

Perfect Brand

Is perfect branding really the best way of building brands? Up until recently this might have been true. Asking Martha Stewart fans they would have agreed with me. Year after year the ever-perfect Martha have been dishing up one perfect decoration advice after another. And yes they were really perfect – but repeating this session decade after decade made one mistake look so much more dramatic than if the brand Martha would have conducted mistakes, purposely or not, through the years just like us “ordinary” human beings.

And this brings me to the point. I’m a big believer in the fact that the ultimate brand is like a real person. Needless to say no brand hardly reaches a stage where people perceive it as being a real person, but the fact is, that the more human components we associate a brand with, typically the stronger the brand is.

The times where I’ve been most amazed about a brand have often been where it did something human. Where the service was extraordinary good – and had a “real” human touch. The cases where the emails I received

as a reply on my question sent either in anger or just in curiosity – reflected that a real person, of real human blood – actually were answering my email. But not only that – that the writing – reflected that this person had the authority to be a true individual, either in the tone-of-voice, the writing style...you name it. You see as customers we expect a brand to deliver on expectations. It’s a minimum standard to expect a brand to answer back, often within 24 hours. But if the reply is everything but standard, if it had that special “glimpse in the eye” it added extra brand equity to my brand – perhaps making it my favourite brand.

But making this possible requires a human behaviour. And a human behaviour is often reflected by mistakes. I don’t need to tell you that neither you nor I are perfect. We do mistakes – well I guess its mantra that we do this now and then, but it also creates our personality. Brands should do the same. No – don’t get me wrong. I’m not talking about messing up your account status, filling your emails and letters with spelling errors – but talking about making a brands behaviour real. You see – a

too perfect behaviour creates a distance, as we know no one is perfect. When I look at these huge banks on the main street, dressed in steel and glass, with a huge corporate logo and people dressed in corporate black – it makes me feel like nothing. Corporations don’t need to go along that path; in fact I sometimes believe this is more a reflection of insecurity in senior management, creating these self-promoting statues – than actually a desire to create a stronger customer relationship.

And all this brings me back to Martha and her perfect image. Imagine Martha one day had pulled out her pudding from the oven and it collapsed. Imagine that the paintings she was framing were not hanging perfect above the sofa or imagine that she one day said she had a terrible hangover because she had a birthday party yesterday. That would have created empathy with her and her brand arming her for ... well the day



where a real mistake would have happened.

Remember one thing – the more perfect image we want to project our image towards the world – the more perfect the world expect us to be, However this is not necessary our benefit. So before you go ahead designing your website, your TV programs or commercials, your store decoration or whatever is generating traffic and revenue – think about the level of perfectionism you want to reflect – perhaps the being perfect is not as perfect as we all think it is.

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