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Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

TELLING BEHAVIORS...FOR TRUE BRAND-BUILDERS

*"This factor, 'telling behaviors,' adds valuable texture to the strategic Target Customer definition. It thereby provides us with a deeper understanding of our prospective customers. It consists of, and results from, direct observation of **what else they do** consistent with treating the condition, their life-stage, or occasion relative to the category."*

--Competitive Positioning, Czerniawski & Maloney

Working with a client this week called to mind a key Brand Positioning Target definition element that is so often overlooked—that collection of a handful of *Telling Behaviors* that, more than any other label or descriptor applied to the Target, enables one to instantly say, "Oh, sure, now I recognize and distinguish from other targets **exactly** whom you've identified as your target." In fact, we have always insisted upon including these 4-5 behaviors as one of the 7 essential Strategic Target definition elements (i.e., as part of a truly technically sound Target definition).

As it happened, while working with this longstanding healthcare client, the discussion around selecting the most opportunistic psychographic HCP (Health Care Professional) Target came down to a fundamental question: How would the Sales Force be able to "*spot*," to *identify* the actual HCP's who fall within the chosen psychographic profile? The answer lies in articulating those most common behaviors—beyond mere usage of the category or our brand—that "tag" such customers as fitting into the psychographic segment.

As we stated in Competitive Positioning, if for example, the chosen HCP psychographic segment was labeled "Goal-Oriented Prescribers" (doctors insistent on getting their patients' high cholesterol not just lower but down to safe, healthy levels), one such telling behavior might be that they typically refer these at-risk patients to a nutritionist or dietician. In fact, they might well have such a specialty within their practice. This added behavior, beyond their prescribing of the most effective treatment drugs, demonstrates they want to do whatever it takes to reach their goal for their patients.

This whole conversation came upon us during a time when we had recently rediscovered an old file from our Procter & Gamble days, one entitled simply "Some Characteristics of Successful P&G Brand Managers." And the more we reconsidered this memo, the more convinced we became that it was actually a set of "Telling Behaviors for Successful Brand Managers...Brand-Builders...Marketers." So, in the spirit of our client's question this week, we offer excerpts from this file—in answer to the always relevant question: How would we recognize a *True Brand-Builder or Marketer* if we saw one? The memo goes as follows:

"The following are some personal observations on those characteristics that most clearly and consistently distinguish successful P&G Managers. Of course, no one exhibits all these

characteristics in a complete fashion all the time—but our strongest managers do approach them in a very consistent fashion.

1. ***They have a tremendous personal interest in leaving their individual stamp on the business...****in contributing to the business...in bringing innovation to it. They attach great importance to making a personal difference in whatever they do. They feel great 'ownership' of their area of responsibility. They tend to expand the scope of the job that they are in. They do more than is expected. They are looking for new areas and new ways in which to contribute new ideas that can build volume and profit and people.*
2. ***They have uncompromising intellectual integrity.*** *They speak their mind on an issue, whether their view is popular or unpopular. They try to follow a set of facts to the logical indicated action, even though that action can be punishing, controversial and unexpected. They are 'non-political' and relatively 'un-defensive.' They are interested in what's right—not who's right. They carefully consider points of view of senior managers, as they do of peers and those reporting to them, but they do not let these views lead them to adopt a course of action or conclusion that is contrary to that in which they believe.*
3. ***They have a critical and objective view of the imperfections and improvability of things—****whether it is how we operate; how we're marketing a brand; the effectiveness of a brand's copy. This is coupled with a realistic and positive determination to make these improvements.*
4. ***They have a deep respect for people—other people and themselves.*** *This enables them to maintain strong personal initiative and individuality of thought while gaining important learning and ideas from others. They have well-considered, often strong points of view. But at the same time, they are exceptionally attentive listeners. They know that the Company's success is dependent on its people—their ability, training and motivation.*
5. ***They develop objectives and standards for their organization which are stretching and beyond those which the average person might adopt.*** *But at the same time, they are highly realistic in assessing what it's going to take to get to these objectives and how far along that road they have come. Far better than most, they tend to see things as they are, unclouded by either undue optimism or pessimism.*
6. ***They approach decisions and issues strategically and on the basis of principle*** *(e.g., providing superior performance/value to consumers in our products), but they try to do so on an empirical or pragmatic basis. For example, on a project designed to provide a superior product to consumers, they want to see evidence that, in fact, consumers agree that the product is providing better performance or value. They resist over-intellectualizing or over-complicating things. They try to identify practical values. For example, a new method for developing new products will be appraised not by its intellectual neatness or appeal, but whether it works.*
7. ***They are decisive.*** *They treat time as a precious commodity. They get on with it. They accept risks. They take the time to get the information needed to make a good decision.*

But they are very wary of delaying a decision to get more information than is really needed."

Though these "Telling Behaviors" were written specifically with the Procter & Gamble Brand Manager in mind, we believe they transcend time and companies. These are, for sure, the behaviors one would desire and expect from a True Brand-BUILDER, a True Marketer, regardless of where she or he worked. Come to think of it, these are behaviors one would desire and expect of anyone who is responsible for much more than just one brand...for one responsible (or aspiring to one-day be responsible) for a Company.

By the way—and along those lines--the memo was written and circulated by Mr. John Pepper in 1980. By 1995 he had become CEO; and in 2002 Mr. Pepper became Chairman of The Procter & Gamble Company. After retiring from P&G, he also served as Chairman of The Walt Disney Company. He was a much-loved CEO and Chairman at P&G...which had a lot to do with him consistently practicing the very Telling Behaviors he preached.

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