

[>> JOIN AMA](#)

Search Blog

SEARCH THE BLOG...

About

Elevate, a blog created and delivered by the American Marketing Association, offers ideas and perspectives on the latest in marketing from experienced marketers, researchers and academics, and AMA leaders.

Never miss a post!



Subscribe to our blog

Categories

Advertising

Branding

Career

Digital Marketing

Engagement

Global

Marcom

Metrics

Multimedia

Publications

Research

Strategy

Uncategorized

[Popular Posts](#)[Contributors](#)[Archives](#)

- **8 Ways Big Data Will Transform Marketing in 2015**
- **Plotting a Course for Social Business**
- **The Biggest Lie in Marketing**
- **6 Steps to Build a Data-Driven Marketing Department**

Tags

[ama annual conference](#) [inspired marketing](#) [jp kuehlwein](#) [rethinking prestige branding](#)

[russ klein](#)

Follow Us

AMA E-newsletters

Bringing you the latest marketing news, information and thought leadership.

[Sign Up](#)

Check out more on AMA

AMA Membership

Events & Training

Marketing Careers

Resources

Multimedia

Partners

Elevate

Ideas and insights to take your marketing to the highest level

Home > Branding > Global > The Power of an Experience-Driven Brand

🕒 September 9, 2015



Russ Klein

Share

Tweet

G+ 8

134

The Power of an Experience-Driven Brand

💬 No Comments



I have had the privilege of spending time with **J.P. Kuehlwein**, executive vice president of Frédéric Fekkai, to discuss his views about what's next in the domain of brand management. After reading

Rethinking Prestige Branding: Secrets of the Ueber-Brands, the book that he co-authored with Wolfgang Schaefer, global chief strategy officer at ad agency SelectNY, and after just one conversation, I invited J.P. to deliver a keynote presentation at the **AMA's Annual Conference** that focuses on "Inspired Marketing." Why? It's rare that, in the area of brand strategy, we hear of truly fresh and new concepts that can advance both theory and practice.

You may have read **my historical account** of how the buyer/seller transaction has come full circle from what was once a "one at a time" merchant to customer relationship, with the advent of mass media to mass consumerism, then with the advent of technology and back to a technology-enabled personalized customer relationship.

All the while, the simple formula of a brand was "brand = promise + experience." I would assert that, for 75 years of mass consumerism, brand management was much more about the promise-making than it was about delivering an experience. Then along came brands like Starbucks that, for the longer part of their existence, weren't into the promise-making business. They were among the forerunners to usher in brands that were defined by the experience that they created.

The power of an experience-driven brand is the authenticity. I suppose it's why some marketers describe the retail transaction as "the moment of truth." In a sense, for an experience-driven brand, there aren't any promises to be broken. Customers' expectation is created by their last experience, not some insight-driven brand promise. It's not that there's anything wrong with an insight-driven brand promise; it's just that there is always such a risk that the people making the promise aren't the ones responsible for keeping the promise. And that's where the lack of alignment can create brand failure. It certainly helps to mitigate this risk when a company can adopt an enterprise-wide customer centricity, which simply underscores the critical role that today's marketer should be playing inside every organization. Every marketer should transcend the "department" mentality and become a source of enterprise-wide obsession with delivering the customer experience, and *then* work backward from that to align your brand promise.

J.P. Kuehlwein and Wolfgang Schaefer will be speaking about "ueber branding" at our upcoming conference. They have brilliant ideas about pushing past brands built on the promise of performance and pricing, and into the challenge of creating brand mythology. They go beyond the current school of thought on the importance of being a purpose-driven brand, in which I strongly believe, and beyond storytelling—which, of course, is all the rage as it pertains to so-called content marketing. The power of *the myth* is irrefutable, and it would be a mistake to equate brand mythology with puffery or things that are somehow deceptive. To me, mythology simply means "elusive or difficult to explain" ... but not untrue.

Importantly, there's no more inspiring source to build a brand myth than through delivering a spectacular brand experience.

The fact that we have come full circle, thanks to technology, to enable brands to return to personalized customer relationships is historically important context. Now add to it the insight that experiences represent a more durable approach to brand building, and at the same time, they represent the most inspiring sources of brand mythology, and you have a truly new model for brand management. These dynamics have set the stage for a renaissance in brand management and behavioral economics.

There's no better time in business history to be a marketing professional. It's not just because of all of the shiny, new objects in technology. Thanks to thought leaders like J.P. Kuehlwein and Wolfgang Schaefer, it's also because of a deeper human understanding of what motivates us to, in their own words, "long and belong" to a brand. I hope that every marketer reading this will take full advantage of these insights and opportunities, and re-aggregate your thinking around an experience-driven brand that can inspire mythological status in pop culture.

*J.P. Kuehlwein and Wolfgang Schaefer will be delivering a keynote presentation at the **AMA's "Inspired Marketing" Conference** in Austin, Texas, on Sept. 27-29. To learn more, visit AMA.org/Annual.*

Positively,



Russ Klein, CEO

[Branding](#)
[Global](#)

🔍 ama annual conference, inspired marketing, jp kuehlwein, rethinking prestige branding, russ klein



[AMA.Org](#)
[Home](#)
[About AMA](#)

[Resource Centers](#)
[Volunteers](#)
[Academics](#)

[AMA China](#)
[Media Kit](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Help Center](#)
[Terms & Conditions](#)
[Privacy](#)
[Site Map](#)

[Students](#)

[Topics](#)
[Advertising](#)
[Branding](#)
[Engagement](#)
[Digital](#)
[Global](#)
[Marcom](#)
[Metrics](#)
[Marketing Research](#)
[Strategy](#)

[Channels](#)
[Membership](#)
[Events/Training](#)
[Career](#)
[Community](#)
[Multimedia](#)
[Publications](#)
[Resources](#)
[Partners](#)

[Membership](#)
[Benefits](#)
[Join](#)
[Renew](#)
[Create Online Account](#)
[Subscription Center](#)
[Update Profile](#)

[Services](#)
[Marketing Research Directory](#)

>> JOIN AMA

The American Marketing Association
311 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 5800
Chicago, IL 60606
Tel:(800)AMA-1150 or (312)542-9000
Fax:(312)542-9001

Copyright 2014 American Marketing Association

This site content may not be copied, reproduced, or redistributed without the prior permission of the American Marketing Association or its affiliates.