a thesaurus, diving into desktop research, looking for increasingly interesting or unexpected ways to express ideas. And generating a long list of name candidates is only half the battle.

The full naming process begins with a clear creative brief and includes preliminary trademark screening and linguistic checks. The last step in the process is arguably the hardest of all: selecting the final name. Once you've secured your strategic, creative and technically viable name, all that's left to do is build and maintain a strong brand around it. Ay, there's the rub. **MN**

Don't Be a Greenwasher

How your brand can stay true to its environmental claims

BY STACY HINTERMEISTER | VP OF MARKETING AND GROWTH, CBX

As a marketer, you'll find these research results about sustainable brand positioning to be both exciting and daunting: Sixty-four percent of consumers surveyed by the environmental firm Green Print say that they're happy to pay more for sustainable products, and a striking 78% say they're more likely to buy products that are labelled as "environmentally friendly." But here's the thing—nearly three quarters (74%) of those consumers admit they don't know how to identify eco-friendly products and nearly half confessed they seldom or never actually believe eco-claims.

So where does that leave marketers and brand designers who authentically want to highlight the environmentally-conscious attributes of their CPG brands?

Clearly, simply claiming on your packaging that your company has a commitment to the environment—perhaps with imagery of waterfalls and sunlit forests, along with a certified organic label—is no longer enough. Brands that offer consumers a false impression of how a company's products are good for the environment—a practice known as "greenwashing"—can damage a brand's reputation. In a nutshell, greenwashing involves brands trying to get credit for playing in the sustainable space without having any intention of long-term environmental benefit, or exaggerating the eco-friendly steps they're taking.

And it's not always a deliberately deceptive action by a brand; unintentional greenwashing can occur over time. What was relevant in 2020 may not be as relevant in 2022. Exhibit A: The designation that a food product is "natural" was once a powerful statement; but today, the word "natural" is barely table stakes—it provides so little differentiation that referring to a food product as natural means nothing to most consumers. With consumer interest growing in farm-to-table, bee-friendly certification and traceability of their food, it's vital that brands stay a step ahead of consumers. For example, our organization is now working with the Applegate brand on hot dogs that are sourced to regenerative farms—a benefit that consumers might not have imagined just a year ago.

And that's the key insight for smart marketers—it's not enough to be eco-friendly; a brand must educate its consumers on what its initiatives mean. As an example, the juice brand Snapple (in full transparency, a CBX client) recently moved from glass bottles to plastic. We know that some consumers perceive plastic to be worse for the environment because glass is fully recyclable. Yet Snapple identified a more important goal for its packaging: reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Glass is heavy, and switching to plastic bottles was a better way to achieve that climate-preserving objective. As marketers, we must recognize that the goal posts for sustainable packaging and brand claims are not static, so we have to be nimble enough to evolve as our consumers' perceptions do.

Nina Goodrich, director of the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, cites the seven sins of greenwashing: the sin of the hidden trade-off, sin of no proof, sin of vagueness, sin of worshiping false labels, sin of irrelevance, sin of the lesser of two evils, and the sin of fibbing. Goodrich concluded

that all of these greenwashing issues are still rampant. "An example of one of the most egregious claims that we see is stating a package is '100% recyclable.' However, nothing is 100% recyclable because packaging uses inks, coatings, adhesives and other materials," Goodrich said.

As package designers, we know that selection of inks is becoming mission critical—shiny packaging with a metallic component is not recyclable and some, but not all inks, are biodegradable. Education is key—do your consumers understand the difference between your package being reusable versus recyclable?

In order to keep from falling into this greenwashing trap, marketers must accurately communicate their environmental impact, resisting the temptation to mislead consumers. Brian Hauck, design manager and sustainability expert for CBX, notes that while some companies may introduce a product to show its commitment to protecting the environment, that step is often performed to generate positive PR rather than for its impact on the earth.

"The reason you should be committing to eco-friendly practices as marketers or package designers is not only to get credit for it, but because it's the right thing to do," he said. "The planet is in peril."

Companies that really want to make a difference with sustainability efforts should start by putting together a list of sustainability goals and an action plan to make it happen. "Recyclability and other eco-friendly claims are going to be table stakes for brands because as each generation ages, sustainability becomes more important," Hauck said. "It's going to be required by a lot of retailers. There are several states, and even the federal government, which will be requiring more sustainable solutions from marketers of consumer packaged goods."

Tips for Successful Sustainability

Avoiding greenwashing is not difficult, as long as a company stays true to its word and follows its plan accordingly.

Lifecycle assessments should be conducted for all of your products, analyzing where ingredients and product components are sourced, manufactured and how they are packaged. Rather than "go big," your brands may be better off taking incremental steps that increase their sustainable positioning over time.

Plus, there is help out there. Consider aligning your company with and learning from organizations such as the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, the Flexible Packaging Association or the Association of Plastic Recyclers.

Making a Wrong Turn

One of the key areas where CPG manufacturers face sustainability problems is in comingling materials that make recyclable material challenging to extract. For example, you don't want to use different types of layered polymers or resins in your packaging because you can't isolate those elements to make them reusable.

Then there are companies that proclaim big sustainability goals in the future, setting certain targets by 2030 or another far-off year. That strategy has the potential to be perceived by consumers as greenwashing, especially if there is no roadmap for the next decade.

And finally, there are some brands that make honest mistakes or overstatements; correcting those errors in a prompt manner can ease the harsh criticism companies are facing from environmental advocates and sustainability evangelists alike.

If your company wants to avoid greenwashing, it should rely on data, embrace credible third-party certification, and resist stretching the truth about the eco achievements they're making. In the end, it's vital that brands educate consumers about what truly are the environmental attributes of their product portfolio. The best way for marketers to avoid accusations of greenwashing is simple: stay truthful—the future of our earth (and your brand's reputation with consumers) may depend on it. MN

"The reason you should be committing to eco-friendly practices as marketers or package designers is not only to get credit for it, but because it's the right thing to do. The planet is in peril."

Mentorship Matters — Now More Than Ever

AMA Toronto's Alan Middleton with a salient reminder of the power of mentorship in professional communities

BY ALAN MIDDLETON, PHD | ADVISOR, AMA TORONTO MENTOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Jan. 17, 2022 marked the seventh year of celebration of International Mentoring Day. While mentorship is an ancient concept, dating back to the Greek character Mentor in Homer's "The Odyssey," its role in effective management practice is now needed more than ever.

The changes in organizational practice wrought by the impacts of the pandemic and the ongoing development of communications and other technologies mean that this most human element—mentorship—is a critical piece of effective management. This is especially true in marketing, a discipline blending art and science and crossing a range of activities and organizational silos.

Harvard Business Review Press defines mentorship as "the offering of advice, information or guidance by a person with useful experience, skills or expertise for another individual's personal and professional development." This often happens informally but with the changes around us, it needs to be available more formally and more extensively as well.

Old notions that mentorship was only for more senior personnel to mentor junior personnel and only within organizations no longer apply. Additionally, the notion that the value was only to the mentee also no longer applies as mentorship is itself recognized as a key management skill for mentors.

Some business researchers have described this as the need for more "transformational leadership," which focuses more on leadership as a mindset to help others be more innovative and engaged. As I explore in my book, "Mentorship Matters — Now More than Ever," mentoring today needs to be a rewarding two-way process that sees the mentor getting wiser and the mentee gaining valuable knowledge.

Good mentorship programs can work well internally within the organization and also externally. Each has strengths, with internal programs more able to help the mentee understand and work within the organization, while external programs enable mentees to understand the broader contexts.

In a positive two-way mentorship process, mentors benefit from improving their management skills: listening and asking, facilitating change management, influencing, and overcoming obstacles. They prove themselves as valuable transformative leaders by learning what it takes to develop others. Mentors gain fresh perspectives and stay updated with new thinking and knowledge. They learn more about themselves and share their expertise with others in the organization. They expand their professional network and reinforce their role as subject matter experts.

Mentees gain valuable perspectives and ideas from someone with relevant experience. When in an internal program, they learn about the organization and its culture and enable contacts and networking for greater job satisfaction and promotional opportunities. If in an external program, they add to their knowledge and perspective on the discipline, industry sector, or gender and ethnicity issues. Mentees gain perspective on their career and themselves, as well as future challenges and opportunities. And crucially, they gain perspective on managing others based on their mentorship experience.

Organizations that encourage informal and formal, internal and external mentorship programs also benefit in numerous ways. These types of mentorship programs foster a corporate culture that encourages personal and professional growth through the sharing of information, competencies, values and behaviors. Establishing an environment where leaders are building leaders helps the process of identification, development and retention of talent for key managerial and professional roles.

Job satisfaction for mentors and mentees is improved in these organizations, too, because mentorship helps flatten organizational hierarchies and reduce bureaucratic structure.

Lastly, we know that good mentorship programs have the ability to accelerate staff diversity and inclusion, which are critical for business success. In recognition of International Mentoring Day on January 17, mentorship advocates Eli Wolff and Mary Hums wrote: "Mentoring relationships help us to broaden our lens for diversity and inclusion, allowing us to see others as people first while moving beyond labels and stereotypes. Mentors and mentees can help each other to redefine normal and move to typical, creating visibility for individuals and communities. Through mentorship we can expand our minds, hearts and vision toward race, sexual orientation, disability, religion and culture. This is the power of mentoring."

