

instincts

Instincts is a monthly publication on branding for clients, associates and friends.

Leading and inspiring all those who touch the enterprise
to understand, embrace and enhance the power of your brand.

A Brand's Worst (And Next Worst) Enemies

The days are getting shorter. And as the people of the Golden Horseshoe say goodbye to summertime, they say so long - yet again - to the MarineLand jingle. For as many springs as anyone can recall, MarineLand Niagara Falls has brought back those commercials with that incessant musical signature. The collection of notes that floods their Brand instantly into our consciousness and our summer plans. Parents hear it and instantly recall they promised to take the kids - and the kids are all over it. It works.



If owning brain space these days in the hyper-busy minds of customers is tough enough with year-round contact, it's extremely difficult for seasonal brands that disappear for months at a time. So wouldn't it seem sensible to exercise consistency in the use of creative, as MarineLand has done to such great effect?

Yes - but it's tougher than you might think. Imagine telling someone you work for MarineLand. You know what's coming next: a comment about the jingle. Truth is, you can't escape the darn thing. And your ad agency just can't stand it.

"Old friends" like these are a Brand's worst enemies. They're the people who abandon core, long-standing Brand ideas in favour of new - because they think everybody's as tired of hearing them as they are.

Wrong. Consumers are over-burdened with commercial messages. They're happy and highly receptive to hearing a friendly reminder.

I was flabbergasted when Canadian Tire killed the "Give Like Santa - Save like Scrooge" campaign. It was a bona fide Christmas tradition and bought Canadian Tire instant and positive mindshare for the calendar's most profitable shopping season. Funny: they'd just hired a new ad agency from Chicago - and if "old friends" are a Brand's worst enemies, who are the next worst? That's right: "new friends."

What did the Brand Coach coach?

Keep a handle on your Brand's old friends - those folks who have been living with a consistent message for a long time and would welcome a change, any change. And say no thanks to any new friends who arrive and want to make 'their' mark on your Brand with a change. And lastly, challenge your creative suppliers to keep the existing idea fresh. Then fire the ones who bring you change for their own sakes.

A brief footnote: I once took this consistency argument to the Federal Government and proposed that they embrace a similar strategy for their seasonal blitz for Canada Savings bonds. It fell on deaf ears. In fact it fell on ears attached to the official who was apparently working a whole different agenda with the Government's ad agencies. I was presenting to Chuck Guite.

New is easy. The tough part is "same old."