

**How does a creative add
Brand Value to a product?**

The 4 pillars of branding

Narrative

You need to tell a story about the brand

Differentiate

Make it stand out from the crowd

Communicate

Reach your audience using the correct channels

Consistent

Keep to one key visual style

Narrative

Advertising is no longer just a loose collection of disciplines such as branding and promotions.

Rather, solid advertising campaigns are built around good stories.

Everything that advertisers do should help tell that story.

Stop interrupting what people are interested in, and be what people are interested in.

The best advertisers are storytellers.

After all, how many customers truly make purchasing decisions based on statistics or a cost-benefit analysis?

Emotional appeals are the truest way to connect with customers, and stories are the most powerful method for doing so.

This is what makes your brand's narrative so important.

Done correctly, a well-crafted narrative about your brand can significantly increase its value.

We all know a good story when we experience one.

But the plot of a book or film might seem very different from the kind of narrative you're trying to create for your brand.

Keep these points in mind to ensure you're creating a compelling and successful narrative:

1. Root it in reality

Brand narratives must be genuine because consumers can smell insincerity a mile away.

Made-up stories inevitably become inconsistent, which can lead to confusion, frustration, and even the loss of sales.

If the pieces of your story don't add up, the deception is obvious.

Deviating from the company's truth in hopes of telling a more impressive story will only cause problems.

On the other hand, if a brand is grounded in its narrative, a consumer's journey with that brand will be consistent.

The narrative will signal exactly what consumers should expect and keep them connected to the brand at every touchpoint.

2. Keep it Simple

An overly complex narrative can be just as confusing as one that's insincere.

As a brand narrative develops, new platforms, ads, and products might be incorporated, but the general story should be kept simple and consistent.

For most brands, the sequence is problem, solution and success.

This three-act structure can be told in many different ways with many different characters, but the basics should remain consistent.

When that story is told clearly, it's easy for customers to follow, which allows them to focus on your brand's content.

3. Consider your Perspective

The perspective from which a story is told can significantly alter its impact.

Brands should settle into their customers' shoes (as well as their eyes, ears, and minds) and take a look at their own advertisements from that point of view.

4. Add Elements of Surprise

People love page-turners and cliffhangers.

We're always looking for something new and exciting in stories.

For both brands and customers, however, change can be scary.

Good brand narratives keep the element of surprise intact, without any of its potentially negative connotations.

The possibilities for “surprise and delight” in the advertising world are limitless.

5. Make an Empathetic Connection

Brand narratives are at their strongest when they're able to make connections to customers' lives.

A brand's narrative might resonate with a customer's values, or it might clearly describe a problem he or she is experiencing.

Similar to the choice of perspective, the way a brand narrative is delivered can also determine its impact.

Brands can now connect to customers through many different platforms, and they should take advantage of as many as they can.

A company's videos on YouTube, images on Instagram, and posts on its blog should all align with the same narrative.

In this integrated world, brands should not only create content that underpins their narrative, but they should also allow their customers to participate in that narrative.

A brand's narrative should be the cornerstone of its overall branding strategy.

It provides the backdrop for products and services, fosters an emotional connection with customers, and identifies the emotional footprint that the brand creates.

Every brand has a story to tell. Make sure yours is worth telling.

Differentiation

Everyone has heard that you have to differentiate your brand.

But is it actually important?

And if so, how do you do it?

What exactly is brand differentiation, anyway?

Brand differentiation is a process undertaken by companies who seek to ensure their brand stands out from their competitors’.

By singling out unique qualities your product offers and promoting them in a way that best targets your consumers, you are likely to gain a competitive advantage over your rivals, which, in turn, should equate to increased market share.

Brand differentiation focuses on what you can offer your customers.

To differentiate yourself from similar brands you need to be able to provide something your competition does not.

A differentiator, sometimes known as a “competitive advantage,” separates your brand from the rest of your competitors.

For a differentiator to be effective, it must pass three tests:

1. Is it True?

First and foremost, a differentiator must be true.

You don't want to gain a reputation as a brand that is dishonest and makes false promises.

On the flipside, you might want to consider eliminating differentiators that are generic and are not unique to your brand:

Differentiators like “we have quality staff” or “we provide great customer service” may be true, but these are boxes that most clients expect to be checked when working with any professional services brand.

No brand is going to say, “we have inexperienced staff” or “we’re not the most responsive bunch.”

2. Can you Prove it?

Secondly you must be able to prove your differentiators are true.

Conducting research is a good way to discover proof. Statistics from brand research, client satisfaction research, and other forms of market research can be good proof points and can reassure potential customers about why they should engage with your brand.