The need for progressive mentoring programs is particularly acute in marketing. Marketing requires a judicious blend of science and art. Its requirement for data to analyze target groups and the products or services, pricing, distribution channels, communications and branding required to attract them as customers is increasing exponentially. This will continue with greater use of AI, robots and cobots (collaborative robots), as well as ongoing changes in marketing communications.

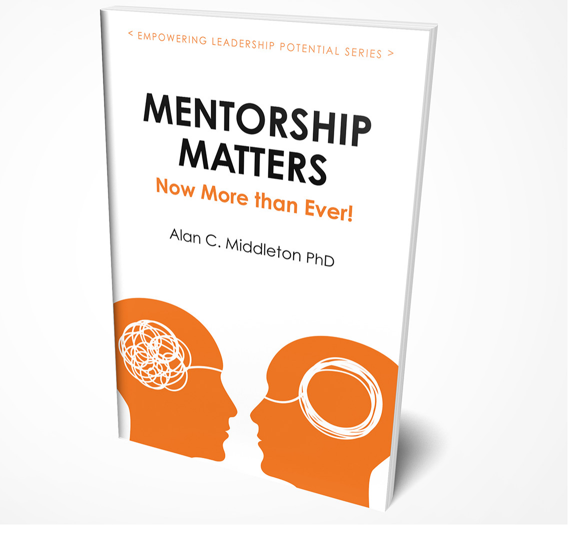
However, the problem-solving, decision-making, judgment and humanity required in ensuring the respect needed in dealing with both potential customers and staff is equally important. This blend requires ongoing formal training and effective mentorship programs that help mentors and mentees.

Among the most recognized and best developed programs in the marketing sector today is AMA Toronto's Mentor Exchange. Established in 2009, the program has a matching process for mentor and mentee, and ongoing follow-up and evaluations of the people and the process. It also offers training programs for mentors and mentees on how to maximize the value of the process and best practices, with speakers, panels and networking events to enable continual mentorship opportunities.

External mentorship programs such as the Mentor Exchange have many management advantages. They enable exposure to learning, ideas and judgment outside of the immediate needs of the person's own specific organization. These practices also introduce different styles and types of management issues and aids in cross-silo and cross-organization knowledge and thinking. Avoiding political issues, external mentorship programs also expand networks and positive experience within new communities.

With marketing issues now so important for all organizations, especially small and medium enterprises, the industry's greater commitment to better training and mentorship programs is a necessity. Indeed, in the emerging post-pandemic world mentorship is a critical management skill, one that matters more than ever.

Alan Middleton, PhD is an independent consultant, author and speaker on marketing and mentorship. He is a member of Canada's Marketing Hall of Legends and is an advisor to the Mentor Exchange run by AMA Toronto. His latest book "Mentorship Matters – Now More Than Ever!" is available on Amazon. **MN**



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Chief Marketing and Graduate Enrollment Officer
and Professor of Marketing,
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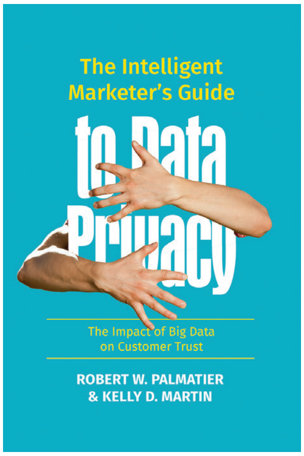

WINNER:

The Intelligent Marketer's Guide to Data Privacy

By Robert W. Palmatier and Kelly D. Martin

Robert W. Palmatier
Professor of Marketing and
John C. Narver Endowed Professor in Business Administration,
Foster School of Business, University of Washington

Kelly D. Martin
Professor of Marketing and
Dean's Distinguished Research Fellow,
Colorado State University

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Vasileios Davvetas, Adamantios Diamantopoulos and **Lucy Liu**
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"Dog Parks and Coffee Shops: Faux Diversity and Consumption in Gentrifying Neighborhoods," Vol. 37, No. 1

FINALISTS:

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"Assessing the Societal Impact of Research: The Relational Engagement Approach," Vol. 36, No. 1

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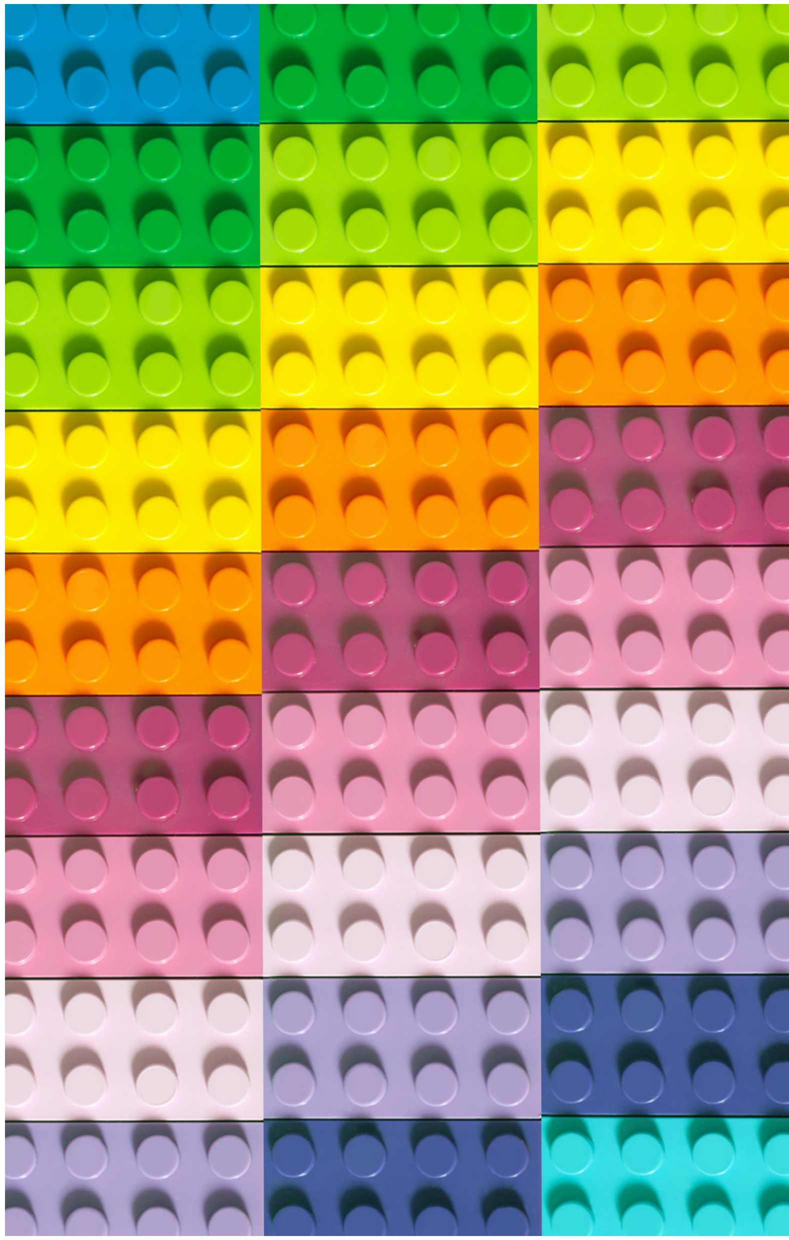
Why Product Brands Should Build Their Own Platforms

