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LIVING YOUR BRAND

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So what exactly is the mystery of living your brand?**The mystery of living your brand?**

The simplicity of aligning identity and image is where most brands, whether commercial, person or service, forget the essence of who they are and lose the commitment to the reason of existence: in this instance a luxury brand promise to you the enthusiast. It's most definitely a stale, over-complained-about problem: private banks with limitless call centre holding or no returns policies at top-line stores. So what's the problem here? Your living has been compromised.

So in the same way that International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge said that London refreshed the Olympic brand but managed to deliver exactly what it historically promises is what living your brand is essentially driven by. Exceeding expectations but remaining true to the cherished standards that have built the brand in the first place, what has attracted you, the devotee, and tantalized the critics.

So the enigma with living the brand comes from the internals and radiates outwards. According to Kathleen Quinn Votaw, 68% of customers who abandon a brand leave not because of product dissatisfaction but by an indifferent attitude of a single employee. So product, advertising, research and every other cent spent on a brand is futile if the human element is not catered for. The human element includes the actual person to person interaction (service) but also the decisions that affect the person desperately trying to engage with the brand (conditions to the service).

Jim Signorelli, CEO of ESW Partners, believes in the importance of buyers' involvement on an emotional level when supporting a brand's true meaning: the beliefs and values that explain behaviours. He suggests looking at the 'why' of the brand, the reasons a brand does what it does. Here are his five situations to assess to see where brands you hold in great esteem are measuring up:

1. Functional outcome: what is the underlying value you receive?

2. Describe the opposite of the said brand.
3. Create your brand's story hero: what does the hero value as important and is it you?
4. Review your set of values: do they align with the brand?
5. Get feedback: invite some criticism on your brand choices

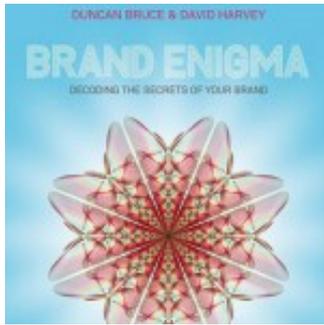
In "Brand enigma: Decoding the secrets of your brand" a book by Duncan Bruce and David Harvey they reiterate that living your brand can only succeed when what you do (realistically) matches with the promise you're making to your engagers. So as an engager can you hear this promise and match it up with the brand's actions?

If they don't align it's time to find synergy elsewhere. It's actually that easy.

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