

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.

Air Canada now claims to have been 'meant to fly'... well,

One of, if not the most effective way to build a brand is through an experience. Recently, an acquaintance of mine shared one of his favorite brand encounters with me.

Flying from Los Angeles to London on Virgin Atlantic's Upper Class, he was picked up at an office downtown in a chauffeur-driven car and whisked to the airport where, upon arrival, a woman in a striking red dress made her way through the crowd directly to him as he stepped from the car. "Mr. Argent"? Yes. "Your boarding pass sir, please make your way to the lounge. I will take care of your bags and bring you your tags". (Wow!)



Shortly thereafter, she brought him the tags and asked to escort him down to the gate and onto the plane, where she introduced him by name to the stewardess who would be taking care of him during the flight. After giving him a few minutes to settle in, Sally asked whether he would care for a newspaper or magazine. Stephan responded "magazine" and inquired as to which magazines were available. The Virgin staffer responded "whichever magazine you would prefer, I will step off the plane and purchase it". (Really?)

The plane landed after a long but pleasant flight, and Stephan found himself staring wearily at the luggage carousel, dreading the standard wait for his bags. The first item to appear - and to make its way around the carousel for all to see - was a bright red Virgin-branded carton of eggs in perfect condition. On the carton was written: "Please excuse the short wait, this is how much care we take with all of your bags". (Very nice.)

What would brand coach suggest?

Stephan claims to have told the story a hundred times and I've told you and many hundreds more readers. It's called sneezing - spreading a viral campaign.

Virgin's leader, Richard Branson is a CBO - Chief Brand Officer - extraordinaire. His Virgin group of companies rebrands old, tired industries with fresh new customer experiences. Little things, with big, big impact - because people don't expect them, have helped build his brand and his empire.

Treating people with dignity and a little surprise will kick start a customer relationship for life - building Brand Equity which you can ultimately measure as Customer Equity, and take to the bank.

Coach's note:

With the 'new' Air Canada, we may hear Celine and we may see the newly painted tails but with the same old CEO, it will be the same old song we experience in the belly of the plane. How dare they call it rebranding!