BY JULIAN R. K. WICHMANN, NICO WIEGAND AND WERNER J. REINARTZ

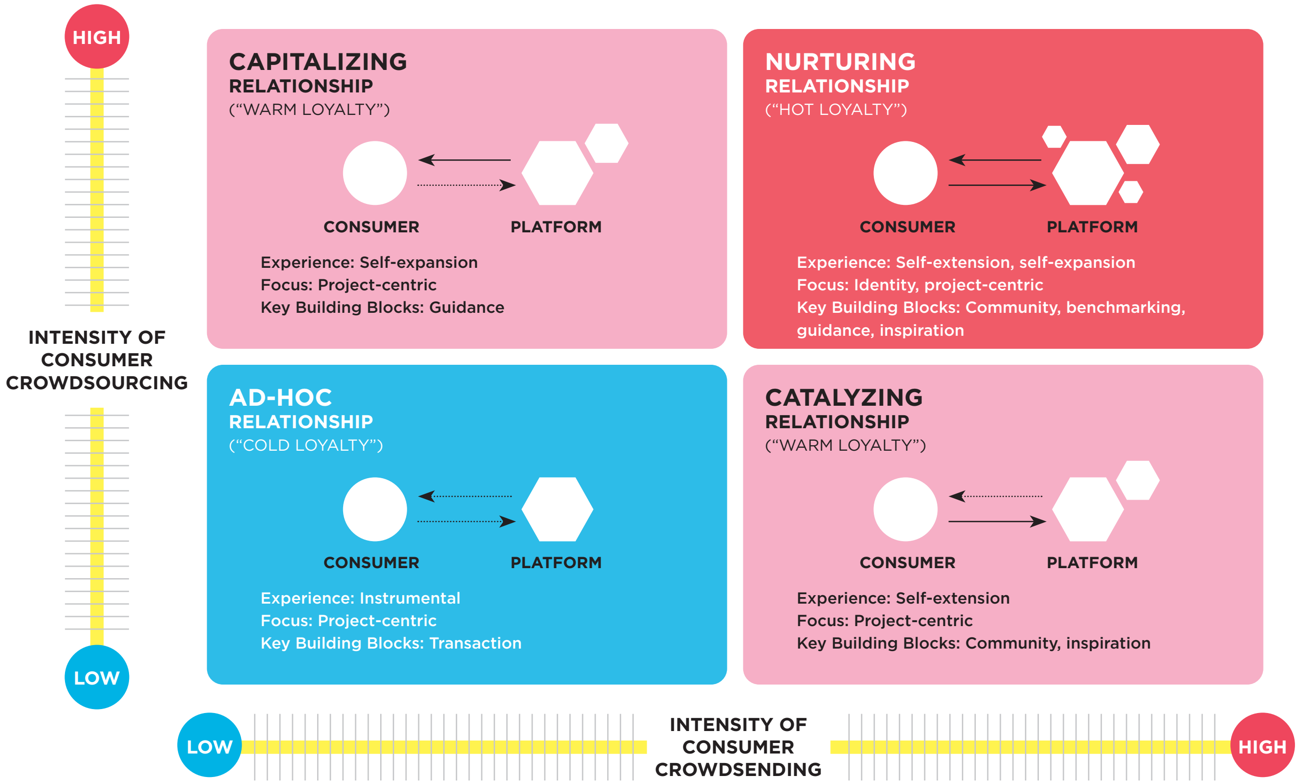


Digital platforms such as Amazon, Zalando and JD.com have conquered the interface to consumers by offering vast assortments of competing products and vendors. This has put considerable pressure on traditional product brands that face increasingly fierce price competition and diminished brand differentiation on these platforms. However, the poison can also be the antidote as a new Journal of Marketing study shows. Brands such as Nike, adidas, AISICS and Bosch are operating their own brand flagship platforms that incorporate a host of functionalities and stakeholders, thereby regaining the direct interface to consumers and deepening buyer loyalty.

Our research team identified two central processes shaping brand flagship platforms: consumer crowdsourcing and crowdsending of products, services and content. Consumer crowdsourcing refers to consumers drawing value from platform participants such as the brand, other consumers or third-party businesses. Consumer crowdsending refers to consumers providing value to these platform participants.

Consumer crowdsourcing and crowdsending processes manifest in various interactions on flagship platforms. We group these interactions into five key platform building blocks: transaction block, community block, benchmarking block, guidance block and inspiration block. We argue that brands should assemble these building blocks and their functionalities based on a common overarching consumer goal. For example, Nike's Run Club addresses the overarching consumer goal of living an active, healthy lifestyle by offering exclusive products (transaction block), sports events (community block), tracking and competitive features (benchmarking block), and expert guidance and personal coaching (guidance block).

Furthermore, we show that brands can tailor the degree of consumer involvement in the crowdsourcing and crowdsending processes, which has important implications for the emergent consumer-platform relationships. That is, the more frequently and more intimately that consumers interact with the platform, the more intensely they crowdsource and crowdsend and the more the relationship transforms from purely transaction-focused to highly self-relevant, committed, and durable. Specifically, we identify four different states that consumer-platform relationships can assume.



In ad-hoc relationships, consumer crowdsourcing and crowdsending intensity is limited and interactions are firmly focused on the brand's core product. In this state, the platform often features a strong transaction block or (smart) extensions to the core product (e.g., Philips' Sonicare App for its dental health products). The emerging relationships are instrumental and characterized by cold loyalty as consumers focus on the platform's utilitarian benefits such as convenience or cost savings.

In capitalizing relationships, there is intense consumer crowdsourcing as the platform integrates a variety of third-party business into the value creation. Consequently, the platform's focus expands from the core product to the broader category space under an overarching consumer goal. For example, an athletics brand can invite coaches and nutritionists onto its platform to assist consumers on their journey to an active and healthy lifestyle. Accordingly, a common building block of such a platform is the guidance block. The emerging platform-consumer relationship is characterized by a warm loyalty with strong commitment and attachment that exceeds purely rational motives.

In catalyzing relationships, consumer crowdsending is intense, implying a deep integration of consumers into the value creation process. LEGO Ideas represents such a platform on which consumers create and publish their own LEGO designs. These platforms often feature strong community and inspiration blocks through which they become like a blank canvas that consumers can project their own identity and goals onto. As such, consumers are highly involved, engaged and committed, representing another form of warm loyalty.

Finally, in nurturing partnerships, consumers engage in intense crowdsourcing as well as crowdsending, which leads to a profound relevance of the platform for consumers' sense of self. That is, the platform becomes a co-creator of a consumer's identity as much as the consumer co-creates the platform offering, leading to what we term hot loyalty. A consumer seeking to become a proficient runner, for example, crowdsources training routines while also exercising her new identity as an increasingly avid runner through crowdsending by advising other consumers, setting up competitions or sharing running routes.

While the opportunities of brand flagship platforms are enticing, they also come with distinct risks, such as the dilution of the core brand due to the inclusion of third parties, platform hijacking through consumers and high operational costs.

For managers, the platformization of brands implies some fundamental changes to established notions. Flagship platforms shift the market focus from products to entire category spaces, require measurements that extend beyond brand performance to interaction quality, and demand new resources and skills that enable the ongoing orchestration of interactions and relationships. Given the increasing platformization of the marketplace, companies will need to decide whether they want to stick to the traditional pipeline model, complement other platforms or embrace the opportunities and challenges of operating their own brand flagship platform. MN

Befriending the Enemy

The effects of observing brand-to-brand praise on consumer evaluations and choices

BY LINGRUI ZHOU, KATHERINE M. DU AND KEISHA M. CUTRIGHT

The day Nintendo launched the Switch gaming system, both Xbox and PlayStation made a surprising move: They publicly congratulated Nintendo on Twitter. Brands typically avoid complimenting their competitors because they do not want to offer a rival brand free publicity. However, the response to this was positive. The posts generated a significant number of likes and retweets for Xbox and PlayStation. In fact, these compliments, on average, generated over 10 times more likes and retweets for the brands than their usual content.

A new Journal of Marketing study explores what happens when brands communicate positively toward their competitors. Our research team ran nearly a dozen experiments that show that a brand that compliments a competitor ends up boosting its own reputation and sales.

In our initial experiments, we compared a brand complimenting a competitor, which we term "brand-to-brand praise," to traditional brand communication, such as self-promotional messages or informative content. We discovered that brand-to-brand praise indeed boosts preferences for the praiser brand. In one particular experiment, we showed half of the participants a fictitious tweet in which Kit Kat complimented a top competitor, Twix ("@twix, Competitor or not, congrats on your 54 years in business! Even we can admit – Twix are delicious").

We showed the other half of participants a tweet in which Kit Kat mentioned its own products ("Start your day off with a tasty treat!"). After 11 days, we asked participants to report any candy purchases since the time they completed the study. Those who saw the tweet in which Kit Kat praised Twix purchased Kit Kat 34% more frequently compared to those who saw the tweet from Kit Kat about its own product. Importantly, we found that Twix sales did not increase, even after Kit Kat called Twix delicious.

Next, we sought to better understand why brand-to-brand praise led to more positive consequences for the praiser. Through our subsequent studies, we found that the brand was viewed as "warmer," meaning it was perceived as more friendly and trustworthy, after complimenting a competitor. It is this warmth that drives the favorable outcomes for the praiser—outcomes that include greater brand engagement and higher sales.

We also uncovered when brand-to-brand praise is most effective. We found that there are certain types of consumers and certain types of brands that are most likely to benefit. With respect to consumers, we found that skeptical consumers actually respond most positively to brand praise.

When consumers read a tweet from Lyft that praised rival company Uber ("@Uber Congratulations on all your achievements this past year!"), skeptical consumers showed the greatest increase in attitudes toward the praiser, seemingly disarmed by the praise. With respect to brands, we found that brand-to-brand praise has the largest effect for organizations that are not traditionally seen as warm or caring, such as for-profit brands.

Lastly, we found that praising a competitor will only be effective when done in an authentic manner. Praise that appears disingenuous or is not perceived as risky will not be accepted as a meaningful indicator of warmth. In one experiment, we demonstrated that when observing praise toward a non-competitor brand (in particular, an eyewear brand complimenting a hamburger brand, which would not be viewed as a risky behavior), consumers did not form more positive evaluations of praiser.

