

Isn't real service all about gaining a perfect understanding of customer needs?

The retail world seems to be concerned exclusively with customer relationships and in-store experiences, but do these concepts have to rest upon interaction with sales staff?

 Guillaume B. / Human Resources

Seen in Los Angeles

In some of its stores in the Los Angeles area, Nike is trialling a new app that allows customers to scan the bar code of the item they are interested in to find out which colours and sizes are in stock. They can then check the state of progress of their order on a screen, before going to a specific section of the store to wait for their shoes to be brought to them. As a result, customers no longer need to look for a sales assistant. Nike is also trialling a service that lets you book items to try on in a store at a later date, as well as offering exclusive advantages.



What to think of it?

At a time when retailers are putting all their energy into making the in-store customer experience as personalised and unforgettable as possible, Nike's chosen strategy is somewhat surprising. Indeed, it appears to reduce interaction with store employees to a minimum. It could signal the early stages of **a future approach to customer relations that completely contradicts current predictions**... Could this new service actually cater perfectly for the needs of the youngest generations: Gen Zs and Millennials? Although they are sometimes overwhelmed by choice, do they always want the advice of a sales assistant who they might feel actually knows less than them (in some cases justifiably)? Allowing them to search for products on their smartphone is a way for the Nike brand to **stand out and prove that it is keen to take on board the expectations of the younger generations, who account for the majority of its customer base**. It also reminds us that innovating sometimes means **going against the grain of convention**.

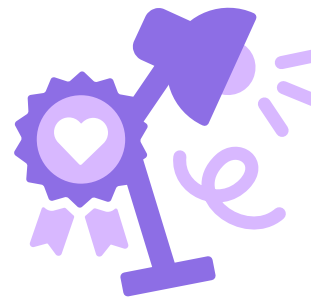
First there were product brands, then there were service brands. Today we are seeing the emergence of moment brands.

Nowadays, all brands are looking for partnerships. However, simply putting two names together is no guarantee of success.

www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/sbe-and-bercrombie-fitch-sign-global-partnership-300679482.html
www.lg.com/us/bnbinge

Seen in the United States

US fashion brand Abercrombie & Fitch recently entered into a global partnership with SBE, a hospitality company that runs several high-end establishments around the world (25 hotels and more than 150 restaurants and nightclubs), to organise tailor-made events and ephemeral stores in selected locations. This summer, members of Abercrombie's loyalty programme were invited to the launch of its new denim collection at the famous Mondrian Hotel in Los Angeles. The poolside event offered guests an interactive product experience in luxurious surroundings.



What to think of it?

Today, all brands are on the lookout for partnerships to help keep their image up to date, reach new target audiences and create a buzz, **but running a successful campaign often takes more than just bolting two names together**. To succeed, partnerships must enable the brands involved to set foot in the highly coveted lifestyle market, the Holy Grail for today's marketing executives. **Playing the lifestyle card allows them to do away with their product offering** (which will invariably be subject to competitive pressure) and **instead become a symbol for a particular way of life**. This is an objective for all brands, whether they are selling clothing, mineral water or electrical appliances, as demonstrated by Evian's recent initiative, an app offering access to limited-edition city guides via the label on its bottles, and LG Electronics, which has launched an unprecedented partnership with Netflix in the US. Just a few years ago, had a clothing company teamed up with a hotel operator, this would invariably have involved dressing employees of the latter in the colours of the former. Today, such alliances **lead to unique events being devised to offer customers fresh new experiences**. Welcome to the era of moment brands.

Personalising a relationship is great. Getting intimate is even better!

Personalising the customer relationship is not just about listening to their needs, you also need to achieve a degree of intimacy.

www.origines-parfums.com/maison-martin-margiela.htm

Seen on the web

To make it easier to choose a fragrance from Martin Margiela's ten-strong Replica range, perfume website Origines offers its customers an original service based on artificial intelligence. All they need to do is upload a photo, via Instagram or another source, that conjures up certain memories within them. They then receive a suggestion inspired by their submission. If they specify the date and location of the photograph as well as the recipient's first name, they can also have a personalised label. Meanwhile, Guerlain is offering customers an unusual perfume experience in partnership with Google Home: a 100% audio-based olfactory journey featuring 110 fragrances.



What to think of it?

Relentless perfume launches have made it difficult for consumers to make a choice and try an unfamiliar brand that they have never purchased before. How can they possibly find the perfect fragrance for them? Faced with this challenge, the arguments put forward by the beauty advisors who work for stores quickly reach their limits. Some organise quizzes or individualised consultations, but these are not always compatible with the constraints of the retail world. The initiatives led by Origines and Guerlain have breathed new life into the sector. First, because they require no personnel. Second, because **they establish an intimate relationship from the outset**. To what are we more emotionally attached than our photos or our own voice? In these cases, **the brands are the ones attempting to enter the personal worlds of consumers, rather than the opposite**. This should help to reinforce the brand-consumer relationship and win over the next generation of shoppers, who are tougher to impress with standard marketing spiel and, most importantly, are more accustomed to having emotional ties with brands than their elders. Could marketing eventually be superseded by "mood marketing"?



