

A note from us

In the last issue of BrandReturn, we told you about a recent Forrester Research survey of consumers. It revealed that:

- 67% feel the brands they know don't keep their promises
- 89% feel no personal connection to the brands they buy
- 47% believe there's feel no difference between competing brands.

Pretty startling.

In the previous issue we shared ideas to help you do a better job of keeping your brand promise. In this issue we'll talk about how you can stand out from the competition and help prospects and customers recognize your key differences.

Drop us a note and let us know your challenges with these three problems or share a topic you'd like to see covered in a future issue of BrandReturn.

You can also head over to http://www.abiah.com/brand_test/index.php and take our brand test. It'll give you a picture of where your brand currently stands and you'll get a copy of our Guide to Increase Profits with a Strong Brand.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Winnie". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Winnie Anderson

Featured Article

Take these three steps to stand out from the crowd

Customers choose the same old, same old when they can't tell the difference between offerings. These steps will help them see why you're the clear choice.

In a recent Forrester Research consumer survey, 47% of consumers indicated they see no difference between competing brands. That should be incredibly disturbing for brand managers and CEOs everywhere. Especially considering that, according to emarketer.com, businesses spent 281 billion dollars on advertising in 2006.

When customers can't distinguish between competing products they're left to choose based on the one obvious difference: Price. As business leaders, we need to help our customers understand the value we deliver for the price they pay.

No matter what you sell, these steps will emphasize your brand's differences and help you stand out from the competition in the ever-crowded global marketplace.

Step 1: Market the right message

Whether you're selling to consumers or to businesses, people don't buy features; they buy benefits. Yet 99.5% of all advertising promotes features.

When you understand the benefits customers get, you can emphasize them in all of your marketing. People who want those benefits will then be drawn to you.

If you're stumped about this, contact some of your best customers and ask them about the benefits they get from your offerings. You'll grow your relationship with them, get insight into benefits to emphasize, and uncover some great testimonials to use.

Step 2: Compare your message to the competition's

Look at the advertising of your top competitors. What are they saying and how are they saying it? If your competitors are talking about how great they are but their advertising doesn't show any proof of that greatness, then start using testimonials that prove how great you are.

Another strategy is to completely change the conversation that's going on. Volvo® has led the safety conversation and they've recently added some features that have taken that conversation in different directions.

Step 3: Never fail to be grateful

According to Webtrends®, a web analytics company, as little as a 5% increase in customer retention can grow profits anywhere from 25% to 95%. Considering how much it costs you to acquire your customers, it's worth your while to spend a little time and effort to keep them once you've got them.

What can you do to show your customers how much you appreciate them? Create tiers within your customer list and send them things like handwritten notes and gifts to reward them and thank them for their business. Don't just do this at the big holidays. Your card or gift is bound to get lost in the avalanche of other tokens from businesses that really don't care. Show your customers you're different because you really do care.

And what about your prospects? Just because they haven't decided to hire you yet doesn't mean they won't. You may not be the right choice for them but they may have friends or colleagues who they may refer to you. Sending them a "thanks for considering us" gift will position you as a class act.

Bonus step: Get the right message to the right target

It won't matter how nicely you say anything or how attractive your ad, if it's getting to the wrong people they're not going to read it or take action on it.

The more you know about your ideal target the better job you can do to create a message that will touch them and motivate them to action.

Your next step: Get a clear demographic and psychographic picture of your ideal target. When you know what's important to the target and why, you can then execute the three steps.



About Abiah

Abiah is an award winning brand strategy and full service marketing firm that helps mid-sized businesses uncover and leverage what makes them unique to become the recognized leader in their market segment. Find out more about them and take the Brand Alignment test at www.abiah.com or call them at 866-982-2424.