WBA

BRAND TOUCHPOINTS

Understandably, the vast majority of employees in any company are, for the most part, focused on the delivery of products and services. After all, these are the lifeblood of the organisation without which it would cease to exist.

So ‘Brand’ or ‘Branding’ tends to be relegated to the marketing department.

In previous modules of this course, I’ve wanted to stress that Brands are as much a Business Tool as a Marketing Tool and we’ve investigated how a well-managed brand can drive commercial success.

For that reason, I’m always at pains to suggest that Brands deserve a seat at the boardroom table.

But there is one aspect of Brand Management we haven’t discussed and that is the vast array of Brand Touchpoints that offer communication opportunities.

If you work in an advertising agency, you’ll likely think of brand touchpoints as existing purely in mainstream or digital media – TV commercials, Print campaigns, radio ads, eDMs or what used to be called ‘Below the line’ promotions, most of which appeared in the same media or at Point-of-Sale. Essentially, your view is limited to what creates a money-making opportunity for the agency.

If you work in a design group, you might think of brand touchpoints as packaging, in-store displays, websites, logos, graphic guidelines and so on.

But if you step outside the narrow confines of these disciplines, you’ll see that every brand has a myriad of consumer touchpoints, every one of which is an opportunity to communicate the Brand Promise.

This model divides the Brand landscape into four regions. They are:

1. Communications

2. Products and Services

3. Environments and Locations

4. People and Behaviours.

Let’s look at them one at a time.

Communications is perhaps the most obvious place to start.

(Insert list of brand touch points in the Communication Quadrant.)

Advertising in all media, Website and Digital Comms, Direct Marketing, these are the traditional outlets for Brand Messaging.

But a Brand Promise is on display in many other less obvious communication media – vehicles, uniforms, signage, PR, Sponsorship and perhaps the most powerful of all – word of mouth.

It’s probably worth reinforcing this last point. Word of Mouth easily overpowers paid for advertising messages. Imagine this simple scenario. Two people sitting at a bar, perhaps a sports bar. There’s a huge TV screen hanging over the bar. On that screen a commercial that has cost thousands of dollars to make and thousands of dollars to broadcast is playing. If one of the customers turns to the other and says, “I’ve tried this product and it’s not very good!”, then all that money is down the drain. Unless the guy is obviously a crank, we’re always going to give greater credibility to personal endorsement or personal criticism than to paid-for advertising messages. There’s a little bit of a cynic in all of us!

(Insert list of brand touchpoints in the Products and Services Quadrant)

If we look at the Products and Services quadrant, there is a wide range of opportunities for conveying our Brand Promise – how we handle customer service support and after-sales service, product portfolio and new product development, training programs, the conditions and wording of our warranty.

(Insert list of brand touchpoints in the Environments and Locations Quadrant.)

Again, looking at Environments and Locations, we find brand experience opportunities in the design of our offices and retail spaces, how we stage trade shows, conferences and seminars, and how we mount special events and launches. And many of these locations have online equivalents where we can express our Brand Promise.

Last, and perhaps the most obvious, People and Behaviours.

(Insert list of brand touchpoints in the People and Behaviours Quadrant.)

Every brand brings a cast of thousands who have the potential to either reinforce or undermine the Brand Promise – employees, board directors, customers, partners, shareholders, regulators, unions, consultants. If you think of every one of them as a potential communication medium, then it becomes critically important to ensure they have a clear understanding and appreciation of the Brand Promise.

When you look at this plethora of Brand Touchpoints, you can start to see why we are so adamant in our belief that Brands shouldn’t be confined to the marketing department. Brands belong in all departments and wherever there is a customer touch point.

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