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ReadThinkLearnLaugh

Hi there Dennis

It's March already! (Only 300 days to Christmas!) Changing things up for you - and keeping it short & sweet. The theme is TOP 3 - enjoy the links and downloads.

THINK: The Downside of Brand Loyalty and the Meaning of Life

Is marketing evil?

Do you feel guilty that your job is essentially the promotion of conspicuous consumption?

Is selling stuff for a living just so shallow?

Is or was it something that bothered you? Have you ever thought you should just chuck it all in and go and work for a charity or volunteer for missionary work because of the apparently meaninglessness of your day job?

This is something that took me a long time to resolve, and it was important to me that I was able to reconcile my desire to live a worthy life with my need to earn a living.

By their nature, organisations are systems that demand consistency and predictability - and ultimately repeat business. Converting customers into brand loyal followers achieves all of this. Organisations have created (or rather adopted) the notion of brand to hi-jack consumer decision-making; to improve the odds of repeat business.

Because marketers strive to make their brands the preferred choice (top of mind) to the exclusion of all others, a brand is meant to become some shortcut for decision-making.

When marketers succeed, there is a significant downside to the consumer. Once people become brand loyal, they:

- Forfeit the opportunity to experience variety
- Deny themselves the opportunity to seek and find greater value
- Miss out on the epistemic value of new products/services
- Impoverish their long-term decision-making ability as they fail to evaluate and incorporate changing values and product attributes.

Consumers trade all of that for a few seconds of thinking time when it comes to making a purchase.

If conspicuous consumption is undesirable and creating brand loyalty (arguably the marketers number one job) is the strategy to tip the odds in favour of the organisation to the detriment of the consumers; does that mean what we do for a living is bad or unworthy?

The answer, in my mind at least, is absolutely not.

Whilst any one job in any one organisation in isolation may seem to be promoting conspicuous consumption to the detriment of individuals, there is a bigger picture here.

Collectively, as we all do our individual jobs, we are contributing to a rich and diverse society that offers people choices. It is not just me promoting my brand, there is you, and John and Jerry and Mary and Sue too. And it all adds up to a market place that gives society a rich palette of options.

So while the individual's pursuit of his or her own goals seems narrow and selfish, the fact that there are millions doing so simultaneously, means we have created a system that, as a whole, is a healthy environment.

That is the epitome of civilisation: people who are free to exercise their choices and have the opportunity to do so.

And despite what you may read in pseudo-science magazines from time to time, marketers cannot control consumers' minds. Subliminal advertising (and the story about coke & popcorn ads flashing during a movie) is just urban legend.

So, when you are promoting your product, you are actually part of a bigger ecosystem which is a crucial part of our social fabric - without which our lives would be so much the poorer.

TOP 3 BLOG POSTS

1. If you do nothing else, and think you can do with a bit of perspective, [read this wonderful story](#).
2. Are you curious about the [Indian Retail market](#)? Some interesting stats there...
3. Do you want to understand the most important number in retail? Start [here](#)...and if necessary, do a search in the blog for more posts on the topic.

TOP 3 ONLINE TOOLS:

1. The small business [marketing guide](#) (brought to you by HP.)
2. A free online invoicing (billing & tracking) [system](#). (I personally use it.)
3. Google's very own, online, [interactive marketing plan](#) builder.

Bonus: I am also trialling [Smartsheets](#)...

LAUGH

Over 24m views, and over 30,000 five-star ratings. [What this...](#)

RETAILSMARTRESULTS MEMBERS ONLY

1. Powerful Offline Marketing

Found this online by DMS Retail. An e-book listing and describing a loooong list of all the offline marketing tactics you can imagine. Many are old hat, but it is a good reminder.

2. TOP 3 Ads of all time

I uploaded YouTube videos of 3 of the best marketing ideas of all time - and I mean all time. Check it out.

3. The VEIN footwear case study

Vein is a fresh concept in footwear. The link in the title will download a Word document which is

a summarised brand /brief shared between owner and designer. There are also two great pics in the gallery. After all that, visit their website and let Chris know what you think.

4. Member-of-the-month: KAYLASH.

Check out his profile. Check out his organisation. Can you maybe do business with him? Do you have something in common? Can you learn something from each other?

All retailsmartresults group members can simply request information/ tool/ document from the admin team and if we don't have it, will find it for you.

If you liked this, you could return the favour by doing one of the following **TOP 3** things:

1. Join up at [RetailSmartResults](#) (if not a member) OR ask colleagues and friends to sign
2. Forward this newsletter to all & sundry... (link below)
3. Subscribe (email or reader) to [the blog](#)...

Thanks for reading Dennis - have fun

Dennis, Moonyeen & Crew

BONUS: And just because you've read through to the end of this issue, how about [this article](#), listing the **10 most addictive sounds** in the world. (Guess what it is before you click...)

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