

4<sup>TH</sup> COMMANDMENT

# It's Not Just the Brand, It's the Total Brand Experience.

Many of us think of a company's brand as the visual representation of its attributes expressed through its logo, color palette and graphic treatment.

Some of us extend the concept to include messaging such as value proposition, mission statement, promise and vision.

But is that enough to attract consumers and engender loyal, enduring relationships?

It depends. Good branding just may be enough if it's a one-dimensional product such as a soft drink. Pepsi was so confident that consumers preferred its taste to Coca-Cola, it ran **live**, blind taste-test commercials. Although it won the majority of the time, it has never been able to compete with Coca-Cola's branding and Coke continues to dominate the market.

For two-dimensional products such as cell phones, it's a mixed bag. Few companies have a brand as distinct, clean and persistent as

Apple. They've got it all: logo, visuals, messaging, innovations, legendary personalities and fierce fans. Can't miss, you say? Samsung has twice the market share of iPhones and is closing the gap on Apple's iPad tablet business. Despite Samsung's come-from-behind battle and fledgling branding efforts, the superiority of its product and the experience of its customers carry the day.

Four-dimensional product and service providers such as airlines or financial service firms face branding challenges that are even more complex. For these companies, good branding may get the consumer to try the product or service once. But there are so many touchpoints, so many key differentiators, so many opportunities to win or lose hearts and minds, that it becomes more about the brand experience than it is about just the brand.

In the real world, a company can survive an indifferent brand, but it cannot survive a poor brand experience. Too often clients stop the branding effort short of achieving their business objectives.

**It's important to recognize that sometimes the tactics that deliver the brand experience must be given equal, if not more, weight than the strategy of the brand.**

## LIVING BY THE 4<sup>TH</sup> COMMANDMENT

A brand is the comprehensive range of consumer interactions that produce a feeling about that service or product. It's not just the logo, slogan, packaging or even the product or service itself, but the combination of things that define the experience.

## The Right Point of View Comes With Experience

*For 40 years, Adler Branding & Marketing has been advising clients about all facets of brand strategy, communications and design.*

*"The Ten Commandments of Marketing" series is the distillation of our decades of experience, epiphanies and, of course, mistakes, into something useful. We welcome your thoughts and comments.*



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