



MARKETING MATTERS

By Richard D. Czerniawski
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SERVING UP THE WHOLE EGG

Going back, way back in time, when I was an elementary school student, we referred to our classmates (and adults) who were really, really smart as “eggheads.” Irwin Chimerin, our PS 163 class valedictorian (1960), was an egghead. Einstein was an egghead. I’m an egghead too, but not because I’m particularly smart. I’m a different kind of egghead. I love eggs! It’s that simple. Those who know me know that I eat eggs every day, sometimes twice a day.

However, I confess my love of eggs is conditional. It depends upon how they are served up. I love fried eggs, as long as they are prepared over-easy. I’m okay with scrambled eggs, but I prefer omelets so much more. And, while I’m not a fan of hardboiled eggs, I love my wife’s deviled eggs. Just thinking about eggs is making me hungry for them.

I admit that I don’t understand people who don’t like eggs. Excuse me, but we sprang from one, didn’t we? Eggs promote and support life. But what I find particularly bewildering are those people who don’t engage with the whole egg. They consume egg whites, but not whole eggs. They’re missing a whole lot by not eating the whole egg.

The yolk adds savory taste and a more pleasurable texture, and experience. The whole, in my judgment, tastes better than the sum of its parts. Additionally, eating the whole egg provides so much more nutrition than the egg whites alone. In fact, the yolk contains the majority of the nutritional value. The yolk is where you’ll find 90% of the vitamins, minerals, and anti-oxidants found in an egg. It also contains one-half of the protein. And, the yolk is essential to balancing out the egg’s amino acid profile. Furthermore, the yolk is where you’ll find all the fat in an egg. Contrary to conventional thinking, these are good, hormone balancing fats.

So, if you are going to eat eggs, eat the whole egg. When it comes to transforming products into brands, work with the whole product. Like the egg, the product consists of two parts. The part we're most conscious of, and tend to focus on, is the physical product. It consists of all the features and attributes of your compound, product or service. This includes the design, materials, ingredients – everything found in the box or package that is the product. Product development provides us with the physical product.

The other major component comprising the whole product, one often overlooked, are the intangibles. These are the support services, special financing terms, continuing education and training, customer service and so forth. You won't find intangibles in the box along with the physical product. They're not material, yet they are not immaterial to brand success. They add value to your offering.

Intangibles are your way of doing business: the generous return policy or warranty that reduces any cognitive dissonance concerning your purchase; the 24/7 customer service line you can call to speak with an expert who will provide a solution to help alleviate any issues you are having with the product. It is connecting directly with a real person in customer service without having to go through a telephone menu and prompts, which tend to be time-consuming, baffling and, consequentially, frustrating.

The intangibles don't have to be big to make a big difference in the customer experience. Little things count a lot. However, they need to complement each other such that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts in making your brand more attractive. It's marketing's job to develop the intangibles that the organization executes, serving to create an added-value positive experience for target-customers.

My American Express Platinum card packs a lot of features in a small physical product that fits inside my billfold and appears no different in appearance or function than my MasterCard or Visa card. I receive concierge service from American Express along with special promotions for stays at luxury resorts, access to Centurion VIP lounges at select airport locations, points I can use to purchase merchandise from Amazon, airline tickets and resorts, among a plethora of other features.

There are so many intangibles that contribute to making the American Express Platinum card a must for me. I can count on AMEX to protect me when my card is compromised, and they'll overnight me a new card where ever I am. If I have a legitimate issue with a vendor, AMEX will help correct the situation or delete the charge. Their customer service people are highly knowledgeable and treat me consistent with the Ritz Carlton model, "Ladies and gentlemen servicing ladies and gentlemen." By the way, the whole product and its execution contribute to an experience that transforms a credit card product to a brand I prefer.

So go ahead and consume the whole egg. It's good for you and will make for a better experience,

and, go ahead and market the whole product. It's good for your brand and will make for a better experience for your target-customers.

Richard Czerniawski



Richard D. Czerniawski

430 Abbotsford Road
Kenilworth, IL 60043

847-256-8820

847-312-8822

richardcz@bdn-intl.com

www.bdn-intl.com