

BRAND MEASUREMENT

Researchers and marketers often think of brand measurement as one focus and customer experience measurement (aka customer satisfaction measurement) as a separate focus.

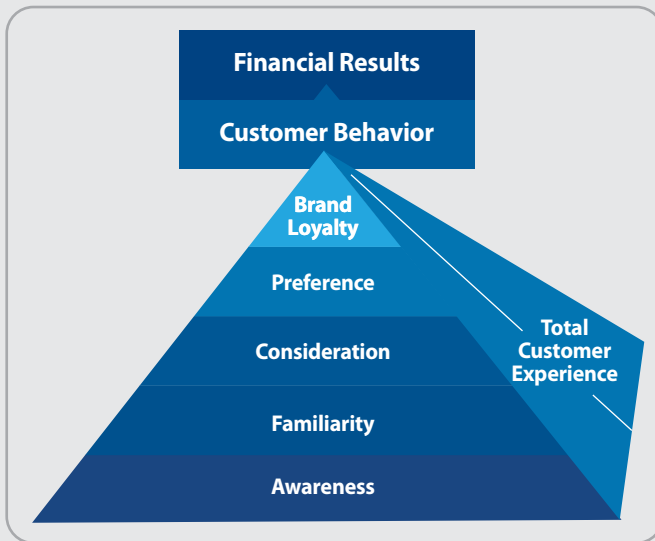
The dilemma is that the customer does not experience the brand separately from the rest of his or her experience. As we have argued in other Thoughticles, the brand promise must be purposefully delivered throughout the customer experience. Hence, from a measurement standpoint, the customer experience also cannot be separated from the brand.

Yet, market researchers and marketers persist with separate studies of “brand” versus the customer experience. More of a rub is that when the results come back from the brand study, the marketer and others invariably ask, “What am I supposed to do to increase brand attraction and retention? How do I make these brand findings actionable?”

Let me acknowledge explicitly that there are needs for separate types of studies on brand or the brand promise. For example, one might want to identify “ownable” attributes for the brand, compare the brand at a high level relative to competitors, or gain insight into the brand appeal across different segments. Frustrations arise, however, when measurement expectations and purposes are

vague or confused. Often a high-level brand study might be conducted, and the brand managers are left wondering what to do because the study wasn’t designed to pinpoint specific areas of the customer experience where the brand was delivered well or not.

If one wants an actionable study on the delivery of the brand promise, one has to measure the specific areas and ways in which customers experience the brand promise. This means measurement must go beyond the traditional brand loyalty triangle, and instead must establish a bridge to critical aspects of the customer experience where the brand comes alive as illustrated in the following exhibit.



Hansa works with clients to establish the connection between brand loyalty measurement and the delivery of the brand promise in the customer experience. This requires advance work to identify which customer touchpoints matter most in driving desired customer behavior. It also entails gaining clarity about the emotional and functional benefits that represent the realization of the brand promise, and where they explicitly take form in the customer experience.

For example, it may be that “a feeling of power” is a key emotional benefit that the brand promise is attempting to deliver in an on-line game. The question then is what aspects of the customer experience stimulate or reinforce that feeling of gamer power? Perhaps it is in the thrill of conquering the enemy. Or, it could be in an on-line scorecard of gamer standings around the world

