

See the back cover and you'll find what we have to HELP YOUR MARGINS

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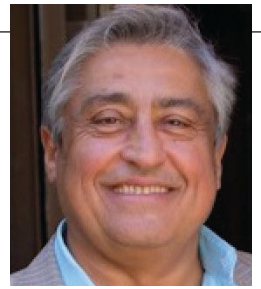
# Dealerscope

PRODUCT & STRATEGY FOR CONSUMERS



## ACCESSORIES

**Hatch Your Profits Now!**



# Keeping a Brand Promise

It's a surefire head start on the path to building customer loyalty

Every day, the average consumer is exposed to thousands of brands through websites, billboards, and through radio, TV and print ads. That's why it's more important than ever for dealers to distinguish their organizations from the rest of the pack.

## BROKEN BRAND PROMISES

In 2009, PepsiCo American Beverages launched a rebranding campaign for Tropicana Pure Premium orange juice by introducing new packaging. The familiar, iconic orange with a straw sticking out was removed, and a vocal minority of consumers immediately voiced their disapproval via letters, phone calls and social media channels, claiming it was too difficult to distinguish Tropicana from other brands. Tropicana understood that its "brand promise" was broken, and the original packaging was brought back.

It's not just large corporations like PepsiCo that can promote and profit from a brand promise. As dealers, I recommend that you focus on the elements that make your services or products exceptional. Dealers who provide fast, effective service and share their knowledge on product features are often more successful, as are dealers carrying quality products that match their business culture.

In other words, quick fulfillment and delivery can be your brand promise. These benefits, particularly if they are unique to your business, should be highlighted and advertised as a brand differentiator. Above all, deliver on all the brand promises that are made, because consistency breeds loyalty.

## FOUR KEY ELEMENTS

I believe that there are four key elements that can help you as a dealer to start establishing your own, unique brand promises. They are:

1) **Manage Customer Expectations.** Beyond the promises your brand makes, such as on-time delivery, customers may have expectations based on what competitors provide. Study the competition and assess what your organization can do to not only keep up with other services and products, but also to go beyond what they are providing.

2) **Remain Current.** Keep up with trends as expectations change over time. For example, provide up-front installation pricing and clear service warranty coverage to ensure that your customers are satisfied with the services they receive.

3) **Keep Customers Happy.** As well as exceptional service, customers demand high-quality products that perform well over an extended period of time. Carefully monitor and address any customer complaints, and work with manufacturers to quickly correct or improve specific problem areas.

4) **Evolve the Business.** Remain ahead of the pack by offering the latest technologies and practices. Add new suppliers and distribution channels, and retrain good employees.

## MAKING A BRAND PROMISE

Dealers, you should consider whether you need to develop, reinforce or execute a brand promise. To more easily communicate your message as a dealer, I recommend developing a 30-second elevator pitch that defines your organization's brand. First, define the organization by creating a list of values, core practices and customer commitments. Then, identify the traits that make your dealership better than the competitors'—and use this for promotion. Finally, make sure all employees know, understand and practice this pitch.

Words and slogans do matter. However, a good slogan should be relevant, clear, believable and desirable. Energizer Batteries' long-running slogan, "Keeps going and going and going," is a testament to the reliability of their product. The slogan, "Money-back guarantee for 10 days after installation" is a one that differentiates a level of service.

Making and keeping tangible brand promises will build customer loyalty. Consumers are willing to pay more for extra services, added value, more flexibility and peace of mind. Consider offering extended service warranties for reliable products. I also suggest offering more convenient store hours, a mobile phone number for service emergencies and no extra charges for Saturday work orders.

The effort it takes to create and promote a brand promise can lead to more repeat business and enthusiastic referrals. *This will set a dealer apart from the competition!* ■

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