While praising the competition seems to go against conventional wisdom, our research shows that it can result in many favorable outcomes for the praiser brand. Given the rise of social media in the digital age, brands can now easily communicate with each other and be observed by consumers. Managers may wish to capitalize on this opportunity by utilizing brand-to-brand praise as a way to foster a warmer brand image and produce more positive downstream consequences. MN

Crowdsourcing for Marketing Success

New research into the benefits of crowdsourced marketing

BY DARREN W. DAHL AND RETO HOFSTETTER

The term "crowdsourcing" was first defined in 2005 by the editors of Wired magazine to describe how organizations began leveraging internet users to outsource tasks. Over the years, the notion has been defined in a variety of ways (e.g., crowdfunding, crowdvoting, and crowdsolving), with specific application to business, government and nonprofit organizations' innovation efforts. Indeed, companies in almost every business vertical— from LEGO to BMW to Frito Lay—have embraced crowdsourcing to gather new ideas and engage the broader consumer marketplace.

In response, researchers have done significant work to define crowdsourcing's advantages and limitations. The work has broadly shown crowdsourcing provides organizations enhanced innovation performance, increased sales, and better customer engagement (Boudreau and Lakhani 2013; Kohler 2015). Ramamurti (2020) even suggested the strategy could be used to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other scholars have identified significant limitations to crowdsourcing, including idea quality variability, brand reputation risks (Verhoef, van Doorn, and Beckers 2013), and misleading idea quality signals (Hofstetter, Aryobsei, and Herrmann 2017).

Most recently, several Journal of Marketing Research articles have sought to add insight to the crowdsourcing discussion. Specifically, researchers have examined how to manage innovation crowdsourcing to optimize success probability in the context of online platforms and innovation contests. Other scholars have explored the value of signaling to potential customers that a product has been crowdsourced.

While researchers have done considerable work to define crowdsourcing's value, few have sought to understand consumers' feelings and attitudes toward crowdsourced products and services.

Managing the Crowd for Success

Stephen, Zubcsek and Goldenberg (2016) have investigated the role of social networks in facilitating innovation in crowdsourcing platforms. The authors note that many crowdsourcing platforms have adopted interdependent ideation, whereby customers can be exposed to or inspired by others' ideas when defining their own. The researchers used an experimental approach to determine how a network of other customers' inspirations affected individual customers' innovativeness. They showed that a high level of interconnectivity between the social network defined on a crowdsourcing platform could negatively impact innovativeness among ideas produced. The researchers suggest the outcome is due to the redundancy and similarity of ideas shared when a social network is defined and when its members actively communicate with one another. The authors advise that firms can attenuate the issue by explicitly instructing crowdsourcing participants not to rely on other customers' ideas for inspiration.

Building on the research, Hofstetter and colleagues (2021) show that the number of potential solutions to a task shown on crowdsourcing platforms can significantly impact innovation outcomes. Using an innovation contest (a common modern crowdsourcing mechanism), the authors found that exposure to numerous competitive ideas harmed rather than stimulated creative performance. Importantly, they found the competitive display of others' ideas underlay the effect, as exposure to an increasing number of ideas demotivated participants. The researchers found noncompetitive exposure to an increasing number of ideas benefited participants by inspiring creative efforts. The authors spotlight multiple strategies firms can use to mitigate the harmful influence of competitive exposure, including limiting the number of crowdsourced ideas shown or categorizing the ideas.

Communicating Crowdsourcing to Consumers

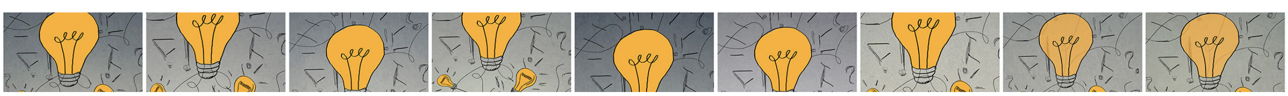
While researchers have done considerable work to define crowdsourcing's value, few have sought to understand consumers' feelings and attitudes toward crowdsourced products and services. So, does marketing products to consumers as crowdsourced have benefits?

Recent research by Nishikawa and colleagues (2017) shows that labeling new products as crowdsourced can improve market performance. The authors used field studies to show that marketing products as crowdsourced increased sales by up to 20%. Their follow-up, controlled studies showed that a quality inference for crowdsourced products drove the positive outcome. In other words, the researchers found some consumers believed crowdsourced products would address their needs more effectively and be more likely to be successfully designed than non-crowdsourced products.

Song, Jung and Zhang (2021) provide additional insight into when communicating crowdsourcing to consumers is likely to be beneficial. They found consumers preferred either consumer-designed or designer-designed products depending on context. The researchers showed that the consumer's power distance belief (PDB) moderated which type of product was preferred. Specifically, they found that low-PDB consumers, identifying more with crowdsourcing companies, preferred consumer-designed products, whereas high-PDB consumers preferred designer-designed products. The authors found the effect pattern at both the country and individual PDB levels. The research suggests that crowdsourcing's positive effect is not ubiquitous, and marketers are best served by the approach if it resonates with their target consumers and fits their product context.

Summary

Crowdsourcing has become an essential instrument in every marketer's toolbox, and recent research provides guidance for how firms can best use the strategy. Although putting a brand in a crowd's hands poses risks, the benefits prevail when the firm implements crowdsourcing judiciously. Managers should ensure that the crowd is heterogeneous so consumers truly benefit from finding each other's ideas inspirational rather than competitive. As it pays to market products as crowdsourced, marketers should find effective ways to communicate their efforts. And they must carefully balance the efforts, as some consumers such as those with high power distance belief, prefer designer-based products. MN



When Customization in Luxury Brands Gets Too Personal

Consumers love to show off unique luxury products, but at what point does it reduce a brand's design equity?

BY CHRISTOPHER L. CAMPAGNA AND KIWOONG YOO

A sitting poodle and a blue alien sticker on your Louis Vuitton bag, along with your initials, can be purchased on Louis Vuitton's online store. You may also select from many other stickers and choose the location of the stickers on the bag. Louis Vuitton is not the only luxury brand that allows consumers to "Design-It-Yourself" and create a unique bag. Customization has been embraced by many other luxury brands such as Prada, Gucci, and Burberry. Why are luxury brands offering customization of their products? The main reason lies in the evolution of the modern luxury consumer. There has been a generational shift from baby boomers to Generation Xers and millennials. Also, the bulk of luxury consumers are now from the middle class. To appeal to more consumers and their changing values, these luxury brands are using their online store platforms and technology to offer consumers a custom experience. But is there a limit to how much customization a brand should employ? New research by Moreau, Prandelli, Schreier and Hieke addresses this question and provides findings from their experiments.

Before thinking about how product customization affects luxury brands, the authors first explore the reasons behind consumers' purchase of luxury brands. Some reasons are to show their status, wealth, power, taste and accomplishments to others and themselves and to indicate that they're part of a particular group. These brands can also give consumers psychological benefits such as increased self-esteem and aspirations of a better life. But as luxury brands become more prevalent among consumers, the traits of exclusivity and uniqueness become more significant for consumers. The growth of social media such as Instagram and TikTok has only spurred on this trend as more influencers showcase luxury brands to millions of potential consumers.

How Does Customization of Luxury Products Affect Consumers' Purchase Intentions?

Customization of luxury products may be able to address the consumer's focus on rarity. When consumers can control the design of the luxury product, the consumers gain a product that is unique to them. If a luxury brand includes more items in the customization process, consumers have a higher likelihood that their product is truly one of a kind and best fits their preferences. However, the authors note that luxury products' customization reduces its design equity, which is the luxury brand's quality and craftsmanship, which is influenced by a designer's expertise. Thus, there is a certain level of tension that customization introduces to luxury brands.

To study the effect that customization has on consumers' purchase intentions, Moreau and colleagues propose four hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that in the luxury market, if there is too much customization or design freedom, consumers may view the luxury product as having lower design equity, which lowers consumers' willingness to purchase the luxury product. In contrast, past studies have shown that higher design freedom increases consumers' purchase intentions for mainstream products.

To delve into this further, the authors consider the fashion-conscious customer segment who value prestige, self-confidence, and the luxury brand's image. The second hypothesis is that if a significant amount of design freedom is offered for a luxury product to fashion-conscious consumers, this should lower the consumers' willingness to purchase the luxury product. Fashion-conscious consumers want to keep the luxury product's design equity and its ability to signal value to others and themselves. For mainstream products, the brand's image is less important, so fashion-conscious consumers may want to incorporate more of their style into the product and want more customization, which will increase their purchase intentions towards the product.

Moreau and colleagues also look at the factors that might affect consumers' preferences for the extent of design freedom. The logo of a brand is one way to signal a product's brand identity. Therefore, for the third hypothesis, when a brand logo is clearly shown on a luxury product, this gives consumers more incentive to customize the product because it becomes more difficult to mask the

brand identity and value. For mainstream products, consumers place less value on the brand, and they are less concerned that customization will hide the brand identity and value. So, whether a brand logo is displayed on a mainstream product will not affect the consumers' preference for the amount of design freedom.

When the brand is less pronounced on the luxury product, such as a brand signature, the brand identity and value are more subtle. The fourth hypothesis states that if there's a brand signature on luxury products, consumers will want less design freedom to reduce the likelihood that the customization hides the brand identity. But for mainstream products, consumers do not rate brand identity highly, so whether or not a brand signature is displayed on a mainstream product will not affect their preference for the amount of design freedom.

