

Editorial: *Brands and Emotionally Connected Customers in an Omni Channel World*

In our previous issue we underlined retailers' need of synchronizing the physical and the digital worlds and continuously improving marketing's conversation focused on solutions tailored to the customer's specific situation and enriching customer experience (CX) while going on the way of gaining customer's trust. As it is well-known that CX strengthens customer loyalty, it is good to learn from: what the very recent "Forrester's 2018 CX Index for US brands" revealed, among other aspects, with regard to the brands' need to focus on emotion in making customers feel good about their experience with a brand;ⁱ what the "2018 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Brands and Social Media" highlighted, among other aspects (such as the calling into question by consumers of the commonplace data-based marketing techniques, considering their desire of having a better deal for their data), with regard to the likelihood of becoming emotionally attached to a brand (taking into account that 4 in 10 consumers responded that they are in this situation only when they are interacting via social media, and this within the context in which only 41% of respondents globally are having trust in social media according the 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer Global Report).ⁱⁱ

This led us to also recall the opinions expressed by the global CEO of Accenture Interactive, Brian Whipple, in an April issue of Adweek magazine this year with regard to the imperative of founding the purpose-built experiences upon the brand's value proposition and primary functions, ensuring that brand messaging is authentic and brand promises of improving consumers' lives are kept.ⁱⁱⁱ Moreover, the Chief Creative Officer Bruce Henderson from Jack Morton Worldwide argued a year ago that the proof of a brand's promise (the creation of awareness of a brand promise being the intention of advertising in all media channels) is delivered by effective brand experiences which are designed to create clearly identified valuable interactions (between brands and the people that matter most to them), the deeper emotional connections and greater brand affinity resulting only from well done interactions.^{iv} It is also worth remembering that according to a viewpoint expressed in February last year by Accenture providing personalized, engaging, relevant Omni-channel experiences is the direction brands should be heading, the perception of reliability and value being driven by the connectedness across the experience, companies feeling emotional.^v While in February this year, a Forbes Contributor, President of BusySeed, Omar Jenblat, highlighted that the secret to a powerful marketing strategy (and not only, also referring to the company's considerable financial gain) is the emotional connection with consumers,^{vi} making references, among other studies, to an article from the Harvard Business Review (HBR). This above mentioned HBR article is a true pledge for implementing an emotional-connection-based strategy across the entire CX (whose "true north" is considered the emotional connection), building and investing in the touch points which drive brands' connections with customers, because "emotionally connected customers are more than twice as valuable as highly satisfied customers" (considered on a lifetime value basis).^{vii}

On the other hand, from the viewpoint of B2B marketing, MarketingProfs^{viii} allow us from the very beginning of this year to not forget the important role played by emotions in both

B2B and B2C marketing, because B2B marketing is also taking place between human beings (“feeling creatures that think”, according to the neuroanatomist Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor), and emotion being considered the foundation for building a powerful brand including one with a technological edge for example. Just a few months later, in April 2018, the Chief Marketing Officer at cloud contact center provider NewVoiceMedia (one of the first to market with an Omni-channel contact center solution fully integrated for Salesforce), John Eng, attracted the attention on the importance of having seamless emotive conversations within a company’s Omni-channel strategy (across email, chat, SMS, video, social etc.), which involves ensuring the maintenance of the context between the interactions with customers who are entering and exiting conversations interchangeably across the ever-increasing number of channels. And there is no doubt that regardless of location, device or channel, the conversations need to be personalized, what is a task of such a cloud contact center provider knowing very well what customers value.^{ix}

In other words, we can say that including history shows to us that there is nothing new in approaching emotion, at least if we want to understand some wisdom quotes: “Human behavior flows from three main sources: desire, emotion, and knowledge” (Plato); “When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but creatures of emotion” (Dale Carnegie).

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References

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