

## Your Brand—A Singular Idea Or Perception You Own In The Mind Of The Consumer

A brand is severely weakened each and every time it is stretched into a category or product segment that it isn't known for. The loss of a singular idea or perception weakens a brand-period. The more a brand is asked to do, the less important it will be in the mind of the consumer.

Anheuser-Busch sold more cans and bottles of beer when they had one brand name: Budweiser®. While the King Of Beers® still holds the greatest share of the domestic beer market at 47.7%, it sold more beer when there was just Budweiser. When you add up all the sales of Bud today and also add in all the sales of the sub-brands or line-extensions (Bud-Light®, Bud Select®, Bud Select 55®), that total is less than what it used to be when it was just Bud. Interesting, isn't it.

No one brand can have universal appeal. Line-extensions and sub-brands will most definitely increase sales in the short term. In the long term, however, these extensions will erode the value of the brand. Ever hear of Atari®? Maybe-maybe not. That brand used to be a video game. Matter of fact, it used to be the leading video game. The powers-that-be tried to stretch the brand and make it become a computer. The brand died. This sort of thing continues to happen every day. When marketing directors or managers try to stretch a brand into an idea or a concept that they do not own in the mind of the consumer, the brand will be severely weakened or it just may fade away.

Protect thy brand. At the most, a brand will stand for one thing in the mind of the consumer. When it is asked to stand for multiple ideas or concepts, it will surely become something less than it is today.