

DISPATCHESTM

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

Sunday, September 26, 2010

ANIMATE YOUR BRAND

BAM! We advocate BAM for better results. What are we talking about? *Brand Activated Marketing!* Each of these words has a precise meaning.

Brand – Special relationship and bond with customers that goes beyond the mere transaction of selling;

Animated – Execution that brings the Brand Positioning Strategy to life with BIG Ideas that excite and compel; and

Marketing – Appropriate strategic direction that drives preference and the customer behavior you need and intend.

BAM!

Chef Emeril Lagasse says, “**BAM!**,” when he wants to kick-up his creations. The iconic brands of our time go **BAM!** Apple, Starbucks, McDonald’s – you can count them on two hands. They kick-up their marketing above the fray. On the other hand, the vast majority of products go PFLaTT.

PF - They’re “product focused,” throwing out a litany of features and missing the bigger picture of creating brand meaning, in attempting to best their competition;

L – Their execution is “lifeless,” and, as such, virtually invisible or, at best, moribund; and

aTT – “Tackless,” as in lacking a clear, consistent course of action and direction toward a meaningful goal.

A sound strategy, whether it is brand, marketing or business strategy is an essential component for survival, no less success, in today’s age of sameness. We need to be strategically astute. But we cannot forget execution either. As Leo Kiely, Chief Executive Officer, MillerCoors Brewing Company says. “Strategy is war games. Execution is war itself.” So, we’d like to start-off with the assumption that you’ve done your strategic homework (which, admittedly, is a big assumption, particularly since so many marketers lack a Brand Positioning Strategy Statement for their product offering). Now we want to focus on the “A” in BAM, which stand for “animated.”

Most execution in the marketplace is lifeless. Truth be told, it doesn't advance the brand versus its competition, and does little, if anything, to stimulate customer behavior. Organizations who participate in this kind of execution would be hard pressed to show a "cause and effect" relationship between what they do and what they get. (Do you know the ROI on each of your executions?)

In a recent program we conducted, the participating marketers admitted that their advertising isn't meaningful; it does not impact sales. Although we agree, they said it, we didn't. Yet they struggled with the concept of the Campaign Idea, pressing instead to give customers what they claim to like, according to marketing research: smiling patients; surgeons at work in the operating theatre; static shots of their product. In other words, their advertising isn't meaningful, in large part, because it does nothing to compel customers. It's the same old stuff that every other product in their category uses. So, it's wallpaper. It's lifeless. It is invisible.

But the need to animate the brand isn't restricted to a specific marketing mix element such as advertising, nor is it restricted to a specific sector such as Medical Device companies. The need is there for all marketing mix elements and all brands. We can animate product and packaging design (iPhone), retail presence (Starbucks and McDonald's), PR (constructing a McDonald's Playland for adults in the heart of Sydney), merchandising (Apple retail stores), and, yes, advertising (U by Kotex, MasterCard) – among others.

Where brand strategies and promises are similar (and, in so many categories, identical) you still have an opportunity to win with execution. You must animate the brand. Even where strategies are different, and you have a strategic advantage, you can realize that advantage, and even win bigger, by animated execution.

BOATS & HELICOPTERS:

- 1) ***Take the road less traveled*** – Stop doing what your competitors are doing. If you do the same things as your competitors, in the same way, then you're not going to generate more favorable results than they do. Stop blindly following marketing research that drives you to sameness with your competitors. It becomes dogma. And as we pointed out in a DISPATCHES article two weeks ago dogma becomes a cliché. Do something different. But don't do something different just for the sake of difference. The difference must be relevant and meaningful to your target customer.
- 2) ***Seek BIG Ideas*** – Ideas are capable of capturing customers' attention. They're capable of stirring their imagination. They also have the power to change attitudes and compel customers to take action. Ideas work to bring your brand to life. They endow it with a personality. They exploit opportunities and resolve problems. Ideas are invaluable in separating your offering from the herd of competitors. Ideas are the seed of animation.
- 3) ***Go beyond advertising ideas*** – We advocate the development of Campaign Ideas when developing advertising communications. Adoption of Campaign Ideas will make your advertising more productive (the degree of which depends upon the quality of the idea). But be on the lookout and encourage the development of Marketing Campaign Ideas. Something that is bigger than your advertising. Something that gives wind to everything you do and can be energized by your advertising.

- 4) ***Animate everything you do*** - Identify your key business drivers from among the many marketing mix elements you have at your disposal. If you only had one unit of currency to support your brand, in what marketing mix element would you invest it? Now brainstorm, tactics that reflect your brand positioning strategy and meet specific behavior objectives. Do this for packaging, merchandising, PR, medical congresses, for each of your key business driving marketing mix elements. Generate options. If you have a BIG Marketing Campaign Idea then each of your tactics for your key business drivers will animate it specific to the marketing mix element and consistent with the medium in which you execute it.

- 5) ***Don't settle*** – Insist that what you do on behalf of your brand excites all your constituencies, not just your target customers. Yes, target customers come first. But consider too your sales force, and senior corporate management. They are not immune to the excitement that animation brings to the brand. If your sales force is excited they will sell with conviction. They will even give your brand more than its fair share of their time. If your management is excited you may find that your marketing support budget is less vulnerable to being cut. You may even find that senior management is more willing to invest incremental funds in support of your brand.

- 6) ***Learn how to make your marketing go BAM!*** Brand Development Network International offers specific training and consulting products to help you transform your marketing using BAM.

<u>Brand</u>	<u>Animation</u>	<u>Marketing</u>
Brand Positioning & Communication Program	BIG Ideation & Concept Development	MAPS – Marketing Analysis & Planning Seminar
Brand Navigators	High Impact Ad College	Brand Activation Workshop
Brand Architecture	Creative Brief Navigator Campaign Idea Development Process	MBO – Marketing By Objectives Workshop

Visit our website www.bdn-intl.com or contact us for more information.

Animate your marketing and watch your brand go **BAM!**

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