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Brandanimation: The Experience Threshold

By Erik Hauser

"Ageless Marketing" author David Wolfe drilled into my head that experiential marketing reflects a right brain bias for fulfilling customers' aspirations to experience comfort and pleasure—as well as the innate desire to avoid discomfort.

Today, let's talk about the desire to avoid paying over \$4 for a gallon of gas. This cost has actually gotten people to slow down on the highway. Amazing. In essence, some people have reached their pain threshold when it comes to gas prices and have modified their behavior to keep that pain within acceptable levels. The notion is people are now driving at the speed limit because they think it could help save money at the gas pump.

Now, take a look at the other side of the coin. When a company builds a strong brand that helps potential customers feel positive, they can change the prospect's behavior by surrounding them with things that make them happy and comfortable. But where does that brand experience threshold exist? What will it take to make them a loyal customer?

But if a brand sets up a proper test matrix, they will discover what aspects of their particular brand gets people to change their behavior. Some time tinkering may be necessary, as the matrix can be complex depending on the experiential components. It takes work—but anything worth having does.

Erik Hauser is creative director/founder of San Francisco-based marketing firm Swivel Media and founder of IXMA, the International Experiential Marketing Association. He also moderates the Experiential Marketing Forum.

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