

academic
insights:
designed



by jason chua & purin phanichphant

DIMENSIONS OF BRAND PERSONALITY



JOURNAL OF MARKETING RESEARCH AAKER (1997)

brands have personalities too.

Like people, brands have certain characteristics that make them who they are. These characteristics, when taken together, form the basis for unique brand personalities that help consumers form personal and emotional connections with brands.



shaped through experience.

Brand personality is shaped from direct and indirect contact with the brand. This can include interactions with employees, products and marketing collateral - anything that interfaces with the consumer.



the "big 5" of brands.

American brands can be characterized by five broad domains: **sincerity**, **excitement**, **competence**, **sophistication** and **ruggedness**. Assessing the degree to which a brand represents these traits can be useful in gauging other metrics. For example, sincerity is a good predictor of trust (across product categories), which in turn tends to impact ROI.



WHEN GOOD BRANDS DO BAD



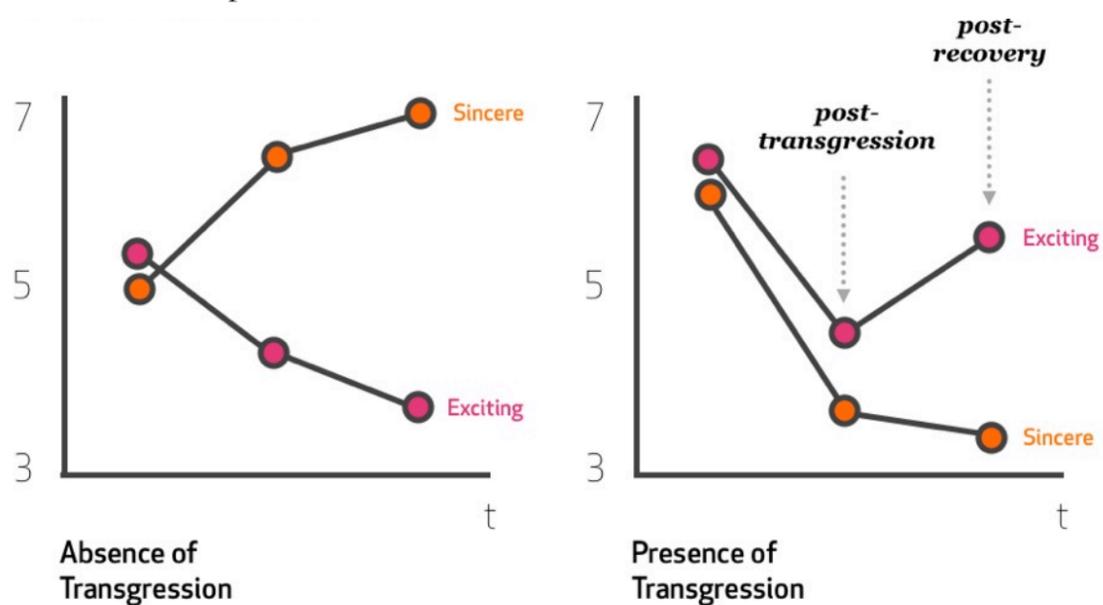
JOURNAL OF CONSUMER RESEARCH
AAKER, FOURNIER & BRASEL (2004)

different types of brands

Consumers form different types of relationships with brands based on the personalities these brands exhibit. Brands that seem warm, caring and considerate, such as Coca-Cola, Ford, Hallmark, are seen as sincere. Consumers see brands like these as dependable and trustworthy and capable of relationship growth. Brands that seem energetic and youthful, such as MTV, Virgin, or Mountain Dew, are seen as exciting. Consumers see brands like these as attractive and interesting, but are often associated with more short-term, fun relationships.

sincere brands

Sincere brands form stronger relationships over time with consumers due to the expectations of trust they build. However, these relationships can be severely damaged if the brand makes a mistake that breaks this promise of trust, and can be difficult to rebuild.



exciting brands

On the other hand, much less is expected from exciting brands, and consumers don't form very strong bonds with them. If anything, the strength of their relationship decreases over time much like a short-lived fling. However, when exciting brands mess up, their relationships with consumers can actually be reinvigorated as they receive more attention.



