

Customer touch points- The power of consistent delivery

Building a powerful brand is one thing. Consistently delivering on your customer promise day in and day out through a myriad of touch points is the hard slog of what it means to maintain a powerful business.

In a market where advertising is becoming saturated, brands live or die through every experience your customers have with your staff. Craig Cesman, Chief Executive Officer of DMX Music looks at customer touch points, the interface where your brand meets your consumer and then lives or dies.

Creating a powerful brand in a saturated market place takes considerable investment. This investment includes spend on advertising, marketing, public relations and other above and below-the-line efforts. However the most powerful place where businesses can reach out and touch the consumer in a unique and differentiated experience is in stores. This is where brands deliver on their promise and where they can live and grow and develop customer loyalty, or where they can fail miserably.

In-store it is not only crucial to deliver a consumer experience that is consistent with your customer promise, but market leaders go much further. The experience economy is unfolding an understanding of what it means to recreate stores as an oasis of pleasure where the brand creates a tangible, yet consistent, experience for customers. And in tandem with this is the long, hard slog of detail.

There's an old saying that retail is detail and this is borne out in the fact that the best and most successful retailers and leisure industry leaders sweat each and every detail. From appealing to the senses, to bringing in experts that can deliver the right music, to ensuring the lighting is right to every last detail of what the consumer experience will be like in store.

Then in the experience economy repeatedly delivering on the brand promise is crucial.

"This is all about delivering on the consumer experience again and again, and again. In a repetitive business where much rests on service this can become one of the toughest, yet most important aspects of branding. At every till point, in every store, with every phone call to your call centre the brand lives, or dies all over and over again" says Craig Cesman CEO of DMX.

Every contact that your customer has with your business represents a valuable touch point that will buoy or bomb your company. Human beings are social animals and, for the most part, are strongly community oriented.

This is compounded by the fact that humans operate in a networked economy where the internet, instant messaging, blogging and cellular phones make the relay of word-of-mouth speedy and prolific. Negative consumer interactions aggregate, and can result in a tipping point effect. When enough negative sentiment builds and consolidates the result can have far-reaching consequences.

Cesman explains that "Music acts as a strong consumer behavioral motivator, but also motivates and improves staff service. Audio, sound-based branding creates a tremendously powerful connection with consumers as well as contributing to the delivery of brand consistency. Music is therefore an essential ingredient in delivering a consistent and enjoyable brand experience to consumers".

The success and future of your business lives in a moment of truth that exists during each interaction that every consumer has with your brand. The opportunity is to create brand champions at each and every point, yet this can only happen if your team is engaged with

the brand. It can only happen if the brand is owned by the whole company and not just the marketing department. If the brand is the business and, the business is the brand.

In the experience economy every aspect will contribute a whole experience that will determine a truth in terms of how your consumer will judge you.

Markets are shifting and while consumer markets used to be fairly loyal the introduction of new generations into the market has created a more volatile consumer market which is demanding smarter and more dynamic brand management.

Sustainability, wealth and economic power will only be the vestige of well managed brands who understand that the aristocracy of brands is fragile and that the meritocracy of quality and service is enduring. That at the end of the day it is all about delivering the brand experience.