

The 3 Traits for Brands to Survive the Future

Part 4: Life addiction to COKEaine!

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Up to the late 90's, corporations were mainly *product-oriented*, i.e. brands mainly focused on showcasing features offered by a product. Come late 2000, organizations shifted to *customer-oriented* establishments. Now, marketing was targeted towards specific customer profiles. In other words, brand corporations pursued fulfilling all needs of a market segment. From hats to bags to shoes, a brand would act as a single consortium of products acting all in sync together.

For the decade to come, brands need to shift their marketing methodologies to what I call '*life-oriented*' marketing. How can that be done? Through selling tomorrow's products to future market segments, only this needs to be done today! This is a rather confusing and hefty statement. Here are some examples to explain:

At 1985, Coca-Cola introduced the new and improved Soda drink. With CocaCola's legendary marketing expertise, you would think the 'New Coke' would revolutionize the industry. It was nothing short of a debacle! Customer rage resulted to the new Coke to be dishonorably discharged from the market. The outrage reached such toxic levels. Coke executives had to make a formal apology, and immediately re-instate the original Coke. Why did this happen? We were marketed for a lifetime! CocaCola's marketing machine out smarted itself! Since childhood, Coca-Cola cans were incubated on family tables, on TV ads during our favorite programs, on billboards as we drove around every corner. No '*new*' marketing campaign could unwind that.

Lifetime marketing is not new though. Although I would presume some brands were tossed into the vortex by chance rather than by choice. British Education Minister Elizabeth Truss suggested that children's toys could impact their career choices. If a toy can affect a child's career choice, how far off does a brand on that toy affect his/her future buying habits? Hence, car manufacturers selling those branded toys are actually influencing which car a kid would buy decades later. That's because childhood memories stick to the subconscious mind. Even in other industries, the same scenario applies. MARS chocolate not changing their innate black wrapper. Kellogs still keeping that clumsy-looking rooster in their packaging. All those legendary brand logos were engraved into our psyche as kids. They simply kept lingering in our minds as we hopped in age from market segment to other.

That being said, the following question is: What do corporations need to do? Here are my 5-step guiding principles:-

1. Study today's technology progressions, social trends, etc. and slingshot to an extrapolated future
2. Envision life's characteristics of that future timeline
3. Figure out how today's consumer will react to that visual future. Draw a progressive map of how today's consumer thinking will evolve. Determine priorities, emotions, and memories, of future profiles
4. Find today's emotional aspects that will permanently resonate in subconscious memory
5. Proactively educate the subconscious mind to incubate a brand

Of course, the steps above are no easy task! However, seeing that memories last for a lifespan, brand marketing needs to have similar longevity to survive. Let me give you an example of the above suggested 5-steps.

Lets go back to our earlier example of Coca-Cola. Today, Coca-Cola is seen as a non-healthy and sugary food source. To that effect, the Coca-Cola brand is not correlated with any notion of a healthy lifestyle. How can Coca-Cola shift its brand to have a saliency that is more health-oriented? Here is a possible implementation of the 5-step principle:

STEPS	TASK	COCA-COLA EXAMPLE
1	Extrapolate the future <i>How will life be at year 2030?</i>	Robots cooking meals instead of humans
2	Envision social characteristics of the future <i>How will consumer daily lives be at 2030?</i>	Moms will not cook for children. Family dinners will be a thing of the past . Families not as close knitted.
3	Evolution of consumer mindset <i>How will today's consumers probably react?</i>	Cooking seen as a decadent hardship. Nostalgia to family dinners. Today's teenagers will look back at their mother's cooking as something overtly emotional
4	Find resonating emotional aspects <i>What aspects of today would resonate to 2030 ?</i>	Cookie jars, toasters, kitchen knives will be remembered as symbols of motherly love
5	Provocatively incubate brand in subconscious mind <i>What is the best way to incubate a brand into the subconscious mind?</i>	Add Coca-Cola logo to today's cookie jars. TV Ads to have Coca-Cola cans next to toasters, cutting boards, etc.