

MYTH:

**We Build
Brands**

Jekyll+Hyde
LABS

The following information may sound like heresy within the advertising community, but stay tuned. Likely, this opinion is unlike any other you have studied and it may be difficult for some to accept, but rest assured that it is based on fact. More important, it is a founding principle of Jekyll + Hyde Labs and will remain part of the agency's DNA. Read on.



Advertising agencies tout their successes as “brand builders,” “brand ambassadors,” “brand guardians,” or any of several other industry clichés. The truth is that they are simply finding clever ways to justify their own existence, and creating a world in which accountability is nebulous and abstract. In the real world, advertising agencies are only capable of building one brand: their own.

Unpopular Truth:
“Advertising agencies do not build brands.”

Seem counterintuitive?

Let's start at the beginning...

What is a brand?

A brand is a company or individual that has delivered a consistent and outstanding experience to a core group of consumers who are willing to pay a premium in order to continue receiving the value they provide. Other hallmarks of real branding are:

- The brand becomes integral to the user's life.
- The core users are passionate about the brand.
- The user is willing to adapt new products or services nearly as soon as they are introduced.

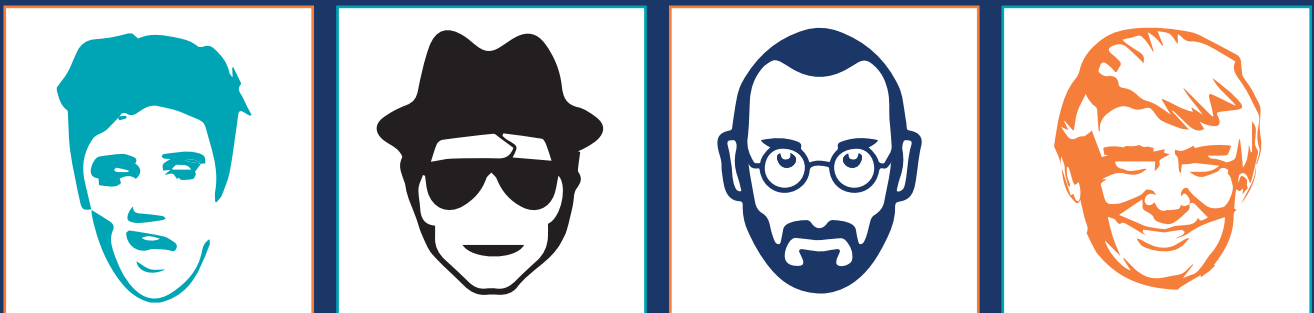
Apple is a brand. People will stand in line to buy the next iPhone, sight unseen. They wear Apple-branded shirts and put Apple decals on their cars.



Harley Davidson is a brand. Their customers live the brand's lifestyle. Many staunch supporters derive their personal identity from the brand, even going so far as to tattoo the company's logo on their bodies.

What is a brand?

In today's world, we are seeing individuals becoming brands at even greater rates than products. The reason is quite simple: To follow or admire an individual is far more natural or organic to human behavior. Individuals have characteristics and personalities that are attractive – and often are emulated in the form of shared values and behaviors. Individual brands may take many forms, whether they be entertainers, such as Elvis or Michael Jackson, or business icons, such as Steve Jobs or Elon Musk.



It is easily observable in pop culture. Consider the 2016 presidential race: Donald Trump branded himself outside of the election and harnessed that power toward a political career. People already had an affinity for (or against) him outside the political arena, and they ascribed that preconception on him as a presidential candidate. Ultimately, Trump controlled his persona and, unlike his rivals, did not have to spend any of his campaigning on “getting to know you” efforts; as he was already very well known.

Brands are built by companies and individuals – not by agencies

When we look at the example of Apple, nothing about the firm’s advertising has ever built a loyal customer. The brand’s loyalty comes from the consumer experience. It is about the design, the ease-of-use, the reliability, the customer service, the innovation, and, ultimately, the prestige and pride that comes with ownership.



The same is true of Harley Davidson. Think back. Have you ever seen or heard a Harley Davidson ad? Doubtful. Brands are built by companies delighting their customers on a daily basis. That isn’t done by advertising.



If advertising agencies don’t build brands, what do they do?

First, a correction on the brand-building myth. Agencies spend a lot of time talking about buzz words such as “brand image” and “brand building,” but are often referring to something other than the typical connotation. “Brand building,” in essence, has nothing to do with monetization, but is, at its core, “image management.”

While important, for sure, building a brand is very different from consistent messaging. Agencies should spend time dealing with image management. They should consistently redirect all conversations to the client’s core values. They should assist in managing the public-facing image of the brand. Their message should be consistent, repeatable, and enticing.

A good advertising agency is a DATING SERVICE

For those that have ever used an online dating service, this will make a lot of sense. For those who have never used an online dating service...this should also make a lot of sense!

The goal of online dating is to simply get an introduction. It is a medium by which users can get to the first date. The end.

Beyond the first date, as many have learned, the relationship is no longer dependent on the online dating service. The relationship is now entirely the responsibility of each of the individuals to provide a positive consumer experience. After the introduction and until the marriage, the courtship is “about the design, the ease-of-use, the reliability, the customer service, the innovation, and, ultimately, the prestige and pride that comes with ownership.” Sound familiar?



It Bears Repeating: “A good advertising agency is a dating service.”



An advertising agency that understands its place in the business world knows this. The best level of output of an agency is to provide the greatest number of first dates for its clients (at a reasonable cost). After the “date,” however, the consumer makes the decision as to whether the product and/or experience provided enough value to continue the relationship.

Contrary to popular belief, all of the advertising in the world will not keep a bad product or service in business.

Without an amazing customer experience, there is no brand; there is only a product/service. There may even be an identity or recognition, but there will be no loyalty. As an example, think of a company like Kmart: very high recognition, but no loyalty at all.

Without an amazing customer experience, advertising is left with the task of buying new first dates every day. Not only is this expensive, eventually there are not enough new users to engage. It is an unsustainable model.

Next Generation Dating

While an agency is responsible for introducing clients to new consumers and keeping their image consistent, it is also our task to partner with clients to find every opportunity to make their customers' experiences as positive as possible.

Often, the agency is privy to information or customer input which would be useful to a client. And, while we cannot run their customer service department or formulate their products, we are responsible for research and consumer feedback whenever possible.



We coach our clients into good business decisions. We manage their brand image (i.e., their dating profile pics). We define their message (i.e., their dating profile bio). We help target their ideal consumer (i.e., their most eligible match search). We clean them up and put them on display (often whispering the right answers in their ear). However, it is their responsibility to earn loyalty from their customers.

The first date is on us. The relationship is on them.



At Jekyll + Hyde Labs, we live and breathe consumer packaged goods.

No advertising agency in America has the depth of knowledge or the connections within the industry that we do. We love entrepreneurs and want to help every brand succeed.

If you think you could benefit from learning more about us and what we can do for you, please reach out.

JandHLabs.com - 800.500.4210

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The CPG Insiders Podcast brings the insights and expertise that Jekyll + Hyde has gained and leveraged across more than two decades in the advertising business, becoming the top agency in the country for CPG challenger brands. The show offers useful perspectives on creative and media strategies, product packaging, retailer needs, trends, traps to avoid and more about what it truly takes to succeed at retail.



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