Methodology

The authors test their hypotheses by running four separate experiments involving mainstream and luxury brands. The first study respondents were students attending a major European university and involved a mainstream sneaker, Adidas, and a luxury sneaker, Hermes.

Different levels of customization were allowed depending on what group the students were put in. For instance, students in the high customization group were told they could choose the laces' color and put their initials on the tongue. In contrast, students in the "no design freedom" group could not do any customization. All the respondents were asked to indicate how much they "liked" the products, as well as the likelihood that they would purchase the items over the next two weather-related seasons.

The second study followed a similar design path, but the respondents were only women, who were recruited while shopping in a high fashion district of Milan. The mainstream and luxury products were Zara and Chanel bags, respectively. Interestingly, this study did not include a "no customization" design condition. Intuitively, this makes sense, as these individuals were most likely people with high fashion consciousness levels, so one would expect their likelihood to purchase to vary from the first study.

The final two studies explored the impact that brand identity symbols, such as logos and brand signatures, have on the levels of customization consumers crave for mainstream versus luxury products.

Findings for Luxury Brands

Moreau, Prandelli, Schreier and Hieke's research reveals that consumers appreciate luxury brands because of their rarity and quality, which are heavily influenced by expert designers. The experiments show that when customization is offered for luxury products, consumers try to balance out these luxury brand dimensions with their own desire to be unique. Consumers put less value on luxury products that offer a significant amount of design freedom because too much customization reduces the brand identity and the value that it signals. A higher level of design freedom is more detrimental for consumers who are more fashion-conscious because they value prestige and brand identity. But luxury brands can increase the design freedom offered by openly putting their brand logo on the luxury product instead of a brand signature. The brand logo ensures that the brand identity will less likely be hidden by customization.

Authors' Thoughts on theFuture of Luxury Brands

Many trends may affect luxury brands, such as the interaction effect of augmented reality, sustainability concerns of luxury consumers, and the effect of customizing luxury products in emerging markets. Augmented reality is becoming more accessible and prominent in department stores and on smartphones. The authors expect that there will be no potential negative interaction between augmented reality diffusion and customization needs in luxury. Augmented reality enhances the experience across the customer journey to impact different dimensions of the luxury customer experience. Also, the experiments in this study focus on developed markets where many consumers are more individualistic. In emerging markets such as China and India, the consumers are more collectivistic and view luxury brands' role as "luxury for others." The authors believe that the findings obtained in their experiments can provide product customization strategies in these emerging markets by reassuring customers with well-recognized logos and recognizable product design. Lastly, sustainability is an essential factor in millennials' purchase decisions. The authors expect that a millennial who is much concerned about environmental and social sustainability and a customized item can offer a guarantee of authenticity and controlled manufacturing processes.

COVID-19 has altered the consumer landscape for luxury brands. The authors acknowledge that luxury consumers' expectations and behaviors have been deeply impacted by emphasizing the role of sustainability and a stronger emphasis on the relevance of authenticity. The authors believe that the pandemic could enhance preferences for customization. For example, luxury customers are changing their focus from quantity to quality, from over-consumption to smart consumption, and luxury brands that "provide consumers with the ability to imprint their products with some degree of consumer essence" may be perceived to be timeless investments. MN

Understanding Shoppers Along Party Lines

Should brands alter customer satisfaction strategies based on political identity?

BY DANIEL FERNANDES, NAILYA ORDABAYEVA, KYUHONG HAN, JIHYE JUNG AND VIKAS MITTAL

Customer satisfaction is of the utmost importance to firms. It drives customer word-of-mouth, loyalty and sales, which is why many firms spend millions or even billions of dollars innovating the customer experience. Now, new Journal of Marketing research identifies customers' political ideology as an important driver of their satisfaction. Specifically, we find that conservatives are more satisfied with their purchases than liberals.

We document this phenomenon in multiple studies conducted in the lab and in the field with U.S. and European participants. In some studies, we analyzed consumers' satisfaction with their actual past purchases and measured their political identity on a nine-point scale (1 = "extremely liberal" to 9 = "extremely conservative" in the U.S. and 1 = "extremely left-wing" to 9 = "extremely right-wing" in Europe). We found that a one-point increase in consumers' political conservatism was associated with a 5% average increase in their satisfaction with actual purchases. In other studies, we created an identical product experience that conservatives and liberals consumed during the study. Specifically, conservatives and liberals consumed the same online instructional videos about how to complete various tasks at home (e.g., exercise from home). Such videos skyrocketed in popularity during the COVID-19 stay-at-home period when we conducted the study. We found that conservatives were more satisfied with this consumption experience than liberals.

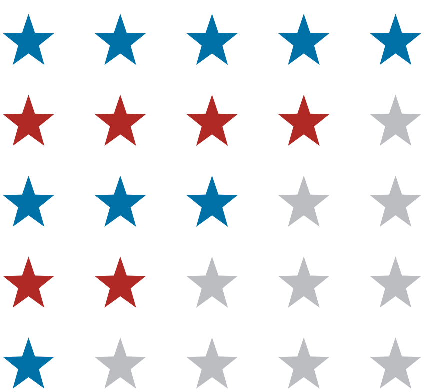
In another set of studies, we analyzed actual customer satisfaction data obtained in the field, such as online reviews and firms' customer satisfaction surveys, spanning various product and service categories including restaurants, airport travel, health insurance and B2B services. Regardless of the context or category, we found that conservatives are consistently more satisfied than liberals. Importantly, higher levels of customer satisfaction drive conservatives' higher likelihood to repurchase the products and services they consume and to recommend these products and services to others. This ultimately translates to higher firm sales.

We find that conservatives are consistently more satisfied than liberals because conservatives believe more strongly

in free-will and their personal responsibility for their actions and outcomes. This leads conservatives to trust their purchase decisions more and to ultimately feel more satisfied with the products they choose to buy and consume than liberals do. In other studies, we found that restricting conservatives' choice freedom lowers their satisfaction levels. However, strategies that boost liberals' confidence in their purchase decisions boosts their satisfaction levels.

These results have important implications for firms. First, by understanding the political identity of their customer base, companies can improve and better manage the satisfaction of their clients. For instance, because conservatives believe in free will and individual responsibility, providing them with abundant choices further boosts their level of satisfaction. Indeed, in one study we found that conservatives' (versus liberals') online restaurant reviews were even higher when there were abundant restaurant options nearby. In contrast, liberals' satisfaction can be increased through tactics that boost their confidence in their consumption choices. For example, increasing perceptions of the positivity of the consumption experience, or category expertise, raises liberals' customer satisfaction. This also means that companies should pay close attention to service and product failures that create negative experiences for liberal clients because liberals' dissatisfaction in these cases may be particularly pronounced.

More broadly, accounting for customers' political identity in analyses and interpretations of customer satisfaction data such as online reviews can benefit firms because customers' political identity could bias customer analytics. Indeed, accounting for the role of political identity in satisfaction data can help companies better understand the extent to which their satisfaction data reflect actual product performance and customer service rather than their customers' inherent tendency to feel content. This can ultimately help companies craft more effective strategies to improve their products and services. **MN**



We found that conservatives' (versus liberals') online restaurant reviews were even higher when there were abundant restaurant options nearby.

In contrast, liberals' satisfaction can be increased through tactics that boost their confidence in their consumption choices.

Under My Umbrella

The power of unifying private-label brands under one umbrella brand

BY AMELA DIZDAREVIC AND MAHROKH ROKNIFARD

Can recategorizing one brand into another brand boost the performance of the first brand? Organizations and retailers commonly use private labeling (PL), in which they group similar products under one category. The recent intake in this idea relies on a more generalized categorization of products and brands in one group. By rebranding several category-specific private label brands into one larger group with a particular name, retailers attempt to influence buyers' purchasing decisions. This strategic technique is known as umbrella branding or family branding, and it affects individuals' mental categorization in evaluating the products.

The positive effect of this strategy is a noticeable decrease in costs and risks of presenting new products. But how can retailers assure brand strength and marketing effectiveness of their products when repositioning their marketing strategy to umbrella branding? Kristopher O. Keller, Inge Geyskens and Marnik G. Dekimpe's recent Journal of Marketing Research article addresses this research question by evaluating the strategic decision made by the retailers SPAR, Attent and Colruyt to rebrand specific PL brands to one umbrella brand.

The Idea

The concept of this study emerged from the previous paper by the authors, "Let Your Banner Wave? Antecedents and Performance Implications of Retailers' Private-Label Branding Strategies." This study revealed that retailers' branding decisions differed on another dimension: whether one brand is used across all product categories or whether individual brands are developed. The result triggered the authors' interest in studying the change in private labels over time, including umbrella-branding decisions.

Even though PLs maintain their growth, many retailers still offer these products in small categories that may individually not be strong enough to perform in the market. To create a more substantial impact, retailers are now more open to using an umbrella branding strategy, which allows them to put differently labeled products under a group name. Although prior studies have focused on the creation and utilization of rebranding strategies, little is known about whether changes from multiple brands to a single brand would materialize. The disadvantage of applying an umbrella strategy refers to the risk that customers could hold favorable associations with particular brands and are not willing to accept a category aggregation with other brands. Can such rebranding attempts be successful?

