

Magic of Brands

A personal confession

I will say it right upfront: I love brands! Isn't it fascinating which magic effect brands can have on us? Even though they do not even exist - except in our minds. This is why every reflection on brands is primarily a reflection on human truths.

Brands also have a very real side. Through product design, logo, advertising, packaging and other characteristics brands develop their own look and feel.

But what else is so magic about brands? Why are we so often willing to pay more for products and services even though there is almost always a comparable product that serves the same purpose and costs less? Any why do we pick just this particular brand?

Let's look at **Nutella**, for example. If you belong to the Nutella generation just like me, let me ask you: What comes to your mind when you think about Nutella? Brown spread? The glass with the red and white letters? The taste? Yes, but is that really all? Think again. Imagine you are sitting at the Sunday breakfast table and open a new glass of Nutella. You touch the groove-like lid, then the crackling sound when the seal breaks. What is your trick to open the foil without getting Nutella onto your fingers? And then the smell. Do you know the smell of Nutella? Slowly the knife sinks into the perfect shining surface. Carefully you spread the brown mixture onto your bread. Then the first bite. That's Nutella! And all the other images that appeared in your mind during the last 30 seconds. That is the magic of brands.

Or **IKEA**. What is IKEA? A Swedish furniture store? The Billy shelf? Do-it-yourself furniture? Pine wood? All right, but now let's look back for a few moments. Do you remember when you furnished your first apartment? Where did you get most of your furnishings and kitchen accessories from? IKEA, right? I bet there are still witnesses of this time around your house which could turn you sentimental, even though they might have ended up in the guest room or the basement. And today? You think you have grown out of IKEA? But it is still fun to look around there, isn't it? One always finds something useful; be it new night-lights, napkins or glasses, something for the kids or to be used for storage. And what about lunch at the restaurant with elk noodles and köttbullar? And do you not always keep a copy of the IKEA catalogue in your stack of magazines? IKEA is all this and much more. Quite honestly, can you imagine how it would be like without IKEA?

These two examples illustrate perfectly what makes up successful brands. They appeal to your senses. They inspire. They are authentic and unique. They are desired.

This is what fascinates and motivates me about my work. To understand how people experience brands and to explore opportunities to anchor them in their lives in such a way that one never wants to be without them again.

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