



Michelli's Musings on Mirthful Matters

What's going right...

What's Love Got to Do With It?

The oft quoted Confucius once said "Wheresoever you go, go with all your heart." Unfortunately, some business leaders I've run into must not have been exposed to Confucius. All too often business transactions become mechanical and complex and the joy and passion for customer connections are lost in cumbersome systems and a pre-occupation with productivity.

As we come out of February, a month noted for hearts, love and Valentine's Day in the United States, many companies have started to champion a message of hope, joy, and enthusiasm. After a rather austere and somber 2009, it is a refreshing change. A classic example of this emotional expression can be found in the brand presentation of BMW.

In a recent article for the Wall Street Journal, Thom Forbes writes, "BMW, which has long promoted the power and performance of its cars with auto-focused ads and its 'ultimate driving machine' tagline, is shifting into a new gear with a campaign that highlights the joy of owning its vehicles....The campaign also features photos of actual BMW owners more than product shots." Jack Pitney, vp of marketing for BMW North America shares, "We hope to really add some humanity to our brand and show the diversity of buyers." In one advertisement entitled "Joy is BMW," the text reads: "At BMW we don't make cars. We make joy."

Madelyn Hochstein, president of DYG, a market-research firm that works with BMW, notes "People now want to lead a richer life, rather than a life of riches." Thom concludes his article with a message I've championed long before consumer confidence was an issue. He notes, "It's important to clarify that leaders communicating a hope-based message do not see hope as a 'strategy' but instead are leveraging the talents and passions of their people to create solutions for frightened consumers by inspiring them to look to a positive future."

As a leader, are you sharing "hope" and, yes, even "love" to leverage the talents and passions of your people to create solutions for your customers and inspire them to a positive future?

Did you Know?

According to Motorola, 51% of shoppers overall and 64% from the 18-to-34 age group used their mobile phones for in-store shopping-related activities during the 2009 holiday season. This included comparing prices, finding user reviews and making a purchase via mobile.

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According to a Forrester study, 43% of consumers switch channels during the shopping process and as people move between channels – online, offline, and mobile – they have a 45-50% chance of changing the retailer they will end up purchasing from.

Given continuing trends challenging “brand loyalty,” I am on the cusp of announcing two very exciting offerings. One involves a pending book agreement for an amazing company that excels in forging customer evangelists and another is a service business that I am partnering on to strengthen WOWful Connections with customers. You’ll find more on both in the next newsletter.