TO DO OR TO HAVE? THAT IS THE QUESTION



JOURNAL OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

VAN BOVEN & GILOVICH (2003)

spending money on experiences rather than material goods is linked with higher levels of satisfaction.



experiences are more central to an individual's identity.

We are the sum of our experiences, and as such, experiential purchases are more closely tied to our identities than material purchases. Experiences also tend to be more goal-oriented and seen as enriching rather than negatively materialistic.



experiences are more open to positive reinterpretation.

Since recall of experiences is more based on memory than physical artifacts, people are able to look back on them in a positive light that filters out disappointing details.



experiences encourage social relationships.

Experiences tend to be more sharable than material goods (consider eating out or taking a trip vs. buying a new shirt or MP3 player). Additionally, experiences create stories which can be shared with others and build social capital.

THE TIME VS. MONEY EFFECT

SHIFTING PRODUCT ATTITUDES THROUGH PERSONAL CONNECTION

JOURNAL OF CONSUMER RESEARCH
MOGILNER AND AAKER (2009)

a personal connection

One of the best predictors of favorable attitudes towards a product is the level of personal connection felt towards that product. For most products, making time salient and emphasizing the experience of using the product results in a stronger personal connection with it. However, for prestige items (luxury cars, designer jeans, etc) and materialistic people, emphasizing the money that went into acquiring the object increases the personal sense of identification with the brand or product.

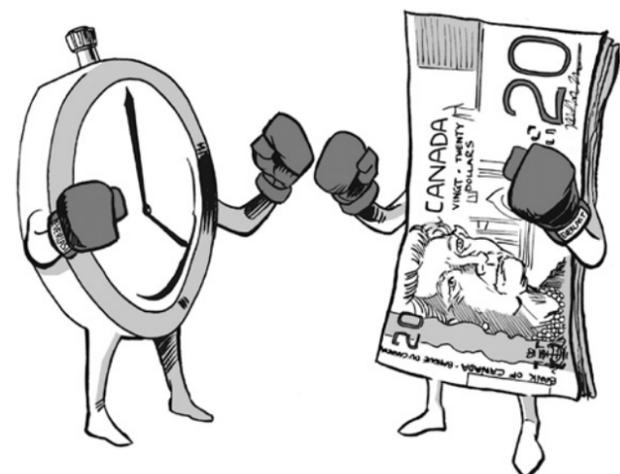
experience vs. possession

Focusing on time instead of money activates different ways of thinking about products. People focus on experiencing products when time is salient, but when money is salient, they focus on possessing the product.



time and generosity the lemonade stand study

Researchers set up a lemonade stand in a park, manned by two 6 year-olds, and varied the message displayed on the stand's signage. In one condition, the sign referenced spending time and in another it referenced spending money. In the "time" condition, customers reported more favorable attitudes towards their lemonade, and were donated almost twice as much as they had in the "money" condition.



CONSUMPTION SYMBOLS AS CARRIERS OF CULTURE



A STUDY OF JAPANESE AND SPANISH BRAND PERSONALITY CONSTRUCTS

JOURNAL OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

AAKER, BENET-MARTINEZ & GAROLERA (2001)



cultural specificity

Brands can be characterized by broad domains of personality. While there is significant overlap in these domains of personality across cultures, there are some important variations specific to each culture.

cross-cultural dimensions.

- sincerity
- excitement
- competence
- sophistication

culturally specific dimensions.

- ruggedness
- peacefulness
- passion

HOW TO TELL A STORY



GSB CASE STUDY M-323 AAKER (2009)
see also *Story* by Robert McKee



people are natural storytellers.

We're wired to understand, remember and work through stories. Framing things in terms of a story allows us to combine ideas with emotions, making them stickier.



