

INTRODUCTION



Marketing Is a Spectator Sport

Observing, Learning, and Then Applying

WE INTERACT WITH BRANDS ALL THE TIME, whether we consciously realize it or not. Some brands we've been loyal to for years (like a favorite shampoo or pair of jeans), and some we are just discovering for the very first time (like a new enhanced water drink or a new electronic device). Some we don't even know are brands (like our favorite singer or a local restaurant)! Our interactions can run the gamut from amazing to just okay to disappointing to completely horrible.

Like clicking on a banner ad that takes you to a website where you find the perfect item you didn't even realize you wanted, in a cool color you didn't even realize existed, and discovering that it comes with free shipping—coincidentally only on orders placed that

day! Pretty amazing. Or stopping at your favorite coffee shop, noticing that it's a lot messier than it used to be, getting the wrong flavor added to your usual coffee drink, and then being charged 67 cents more than usual. Very disappointing.

These kinds of interactions are our personal experiences with brands, and they completely shape our perceptions. They influence our feelings about the brand, good or bad, whether we realize it or not. These experiences define our thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors toward brands and the value that they bring to our lives.

In a sense, how we experience the brand, how we feel the brand, and how we choose to interpret the brand actually becomes the brand to us. This is *The Experience Effect*, and throughout the book we'll be exploring the effect that brand experiences have on consumers.

At the crux of good marketing is the conscious and methodical process of determining exactly the kind of brand to offer consumers and exactly the kind of experience to create for them—and then developing it consistently across every facet of the marketing plan: from obvious marketing elements like packaging and advertising, to the not so obvious elements like customer service representatives, the CEO's weekly blog, or a branded Twitter presence. The essence of good marketing is creating a consistent brand experience with each specific consumer interaction.

In *The Experience Effect*, I will walk you through that conscious and methodical process step by step, chapter by chapter. By the end, we will have mapped out a consistent and ownable brand experience for the entire marketing plan.

We will also be exploring a lot of examples here. Some of the examples will be personal, and some observational. Some we'll explore in depth, and others will be brief mentions to help make a point. I love looking at and analyzing examples of good and bad marketing, and you'll get a load of them in this book. Marketplace

examples help bring to life the principles of marketing that are otherwise left to theory. When we observe marketing theory applied in the real world to real brands, we can learn from both the successes and mistakes of others and apply what we've learned to our own marketing challenges.

In this book we'll look at brands from sportswear to restaurants and from cookies to celebrities. We'll look at traditional, digital, and social media forms of communication. Some examples will be real brands that have become a part of pop culture, and other examples will remain unbranded to help make a point more clearly. We can learn something a little different from each one of them. My hope is to bring the principles of the experience effect to life through these examples. Marketing is a spectator sport and we all can learn by watching brands in action!

My goal in writing was to make this book easy to read. There'll be no heavy technical jargon or complicated theories, no buzzwords or three-dimensional spreadsheets, just some practical advice with a real-world approach. In many cases, I'll simplify a concept we're discussing just to make the point clearer. It's kind of my style in life. It's not that I don't want to present the complexity of the concepts; it's just that I believe that simplicity brings clarity. We can always add complexity later.

Here's how *The Experience Effect* will unfold. First we'll talk about what it is and why it's important, and then we will build it together. Step by step.

In chapter one, we'll do a full-scale definition of "the experience effect" so we can all start out on the same page, so to speak. Like I said, no buzzwords and technical jargon, just a real-life definition that we can wrap our heads around.

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In chapter two we'll outline the importance of brand experiences to successful marketing. I'm hoping that it has already started to prove its worth. Chapter two is where you'll get the answer to the question "Why bother?".

In chapter three we'll take the first step toward leveraging the experience effect by defining the brand. We need to know the brand intimately before starting to build a consumer experience for it. We need to make some conscious decisions up front to guide the brand definition process and to make sure that the experiences come out the way we intend, including putting a stake in the ground about the brand and its offerings for consumers. To help clarify the brand definition, we will compare and contrast it using other brands within the same category.

Chapters four, five, and six are devoted to consumer targeting. Good marketing begins and ends with consumers, so we'll take a look at understanding our consumer targets, whether a brand has one or many. We'll look at developing profiles for our consumers and how to connect with them in multiple ways. We'll explore some grassroots, real-world research techniques that will culminate in meaningful, thorough consumer understanding. Having a true understanding of the real consumer is the key ingredient in developing a brand experience.

The next three chapters, seven, eight, and nine, are where we begin constructing the foundation of the experience effect by mapping, activating, and tailoring touchpoints. As you'll see, touchpoints are so critical to the success of the brand experience and in many ways constitute the marketing plan. These days every brand is asking how to go digital and how to get into social media. By the time we're done with chapter nine, you'll know the ins and outs of maximizing touchpoints, digital and otherwise, and you'll have the knowledge necessary to tailor each relevant touchpoint for its best use.

With our plan almost completely built, chapter ten provides inspiration by looking at the best of the best in brand experiences at touchpoints. In this chapter we'll meet some of the industry's greats and see how they use touchpoints to build unique consumer interactions as part of their brand.

Chapter eleven is about making choices, and we'll take an entertaining look at celebrity brands and how they too have an experience effect. As marketers, we can learn a lot from celebrities and how they make choices to market their brands.

In chapter twelve, we'll go back to research and discover how to make sure that the touchpoint experiences we have created are effective. Each should be maximized for its best use, and research can help prove our work one way or the other. This is a well-known step in television advertising development, but we need to do the same level of due diligence for all the other touchpoints.

In chapter thirteen, it's time to make sure the brand experience is ownable, so we'll investigate ways to make sure it belongs to your brand and your brand alone. There are some simple techniques like using colors and logos, as well as more complicated ones like employing claims and brand character. We'll discuss a range of ways to make the experience effect ownable, and, of course, we'll be looking at a lot of examples.

Chapter fourteen is where we complete our work by making sure that we've fully covered all bases. We'll take a step back to see the progress we have made since the beginning of this book. You'll learn how to do a gap assessment to see what aspects need further development and to help prioritize your resources. The gap assessment also helps us to continually evolve the brand experience over time.

Marketers never act alone, so chapter fifteen will offer some tips to keep teammates in the loop and to share the full range of

marketing work with everyone who touches the brand. Marketing is not only a spectator sport, but a team sport as well!

We will be building the experience effect throughout this book, from the ground up. As you read, you'll see how to create a unique brand experience in a logical, methodical fashion. Real marketplace examples will help you make it come to life.

My goal for this book is to make it not only easy to read, but also easy to apply to your own brand so that you don't just get theory, you get practicality, and so you don't just read, you apply.

The experience doesn't have to end here. Visit my website, JimJosephExp.com, to continue the journey. You can ask me questions and do some more exploring, and maybe even hook up with other marketers to compare notes.

Let the journey begin!