

AIMING FOR THE HEARTS OF CONSUMERS

Concept 21

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Brand-building expert and best-selling author, Denise Lee Yohn famously said, “Great brands aim for consumers’ hearts, not their wallets.” It is crucial that brands recognize the importance of appealing to the deeper desires of their audience and building an emotional, memorable connection with them. How do you plan to “seduce” your way into the hearts of consumers? When we look at the world’s most successful brands such as Apple, Coca Cola, or VISA—they don’t simply market a product—they sell a lifestyle, an experience, and a feeling.

Consider the emotional appeal that Starbucks has established. Their reputation has very little to do with coffee itself. Storefronts draw you in with ambient lighting and luxury furnishings. They are a haven for time to yourself, an indulgent treat, an intimate conversation, or a communal meeting place. The logo’d paper cup has come to symbolize social status and success. The charm of Starbucks goes far beyond what used to be a simple, \$0.50 caffeine boost.

Kleenex is a prime example of a brand that almost lost their name due to a failure to stand out among countless generic brands of facial tissue. Kleenex has become a victim of ‘genericization’ by producing a commodity with no loyal consumer base. There is a ruthless cycle of competition in the market, where shoppers routinely reach for the cheapest box of tissues. The same can be said about Ziploc, Band Aid, Chap Stick, and Aspirin...don’t let it happen to you!

What are you bringing to the marketplace that will win over your target consumers? You are trying to build a fanbase and a loyal following, but why should they care? Unfortunately, no one can tell you the answer to these questions. This is where you begin a process of discovery within your brand. Consider the following:

- 1. What is driving you?** In the beginning of this journey, you conceived this idea and felt strongly enough to share it with the world. The passion and the driving force that brought you this far will be the same energy that your customers gravitate towards. Your motive cannot be profit or sales, or else you are doomed for failure from the start.
- 2. Why would others care?** If your answer above is a fixation that only you can relate to, you can’t influence buyers to follow your lead. However, your passion to enter the market often signifies an untapped need that others can resonate with.
- 3. What is it about similar products that is so dissatisfying to you?** Discontent with the current options in your industry pushed you to do something different. Express what that was and how you are striving to be different.
- 4. Stay true to your core values.** Exploring the WHY of your brand will help you determine your values and how you want to be perceived by your audience. You must immerse your brand’s identity in these values and exude the same energy you wish to attract.
- 5. Place relationships above sales.** Your customers are seeking more than a basic transaction. They are looking to feel valued. No matter what you are selling, your BRAND is not a product—it is a service. It possesses an attitude, a tone, and a reason for being. Defining this abstract feeling will determine how your brand engages with people.
- 6. Consistency is essential.** After determining how you effectively connect with your target market, your brand must have a vain consistency and dependable identity in order to gain true followers.

This is a useful exercise that Concept 21 uses with its clients to develop their unique point of view and enthusiasm

for their brand. We urge you to set aside some time to deliberate each of these points and write your responses in rigorous detail. Discover what you value and how to persuade your followers to connect with you and your brand in a meaningful way. You can only win the love of your customers as a result of that one powerful thing you offer. Now is the time to find what out that is!

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