

Brand Journey: How Brands Behave Online

Ann Pisanelli,

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1. Document your brand strategy

- A set of associations in the mind of the audience (Awareness, Quality, Associations, Loyalty)
- What do you want the brand to stand for?
- What do you want the brand to achieve? It is influenced by the business strategy. It should represent the same strategic vision and corporate culture.

2. Brand building programs do not simply implement the brand, they help define it.

- The key to a strong brand is brilliant execution.
- The difference between good and brilliant cannot be overstated.
- The strong brands of tomorrow will provide relationship building experiences
- They will articulate the emotional and self-expressive benefits of the brand to provide a higher order basis for building relationships.

3. Traditional Branding

- All dimensions of the core identity should reflect the strategy and values of the organization.
- Uses a consistent visual vocabulary to establish personality.
  - o This establishes/builds recognition and awareness (awareness influences perception—people like the familiar)
  - o Visual vocabulary has an influence on the perceived quality and associations
  - o Associations emotionally connect the consumer to the brand.
- The visual language influences the organizational associations as well

- o Organizational associations become very important when it comes time to extend the brand to new markets, products)
- Ultimately, if a company can deliver on its promised functional and emotional benefits, brand loyalty will be won.
- It is essential to deliver on the brand promise. Marketing communications functions put a public "face" on the brand, but how the underlying promise the brand represents gets DELIVERED determines the "brand experience"

#### 4. Online Branding

- "We need a web presence"
- Opportunity to maintain a brand, extend a brand, and/or create a whole new brand.
- Based on the core attributes as in traditional brand building channels
- Like the brand journey with a product, perception is based on design and consumption of an experience.
- The online space provides a tremendous opportunity to interact with the target in a relationship building capacity (remember this is pre-purchase interaction)
  - o Unique attribute of the internet among other mass communication tools: INTERACTIVITY.
  - o INTERACTIVE experience builds relationship
  - o Establish and follow a Brand-Customer Relationship model: a consistent experience with the brand across all touch points.
  - o "The medium is the message": the power to change the course and functioning of human relations and activities.
- Brand "behavior" not web presence

#### 5. Brand Behavior

- The online brand journey
  - o Attraction: you only have seconds to attract
  - o Entrance: opportunity to personalize the users entrance to the site
  - o Experience: critical to the users stay and to future returns
  - o Exit: even upon exit, you can offer some kind of brand contact
  - o Extensions: products and services associated with the brand
- Attraction:
  - o Advertise in other channels
    - Email campaigns (push becomes pull)
    - Web-only offers

- Traditional channels are still effective at creating awareness
  - Creative ads and sponsorships can drive traffic, form associations
  - The key to success: ensure that the brand is accurately represented, stick to the core attributes of the brand
- o Market your e-business program to trade partners, even train them in using online services
- \*you should never have to train someone to use a web site

- Entrance

- o Offer substantive content on every page, including the home page
  - Home page should tell you:
    1. What/who is the brand?
    2. What you can do on the site
- o Don't use gratuitous graphics, or pages (i.e. splash pages)
  - Users don't want to wait
  - What does it DO for building the brand?
- o Capture user data and use that to personalize the next visit to the home page
- o Hire a professional information architect to organize the content on your site.
- o The user should not be overwhelmed with choices. The navigation should be totally intuitive and as simple as possible.

- Experience

- o User Experience and Content Strategy are the keys to success!
- o Build a user-centric site: looking at how a customer interacts or is likely to interact with the company, taking into account the wants and needs that the company can fulfill.
- o Do not build a web site without talking to your users (or those who fit the profile)
- o The user is ALWAYS LOST
  - Some things should always be present to improve the UX.
    - ✓ Intuitive global navigation
    - ✓ "Bread Crumb" trail (shows the user's click stream)
    - ✓ Page title ("the user is always lost")
- o Develop a Content strategy:
  - document what you want to communicate on the site
    - ✓ direct and indirect messages



- Internal metrics will capture how well the company is delivering on the promise in each functional area, including web
- Active solicitation and maintenance of a dialogue with customers ensures that the brand evolves and anticipates customers' needs.