Supermarket car parks could become more than just places to leave your car

Traditionally, we have used our cars for supermarket shopping. But will supermarkets actually become places where you can pick up a vehicle?

https://bizz-energy.com/lidl_und_aldi_experimentieren_mit_carsharing_und_e_mobilitaet

Seen in Germany

Since the beginning of the month in Germany, customers of around 50 Lidl supermarkets in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia can make use of three different Mazda models provided by the manufacturer's car-sharing division, each suited to a particular purpose or situation. To book a car, they simply need to open the brand's app or go through the Finkster car-sharing service (owned by Deutsche Bahn). They can then collect the vehicle from the car park of a participating Lidl supermarket, to which they must also bring it back. Should it prove successful, the service will be extended to the rest of the country. Meanwhile, the food retailer's competitor Aldi Süd is installing free electric vehicle charging points in its own supermarket car parks.

What to think of it?

Mass retail brands are increasingly being tempted to put out marketing messages that highlight their commitment to the local area or their social responsibility, while also being careful never to stray (too) far from their natural tendency to focus on price and promotions. Lidl appears to be going down a new road. **The first part of its strategy was to forge ties with a partner from another sector**, thus demonstrating its vitality and its capacity to innovate. Here, it decided to team up with a carmaker, to demonstrate its ability to come up with mobility solutions. But its aim was also to devise a new service based on its own reality, **with its car parks becoming not just destinations, but start points for something different and for new brand experiences** (such as trying out a Mazda). Like pop-up stores, which have contributed to the emergence of new retail concepts by setting up in unoccupied shop spaces, assigning a new role to store car parks (symbols of a consumption model that is now outmoded) can **help retailers reinvent their relationship with customers**.



Food & Festivities

Perhaps as a reaction to the recent vegan and detox trends, a new generation of restaurants is appearing in the capital, fuelled by the desire to break with excessive minimalism.

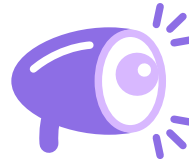
www.lafelicita.fr

Seen in Paris

Recently opened at the Station F campus, an essential meeting place for thirtysomethings who run startups or love coding, La Felicita is a restaurant designed to offer an alternative to current models. Its most striking differences are its size (more than 4,500 square metres) and, even more importantly, its philosophy. Because this is a place to which you can come as a family and stay all day. Visitors can eat at one of several food stands, have a drink and enjoy a mini-concert. This is a festive take on the English-speaking world's so-called food courts, other examples of which can be found in the French capital's various urban wastelands (Ground Control, Le Consulat, les Grands Voisins, Richard Lenoir) and in Saint-Ouen, at the Yaya restaurant.

What to think of it?

Observing how the restaurant industry is evolving is a good way of keeping up to date with society. After years of orthorexia, as epitomised by the detox and vegan movements, **the future of eating out could well revolve around abundance, conviviality and sharing**, ideas that have been somewhat forgotten. In this new type of establishment, the idea is not only to offer meals, but also special moments. **“Celebratory” moments**, often accompanied by music and overtly inspired by Mediterranean lifestyles. Moments to make people feel as though they are attending a village fête or a community gathering. The atmosphere conjured up is one of **togetherness and hedonism**, joviality and gastronomic indulgence, where customers feel that they belong to **a community bound by shared values**: enthusiasm, generosity and sharing. La Felicita at Station F calls itself a “Food & Festivities Market”, a “maximalist” approach focused on joy and sharing that could well inspire other brands keen to develop new **customer relationship models**.



A glance in the rear-view mirror

Ten years ago, Dove launched an initiative that would still be highly relevant today. Could offering therapy be a future avenue for brands who are increasingly keen to display their benevolence?

An outstretched hand

The facts

In line with its mission to help build self-esteem, cosmetics brand Dove recently launched an original website that enables women and girls to chat with psychiatrist Serge Hefez. Serge Hefez, who heads a family therapy unit at Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, places a focus on teaching his audience to gain some perspective on beauty stereotypes. Within the scope of this partnership, he will also publish a monthly article on the website reacting to a recent news story.

Analysis

While brands may once have been content to meet strictly functional promises, their claims have gradually become more sophisticated. These claims might relate to well-being, health and personal balance or, as in Dove's case, self-acceptance. By inviting women and girls to speak to a therapist, the Dove brand is moving away from “miracle claims” and acknowledging that it cannot solve every problem or, most importantly, usurp individual freedom. It doesn't just show customers empathy, it reaches out to them by leading them to greater understanding and suggesting new ways of dealing with stereotypes, many of which are created by cosmetics manufacturers. Could this be proof that a brand can carve out a new role for itself by going against its market's conventions?



