As cultural power shifts from corporations to consumers, it no longer seems appropriate for brands to be issuing imperatives.

Perhaps taglines’ most significant limitation is inherent in their nature. An effective tagline helps a brand stand out in the customer’s mind. As such, taglines work when a brand’s differentiation is derived from a product attribute (Where’s the beef?) or a unique benefit (Tastes great. Less filling). But most brands today are distinguished less by products and features and more by values and personalities. These differentiators can be difficult to convey succinctly.

So it’s no wonder that some might declare the death of the tagline. But let’s not be so quick to dismiss it. Taglines still serve an important purpose. They remain an easy and effective way to communicate a new or revised brand message.

As media gets more social and consumer attention shortens, brand messaging needs to be more invitational than imperative.

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