

"I don't go anywhere without my (iPod). I find myself staring at it, admiring it..."

ARE YOU A BRAND OR A 'LOVEMARK'...?

We all have our favourite brands. Picture yourself doing the weekly grocery shopping. Whether you spend an hour wheeling a trolley around the supermarket on a Saturday morning or else sit sipping a cup of coffee (which will be your chosen brand) in the comfort of your home, ordering groceries online, you will be (sub)consciously making a decision that involves several hundred brands..

Amazingly, in an average day you can expect to have contact with 1,500 trademarked products. If you go to the supermarket, this increases to 35,000.

What is it that attracts you to a particular breakfast cereal or a bottle of shampoo? Is it the packaging, the attractive family advertising it or its endorsement by family or friends? It could be that it is a brand you have grown accustomed to using, a soap that reminds you of your childhood, of your mother's hugs or happy times spent with friends.

However, as consumers we are fickle and a new ad. with an even catchier jingle or a better designed, more environmentally friendly package will catch our eye and we may then be tempted by another of the twenty

plus brands of tea bag on the shelf. The loyalty we felt for the memory evoking soap may disappear when a more fragrant, more moisturising bar is brought to our attention.

Every brand has to undergo two tests on the shelves of the store: first, to be picked from amongst all others, and second, to be a success with the consumer.

According to Kevin Roberts, Worldwide CEO of Saatchi and Saatchi, liking a brand and enjoying a brand is just not enough. For good brands to make it they must have something which creates loyalty in the consumer and differentiates them from the going-nowhere 'blands'.

Roberts points out that the more brands we invent, the less we notice them as individual entities. "If you're not number One or Two, you might as well forget it." In his publication 'the future beyond brands – Lovemarks', Roberts assesses the need for companies to court the consumer and to create not just a brand but a 'Lovemark' which is a step beyond trusting the brand, it is also about respecting the product. No Respect, No Love.

The most effective way to make money is to encourage loyal users to use your products all the time. This loyalty can take time to build but once you have it, the committed consumer will be prepared to wait for that sought after 'Lovemark', the fast, sleek car. Think of the Aston Martin Vanquish for all those aspiring James Bonds the Hermes Birkin bag – a symbol of style. Nike, Coca Cola or iPod are all brands that are deeply rooted in the consumer's psyche and inspire complete devotion. We can all name a handful of 'Lovemarks', the products that apparently sell themselves.

Roberts speaks for a significant percentage of consumers when he brings to light some of the worlds favourite 'Lovemarks'

- 1) "I don't go anywhere without my (iPod). I find myself staring at it, admiring it..."
- 2) "Placing a (Post-it) note on a page thrills me to my very soul...a page is not complete unless it has at least one Post-it on it, fluttering delicately..."
- 3) "My first car was a (Mini). I bought it with money saved from my first job...even today, seeing a Mini makes me smile..."

Roberts defines a 'Lovemark' as an experience or a product that has the power to create a relationship, long-term and emotional, with the consumer. His realisation is that it is the consumer and not the company who owns the 'Lovemark', "they are owned by the people who love them." Lovemarks are the products and brands that arouse emotions.

If you are inspired to make your brand a 'Lovemark' call us at Impact Executives on 020 7314 2011 for a top class interim branding expert.