

Practise what YOU PREACH

Marketing equates to communication, writes Michael Kava.

In our extremely over-communicated and cluttered marketplace, we get delivered a multitude of messages from brands trying to convey messages to their prospective clients and customers.

If they're lucky enough to be sending the right message to the right person and there's a match, we would be happy to assume that the brand has done its job. But has it? How many times have you heard people complain about a poor product or service, the bad experience they've had, how the product doesn't work, how the restaurant's food was poor or how misled they feel over a purchase?

Given how competitive the general marketplace is, I thought that people in business realised how important it was to deliver on their promises, but clearly there's plenty out there that believe that they don't have to practise what they preach.

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Here's a couple of items to remember in your day to day business on making sure you deliver on the message you're portraying to the marketplace.

DELIVERING ON YOUR BRAND MESSAGE IS KEY

People talk about perception being everything ... that is true, but if someone tries to engage your brand or its message and they are left bitterly disappointed, it's hard to bring them back from the dead.

Not a personal fan of *Big Brother*, I was seemingly caught up somehow in the 'shuffle' and the somewhat uniqueness to what *Big Brother* would bring to the plate this time via Channel 9. However I tuned in on the first night to be left bored and discover no real difference to every other appalling series that had come before it.

DELIVER TO THE VERY END

When you have made a commitment to your marketplace you should always deliver. For example, if you communicate that you will run an offer on a certain day but don't make good on it and place conditions that have not been communicated effectively in the first place, you will get many angry consumers knocking down your door!

If for some instance it is an honest mistake or miscommunication, as a business owner you must always try and rectify the issue to ensure there are no unhappy people out there thinking and talking about your brand in a negative light.

Having angry consumers may also lead to complaints being made to the Department of Fair Trading about being misled by your communication and marketing efforts. To remain in business and have a sound amount of customers and clients walking through your doors, you must remain ethical at all times and meet the expectations you created.

DON'T MISLEAD, IT'S NOT COOL

If you create a clear message and communicate it effectively there should be no misleading behaviour. If someone engages with your brand and has expectations that they will receive a particular service or product, as a brand you should deliver and meet the expectations you have set.

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Say you find a great deal on an airline price and go to book and then find you have to pay an extra \$10 for the physical seat but nowhere on your message does it say that you must pay these extras; you have been misled. Even if it did not say you have to pay an extra \$10 for your seat, it is misleading in the fact that the cost of the ticket should include your actual seat, right? Wrong! A small American airline actually does make you pay extra for the seat! What is one supposed to do, stand in the aisle instead if they choose not to pay for the seat?

DON'T BE SOMEONE YOU'RE NOT

When you visit your local Chinese restaurant, you're not expecting glitz and glamour, but a value for money meal. If you are going to preach through marketing and communication that you are a certain type of business and brand that is exactly what you should be.

If you are after a department store but are on a budget you will opt for a place like Kmart or Target. Kmart is known for their low prices and when you visit one of their stores you expect low prices. If you want a little bit more luxury and prestigious brands, you will opt for David Jones because you know what their price range is.

Most people go to certain places because they have expectations on what they will receive due to price, luxury and overall the brands.

What message does your brand send about price?

YOUR REPUTATION FOLLOWS YOU

Word of mouth is a very strong communication tool and if you are having people talk bad about your brand it will cause a bad reputation. Take Apple products for example; they never disappoint. Most people now have Apple iPhones, MacBooks and iPods because of the great reputation they have from their consumers. They make simplified technology and even offer you new replacements if their products are faulty.

Their brand stands apart from its competition and is highly reputable because of the hype and positive things people say about them. Their success should be admired and other brands should follow suit. TGR



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