

# 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.

## Not just services, products need to create an experience too.

I recently toured a very successful Toronto-based retail design company with owner and head designer David Milne who's created customer experiences for the likes of T-Mobile, the new Ottawa Airport and Bell Stores. While I was there, David inspired me with a little sidebar about Apple computers. "I always insist that my staff wait for me to open any box with new product we buy from Apple. I just love their packages. Every graphic, every packing piece is beautiful and well thought out. Everything fits and is presented as a piece of art. Even their styrofoam is beautiful! And finally, when you unwrap the computer itself, it is beautiful. The whole thing is a wonderful experience."



A recent brand coaching assignment for Steam Whistle Brewing had me interviewing a few of their customers, mining for insights. Whereas Apple's brand has been largely built with advertising, here is a brand that has been built through careful attention to detail that reinforces their retro-quality positioning. The 12-packs are a handsome presentation with a beautiful brief-case handle that actually works and feels solid in the hand. Their bottles, which are 30% heavier than the industry norm, feel substantial. The graphics are beautiful raised-letter printing right on the glass. The closure is the old style pry-off cap that presents a rounded, soft on the mouth opening. The beer tastes good. Customers talk about the quality of Steam Whistle unaided. They defend the

premium price as understandable and worth it. All of this perception they've drawn from their actual experience with the product.

Contrast this with a box of CANADIAN from poor old Molson. The case itself is a demonstration in production minimalism - thin, wobbly, cheap (never try to pick one up after it's been opened). The bottle is the industry standard with the 'screw-off' cap, which is exactly how it feels in your mouth. The label is a randomly stuck-on paper thing that does nothing to embrace the brand (what is the brand?). And good luck getting the bottles back to the Beer Store in the case that has now lost all its structural integrity... and this wonderful little customer experience comes just seconds before you are about to make your next purchase! Ouch.

## What would brand coach suggest?

*Companies that use their brand as a central organizing principle and who have a Chief Brand Officer vs simply a CEO, understand the difference between a great and a not-so-great customer experience. These companies use every single touch point in the shopping, purchasing and consumption cycle to reinforce their brand and its differentiation. Your brand is what people think of you and each and every touch point contributes to the brand. Learn from Molson's - don't let the 'production guys' run the show, or you too could soon be owned by a like-minded American company.*