

5 Tips for Creating an Appealing, Engaging, and Memorable Brand

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Date : September 12, 2015



It's 2015. If you want your company to rise above the **digital** noise, a cold, sterile approach isn't going to cut it. To get consumers talking about your product or service, you need to develop a strong, memorable, warm-blooded **brand**.

Straying from the mold in order to elevate your company from the pack comes with risks, of course. But in the words of hockey legend Wayne Gretzky: "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take."

With that in mind, here are six strategies for humanizing your brand.

1. Start with a sense of humor

Don't be afraid to use humor to promote your **brand**. Have fun with your fans -- tell a funny story, maybe even push the envelope a bit.

Consider the Super Bowl. The event is as much about the ads as the game, and the **brand** with the funniest commercial wins big. Doritos, for instance, nailed it with its [flying pig commercial](#), which ensured consumers would think of that LOL moment every time they opened a bag of the chips.

If you're unsure how to incorporate humor, take a few tips from media sites offering 'how-to' ideas, such as [Social Media Examiner](#). The site recommends including jokes about your brand on your landing page and in your newsletters, as well as including quirky Instagram shots of people, places and things that can be easily associated with your product or brand. Lastly, the Social Media Examiner suggests hiring professional writers to compose humorous stories about your company to share on **social media**.

2. Use colloquial language

Nothing kills a customer's interest in your brand faster than jargon, or overly complicated details. Consumers don't want to listen to business speak and industry-specific language.

Words like ‘value-added,’ ‘best practice,’ and ‘synergistic’ will annoy consumers and drive them away, [according to business consultant Patti Rowison](#). Speak to your customers like you’d speak to your friends.

3. Blend in-store experiences with online ones

Businesses often wrestle with how best to meld their offline and online presences. A good **strategy** is to create an offline experience that mirrors your business’s **online** experience.

For example, Nordstrom has cultivated a strong community of Pinterest users. To link its brick-and-mortar stores with its ecommerce site, Nordstrom uses **Pinterest** to ID items popular with its social followers, and then highlights these products at the brick-and-mortar stores so customers can easily find the most pinned merchandise.

4. Own up to mistakes

If your startup makes a mistake, own up to it and be transparent with your customers about how you are working to fix it.

Take **Coca-Cola**. [In 1985, the company decided, without much market research, to change its basic formula](#). The results were catastrophic. **Coca-Cola** received more than 40,000 letters of complaints and a heaping pile of negative press. The company responded by returning to the original taste, which it named Coca-Cola Classic. The debacle generated so much attention that when Coca-Cola announced it was reviving the old formula, [anchor Peter Jennings interrupted General Hospital to break the news](#). Sales for Coca-Cola Classic soared.

Confessing a mistake – after correcting it, of course -- shows your customers you can be trusted.

5. Make it personal

Who writes your blogs, posts your Facebook notices, or takes your **Pinterest** photos? Technology has made shopping more convenient, but automating the process can also make it feel dehumanizing. A good fix is to have your staff sign their individual names on company social media interactions and bulletins, as well as ensure that their personal information is easily accessible to consumers.

It’s important to adopt a “holistic” approach to the customer. This means having a unified presence across all online platforms. “When customers can access your brand on more than one venue, meaning they can see it on **Facebook and Twitter** as well as on **YouTube**, and see that it’s presented in the same professional and transparent manner in all media, they begin to trust what you’ve got and want to know the story behind it -- which you are also presenting on multiple **media**,” says Richard Hollis, the founder and **CEO** of [Holonis](#), a digital **marketplace**. The idea is to provide your audience with a clear picture of the human behind each post, thus personalizing every interaction.

For example, when a customer receives an anonymous tweet thanking her for making a purchase, she may feel irritated at the interruption; but if a real person's name is attached to the tweet, she may feel more inclined to purchase again -- and soon.

As a related sidebar, remember to include a call to action – such as a link to your startup's landing page -- in your email signature. (You can how to do so [here](#).)

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