

Communicating value

Organizations should communicate their brand identity and their value proposition. Messages are communicated not directly to consumers but via codes that are decoded by the recipient of the message. Organizations should use codes wisely to enhance the chances of the audience interpreting the message in the way that it is intended. Codes include but are not limited to form, application, visual, sensorial, typographic, and haptic experiences, aesthetic, stories, episodes, scenes, as well as written or spoken words associated with the branded-product.

Brand managers should learn how to use these codes to facilitate consumers' interpretation of the brand communication and connect to customers at deeper levels. Compared to attitude strength, brand attachment has been shown to be a better predictor of purchase behavior, brand purchase share (share compared to immediate competitor brands; e.g., Coke vs. Pepsi), need share (share compared to extended competitors; e.g., Coke vs. Evian), and difficult behaviors such as relationship maintenance (Park et al. 2010). While attitude strength refers to an overall certainty that a given brand is good, brand attachment is a personal connection with the brand, an emotional bond that makes consumers perceive the brand as if it is part of themselves. To help the formation of brand attachment, brands should connect emotionally to consumers. A good understanding of the audience paired with effective communication that promotes such emotional connection can help toward that goal.

Highlighting your value

Although everything related to you communicates your brand identity, you can build a communication plan to express your brand and highlight your unique value. Choose codes that are consistent with your brand identity and value proposition. This will facilitate your audience's recognition of your message and will pave the way to build relationships. Highlighting your values may seem like a narrow niche strategy, but this is a good path for emotionally connecting to your audience, those who indeed value what you have to offer.

Identify the tools that you will use to communicate your unique value proposition (e.g., website, social media). This will help you become visible and memorable. Eventually, consistency in communicating and delivering your value proposition will help establish a strong connection with the people who matter to you, just like brands should aim at establishing resonance and relationships with customers as a way to sustain strong brands (Keller, 2001; Rust et al. 2009).