

**Lexicon Essay: Emotional Branding**

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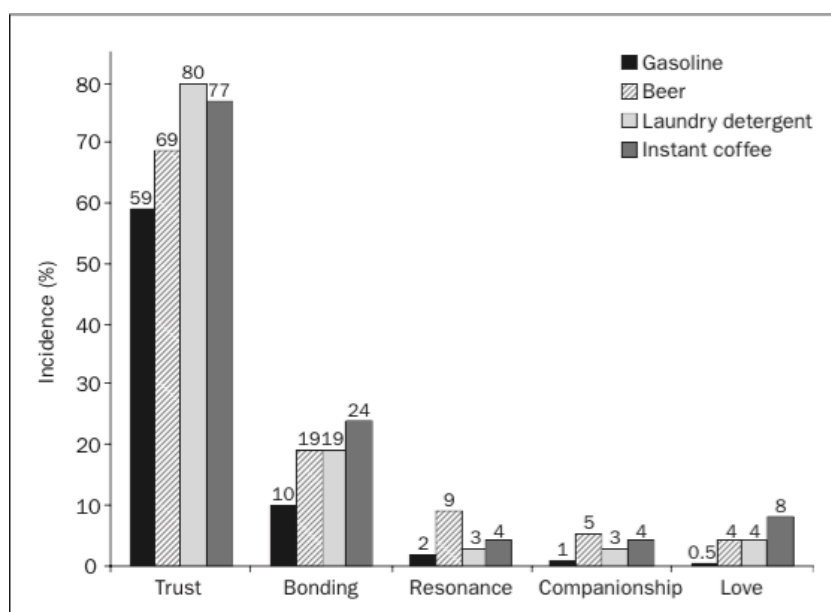
AAD 610 Marketing, Media, and Communications II

## **Lexicon Essay: Emotional Branding**

In a time and world where people are spending more time researching products or companies and purchasing more online, marketing has become one of the most important areas of a company or business. Individuals make decisions emotionally and then try to logically rationalize them. Regardless of what consumers believe, emotional branding is a highly effective way to cause them to react, forming a connection or sense of loyalty with a company.

Consumers today identify strongly with the brands they purchase. Businesses are changing their methods of marketing because consumer habits are changing as well. Consumers are expecting to be spoken to and addressed individually and in a personalized way. Tapping into those consumer emotions has become a trend that many companies have started using in their branding and marketing techniques. Emotional branding is a term used in the marketing field that refers to working off the customer's emotions in order to build a brand. This increases brand loyalty because it creates a mental attachment or a feeling of nostalgia in the consumer. It was not until the twentieth century that this method of marketing was being widely used by businesses all over the world. In the late 1990s the term "emotional branding" came into play. According to Travis Scott Luther, "the strategic objective of emotional branding is to forge strong and meaningful affective bonds with consumers and...become part of their life stories, memories, and an important link in their social networks" (2006, para.4). While the tactics used in emotional branding can lead to increased commitment, satisfaction, and customer loyalty, in the last twenty years this concept has come to mean consumers

associating the brand with an ideal vision of themselves. An article by John Rossiter and Steve Bellman entitled *Emotional Branding Pays Off: How Brands Meet Share of Requirements through Banding, Companionship, and Love*, they have defined five aspects of emotional branding including trust, bonding, resonance, companionship, and love. These words describe the relationships that consumers have with brands that use this idea of emotional branding (2012. p.292). These two men conducted a study in Perth, Australia in which 1,025 consumers were asked to participate in a survey in which they were asked questions about various types of products. “Men were surveyed for gasoline and beer; women were surveyed for laundry detergent and instant coffee” (2012. p.292). In this market there were twenty-five different brands of detergent, eighteen brands of beer, thirteen different types of coffee, and eight different brands of gasoline. Participants were asked to check off descriptive words that applied to the specific brands. This is where the five aspects of emotional branding come in. Trust, bonding, resonance, companionship, and love were the words offered and for each brand the participant could either choose 1 = picked or 0 = not picked. In this area and with these brands, it was found that “consumers trust most—but not all—of the brands that they buy” (2012. p.293). For gasoline, there was the lowest incidence of trust, with only fifty-nine percent of male buyers trusting the products while for the other three product categories (detergent, beer, and coffee) had between sixty-nine and eighty percent trust. Here is a graph display all the findings:



While further research would be needed to determine whether or not advertising could be used to facilitate consumer's emotional attachment to various brands, it is evident that individuals are more likely to buy a brand that they feel some sort of emotional attachment to.