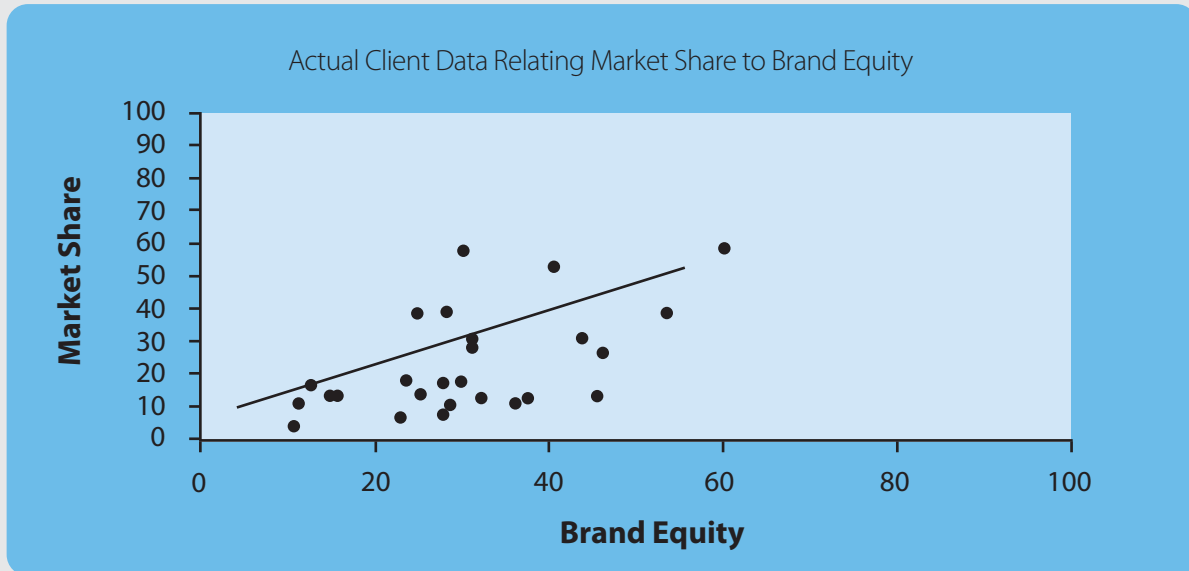
indicating rank among peers. Or, perhaps it is in the ability to find secret weaponry unknown to others.

If the brand promise is to deliver an experience that stimulates the utter excitement of power, then measurement of this game system brand needs to include the touchpoints like the ones above. The question is not just, “How is the brand for XYZ game system building loyalty (moving people up the brand pyramid)?” The question also is whether the brand promise of an exhilarating experience of power is being realized in critical touchpoints of the customer experience. If not, no brand communications or advertising will overcome the lack of delivery of the brand promise. Gamers will defect in droves.

Building the bridge between traditional brand measurement and customer experience measurement is part of a comprehensive brand measurement system. The other essential components of a brand measurement system involve linkage of the customer attitudinal data (through customer surveys) to actual customer purchase behavior and financial results in company databases. This may not be possible in some cases at rigorous levels, but gaining a sense of how customer brand attitudes can affect financial or market results even at a high level can help answer the key management questions: “Are we moving the needle? Is our brand strategy paying off?” The following exhibit illustrates this linkage at a high level.

