

WHO'S BRAND IS THIS ANYWAY?

Bet it is the case that you the brand manager have a pretty good idea what your brand stands for. It could stand for durability. It could stand for innovation. It could stand for quality. It could stand for, well, many other things. If you took next week off and traveled around the country (or world for that matter) and spoke to 100 customers of your brand, would what they feel your brand stands for be consistent as to what you think your brand stands for?

While you own your brand and are its caretaker, it is really the consumer who has decided, over time, what it is and what it stands for. If they like what it stands for and relate to it, you probably have a customer. If they don't, there are many other places the consumer can go to get those brand feelings they are after...it's pretty simple math.

Okay...you got us: our group was at the golf course for a charity tournament the other day. I happened to be honing the part of the game that haunts me the most, perhaps it is your Achilles heel as well – putting. Near the fringe of the practice green was a teen clothed from head to toe with a very recognizable brand in the golfing world – Puma. With more than a fleeting interest in branding, I approached the young lad and asked him why he was wearing all the Puma garb. He was pretty open and went on to let me know that he liked the cat (the logo), the colors, the fit and function of their goods, the fact that when he wore

Puma it made him feel kinda cool, kinda relevant and confident...and he liked that fact that Puma is really innovative - always coming up with “neat” stuff. Too, he looks up to Rickie Fowler and wants to emulate his game after him.

Will Puma make this young man's golf game any better? Perhaps – perhaps not. Does he understand the brand message Puma is trying to communicate to the marketplace? Sounds and looks like it. Most importantly, is he (and thousands of others like him) buying Puma products because he likes what the brand stands for in his mind? We think so. In this case, is Puma's brand communication consistent with the consumer's brand perception – yes it is.

PROTECT THY BRAND: If you are not certain what the consumer thinks your brand stands for, you had better find out and swiftly put plans in place to align with that perception.



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