Word of the month

Woke: from the verb “to wake”. To gain awareness, to become engaged and to wake up to society’s problems, particularly those faced by minorities. The term was popularised by the Black Lives Matter movement, which denounces police violence against African Americans, and has spread to other causes.



Catching the eye

97 million cars were sold worldwide this year, including just **1.1 million electric vehicles (EVs)**. The survey conducted by *L’Observatoire Cetelem de l’Automobile* in 16 countries reveals that although **85% of motorists believe that EVs are the future, they are finding it hard to take the plunge when it comes to buying one.**

Two major obstacles stand in the way of their growth. The first is price, with 86% of motorists (91% in France) believing that they are more expensive to purchase than their combustion-engined equivalent. Poor range is the second obstacle: only 13% of French drivers (30% as a global average) can see themselves buying an EV with a range of less than 300km.

A zOOM survey by L’Observatoire Cetelem, entitled “Education, but at what price?”, reveals that **for 85% of the French population, a child’s academic success depends more on time investment than financial investment.** And this clearly comes from personal experience, given that the vast majority of parents state that they spend (or used to spend) an average of 5 hours and 6 minutes a week supervising homework. (Survey conducted by Harris Interactive from 11 to 13 September 2018 on a sample of 1,022 people)

Two-thirds of Americans get their information from social media, despite the fact that **51% believe that the information they receive is inaccurate.**

www.journalism.org/2018/09/10/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2018/?utm_source=La+Lettre+de+Petit+Web&utm_campaign=bd824ef3b9-EMAIL-CAMPAIGN_2018_09_17_09_49&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_924f520221-bd824ef3b9-9902717

Summing Up

To coincide with the end of summer, Neoneer fitness clubs have come up with an original campaign dubbed "The more you train, the less you pay", where members receive a €1 refund each time they attend a session (up to a maximum of 20 sessions per month).

 *Matthieu T. / Brand, Communication & Advertising*

700,000 heures sells itself as a new hotel concept, because it has no fixed establishment with a specific address. Instead, it switches locations every six months. Its approach is fuelled by a spirit of responsibility and solidarity that is intended to appeal to the community the brand has built up: the Amazirs' Circle.

www.700000heures.com

Patricia B. / L'Observatoire Cetelem

Founded in Denmark, the *Cycling Without Age* charity takes the elderly and residents of retirement homes out on cycle rides.

<http://avelosansage.fr>

 *Isabelle R. / Retail France*



Since the end of the summer holidays, l'Oréal has offered consumers the chance to try out its makeup on Facebook through virtual means. This involves the Facebook Camera tool, which allows filters to be added to selfies. The service was made possible by the firm's acquisition of Modiface, a Canadian company that specialises in augmented reality and artificial intelligence.

 *Guillaume B. / Human Resources*

In the Melrose neighbourhood of Los Angeles, Nike recently opened a store designed by and for local members of its NikePlus programme. An analysis of the data collected online and via Nike's apps suggests that the local population has developed a taste for stylish running gear.

<https://news.nike.com/news/nike-by-melrose-store-los-angeles>

 *Nicolas R. / Echangeur*

FlixBus has joined forces with Uber to develop an app that allows its customers to enjoy door-to-door travel. The service is available in the 12 French cities served by FlixBus.

www.flixbus.fr/entreprise/presse/communiqués-de-presse/flixbus-uber

 *Véronique B. / Brand, Communication & Advertising*



Currently being trialled in Belgium, ShipTo is a new service set up by Carrefour to provide consumers with a personal shopper. The latter compiles the order and suggests alternative products in the event that those selected are out of stock or if there is a promotional offer. The service costs €5, all of which goes to the personal shopper. Orders are then delivered by cargo trike in under 90 minutes.

<http://press.carrefour.eu/fr/press-release/carrefour-lanceert-personal-shopper-dienst-voor-dagelijkse-aankopen>

Audi recently launched an application dubbed e-xperience, which allows motorists to analyse data from journeys undertaken with their current combustion-engined car and compare it with the figures that would be obtained with the first ever electric Audi. This is an effective way of determining whether it is worth opting for this type of vehicle based on one's personal mobility profile.

www.fr.audi.be/be/web/fr/modeles/e-tron/Electrique/e-xperience-app.html




In Germany, Lidl recently assembled a team of 20 influencers whose role it is to generate exposure for the brand on social media. Some of these individuals will develop a selection of products to be sold in limited numbers via the company's e-commerce site.

At the Occitane en Provence store on New York's Fifth Avenue, customers can straddle a stationary bicycle while watching a screen showing images of the Provence countryside, or enjoy a 360° virtual hot-air balloon tour in the South of France.



Employees of BNP Paribas Personal Finance help to uncover the micro-facts reported in L'Œil by L'Observatoire Cetelem.

 *means that the fact or the news in brief was spotted by one of them.*

L'Œil de L'Observatoire Cetelem analyses micro-facts on consumption, revealing the emergence of new manners of spending.

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