

Finding the emotional connection

By  Danette Breitenbach

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People connect differently and define an emotional connection differently, so while an emotional connection builds consumer trust and sales growth, it is a difficult connection to achieve.



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Frances MacMahon, CEO, Meraki Research defines an emotional connection as “when a bundle of subjective feelings come together to create a bond between two people”.

A speaker at the Franchise Association of South Africa's (FASA) recent Franchise Convention held at The Forum in Bryanston, she told the audience that data can be used to create an emotional connection. “By collecting facts and stats and analysing these we can use the findings to create an emotional connection with your customer.” She adds that without data, you cannot build an emotional connection.



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Emotional motivators

“To build and drive emotional connections, emotional motivators are used. Emotional motivators vary by category and brand, customer segment and customer journey position,” MacMahon says.

Five high impact motivators include:

- To stand out from the crowd, for example with a unique social identity and be seen as special.
- To have confidence in the future, that is to perceive the future as better than the past.
- To feel a sense of freedom.
- To feel a sense of belonging.
- To protect the environment, that is to take action to improve the surroundings.

How do we know what emotional motivators will appeal to which target audience? This is determined by a high-level process. "The first step is to segment the customers as they all have different emotional motivators. The next step is data analysis which entails research.

"The first type of research is primary research, but it is not enough to only do this type of research as consumers do not know what motivates them. Therefore, we also need to use internal data from a source such as a rewards/loyalty programme and then lastly research using unsolicited data, for example social media," she explains.

"The fact is the highly satisfied customers are fully connected with a brand, making connected customers of more value to your business," she concludes.

Emotionally connected brands

Nando's is a great example of a brand that people are emotionally connected with. "Nando's knows people are constantly online and interacting with something or someone. They have a consistent personality online and that's how they connect with their audience," she says.

BMW, she says, are another brand with very connected customers. "They have a common tone throughout their communications, that utilizes the emotional motivators of an aspirational lifestyle (standing out from the crowd) and freedom."

The best ad of 2017 is Samsung's Made for India TVC, receiving over 200 million views on YouTube. It is also, she says, the best example to demonstrate what an emotional connection is and means to a brand. "The TVC shows Samsung's emotional investment to its customers and demonstrates that people will not forget how you make them feel."

In her presentation she also touches on artificial intelligence as a technology that is very relevant to connecting with customers. “Find ways to enhance your human touch through technology. We should all be familiar with customer support bots. By 2020 AI will revolutionise the industry to create a seamless user experience that is personalised. Areas where AI is becoming more important includes content creation, sales, and social media reach.”

Relevant, targeted communication

In another presentation in the marketing and technology theme, Maphale Moloi, Google South Africa, spoke about using digital marketing to reach the consumer in a more relevant and targeted way. “There are two parts to this. The first is defining your company objectives. What is it you want to achieve? Is it to increase revenue, generate greater customer loyalty, or attract customers to cross-sell, etc. – whatever it is it must be clearly defined.”

Then he says, you need to communicate appropriately. “Speak to your customers. By this I mean know how to communicate with your audience and know your audience that is know how you are talking to.” He recommends using Google Places, especially for smaller businesses.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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