

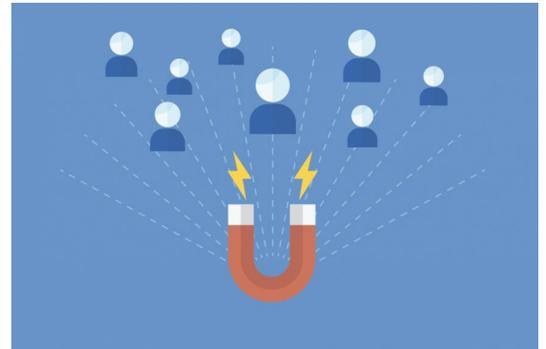


By Matthew Crouch

Wednesday 26th August 2020, 23:33 GMT

Moving from awareness to affinity

Marketing expert Matthew Crouch explains the power of brand affinity



In June, Statista reported that global spend on advertising in 2019 surpassed US\$560bn. Yet, it is still highly common to find marketing budgets tight in fresh produce, due to the low margin nature of the industry. This can limit our ability to explore beyond the first stage of the AIDA model (attention, interest, desire, action), which is around building brand awareness.

However, several of the leading produce brands around the world are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of striving for something different. Striving for brand affinity.

Brand affinity is the goal that all brand managers and marketing managers want to achieve. However, when your internal stakeholders are not marketing purists it can be difficult to define brand affinity in terms that they recognise as value.

At Soto Consulting, we work with a wide variety of businesses to learn how to identify brand affinity as a combination of metrics – brand awareness, brand

engagement and brand equity. You need to assess affinity according to these three layers in sequence as in a lot of ways, stakeholders prefer to see improvement in each of these areas rather than one specific affinity metric.

Put simply, the goal here is to build a reputation with your end consumers that is emotional, long-term and intergenerational. They must want to align to your brand on a definitively personal level.

In 2014, I worked with Freshmax Group on a campaign for one of its hero IP products. We developed a new brand archetype, that of the 'care-giver', threading a corporate social responsibility message through the brand in the form of an 'upstander to bullying' message. The campaign engaged consumers on an emotional and ethical level, far beyond the previous tactics. It also resulted in a significant uplift in sales, while it became the most visited product brand on a retailer's website (within category).

So, we successfully saw growth in all three layers of affinity because we tapped into a deeper connection with target consumers than previously.

Fast forward to 2017 when we worked along similar lines with Innovar's Australian hero, the Modi apple. We helped reposition the brand to become an 'educator', encouraging creativity in the next generation of apple eaters. This was all designed to build a message and dialogue with consumers that was about so much more than buying apples.

Do not underestimate the power of a non-transactional message and ethos within your brand messaging. There are so many ways to change the course of your brand's storytelling, its digital persona, and its key audience touch points. Start by stepping back from your current brand strategy and asking the following two questions: "how is this benefitting someone other than us?" and "could we do more to help others?"

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