

Luxury Experience Company

Spring Cleaning for a Brand

By Edward F. Nesta

One question that I am often asked is, "How do you refresh or freshen up a brand?"

Yes, my response comes with a story to be told, but that is what a brand needs to do, tell a story. In a world where information is readily available, where people's dreams come true through a click of their mouse, and where a product's 'twin' [competition] is just a few searches away, how do you differentiate yourself and stand out from other brands and products?

A brand needs to define how they fit in the market and what their value proposition is for the customer. Thus, expressing a brand's assets through various well crafted messages, which should include creations of experiential marketing materials, and experiential articles exploiting a brand's assets, creates a compelling look into a brand. The key component is getting a story told so that it draws a connection with a brand's desired audience. Regardless if a brand is launching a new product, trying to extol the virtues of an existing product, or updating customers on changes that have taken place, it is important to connect a brand's values with that of the customer's.

For certain brands their human element (example: family owned business, passionate leadership, or an engaging story on how they got to where they are) is an obvious connection to the customer and for others they overlook the human element, which in some cases is one of the most powerful assets that a brand has. With some brands, the passion, focus, and ambition that drove them to greatness is not projected and thus an emotional connection to customers, via the human element, is lost. Emotions along with passion are very important factors when customers make purchase decisions.

In addition to telling a story, a brand will need to find out about their audience's behavior so that they can target and distribute their message, as well as obtain feedback so they can act accordingly.

There are other ways to compile content, snippets of information, and experiences that can be turned into fresh new stories. The use of Web 2.0 technology may open up channels of interaction with customers that may never have existed. If using Web 2.0 is too early in the process, then a brand may try to target their message via word-of-mouth, though tracking all the different channels and paths that a word-of-mouth campaign travels may take some time. On the positive side, you may be rewarded with some excellent examples of how a brand had a positive effect on a customer, and what better story to tell than a firsthand experience.

There is an old saying, "Choose your partner's wisely." This is very true when expanding a brand's image, especially if a brand is looking to freshen up a tired or stale image by associations with other brands with similar demographic or psychographic attributes. Cross-pollinating stories between brands opens up new channels of visibility, as well as it can create a positive situation by association.

The result of a refreshed brand is not an ad campaign, but it is a story that captures and builds a connection with a customer's needs and imagination.

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