

Brand Building: Back to the Basics

As healthcare marketers, we are charged with the vital task of communicating the benefits of pharmaceutical therapies to the healthcare professionals (HCPs), patients, and payers we serve, with the goal of improving the health of individual patients, and more broadly, public health. The importance and challenges of communicating health-related information is on full display during the global coronavirus pandemic.

Delivering on the Promise

One of the more efficient ways to deliver critically important communication to healthcare customers is by building a strong pharma brand that connects stakeholders at all levels. Why is that? Well, simply put, a brand delivers an inherent promise to the customer. Delivery of that promise over time through brand experience builds trust or brand equity. Brand equity creates a relationship and a strong bond that grows over time. In an age of increasing choice, greater complexity, and limited time, brands can help break through the communication clutter and simplify choices.

As our normal lives and routines have been thrown into disarray, and we are all trying to adjust to the new normal of social distancing, we are being constantly reminded of fundamental concepts. Stay home, stay six feet apart, and wash your hands often, among other things. Fundamentals also exist for building successful brands. In my experience as a brand strategist advising clients, I have found that there can be wide differences in the application of these fundamentals. That said, it would probably be helpful to review the fundamentals of successful brand building.

Understanding the 4Cs

It goes without saying that before you begin to build your brand, you need to acquire a lot of information about the 4Cs: category, compound, competition, and customer. We need to uncover the customer challenges in the disease category and in the broader context of their lives. As the saying goes, nobody wants a quarter-inch drill bit, they want a quarter-inch hole. HCPs and patients don't want the pill or injection, they want the benefit

of alleviating the symptoms of disease — so what tensions exist that keep them up at night? Specifically, tensions that your brand can uniquely solve. The stronger the tension the better, as this is the fuel needed to change behavior. Don't settle for a surface level of customer knowledge. Dig deep. With this knowledge in hand, you can begin to build a strong healthcare brand.

Building Your Brand

Three key components of brand building are the development of brand positioning, brand character, and brand identity. Many brands spend far more time on developing positioning than brand character, which can short change the brands outward creative expression.

1. Brand Positioning

Brand positioning is the space you seek to own in the customer's mind. Brand positioning defines the target audience, competitive frame of reference, the brand promise, and reasons to believe that promise. The reasons to believe become the framework for the brand's message platform.

2. Brand Character

Brand character is how we personify the brand and bring it to life in a way that helps customers, develop a relationship and emotional connection. Brand character contains brand essence, brand values, and brand personality.

Brand essence is really the heart and soul of the brand, or what it stands for. A good illustration of this? The brand essence for the Disney brand is magical fun. It is crystal clear what the brand stands for and what customers feel when they experience the "magic" of Disney.

Brand values speaks to what the brand believes in. Disney believes in innovation, community, storytelling, optimism, and decency.

Brand personality is how the brand behaves. Disney's personality traits are happy, imaginative, caring, loyal, and full of laughter.

It's easy to see through the examples above how Disney is personified and how well they express these traits in all that they do. A strong



Gordon Olsen
Executive VP,
Brand Strategist
Ogilvy Health

To deliver critically important communication to healthcare customers, build a strong pharma brand that connects stakeholders at all levels.

brand character invites you to interact and have a relationship with the brand.

3. Brand Identity

Brand identity is the visual components of a brand that create recognition and provide differentiation. This is derived from the brand character. These include the brand logo, typeface, hallmark, and the color palette that is used in customer-facing communications. Did you know that in a study of the most recognized symbols across several nations, the McDonald's golden arch hallmark was in the top five, behind the Olympic rings, but ahead of the Christian cross?

It takes marketing discipline and great effort to get the fundamentals of building a brand the right way. Don't be tempted to forgo the fundamentals to chase the latest bright and shiny objects. When done well, the key elements of brand positioning, brand character and brand identity work seamlessly together to drive brand strategy and an integrated, differentiated communication platform. This will lead to a consistent brand experience with customers that builds strong brand equity. ^{PV}

Ogilvy Health makes brands matter by keeping our audiences' health, healthcare and wellness needs at the center of every touchpoint.

For more information, visit ogilvyhealth.com.