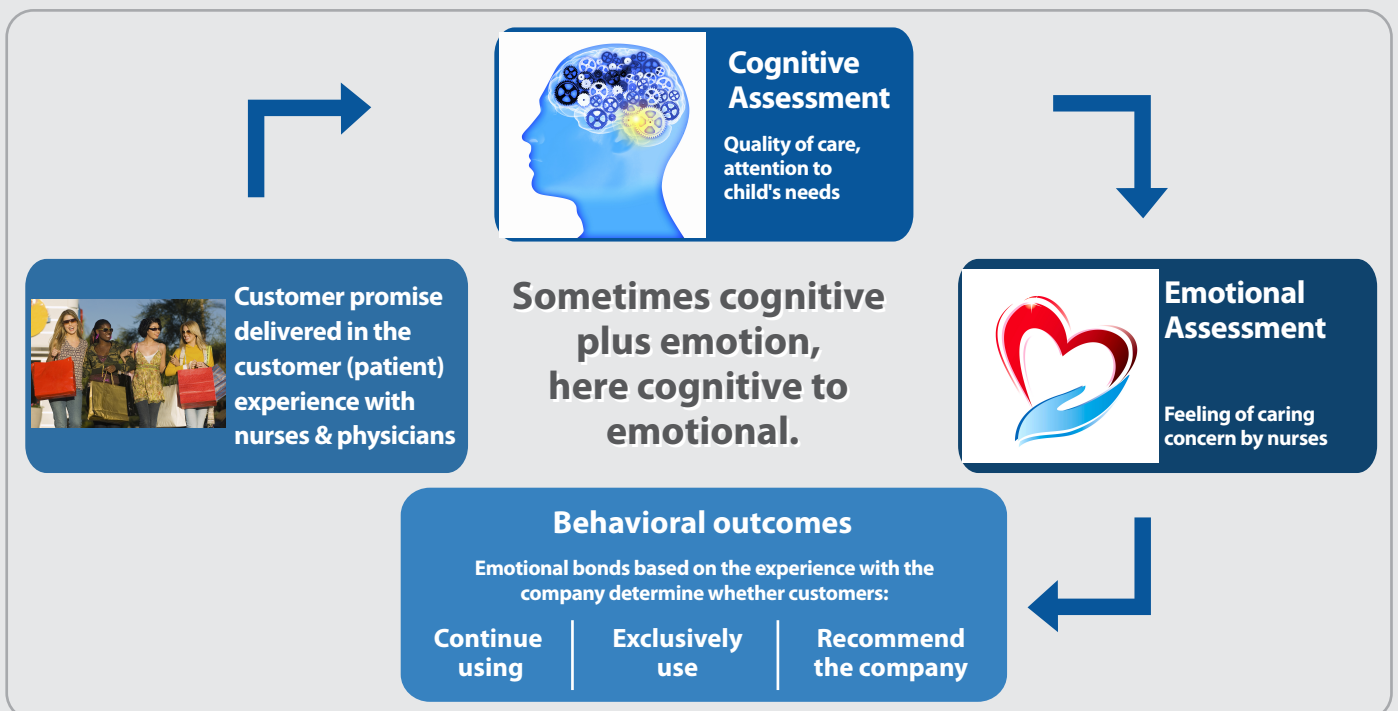
Brand attitudes linked to Behavior

Increasing brand equity by 10% would result in a market-share increase of 3.7%



Other types of linkage analysis can establish at a more granular level how delivering the brand promise can drive customer behavior. The following exhibit illustrates the case of a healthcare company that found emotional

motivators to be key drivers of behavior. The brand promise of a caring environment needed to come alive in the nurse and patient/child experience for this company (data disguised and modified to protect confidentiality).



In the previous example, the company wanted to understand at a detailed level what aspects of its brand promise were working or not working. Analysis demonstrated that its promise of a caring environment needed attention in nurse interactions. The desired emotional bonds with patients (children) and their parents could be improved to make the brand come alive and drive the desired outcomes.

Brand and brand management has evolved considerably from just establishing a logo and communicating an image. That was the province of brand management of yesteryear. Today, brand development and execution must consider the total customer experience, developing a differentiated brand promise and then making it come alive in the touchpoints with customers.

Brand measurement also must reflect this new paradigm. This requires clarity of objectives in the measurement system and an understanding of what components of the measurement system will deliver what insights. A comprehensive brand measurement system can establish the bridge

between the brand promise and the traditional brand pyramid, uncover how the brand drives behaviors and financial results, and gain detailed insight on whether the brand is delivering its promise at specific touchpoints. This type of measurement and data can provide powerful input to brand strategy and operations management.

If you would like to talk to us about how to build or measure your brand, we would be pleased to discuss how we might help with research and consulting.

Hansa provides a full range of qualitative and quantitative research services. Our experienced research and consulting team uses innovative, data-driven methodologies tailored to our clients' research needs.

We pride ourselves on our ability to truly understand the voice of the customer and translate that voice into winning strategies for brand development, marketing communications, customer relationship enhancement, and product/service innovation.