

Proof of a concept: building brand awareness



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Marketing is truly the heart and soul of converting sales. With every marketing effort, you are working to sell a product or service and build a level of brand awareness for your company. Brand awareness is quickly defined as the extent to which consumers are familiar with the distinctive qualities or image of particular brand of goods or services.¹ Creating brand awareness, especially within the point of sale industry, requires following a certain set of steps.

First and foremost, you must decide how you want your brand to be associated with your products. When a company sells multiple products or offers multiple services, often times they must focus in on one important good or service (likely the one which generates the most profit), and associate their brand with that. For example, when you think of Coca-Cola, most people think of the soft beverage that everyone refers to as “Coke.” People often forget that Coca-Cola generates an entire line of beverages including Sprite, Fanta, Dasani, and many more. Coca-Cola, recognizing that Coke is the product that is most associated with their brand, uses this product as the base of their marketing efforts to build brand awareness.

That part is done, and now people know what goods or services your company offers. Now you must work to associate your brand with thought. What adjectives do you want people to associate with your brand? Do you want to be thought of as innovative? Do you want to be thought of as reliable? Do you want to be thought of as trendy? Associate these types of adjectives with your brand is what really draws people in to your company’s product. Now, the challenge is associating those adjectives and thoughts with your product itself.

When building brand awareness, a company must first associate their brand with their product, and then associate their brand with thought. The next step in the process is to associate those thoughts with your products. It is important to make sure that

the two match. For example, a company that makes garbage cans would not want define their brand as being innovative. The two do not match. Apple, a brand well known for their sleek smart phones and laptop computers, is the perfect company to define themselves as innovative, because they offer a modern and creative design for their products. After you associate a certain thought with your brand, you must make sure that those thoughts are associated with products as well.

Now, prove it. Modern-day marketing has a huge focus on content creation from social media content, to blog content, to web content. The problem with brand awareness and content creation is that content does not show people that your product is the best; it only tells people that your





product is the best. Once you have created brand awareness through content, it is time to prove that what you are saying is true. There are a number of ways to do this.

A very common and very effective way to display your company's success and help support your brand awareness is through customer success stories and testimonials. People tend to trust brands that have success stories and testimonials from their customers because it proves that the product is what the brand says it is, and it proves that customers are satisfied with the product. This goes back to the association of product and the association of thought with your brand.

People feel more comfortable with a particular brand when they see it become a commonality in their market or peer group. Generally, people tend to follow the crowd and common trends, and that is no different with brands. When you see someone effectively using and satisfied with a specific product, it makes you more trusting of that product and

brand. We can say all we want, but seeing is believing.

Understanding what brand awareness is, is just the beginning of creating it. Companies often have a clear vision of how they want to define their brand, but do not know how to efficiently execute a marketing plan to build their brand awareness. First, it is important to understand the marketing channels and tools available to you to build your brand. It is also important to keep in mind that the number one way to create brand awareness for your company is through forming connections.

The number one way companies build their brand awareness and form connections in this industry is through trade shows. Trade shows are a great opportunity to build brand awareness because they allow you to form immediate connections. This allows the customer to actually get up close and personal with your product before purchasing, and creates a more trusting relationship between the customer and your brand.

Through trade shows, customers can have the opportunity to ask questions and form a valuable connection to the company they are taking interest in.

Another way to form connections is through social media marketing. Social media marketing is one of the top places where companies go to create brand awareness. Building brand awareness is especially appealing through social media because it allows you to give your company a "brand voice." Brand voice defined is the purposeful, consistent expression of a brand through words and prose styles that engage and motivate.² Interacting with customer through social media creates a trusting experience, and helps you to prove that your company's brand is what you say it is.

Lastly, it is important to remember that building brand awareness for your company is a marathon, not a sprint. Building a brand starts with a vision of what you want your company to be, followed by a strategic marketing plan for how to achieve your goals and a dedicated team who is ready to go out and show the world what your company and your brand stands for. It is about more than the products you offer; it's also about the thought and feeling that consumers associate with your product. Building a brand, and associating thought with your company is only the beginning. The real challenge is proving it. c

¹ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/brand-awareness.html>

² <http://larsen.com/insights/creating-the-right-brand-voice/>