Methodology

Through intense collaborations with the SPAR Group (which owns SPAR and Attent) and GfK Belgium (delivering insights and data for Colruyt), the authors had the opportunity to observe and evaluate the PL umbrella branding from different angles. During the rebranding phase, the three retailers granted in-depth company views about the steps they performed as well as why and when. These insights advanced the understanding of the rebranding efforts and augmented the valuable data sets that were already available, especially with regard to real-life cases.

SPAR, Attent and Colruyt have rebranded all of their category-specific private labels to one umbrella brand across more than 50 product categories. Some product examples of SPAR unifying different PL brands under the umbrella brand name "OK€" are presented later in this article. As the three selected retailers SPAR, Attent and Colruyt differ in terms of store format, service type, size, value sales, selling space, the rebranded PL tier and its prior market share, the authors were able to generalize their findings from one case to other cases.

With the available data, the research objective was to determine whether the strategic decision of rebranding was effective with respect to the businesses goals to gain brand strength and marketing-mix effectiveness. When choosing a suitable method for data gathering and analysis, the authors faced the challenge of lacking knowledge about how the brands would have performed without the strategy change. For this reason, they decided to utilize a difference in differences (DiD) analysis and a quasi-experimental procedure to analyze the obtained data. By observing control cases by means of outcomes for very similar brands that did not engage in the strategy change, they were able to understand how the treated brands would have performed had the change not taken place. The authors utilized weekly sales data for five years, including at least one year before and after the rebranding, and rich marketing mix information to understand the effects of the rebranding.

When performing DiD analysis, a good setting with a clean set of control cases is essential. Fortunately, the DiD approach was suitable in the case of the SPAR Group. The SPAR Group is part of a group of several retailers, which collectively source some of their private labels. As some of the group's members decided not to rebrand the category-specific private labels, the authors were able to observe how these brands performed, while also observing the move to umbrella branding performed by SPAR and Attent. Hence, they were able to observe the exact same brands sold through different retailers.

Findings

When the authors started the research project, they discovered an empirical literature stream on umbrella branding, but these studies focused exclusively on national brands. Another research trend led them to examine game-theoretical papers, which further contributed to their understanding of the effects of umbrella branding. The authors were fascinated to find that no single lens would provide a comprehensive answer but that a combination would advance their understanding of the relationship between private labels and umbrella branding.

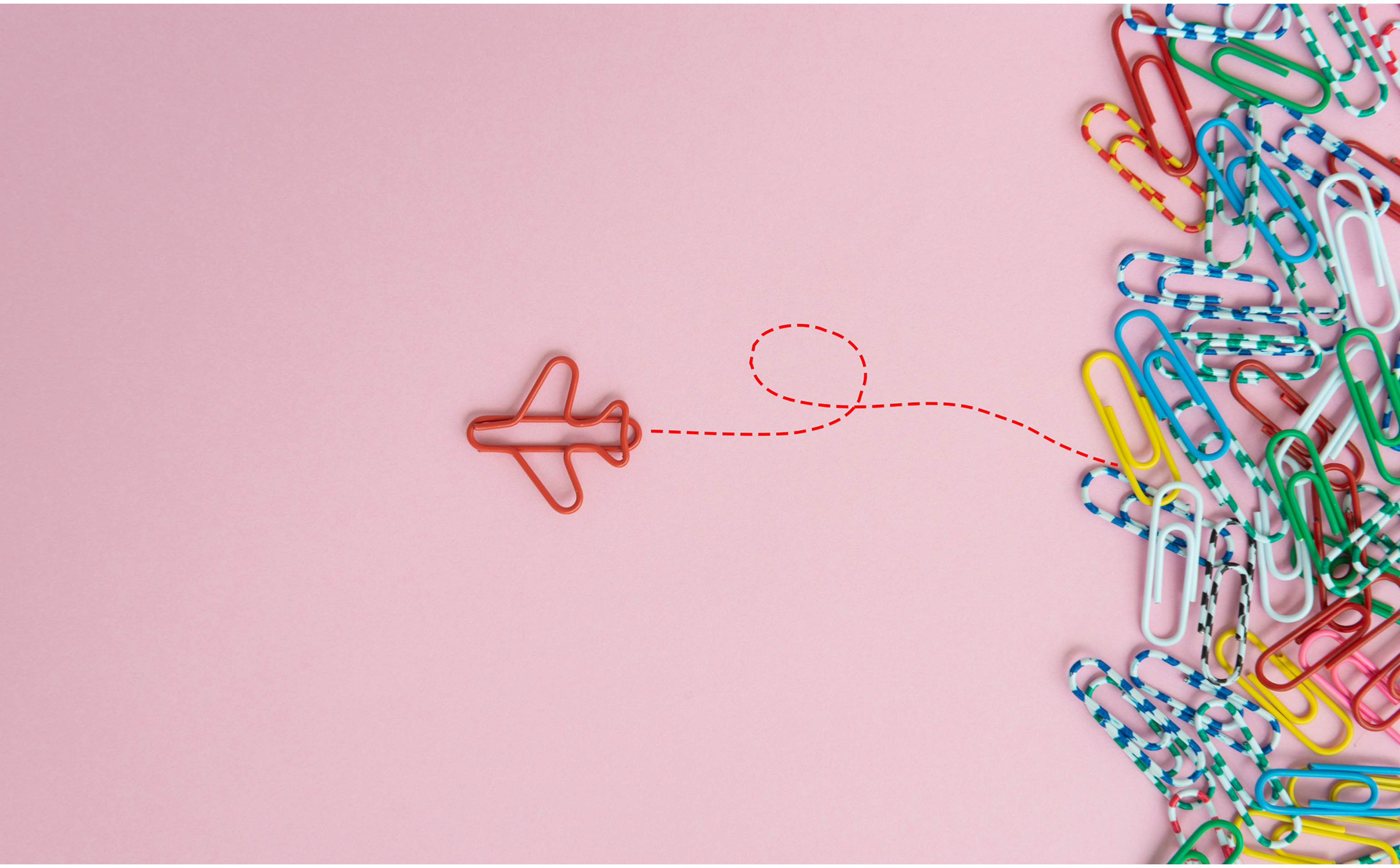
The study's findings indicated that rebranding to an umbrella brand makes the PLs more reliable brands, less price-elastic and reliant on low prices, and less reluctant and sensitive to price promotions. In contrast, the famous brand name across a large and diverse set of categories throughout the store seems to lead to a reduced variety perception and decreases the effectiveness of further SKU additions under the PL brand. Consequently, the authors recommend that managers should avoid siloed thinking in setting the umbrella brand's promotional intensity.

According to the authors, the results of this study provide retailers that still offer category-specific private-label brands with insights into the various implications of a shift to umbrella branding. Although private-label umbrella branding is common, looking at the market leader in the largest five countries in each of the six continents, close to 30% of the banners still use category-specific branding.

Avenues for Future Research

Since the results obtained were successfully applied to three European retailers, the authors suggest that their key results can be applied to American retailers or other European retailers. As all examined retailers operate in more developed countries, it may also be interesting for future studies to compare the results obtained in less developed retail landscapes.

Furthermore, in the article's limitations and future research section, the authors raised the thought of an inverse positioning by splitting one umbrella brand name to multiple PL brands. Would the flipside of the setting be an effective marketing strategy and worth studying in future research streams? The authors suggest that if moving from an umbrella brand to category-specific PLs would produce symmetric effects to the reverse move, a steep drop in brand strength could be expected, making the new private labels less appealing. Also, the price elasticity would increase, bringing rock-bottom prices back to the fore—quite the opposite of retailers' efforts to create private labels that are brands in their own right. Another idea could be to combine the best of both worlds: A hybrid strategy with selected product categories getting independent brands from an umbrella brand that covers most other product categories. Research could examine if this approach would be fruitful or too complicated for retailers to manage and for customers to understand. MN



Idea Revolutions: Cognitive Bias and Instigating Innovation

BY JENNIFER MURTELL | VICE PRESIDENT OF STRATEGY, ASIA PACIFIC AT MARKS

"To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk."
– *Thomas Edison, American inventor*

Every day, we unknowingly deal with cognitive bias in every sphere of our lives. In the workplace, it can lead to inadvertently choking pipelines of creativity, innovation and opportunity by implicitly training employees to censor themselves, their ideas, and their thinking by deprioritizing a vision of the future. One of the ways cognitive biases, or limiting cognitive paradigms, can manifest is in culture. Fear-based management, for example, fuels fear-based cultures that manifest in many ways: decision-making focused on profit over solutions, transactional attitudes and relationships, overworked and undervalued staff, toxic behaviours.

And here's the rub: It develops honestly. We are conditioned to shift gears into convergence before truly excellent ideas have a chance to breathe. Groupthink is real, both biologically and sociologically.

In many professional environments, creativity and disruption can feel like a radical act. But the data doesn't lie; employees that make ideation, discussion, collaborative problem-solving and creativity a part of their cultures, win in the innovation space. Let's look at some simple and effective ways to break free of the chains of our business brains and start a tiny, creative revolution in our teams.

