Chapter 15
Emotionally Engaging Customers Through Storytelling

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ABSTRACT

Businesses are considered to have reached the zenith of progression once they are able to value and create emotionally engaging customer experiences. Its importance relies on creating strong customer-business relationships in order to increment brand value, customer loyalty, and business growth. Emotional marketing is well acclaimed for introducing storytelling as a tool that facilitates establishing emotional connections. As described by the 5 C model, care for customers, content creation, communication, connection, and customer interaction are essential customer experience elements that when applied to storytelling can create significant relationships. Applying these can create three main types of customer-business relationships: functional, emotional, and symbolic relationships. Through ADANCO 2.1.1, the authors were able to test the goodness of model fit. The indicator SRMR (standardized root mean squared residual) provided information that corroborates that adding emotional elements to customer experience can strengthen the way a business is perceived by the customer.

INTRODUCTION

In the actualized and globalized market that businesses face today, competition and innovation present a challenge. With the availability of such competition and customization of products, gaining and retaining customers is a difficult endeavor. In today's market, the definition of success in business is "the value that is added by the customers of businesses," and building significant relationships is necessary

to achieve this goal. Building emotionally engaging experiences by using storytelling techniques can increase brand value, retain customers, create brand loyalty, and help the business progress. Seventy percent of emotionally engaged customers tend to spend twice as much on products from brands to which they are loyal, and 80 percent of these customers are likely to recommend these brands to friends and family (Senecal & Nantel, Jacques, 2004). A customer achieving an emotional and engaging experience through storytelling can help build three types of relationships: functional, emotional, and symbolic (Shu-Pei, 2011; Feldman, 2007). A functional relationship develops when a customer sees a certain positive outcome from a product purchase. In this case, the story typically involves a problem that needs to be solved and portrays how the product solves the problem by highlighting its functionality and benefits. The relationship that arises is ongoing, limited, and typically formed when a buyer purchases a product habitually to satisfy their basic needs. An emotional relationship is formed when the story generates positive feelings toward using the product and leaves the customer feeling satisfied. The emotions generated add value and richness to the experience of purchasing a product, which can be extremely important as most brands have to create sentimental connections to stand out and differentiate themselves from their competitors. When customers are emotionally attached to a certain product, they will remain loyal to the brand despite the appearance of new entrants. A symbolic relationship arises when the story depicts inspirational content to which the customer can relate, such as who they are and who they wish to be. Symbolic relationships correspond to a customer's self-esteem and the feeling of being socially acceptable; therefore, customers will only purchase products that are associated with a certain prestige.

Emotional marketing uses storytelling to evoke deep-rooted emotions that help a business connect with customers. According to Tyrha Lindsey-Warren, a clinical assistant professor of Marketing in the Baylor University Hankamer School of Business, an empowered storyteller can create emotions that have a positive impact on customer attitude and behavior (Woodside, A.G, Sood, S., & Miller, K.E., 2008; Kemp et al., 2021). Hamelin et al. showed using biometrics data such as eye tracking, facial expression analysis, and galvanic skin responses (GSR) that a more emotional story was faster and more effective at changing respondents' attitudes, while a less emotional and more cognitive approach resulted in longer-lasting attitudinal change. They concluded that while affective stories may lead to more immediate shifts in attitude cognitive stories resulted in greater elaboration and consequently better memorizing. (Hamelin et al., 2020).

Storytelling is empowered to transform product advertising into memorable customer relationships. Using the properties of a story allows for the creation of a thorough sequence of events that are presented in a creative manner and transmit a message to connect with customers. The story itself as well as elements such as characters, scenarios, problems, twists, and resolution should be unique, detailed, and tailored to avoid generic or incoherent content (Kamath, 2019). Moreover, marketers use literary devices such as metaphor and analogies to create an emotionally connection between customers unfamiliar products via more familiar concepts (Spiller, 2018).

The objective of research is to design a model that will help brands create emotionally engaging experiences for their customers through storytelling tools, which can benefit them in the long term.

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