

## **Be Attractive to Attract Customers**

Studies have shown that the more attractive a product the better it will sell. Many of us like to think that we are too sophisticated to be drawn in and influenced by the basic marketing tactics of packaging and branding. We know that the contents are more important than the package. We have been raised on the principle “you can’t tell a book by its cover”. And yet they continue to sell books by their cover, and we continue to buy them that way.

There are physiological reasons we are drawn to things that are attractive to us. There are reactions in our brains that activate a level of excitement when we view something we deem attractive. We desire it. We sought it out. And in the end, if it within our power, we attain it.

So, if we buy products because we like the way they look, is the same true for companies we buy from? Could it be that the preferences we have to certain brands and companies comes from our appreciation for the way they look? Could it be that looks, together with what the company stands for (brand meaning) make up the entirety of our decision making when considering product partiality? And if this is true, does what’s in the box matter at all?

The challenge to branding is to make the contents of the box come to stand for the message and image of the package. The unison of these two elements is what transforms shoes into great athletes and electronic devices into symbols of freedom. And the best part is that you can do for your company what great companies have done for their products.

Wanting to make your company attractive to customers is a basic desire. Most companies realize that the more attractive they are to their customers the more likely their customers will remain loyal and buy. Perhaps they’ll even buy more.

The attractiveness of a company is a blend of product, image, policies, attitude and image. Making your company more attractive includes doing the following:

### **1. Stand for Something**

People will not understand how you fit into their worldview if you do not stand for something. This does not need to be a political statement or even a statement of cause. Volvo stands for safety. M&Ms stand for fun. The Gap stands for casual fashion. Each one of these may, from time to time, use their brand power to help a cause, but none of them stand for any particular cause. Yet we all know what they “mean” and through that we know how to understand them. This helps us create a relationship with them.

### **2. Promise and Deliver**

You need to be making promises to the market. Your customers need a measure with which to judge whether or not you are succeeding in providing them with the very best you can. The way they judge is by measuring you against the promises you make. Therefore, promises are not some sort of marketing tactic. They are a marketing imperative through which the market can determine how you’re doing. The downside is you’re being judged. The upside is you get to set the bar. Naturally, if you set it too low

you open yourself up to competitive challenges, not to mention consumer ridicule. If you set it too high, you run the risk of failure. Therefore, the best way to set the bar is by determining what you can actually deliver – and then actually delivering it. This rapidly eroding concept should be apparent, and yet companies decline to adopt it all the time. Seems the temptation to over promise and under deliver is too great for some. This just leaves more opportunity for you. Promise what you can deliver and deliver what you promise.

### 3. Embrace Quality

Quality is, of course, a subjective matter and gets further complicated by the price of your product/service and the distribution channels you deploy. All this aside, however, quality is also a statement of your own self-image, how you perceive your product/service and how you see yourself serving your customers. Therefore, within the scope of your price, distribution, etc., you should be striving to demonstrate the best possible quality so that you are communicating to the market that you are proud of what you do and strive to be the best (within your price range, etc.).

### 4. Look Good

Looking good is also perhaps somewhat subjective, but it is not, like quality, vulnerable to varying standards based on perceived value. In most cases there is a consensus regarding what looks good and what does not. Within the scale of looking good may be degrees of looking good versus looking better, but as long as you're somewhere within the consensus you're okay. The reason you want to look good is because it is scientifically proven that people respond better (more positively) to something that is pleasant to their eye versus something that is not. Insofar as we are seeking positive responses, we need to look good enough to earn them.

### 5. Feel Good

People do not only respond to what looks good, but also to what makes them feel good. In this sense, your ability to communicate a positive message that makes people feel good about your company or product/service will also contribute to making your company more attractive. Some feel good possibilities include being optimistic, adventurous, bold, and civic minded. Sometimes if you make people feel good they are willing to overlook some weaknesses you may have in your appearance. So if you only have resources for one tactic, it is better to make people feel good over looking good. The only caveat to this is that you must make sure you look good enough to provide credibility to your feel good approach. If your appearance is too much the opposite of your feel good message, people will not believe it, and you will lose the benefit of your efforts.

### 6. Be Generous

Generosity has become an endangered specie in business. It seems that every point of contact with the customer is viewed as a potential profit center. So, for example, Starbucks charges for internet access. This is a petty and unnecessary policy that opens them up to competitive challenge and leaves their customers with a bad taste in their mouth (beside the one left from the coffee). There are, in all our businesses, opportunities to be generous to our customers. There are areas where we can deliver a

service or product in such a way that the customer feels not only a bit of extra value, but also your appreciation for him/her being your customer. The cost to Starbucks to bring free internet service to its customers is minimal and yet the appreciation would be enormous. Don't view every interaction with your customers as a way to grab a bit more money from them. Instead, view each contact as a way to serve them, and you will find that they will be happy spending money with you.

## 7. Be a Leader

There are all kinds of ways you can be a leader in your sector, and not all of them require that you spend a lot on advertising or become the best known brand. All it means is that you have to be willing to shake up your sector from time to time and gain the reputation as the company that keeps coming to the market with new products, new applications for existing products, and new offers to engage the products. Leadership can be a function of imagination and boldness, effectively neutralizing the power of those companies with deeper pockets.

Being attractive is not all about how you look, but also about how you act and how you interact. The power of being attractive is that people will want to be involved with you, and you will have the opportunity to engage them in your products/services in a way that is meaningful to them, and profitable to you. Making yourself attractive isn't that difficult. It only means paying attention to detail and delivering on value. If you are able to embrace being attractive you will notice your company growing. And any way you look at it, growth is a beautiful thing.