EXERCISE: BUILD AN IDEA WALL

Light the spark of collaboration and idea-sharing with a literal 'Idea Wall'. Teams and individuals can anonymously answer the problem-solving call freely, with more courage and without the pressures of performing in a formal session. Ensure you've got a focus statement or a clearly defined problem to solve at the top of your wall, provide copious amounts of Post-it notes and markers, and let the ideas flow in. This is a simple tool, but it provides employees a voice that they are hungry to provide—and lays the groundwork for more collaborative engagement in the future.

EXERCISE: PLAN WELL

If planning and leading an ideation feels like an overwhelming task, break it into three simple phases: setup, facilitation and follow-through.

To set everyone up for success, crisply pinpoint the objectives of the session ahead of time, framing a focus question or singular problem to solve. Allow the participants a few days to percolate with their goal and ground the objective in credible insight or data to ensure common purpose.

To more powerfully facilitate, open the session by sharing input—inspiration from an outside-in perspective can provide powerful fuel. Culture and category trends, consumer insights, competitive and adjacent research, framed around the objective, empowers participants to contribute more effectively. Embrace a mindset of curiosity and dispel with conventional hierarchies.

To make ideas effective, activate the thinking and creativity you've unleashed. Then synthesize, curate and optimize the ideas into actionable outcomes. Keep your participant pool in the communication chain—it builds momentum and transparency, and it's a small act that incites a more collaborative and engaged culture.

Breaking the Creative Ice

It's vital in an ideation that participants know and trust one another—especially at inception. But even more important is to exercise cognitive elasticity, to prime and stretch our creative muscle to think differently than we normally do in our day-to-day tasks.

Round Robin is all about collective authorship, so it's a great way to ease performance pressure. Pass a number of problems around the room quickly and iteratively, so that everyone contributes and builds on it. Ideas will evolve in surprising and provocative ways and ultimately, they have the power to uncover radical new territory.

Frame the challenge as possibility, by articulating it in a How Might We (HMW) statement. Participants capture their unconventional solution on a Post-it note and pass it to the person sitting next to them. To add complexity, add a reverse round of critique to the mix, to encourage innovative solutions to any barriers. To add value, participants who present the ideas move to prototyping phase, answering questions that dimensionalize the solution: How does it work? What form does it take? What are the time/scale limitations? What problem does it solve?

EXERCISE: IMPOSSIBLE OBJECTS

This exercise, inspired by Michael Michalko's book Thinkertoys, focuses on stimulating divergent thinking skills. It uses elements of mash-up and randomness to tap into our more synthetic, elastic cognitive abilities. This exercise brings two seemingly disparate objects together, mashing them into an unusual new hybrid object to uncover a new purpose or benefit, a new form, usage or delivery, or it might be useless. Sharing these ideas back can become the most fun and rewarding part of this exercise.

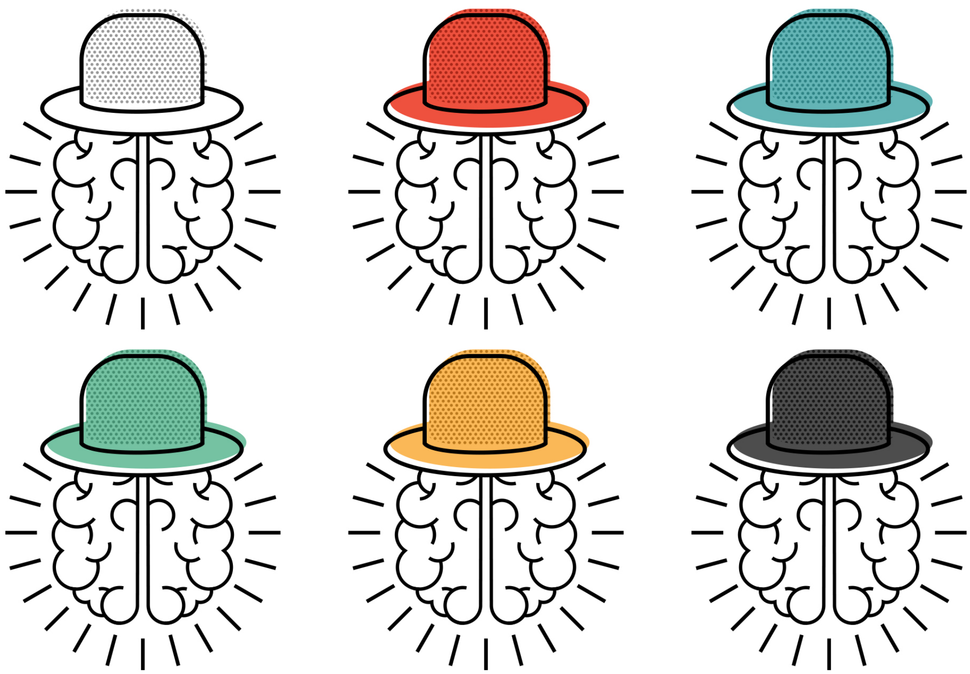
Create a series of small cards or notes with 20 random objects written on them (do not visualize). Have each participant or team draw two from a hat. Give them 10 minutes to invent their new object, and quickly dimensionalize it. What would it look like? Can you sketch it? What does it do? Who might use it? Where might it be used?

Then, dovetail your core objective into the stimulus, choosing objects from your category, adjacent categories, new innovations or trends. These seemingly impossible objects will inspire innovation for the problem you're there to solve.

Deconstructing Bias for Innovation

EXERCISE: SIX THINKING HATS

The Six Thinking Hats brainstorming method comes from Edward De Bono, who recognized that we have six cognitive problem-solving 'states', not all of them welcomed in a traditional corporate environment. His method seeks to acknowledge these states, providing space for each to contribute. The power of the methodology is in the structure; the team wears six metaphorical "hats," each defining a distinct type of thinking. In a group, everyone wears the same hat at the same time, focusing on the same topic, through the same filter.



When each decision-making state is used with singular focus, it provides tremendous clarity, allowing participants the permission to speak frankly and honestly.

- **Red Hat Thinking**
  Intuition, feelings, hunches, emotions
- **Black Hat Thinking**
  Judgment, caution, evaluation
- **Yellow Hat Thinking**
  Optimism, positivity, opportunity
- **Green Hat Thinking**
  New ideas and fresh perspectives
- **Blue Hat Thinking**
  Controlling the process of thinking
- **White Hat Thinking**
  Information known, just the facts

The red hat, for example: Typically, feelings and intuition can only be introduced into a discussion if they are supported by logic. Often, the feeling is genuine but the logic is spurious. Wearing the red hat allows participants to articulate feelings, assumptions and intuitions without the need for explanation or apology.

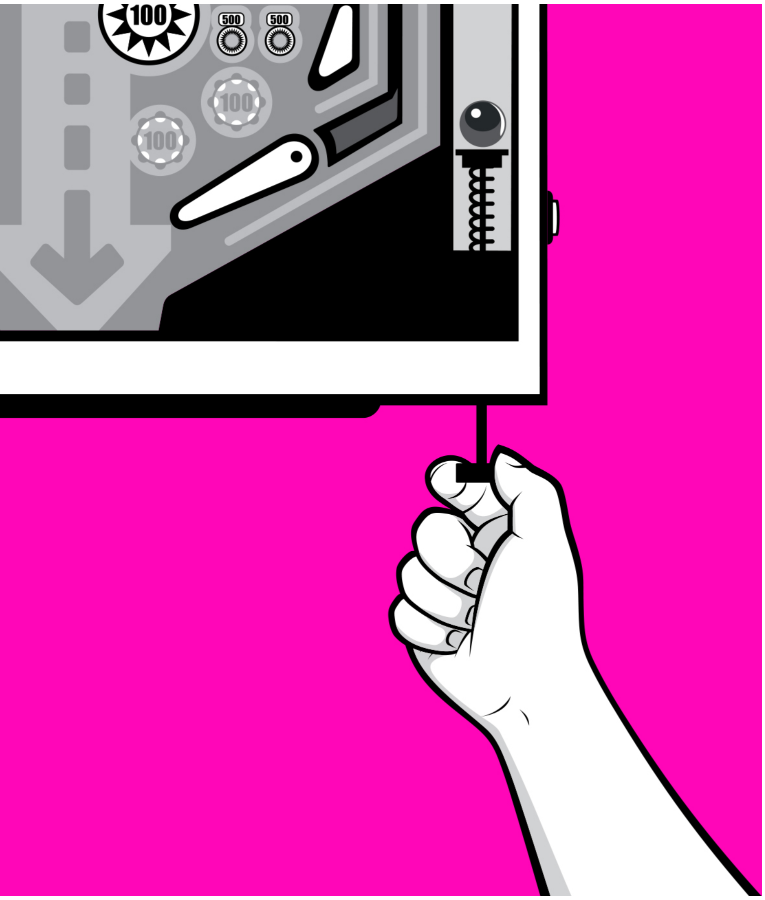
Worst Possible Idea

Worst Possible Idea, coined by Bryan Mattimore, president and co-founder of The Growth Engine Company LLC, is an ideation method that intentionally seeks out the worst solutions to a problem. It's a powerful tool because it eliminates the fear, anxiety and pressure of being responsible for the "right solution." It also helps eliminate the habit of convergence and critical thinking too early in the process. Because the objective is to produce the weirdest, lamest ideas, the worry dissipates. Presenting bad ideas back to the group becomes humorous, inspiring and enjoyable.

