

Ask Yourself What it Means to be "A BRAND OF THE TIMES?"

Dear Clients and Colleagues,

As brands continually seek to gain relevance among new markets, Desgrippes Gobé will regularly share with you our current thinking on issues and ideas that are shaping this vital dialogue. What follows are essential questions everyone who owns or manages a brand needs to ask to determine if they are a "Brand of the Times."

DO MY DESIRED CUSTOMERS CONNECT WITH MY BRAND?

Today's consumer connects with brands that are emotionally relevant. Desgrippes Gobé believes that brand communications are sent and received at three emotional levels:



1-HEAD COMMUNICATION:
speaks to rational needs and desires.

2-HEART COMMUNICATION:
captures a sense of shared values and connection.

3-GUT COMMUNICATION:
taps into intuitive desires that generate a drive and badge-like attachment to a brand.

Ask yourself—what is my brand saying on all three of these levels?



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WHERE ARE BRANDS GOING?

The notion that brands are separate from the consumer is gone. Where consumers are going, brands are going. Think of it as a relationship. What we often find most compelling about another person is the totality of who they are: complexities, contradictions, even idiosyncrasies. Likewise, our relationship to brands has become multi-dimensional. We find contrasts appealing, depth compelling and dialogue engaging.

Ask yourself—is my brand communication a monologue or a dialogue?

If brands today inhabit a temporal zone, how do I identify the past/present/future values my brand conveys? The further we move into the 21st century, the more we will experience significant breakthroughs in nearly every aspect of life. Among the more significant shifts will be a redefinition of how brands function in our lives. Nearly every brand leverages a different "time zone" to communicate their values. Is a rich heritage among your values? Is your brand in tune and in touch with how consumers live today? Or, are you a risk taker at the forefront of innovation?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A BRAND OF THE PAST?

Brands of the past, like Ford, Disney and Hallmark, possess longevity, heritage and trust. They face the greatest challenge in becoming a "Brand of the Times" since relevance requires evolution, a delicate process of holding on to what consumers value while discarding what no longer resonates.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A BRAND OF THE PRESENT?

Brands of the present perfectly mirror how consumers want to live today. Always fresh, always current, they succeed by growing along with their primary audience. For this reason brands like Apple, Target and Jet Blue speak a similar language that consumers reward by allowing them full integration in their daily lives.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A BRAND OF THE FUTURE?

Brands of the future generate excitement by asking consumers to stretch beyond the known into a place where the visionary becomes palpable. They win big by challenging the status quo. Brands like Hewlett-Packard, British Petroleum and Microsoft have made defining what's next a normal part of doing business.

Ask yourself—is my brand about a rich past? Or, is my brand of the present—integrated into people's daily lives? Or, is my brand leading people toward an exciting future?



DOES MY BRAND SPEAK TO A SET OF VALUES THAT ARE MORE THAN A PRODUCT OR SERVICE?

More than ever, consumers are concerned with the values a brand represents. Companies like Whole Foods embody a set of values about healthy living that elevates the mundane process of grocery shopping into a full sensorial experience that reconnects consumers to food as a form of caring for themselves and others.

Ask yourself—what values does my desired customer hold dear and how does my brand support those values?



HAS MY BRAND DEMONSTRATED THE COURAGE TO REACH BEYOND A PRODUCT OR SERVICE?

The most successful brands today go beyond their product offering to connect with consumers in a myriad ways at exciting new touchpoints—through value-driven sponsorships, benevolent "good work" efforts, ingenious event tie-ins, etc.

Ask yourself—what effective marketing vehicles has my brand used over the past year to promote who we are versus what we do?



IS MY BRAND IN TUNE WITH AMERICA'S CULTURAL VALUES?

America has traditionally been a nation of heroes. We've been groomed on the mythology of winners and losers. As we move into the 21st century, this metaphor will have diminished currency. The culture will shift toward a focus on depth of relationships, depth of experience and richness of life. Brands that are in tune with contemporary values will reflect this deepening of connections that involves caring for something more lasting and meaningful than commercial success.

Ask yourself—what does it mean to be an American brand today?

How does my brand support our evolving collective values?



For more on Desgrippes Gobé and what it means to be a Brand of the Times, visit us at www.emotionalbranding.com.