

instinct™

Instinct is a monthly publication on branding for clients, associates and friends of Ted Matthews.

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

Tell marketing it's over.

Poor Molson. Flagship brand's market share slipping. Losses in Brazil. Controlling family turmoil. Plans to band together with another American brewery icon - with similar issues. Ouch.

From a brand perspective, there were four steps to disaster. Declining sales resulting from brand abuse, caused by lack of consistency, brought on by a revolving door in the marketing department, all stemming from the abdication of responsibility for the brand by the CEO.



Brands are built with consistency. Yet, for years the big breweries have used the marketing department as the ex-jock, ex-sales training ground for management in 'important' roles. And every guy who has ever come through this department has tried to make his unique mark to launch his 'important' career.

Inside Molson's marketing department, it goes like this: Question the old [maybe only 8 months old] campaign idea and call the agency or, hire a new agency and discuss with creative guys [average business experience 3.5 years] what to do about the brand. *Dear reader, remember that the creative guys get rewarded for 'creative' which by definition is something that didn't exist yesterday.* And the conversation between the agency and the guy from Molson, who is looking to make his mark, inevitably concludes with "let's do something new, and fast!" .

Can anyone remember what attribute Canadian has as a beer? No, I don't think so. Does anybody know what Molson brings to brewing, after 218 years? No again. Every time someone abandoned an idea, they did the stakeholders a costly disservice by giving up brand equity - the real value in companies today.

What would brand coach suggest?

The real job and the true creative challenge, for the marketing department and their creative suppliers, is to find the way to extend the brand's idea - not change it. Look at Absolute, Stella Artois, Jack Daniels and Chivis. While this rigorous approach may be much tougher to do, it is what builds a brand.

Consistency over time and message, throughout every area of the organization can only happen when the CEO is the CBO - the Chief Brand Officer. He or she needs to assume control to ensure that all touch points of the brand are consistent with the brand's positioning and key attributes. And with CEOs staying only 3 years on average, it takes real discipline to understand the brand and its implications for decision-making across the various functional areas of the company. The role of the CBO then shifts to teach all those who work with the brand and have an impact on the delivery of the brand, leaving it intact for the successor CBO.

Goodbye Molson.