The secret cognitive trick? By generating many seemingly terrible ideas, teams find they could identify what actually would work more readily, with the seeds of truly epic ideas found in the terrible ones.

Create a list of imaginary problems to solve or use the problem you're there to solve. Provide paper, markers and a simple template for capturing terrible ideas. Working solo or in pairs for 10 minutes, participants present their ideas back to the group in as dramatic or humorous fashion as they desire. To add complexity, move all papers to the right, round-robin-style, and have the next team build on the work of the last. As teams present their terrible ideas, provide Post-it notes to all participants to capture anything that seems provocative or inspiring that might contribute to the real solutions. Begin a "parking lot" board of these notes to pull from. Prepare to be surprised.

There are countless ways into growing and nurturing your innovation practice. But today, consider the fundamentals of weaving innovation thinking into your organization's DNA, test them out and have fun. Your teams will appreciate the change that creativity brings to your culture, your team dynamics, your solutions, and ultimately your business outcomes. MN



How to Calculate for Impulse

Marketers, try this physics exercise to change consumer momentum

BY BEN KUNZ | EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, MEDIAASSOCIATES

Every marketer wants to get someone out there to do something. But people have inertia, either starting from behavioral ground zero, or more likely are already in motion doing something else related to your product. This "competitive behavior" dynamic is often missed in campaign plans, because as marketers focus on their inner product attributes to build brand, message, offer, creative and media campaigns, they often forget the winning dynamic is not just pushing out messages for response—it's also getting customers to leave good alternatives.

To solve this puzzle, let's take a brief visit to physics class.

Consider our Earth and Moon flying through space, where it would take a lot to knock either out of orbit, and the formula for momentum is easy to understand. In physics, momentum (p) = mass (m) times velocity (v). Like shifting our planet, any given consumer who really likes something other than your product (think of this as her mass) and has prior habits related to your category (think of this as her velocity) is going to be hard to move to your product.

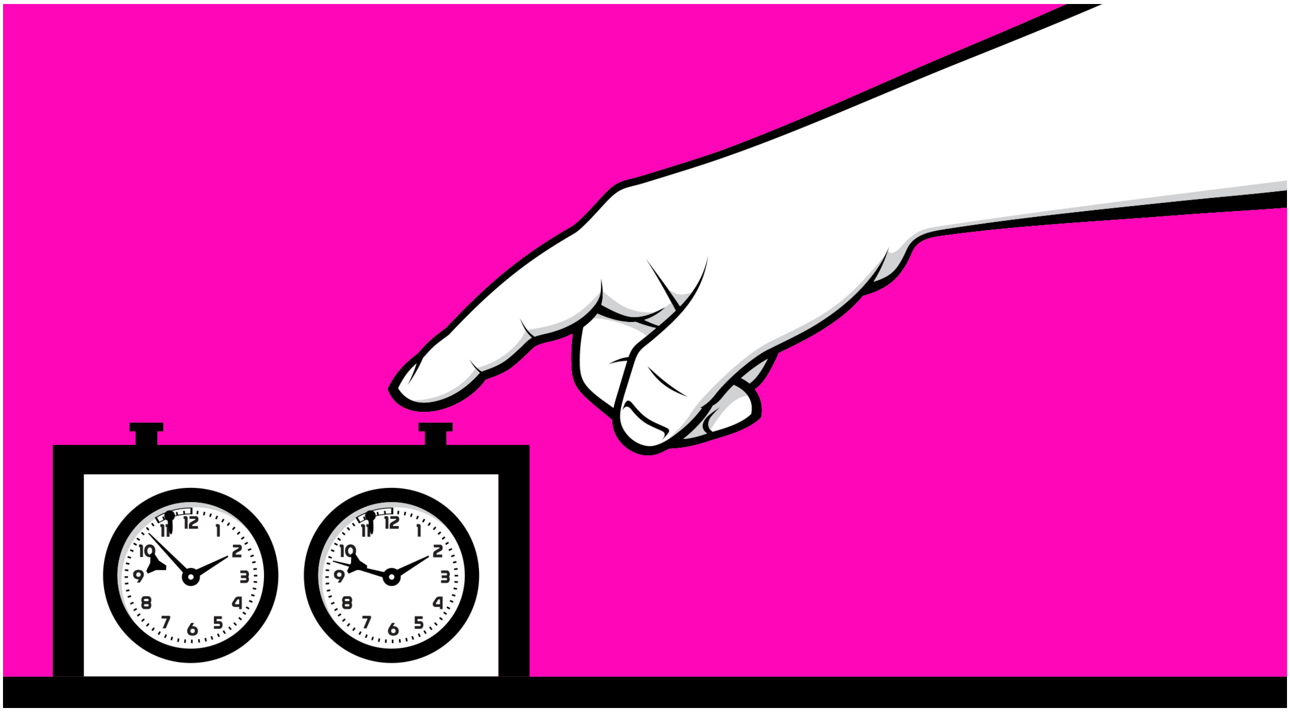
In his book "The Power of Habit," Pulitzer-prize winning journalist Charles Duhigg notes that 45% of most consumer actions occur on auto-pilot. Some marketing categories have grown by building new habits: None of our ancestors chewed gum, brushed their teeth, or rubbed deodorant on their armpits, yet for many today, these are routines. Yet creating new habits is remarkably hard to do, and once locked in, nearly 1 in 2 buying transactions is tied to old habits.

But there is a way to shift consumers' habitual momentum—and it's also a simple formula (the last, we promise!). Physicists call what changes momentum impulse, defined as force multiplied by time. You can visualize impulse by imagining Superman trying to stop a speeding train: He swoops down from the sky in front of the speeding locomotive, holds out his arms in impulse, but has to exert a lot of force while some time goes by. Superman pushes hard, and the wooden ties fly away for yards under his sliding feet, before the train grinds to a halt. Force and time stop the train's momentum.

To change consumer momentum, we need force and time. These are best applied to what Duhigg noted are the four primary triggers of habits: time of day, mood, prior triggering actions, or surrounding people. Most consumer routines are on auto-pilot, but these are common instigators that, like alarm clocks, get us subconsciously moving in action. You likely buy your Starbucks coffee at the same time each morning, drive subconsciously to the same grocery store late on Thursday night, and check certain social media when you believe your friends will be there posting. All habits have triggers.

Put all of this together, and we have a simple workshop exercise that can help you refine your marketing plan. So grab a whiteboard, and map out four things:

- Model "behavioral" momentum competitors. First, list the alternatives to what you want to sell, thinking expansively beyond direct product competition—to the list of behavioral analogs you need to overcome. If you work for a bank, for instance, your competition isn't just



other banks—it may be emerging apps, bill-payment software, trips to Staples for office supplies, point-of-sale interactions, or any alternative behaviors that distract from financial interaction mindshare. Marketers of mobile apps should list all the competing behavior, outside their category, that takes up similar mobile time. Promoters of travel destinations may list all the other similar "fantasy" research habits consumers have online when not plotting their next vacation. Think of your true competitors as the alternative momentums out there you need to redirect or overcome.

- Score competing momentum on two dimensions: mass and time. Then, model the relative attractiveness and usage frequency of alternatives. Think of this as the mass (attractiveness) and velocity (frequency of use) of each competing habit you need to overcome. If your mobile app has 20 primary competing consumer behaviors, which of those is most attractive? Which do they do most frequently? That's where you need to counter.

- Then, list the triggers for each top competing behavior. Using Duhigg's four trigger categories, build a simple customer journey map of what starts consumers in alternative behaviors. What time of day (or month, or year)? What prior triggering actions? What mood or surrounding influencer group? If possible, support this with qualitative research or direct interviews with customers. This exercise defines the points of behavioral instigation where you have a shot at shifting competitor momentum.

- Finally, plan your countering force and time. How can advertising, communication, pricing, access or promotions intercept these momentum triggers with as much force, and required time frequency, to shift behavior? This exercise is one where you customize your prior messaging or media plan to fit within the trigger points that spur competitive actions. It may not be enough to launch a TV or video ad, for instance, if the real trigger of competing behavior is the moment your potential customer turns on her mobile phone each Saturday morning.

Run this exercise and you'll likely find blind spots in your current marketing plan—as you understand existing customer momentum, the real barrier to sale. You'll gain a better picture of competing behaviors, estimate their momentum as conceptual mass-attractiveness and velocity-usage, map the triggers of these behaviors, and finally refine your marketing force-and-time intercepts.

Yes, this is all boring physics, and formulas can be hard to deploy in reality. But consumers, like atoms, adhere to laws of physical behavior. If Superman can stop a train, surely you can run a workshop to plot your future customers' current momentum. **MN**

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