



By Richard D. Czerniawski

DID YOU KNOW ...

Brian Grazer is an Academy Award-winning film producer and business partner of director Ron Howard. Recently, he shared with James Altucher, the host of the podcast bearing his name, the James Altucher Show, how he pitches and prefers to be pitched creative ideas for films. His pitch starts with the question, “Did you know ...?”

Raising the question “Did you know ...?” piques interest. However, it goes a step further. It is meant to reveal and showcase a unique idea.

The vast majority of messaging fails to share anything of distinction—meaningful differentiation—about our brand to target customers in the absolute and versus competition. We message what our target customers already know, and it tends to be the same message as our competitors.

More than likely, if we asked, “Did you know ...about our brand?” the answer would be “Yes!” And that would be the end of the story—what we refer to as “a show-stopper.” When the response is “Yes,” because the message lacks distinctiveness, we fail to drive target customer preference and achieve behavior objectives. Moreover, we contribute to genericizing our brand with target customers by reinforcing their perception that category offerings are essentially the same and, therefore, interchangeable.

On the other hand, if we inquire, “Did you know ... about our brand?” and the answer is “No,” we have an opportunity to win over target customers—providing the message is relevant and meaningfully differentiated versus competitors.

Accordingly, it might be a good practice to search for our brand's distinctiveness by repeatedly asking ourselves the question, “Did you know ... about our brand?” to discover our relevant, meaningful differentiation. Ask “Did you know ...” about the product, customer benefit (i.e., WIFM—what's in it for me, the customer?), emotional benefit and even reason-why support (i.e., clinical studies, endorsements, how the product is made, mode of action, ingredients, science, etc.).

Enlist the brand's support teams (e.g., R&D, manufacturing, clinical staff, technical packaging, sales team, marketing research, competitive intelligence, among others) in the search. Invite them to participate in a ½-day workshop, prepared to share “Did you know ... about our brand?” questions regarding their areas of expertise that are designed to stump everyone. Not only will we learn more about our product and brand, but it will help us in our quest to discover our relevant, meaningful

differentiation.

Did you know this is a way to win target customers to our brand? If your answer is “no,” then get on it. In this instance, if your answer is “Yes,” then the action is the same—get on it!

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