There are ways in which this idea to marketing to consumer's emotions does not exactly pay off. In an article by Craig J. Thompson, Aric Rindfleisch, and Zeynep Arsel the idea of the doppelganger brand image is brought up. The authors argue that these images undermine the "perceived authenticity of an emotional-branding story and, thus, the identity value that the brand provides to consumers"(2006. p.50.). The doppelganger image is "defined as a family of disparaging images and meanings about a brand that circulate throughout popular culture" (2006. p.50.).

There are many famous examples of incredibly successful advertisements that use emotional branding. Graeme Newell, a customer loyalty expert, has a video in which he

discusses emotional branding in beer and alcohol commercials and advertisements. One example he used was Corona beer and how when he, as a consumer, sees the photos or commercials, he feels as though his heart rate drops and he can imagine himself on a beach.



Another example would be Coca Cola. This brand, for many years, has been associated with the idea of happiness and the never cease to use this in their marketing. One of the most recent marketing strategies they released was the Share a Coke campaign. Bottles were individualized with names so that consumers could feel an even deeper emotional contact with the brand. A personal example would be that I was at Target over the summer and saw a regular and diet Coca Cola right next to one another that had the names Seth and Erica on them. These are my parent's names and, of course, I had to purchase both. It was obviously by chance that these ended up where they were but it created an emotional connection between the Coca Cola brand and myself.

Share a  
**Coke.** with...



With the abundance of lexicon terms last quarter, it was difficult to narrow it down to only five to seven. The terms that I have finalized are *identity*, *connections*, *omnipresence*, *communication*, *participatory*, and *atmosphere*. I went through the lexicon posts from last term to see how I defined each word and if that definition had changed for me since. I had defined *identity* as being. Characteristics of what or who you are. The individual and the social identity. Self-definition. What makes one recognizable. Individuality. My definition of *connections* was relationships, whether they be a to a person, idea, or thing. One could have a technological connection with something or someone else; linked through systems. *Omnipresence* is being present everywhere. Being everywhere at once or seeming to be everywhere at once. With technology today we have the ability to access massive amounts of information and technology allows us to be present or find ourselves metaphorically present in all sorts of places and situations. *Communication* is the connections between people, things or places. The exchange of information. Correspondence, whether it is physical, textual, etc. *Atmosphere* in technical, scientific terms is the gaseous surround of the Earth. However, atmosphere is also the

surrounding mood. Environment. Emotional tone. Finally, I defined the word *participatory* as taking part in something. Being active. To share. Coming together.

I think these definitions are a great jumping off point for this assignment. The one thing that I believe to connect these seven words is that they all focus, in some way, on the relationship between the consumer and the business. *Identity* is obviously important since there is the *identity* that the company or business is trying to convey, but also the relationship they are able to build by speaking to the *identity* of the individual consumers. This ties into the idea of *connections* because by evaluating who these consumers are and their *identity*, businesses are able to determine how to form *connections* and what *connections* need to be formed. The idea behind emotional branding is to form relationships with consumers and, in turn, create brand loyalty through emotions. With every business there is this idea of *omnipresence* and being present everywhere. That is the end goal for organizations, correct? To create lasting marketing campaigns that allows the brand to be everywhere at once. *Communication*, similar to *connection*, works with emotional branding to get these ideas out there. These brands are communicating their ideas to consumers through various images that strike a chord emotionally. Although this is mostly the brand at work, consumers must actively *participate* as well. When watching advertisements, reading an ad in a newspaper, or any other way of connecting with a brand, the consumer is *participating* actively in those businesses goals. With the *atmosphere* being the surrounding mood or emotional tone, this is what the brands or businesses are setting by focusing on the emotions of the consumers. This emotional tone that is set by the brand directly affects the consumers reactions to the event or products.

With emotional branding being integrated into marketing strategies in the relatively recent time frame of the last twenty years, there are still differing opinions as to whether or not these methods are actually affective. I think it is safe to say though that when a brand can emotionally connect to a consumer there is a good chance that building that brand loyalty will be successful.



## References

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