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 A CLEAR VISION AND NEW IDEAS FOR
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Get emotional with millennials

Marion Chan | December 03, 2015

It is becoming abundantly clear that marketers have to provide more than just a great product at a great price that is readily available.

There will always be another company that can provide similar products that are better, cheaper, more visible, or have better marketing. Those things certainly help a product's success, but becoming more important is the emotional connection a customer has with a product that will create a long lasting connection.

In order to truly connect with your consumer, you as a company, no matter what you are offering, need to emotionally engage your consumers with exclusive experiences. This is particularly true for millennials.

To gain the attention and loyalty of millennials, which in and of itself can be very difficult, the key is to show that you appreciate them and their business.

- 41% like brands that ask for their opinion
- 50% buy products from companies who understand them and what they need
- 47% buy products from companies who care what they think

Source: *Project Millennial, October 2013*

Use marketing programs that resonate with millennials to convey the deep understanding you have of them. I argue that it's not that millennials are disloyal to brands—they're simply

Marion Chan
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forcing brands to work harder to gain their loyalty. Whenever I hear people talking about millennial brand loyalty, or lack thereof, I use Starbucks as an example of how brand loyalty is alive and well.

Millennials will walk an extra block or two, past other coffee shops, to pay a premium price for their grande venti, half fat, half sweet, double mac, cappuccino, macchiato with half chocolate and half cinnamon sprinkle.

For less than five dollars, Starbucks customers feel special and cool from the time they step into the store, to when they order their special coffee and finish drinking it. Why? Because Starbucks has done a fantastic job of emotionally engaging their customers with exclusive experiences.

How has Starbucks done this? One of the recipes to success is my crazy coffee description (I doubt that is a real coffee order...or could it be?). As a focus group participant in *Project Millennial* once said about what makes brands cool, “Starbuck’s makes you feel cool and special because you speak a language that not everyone understands.” This means that you know something not everyone knows — it’s exclusive. According to Ipsos’ Foodservice Monitor, a third of all Starbucks customers falls between the ages of 18-34.

In order to get millennial loyalty, Starbucks is constantly offering its customers something new and relevant. The in-store experience extends from the music you hear, to the environment you sit in, to the programs designed to encourage return customers, and not to mention how you order your coffee. It’s all part of the experience.

Starbucks certainly doesn’t have the monopoly on millennial loyalty. There are many other brands that are constantly connecting with an emotional side of millennials. Brands like Doritos, Apple, Chipotle, Victoria’s Secret and Dove (the health and beauty products not the chocolate), to name a few, have tapped into some part of the millennials psyche, and have continued to feed a specific need.

Labelling millennials as too difficult to capture because they are fickle is lazy-speak for “I don’t want to bother trying understand what makes millennials tick.”

If you are content to only sell product to millennials occasionally, or at a discount, then the path will be very short and very straight. If you want to avoid scrapping the bottom of the margin-barrel then be prepared to learn things that may be surprising and maybe even a little uncomfortable that will take you on a journey of discovery but ultimately toward success.



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