3. Is it Relevant?

Understanding your target audience is the first step in establishing relevancy of your differentiator.

Where are you currently getting your business?

Where are the biggest opportunities?

What does your ideal client look like?

Communicate

Brand Communication is an important part and tool of brand management by which the brand informs, persuades, enlightens, teaches, reminds, and enriches the knowledge of its stakeholders about the brand, its strengths, values and its offerings of products and services.

It is the combination of activities that influences the customer's opinion of the brand and its products and services.

Brand communication is a voice.

It humanises any brand to be able to create real and relevant conversations with people.

Connections that may last a moment or that last for a lifetime.

A brand image is created through brand communication.

Ultimately, a brand communications strategy is about getting to know your audience, crafting the right message, and making sure you present on the right channels.

Eventually, better communications result in stronger, more memorable brand experiences for your audience, which lead to greater brand awareness and engagement.

Every article you publish, comment you tweet, and video you shoot opens a dialogue with your customers that takes you one step closer to brand ambassadors, and client loyalty.

1. Be Authentic and Honest

Today's customers want a relationship with their favourite companies.

In other words, they don't want you speaking to them like they're just another paycheck – they want authentic brand communication.

To make your conversations as honest as possible, start by looking at the brand values you established for your company.

If you claim to be an organisation that cares about the environment, how do you demonstrate that in your marketing materials?

If you're all about innovation, how can you show your love of development in the things you say?

2. Have Conversations

Conversations are key in the modern advertising environment.

Today's brands can really reach out and listen to their followers – and there are countless benefits to doing that.

Taking the time to develop real and genuine dialogue with your prospects shows that you care about your customers.

3. Transform Customers into Advocates

You're in a world where people are more likely to listen and trust the words of their peers than faceless corporations.

With that in mind, it makes sense that your brand communications plan would include some consideration of the benefits of word of mouth marketing.

The more you focus on combining exceptional customer service experiences with shareable, enticing content, the more likely it is that your brand message will go further, carried by your social fans.

You'll need to devise a social media campaign that targets the right people, and you may even want to consider adding influencers to the mix.

If you can make your clients into advocates, then you can start convincing them to advertise for you.



Starbucks engaged customers from around the world by asking them to create their own white cups?

The #WhiteCupContest not only allowed the organisation to tap into user-generated content, but it also increased social media reach and created happier, more engaged customers.

4. Focus on Exceptional Customer Experiences

Brand experience has overtaken product and price as the key differentiator for brands in 2020.

Part of great brand communications is knowing how to keep your followers happy.

That means that you need to think about the quality of the engagements you're having with your customers.

Thoughtfully responding to comments on your blog, or messages on your social media wall helps to show the humanity of your brand while building trust.

Additionally, speaking directly to your customers will make it easier for you to learn how to support them.

A conversation is far more telling than any pile of data.

5. Be Open and Transparent

In a world where customers can find almost anything they need to know about your company online, dishonesty won't take you very far.

Brand communications always go a lot smoother when everyone is honest and open.

If you're willing to take your clients behind the scenes of what's going on with your business, they'll be far more likely to trust you.

What's more, you'll be able to separate yourself from your competitors by showing you have nothing to hide.

McDonald's in Canada launched the “Our Food. Your Questions” campaign to help improve their reputation after years of scrutiny as a fast food brand.



For a long time, McDonald's suffered from unflattering myths about the ingredients it uses to make its burgers.

The Canadian campaign offered customers a chance to publicly ask for information about the myths and legends.

Ultimately, as worrisome as the strategy must have been for the company, it gave McDonald's a chance to dispel some rumours, educate customers, and improve brand awareness.

Consistent

Brand consistency is the pattern of expression that affects what people think about your company.

The more consistent your messaging, the more consistent your branding — whether via words, design, offerings or perspective.

Your brand should build awareness and develop trust and loyalty with consistent messaging.

Brand consistency is the practice of always delivering messages that are in line with the identity and values of your brand.

Consistency means that your target audience is being exposed to the same core messages repeatedly.

The more consistent your messaging, the more consistent your branding.

Brand consistency = Brand Recognition

It helps build trust and loyalty

You can trigger the right emotions by making your customers feel like they know your brand.

Once you have built the necessary trust, it's easier to persuade customers to take action.

It evokes positive emotions about your brand

Consistently communicating positive messages can also help evoke positive emotions from your target audience. And the best thing is that your audience will, over time, begin to associate these positive emotions with your brand.

It positions your brand above the competition

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Being consistent in your messaging can really set your brand apart from your competitors.

When customers have to choose between a number of near-identical offers, brand consistency often means the difference between earning a customer's business or losing them to the competition.