

Why brand health matters

By Paula Sartini

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The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the world and consumer needs have evolved accordingly. Consumers are more discerning now than they were a year ago and what they wanted from brands before may no longer matter to them today.



Source: www.pexels.com

This is supported by McKinsey which found that [40% of consumers switched brands or retailers during the past year](#) as customer concerns shifted to safety and hygiene and their expectations of brands changed. As customers are reevaluating their expectations, companies need to adapt to stay relevant.

As a starting point, companies need to assess their brand health and determine if they are still relevant in the market today. To achieve this, they need to understand what is important to their customers today and evaluate if their brand purpose and brand promise are still relevant for today's discerning consumers.

Reassessing customer needs

Companies have spent a lot of time and money building their brands over the years. However, over the past year, brand expectations have changed and consumers now expect more of the brands they support. They are looking for brands to live their values and demonstrate a greater commitment to their employees and the communities they operate in. They are looking for brands to be purpose-driven and accountable, taking action to help people in this unprecedented time.

This is supported by Brand Finance which states that [brand expectations have changed](#), and they are now expected to provide collaboration, protection, and security. This means that companies need to shift their focus from brand campaigns and consider how their brand actions can improve the lives of their customer and prioritise employee safety if they are to build their brand reputation.

The Checkers Sixty60 app is a great example of how a company adapted its business model to meet its customer's needs. The pandemic led to a radical shift in online shopping and the app provided a seamless experience at a time when people didn't feel safe leaving their homes, demonstrating the company's commitment to customer wellbeing and customer experience.

Customer experience remains important

Many companies have changed how they work, putting employee safety at the fore and enabling them to work from home during the pandemic. While this was necessary and important, it has impacted customer experiences. With employees fragmented and working from disparate environments, the quality of experiences is likely to be inconsistent.

To help employees provide the best customer experience, they need access to the right information at the right time. Systems need to be put in place to empower employees to provide quality support to customers wherever they may be working from. This is supported by SmarterCX, which states that service teams should be empowered to work from home with the right tools and knowledge base to [assist customers with consistent information](#).

Human touch matters

With people spending time in isolation, the human experience is more important than ever. Brands enable customers to connect with humans, get assistance, receive emotional support, and solve a problem. This human touch is critical to customer experience and to building trust. According to McKinsey, a primary barometer of customer experience will be [how businesses deliver experiences and services to meet customer needs](#) with empathy, care, and concern.

This is supported by findings from the latest [Global Marketing Trends Report](#) from Deloitte, which found that customers are seeking authentic human connection from brands with more than a quarter of consumers stating that they will walk away from companies they perceive to be acting self-interestedly.

Consistency gives reassurance

As the pandemic has created great uncertainty for many people around the world, customers want consistency from the brands that they support as they seek stability and reassurance at this time. As such customer expectations verse the experience they receive is critical at this time and is a key measure for brand health. According to PwC, [consistency is more essential in 2021](#) than ever as customers expect seamless experiences and this, in turn, builds trust, loyalty, and customer retention.

Measuring brand health

According to Deloitte, brand health is a measure of how well a company or brand delivers on certain attributes of a product or service that it promises its customers, especially how those attributes are perceived by customers in terms of quality and delight. Given that customer expectations of brands have changed over the past year, companies need to assess their brand promise and customer expectations to determine if they can align.

Forrester suggests that brand experiences and customer experiences be tightly interwoven by implementing four key components. First, companies should evaluate the brand strategy, second, they need to ensure it flows through to the customer experience. Third, they need to enable the brand promise to become a reality and then implement structures to ensure the delivery of the customer experience. Finally, companies need to measure the brand experience against the customer experience.

As customer needs change, brands need to adapt to remain healthy and competitive. This means understanding what customers want, engaging employees, and implementing technologies to help empower employees to deliver consistent brand experiences and delight customers regardless of where they are working from.

Points to remember to maintain brand health

To maintain brand health companies need to continually track and measure their brand and customer engagement as follows:

- Assess the brand and determine if the values make a difference in the lives of employees and customers
- Measure the customer experience by gathering customer feedback. This can be achieved with a Net Promoter Score or similar mechanism
- Give employees technology solutions that free them up to engage with customers directly and provide the personal touch that makes each customer feel important
- Put measures in place to deliver consistent brand experiences in every customer interaction
- Consistently measure your brand health by evaluating your brand strategy and ensure that it flows into the customer experience.

It is important to measure brand health regularly and adapt the brand strategy to meet customer's evolving needs. These should be tracked using a brand measurement tool which provides analytics based on branded content and emails vs. brand engagement and customer reactions.

ABOUT PAULA SARTINI

With over 20 years' experience helping leading organisations overcome various business challenges, Paula understands the challenges that companies face in delivering a consistent brand experience and the impact this has on their bottom line. An analytical thinker that strives to solve business problems with innovative solutions, Paula believes that technology plays a major role in solving critical business and branding challenges. As such, she established BrandQuantum to help businesses overcome their branding challenges in the digital age.

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