

How "sure" is your brand?

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9 Feb 2009

Consistency of delivery is one of the critical differentiators that make for a reputable brand. It's a product's constancy of purpose to meet consumer expectations at all times, in all places and for all cadres of user-ship profiles. This comes across to the market as uniformity, reliability, dependability or standardised homogeneity.

In the brand's pursuit to remain "sure" to the market demands and consumers' expectations, I have proposed a four-factor determinant that makes for "a **SURE** brand" that maintains stability by balancing varying market variables to its advantage.

The four determinants that make for my **SURE** theory are trea**SURE**, plea**SURE**, lei**SURE** and mea**SURE**.

TreaSURE dimension: At the core of every successful brand is the mythical dimension that the consumers must perceive as their "special diamond or gold" that deserves a premium. Every brand must strive to mean more to its core audience than related products within its category as a basis for sustainable differentiation. This "treasure" in the brand provides the symbolic hook that the consumers latch on to as a mental prop for self projection. The luxury brands have mastered this principle and make us all pay more for this unseen treasure that subliminally gratifies our quest for ideal self. This "treasure" can be a physical attribute like Absolut's purity or conceptual theme like Orange's "bright future". Consumers' continuous search for this "treasure" provide the basis for affinity and enduring loyalty. A brand's "treasure" however, is not always superficial as a surface discovery. It takes "insight miners" to dig it out.

PleaSURE dimension: Brands become endearing objects by the very special sensory feeling that consumers associate with every point of use. This often triggers positive evocation and desire for repeat purchase as it redefines the basic utility that the product delivers. Every brand must create this pleasurable "sync" with the consumer. It must be a memorable feeling of joy, satisfaction, belonging etc. that the consumers can codify and store in their subconscious as their "special moment with the brand". Coca Cola must always deliver the pleasures of refreshment as Disney is under a mandate to be a worthy "magical moment".

LeiSURE dimension: Beyond the treasure and the pleasure is the externalised fun-time or subtle indulgence that makes a brand create a shared recreation space for users to share their collective experience as a "hobby". Harley Davidson riders have extended its mythical treasure to a leisure platform where members engage, share and reinforce their collective loyalty to the brand. It makes great engagement for consumers to turn your brand experience into their leisure. It's a winning strategy! Another popular case is the growing loyal fan base around Chelsea FC for example. Every gathering to watch their team play is an elevated leisure space for Chelsea loyalists to share a collective adoration as a "branded" ritual.

MeaSURE dimension: Every brand must extend its relevance to a quantifiable platform where the consumer can capture

the special emotional value they have for the brand. It's a mental calculation of the opportunity cost of not using the brand. Heinz "measure" was defined by how much customers will move from one store to another until a Heinz product is found, even where there are cheaper alternatives. The true test of a "sure" brand is the unseen value that the consumers consciously associate with it, even when they do not know the actual price on display. It is exciting each time you hear the consumers say "that shoe should be more expensive than that price tag on it". It confirms that consumers can deduce cues for right product pricing and a very insightful trade-off analysis should be able to identify these unseen utility measures.

In financial measures for example, it's known that a bottle of Coca Cola is 90% unseen "measure". This metric challenges modern brand strategists to be able to define, capture and evaluate the "unseen" element of your brand because it's the pillar for winning in the long term.

The future of every successful brand is proportional to an efficient management of these four-**SURE** factors to secure relevance for today and the future.

ABOUT BAYO ADEKANMBI

Bayo Adekanmbi is a DNA Biochemist, who has come to find expression in brand/marketing strategy and creative planning. A versatile researcher in emerging market dynamics, emerging middle-class of BRICs, N-11 and BOP markets and strategic evolution of global brands from emerging markets of Africa and the Middle East. He provides strategic counsel on brand development and marketing strategy at C-level to telcos, banks and FMCG. He believes great brands are products of a deliberate alignment of the brand's eternal purpose and an insight into the core of the consumer's being within a defined cultural context. Bayo is a certified marketing analyst, brand strategist with a postgraduate qualification in marketing from CIM, UK and an INSEAD alumnus. He leads a team of strategists and idea generators on the MTN business at DDB Lagos as executive strategy/business director. He shares his activated thoughts about brands and strategy at <http://naijaq.blogspot.com>.

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