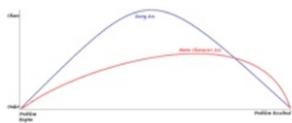
characters

Who are the characters in the story and what do they want or need? What risks do they face if they fail? Great stories get the audience emotionally invested in the characters.



plot

Good plots keep the audience engaged and wondering what will happen next. Stories should have a well defined question the audience is seeking an answer to (will he live or die? will she find her father? etc.) and organize plot points around this question.



story arc

Good stories have a beginning, middle and end. In the beginning, the audience becomes engaged, characters are introduced, and the major dramatic question is established. During the middle of the story, characters are developed, and an "inciting incident" that turns the characters' world upside down occurs. The end is characterized by crisis, climax and consequences, and answers the story's major dramatic question.



STORYTELLING TIPS

show, don't tell.

Great stories allow the audience to visualize the details of the characters, setting, and plot. They avoid cliches and extraneous adjectives and adverbs in favor of concentrated and specific description.

call to action.

Effective stories have a clear purpose and leave the audience knowing what they can personally do help out. This is especially important in a business setting where stories are used to persuade or inspire.

finding stories.

The best stories come from listening to people's firsthand accounts of the missteps they took on the path to success. Exposing vulnerabilities and using direct quotes help build empathy and add authenticity to a story.

HOW HAPPINESS IMPACTS CHOICE



GSB WORKING PAPER MOGILNER, AAKER & KAMVAR (2011)



brands try to appeal to happiness

Consumers want to be happy, and brands often try to appeal to consumers' pursuit of happiness. However, happiness does not mean the same thing to everyone, and consumers' choices reflect those differences.



different meanings of happiness

For some, happiness is defined as feeling excited; for others happiness is defined as feeling calm. The type of happiness pursued is determined by one's temporal focus, which can change momentarily (e.g., through a breathing exercise) and over the life course (as one ages).



type of happiness affects choice

People tend to choose more exciting options (e.g., energizing drinks and upbeat music) when focused on the future, and more calming options (e.g., relaxing teas and mellow music) when focused on the present moment. The definition of happiness, and consumers' resulting choices, are dynamic and malleable.

NONPROFITS ARE SEEN AS WARM AND FOR-PROFITS AS COMPETENT

FIRM STEREOTYPES MATTER

JOURNAL OF CONSUMER RESEARCH

AAKER, VOHS & MOGILNER (2010)



stereotypes exist.

Nonprofits are perceived to be warm and caring about a worthy cause, but are seen as being less competent and having lower-quality products than for-profit companies.

why does this matter?

While warmth is a generally positive trait, competence appears to have more of a driving role in determining marketplace appeal. Consumers are more willing to buy from companies with a high level of competence, which raises questions about how nonprofits most effectively attract customers and encourage investment.

warmth + competence = admiration

When companies are perceived as being both warm and competent, consumers tend to develop admiration for them. Creating the perception that an organization is motivated by more than just sales, and also believes in social responsibility can encourage admiration and increase marketplace appeal.

can these perceptions be changed?

Yes. Researchers found that both an endorsement from a credible source and subtle priming can boost the perceived competence of nonprofits. In one study, researchers found that an endorsement from the Wall Street Journal elevated the perceived competence of a nonprofit to the level of a for-profit company. In another study, priming participants by showing them an advertisement related to money (a concept associated with competence) also raised perceived level of competence of a nonprofit to be on par with a for-profit entity. Interestingly, this elevated level of perceived competence was still present when researchers followed up with participants one month after the initial study.



THE ROAD TO SELF-RENEWAL



STANFORD MAGAZINE GARDNER (MARCH 1994)

some closing thoughts on personal brand...

Meaning is not something you stumble across, like the answer to a riddle or the prize in a treasure hunt. Meaning is something you build into your life. You build it out of your own past, out of your affections and loyalties, out of the experience of humankind as it is passed on to you, out of your own talent and understanding, out of the things you believe in, out of the things and people you love, out of the values for which you are willing to sacrifice something. The ingredients are there. You are the only one who can put them together into that unique pattern that will be your life. Let it be a life that has dignity and meaning for you. If it does, then the particular balance of success or failure is of less account.

John W. Gardner
Class of 1933, MA '36

