

Paper: 'Build strong brands; integrate product and promotion'

Sales promotions should have more pull, and less push. In plain English: sales promotions should not bother people by thrusting a product upon them, but rather whet their curiosity by offering something that is relevant to them. Marketing should, therefore, assume a greater focus on the so-called 'brand core' (i.e. the product), and less on the (sales) promotion. This is the conclusion Ingmar de Lange (Mountview) arrives at after her study into the future of branding in relation to the product and promotion.

The new marketing philosophy propagated by De Lange can be rolled out in two ways. Firstly, brands can offer people entertainment, meaning the brands themselves will be drawing attention to the promotion. So-called 'virals' on YouTube are an example of this strategy, as are specific brand events such as the New Year's dip in the North Sea organised by Dutch sausage maker Unox (fun promotions instead of irritating ones). The second way picks up from the first one and goes a little deeper. This form of promoting a product/brand offers a functional benefit that stays close to the brand core. An ensuing promotion will, in this case, not only be fun, but also have a useful side to it. Examples include coffee brand Douwe Egberts' wake-up service (waking up to a cup of coffee), mobile phone giant Nokia's charging service or Silence Booth (a sound-proof booth where users can make calls without being disturbed by background noise). Such promotions provide the consumer with added value.

The moral of De Lange's story is that the marketing mix needs a revamp. A promotion should be made sufficiently potent to seriously back up the P of product. In the same vein as experience economy gurus Pine & Gilmore's statement that companies should be able to charge people for a good brand experience, a good pull promotion (a promotion targeting a clear need) should also be something companies can charge people for. Because when charging people for a promotion is out of the question, the promotion does not add relevant value.

Promotions that offer value basically become products in their own right. Or, in other words, product and promotion fuse. Such fusion can also come about in the opposite way; a product can have a promotional function. One British furniture maker, for example, built special edition furniture under the name VIP, Very Important Products, to commemorate its fortieth anniversary. The pieces

of furniture from this range were designed by celebrities of the likes of Ewan McGregor and Daft Punk.

Reference(s)

Lange, de, I. (2008) Bouw sterkere merken, integreer product en promotie. [Build stronger brands, integrate product and promotion]. White paper Mountview (10p).*

* : available in the EURIB library.