

# Mixed messages

 By [Mike Taberner](#)

6 May 2014

Every brand has a message - one that their customers, employees and suppliers understand and live by, right? Or do they simply have a *desire*, locked away in a drawer somewhere?

Many brands are struggling with the "mixed messages syndrome", brought about by the lack of effective communication of their vision, mission and values to their stakeholders. This is further hampered by the advent of consumer inflicted value - the value placed on the brand by the consumer, whether it deserves it or not.

## Inflicted value

I am an Apple Fanboy, the affectionate (tongue-in-cheek) name passed along by those who don't own Apple devices and think that we have nothing bad to say about the brand. The truth is that there are many bad things to say about a closed operating system that nobody gets to experience without approval from the Apple gods. The fanboys have created an almost "untouchable" status around the Apple brand.

We fanboys are happy to listen to what they think we need and simply buy it. Apple has a value, granted supported by quality products, but they have nonetheless gained value from their consumers, surpassing their advertising efforts.

## Not all stories are good

There are unfortunately also many brands where the story *isn't* so good. They've had negative value inflicted on them, much of it deserved, but some of it often exaggerated.

However they have not risen to the challenge, but rather remain encased in the mire and leave their plan to somehow just happen. In short - their customers simply don't know who they *really* are.

## Saving money

Recently I was reminded of this quote by Henry Ford: "A man who stops advertising to save money, is like a man who stops the clock to save time". In this context, the brand that keeps their vision, mission and values hidden, cannot expect to hold favour with their stakeholders.

Make sure that you're not "saving" your business into bankruptcy. Get your message out there, make it *visible* and let it be challenged.

## ABOUT MIKE TABERNER

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