

next tuesday afternoon

October 14, 2008

In a couple of recent articles in the Journal of Consumer Psychology, “brand attachment” and how customers determine quality were researched. Brand attachment is the emotional bond that consumers have between a brand and themselves. Since it's October, I'll note my lifelong love affair with Brach's Candy Corn and Mellowcreme Pumpkins.

Consumers who are emotionally attached to a brand don't just like it, they love it. They feel connected to it, feel a great deal of affection for it, and are passionate about the brand.

When scored against brand attitudes, brand involvement and customer satisfaction, brand attachment scored the highest and will strongly predict a customer's loyalty.

What can you do with this info? Instead of building your messages around your likability, take a look to see if they convey brand attachment. Tying your brand to special moments in life may enhance its long-term value.

Now onto the second article about how customers evaluate quality. It can be simple when judging a product, where it's easy to see the workmanship. But what about the more intangible things—like the customer experience? This recent research suggests you should mop the floor.

When consumers are uncertain how to evaluate the quality of a service, they use external cues to figure out if the service provider is trustworthy. For instance, to evaluate a doctor, they might consider how welcoming the waiting room is, the friendliness of the receptionist, or if the room is clean and neat.

The fact that these cues may have nothing to do with the quality of the service provided does not appear to be important. A customer service desk may have caring reps in spite of its messy countertop. But first impressions count big with customers. And yes, that goes all the way down to the shiny clean floor.

External cues can impact just about any aspect of the retail process. For instance, if a product delivery is delayed, customers may be less irritated if they are advised of the delay, and if the person doing so is friendly and courteous. So little things mean a lot. Keep up appearances and stay courteous. It's the little things that have a big impact on customers' judgments of quality.

I'm Lisa Davis. Let me know if I can help you in any way, please feel free to visit at OneAlliance.com and I'll be back next Tuesday afternoon.

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