

The Case for Mentor Branding



Overview

Traditionally, brands have been differentiated on the basis of functional, experience and image benefits.¹ Now, cultural shifts are creating greater opportunities for brands to differentiate on the basis of mentorship, which includes customer advocacy, providing value-added information and serving as inspiration for customers. The opportunity for mentor branding includes financial benefits: Brands that rate high on mentorship characteristics enjoy faster revenue growth.

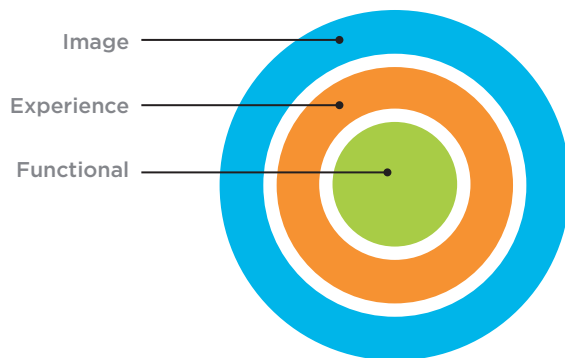
Traditional Brand Differentiation

The following are traditional approaches to brand differentiation:

- **Functional benefits** involve superior performance, efficiency or economy. As examples, the Dyson vacuum brand promises superior performance, Kayak.com promises easier search for travel deals and GEICO promises a 15-minute call can save customers 15 percent or more on car insurance.

- **Experience benefits** involve a unique and engaging experience. Disney and Starbucks are two brands differentiated primarily through experience.
- **Image benefits** convey something desirable about the user to other people. Hallmark has worked hard to make its logo on the back of a greeting card say something about the sender, while Harley-Davidson conveys a rebellious spirit.

Traditional Brand Differentiation



Cultural Shifts

Today, fundamental cultural shifts are creating greater opportunities for a different kind of brand differentiation. These shifts include:

- Shift to a data-based network society
- Shift to a plural, clash-of-cultures society
- Shift to a happiness, self-at-center society

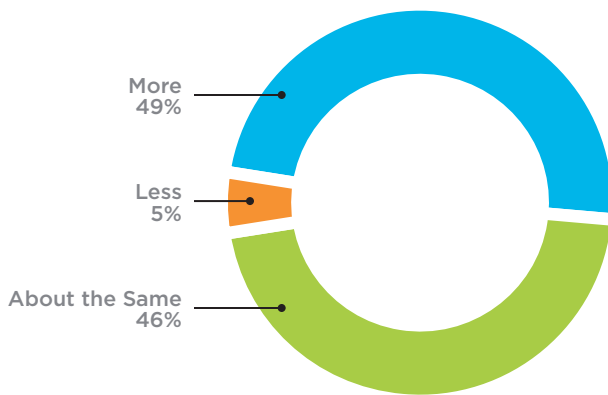
¹ Kellogg on Marketing

Data-Based Network Society

The digitally driven network is fundamentally changing how we live, work and generate information. We are connected by technology that alters both distance and time – and creates extraordinary volumes of data.

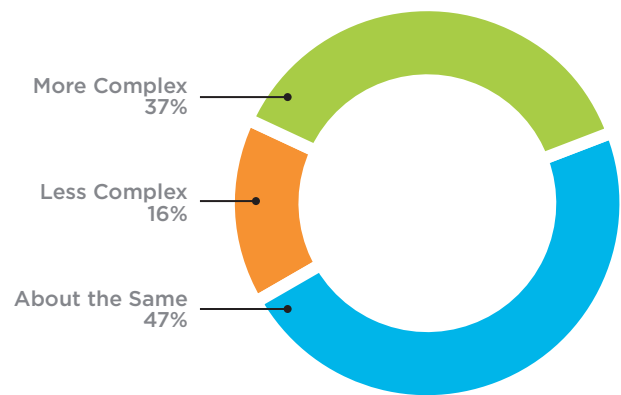
This always-on, always-connected reality creates information overload, confusion and complexity for consumers. At the same time, it threatens to leave other consumers behind who are not connected to the “right networks.” *With this shift, brands have the opportunity be a **counselor** and a **resource** for consumers.*

Compared to five years ago, how much information do you process on a daily basis?



Source: Meyocks Consumer Survey (2014)

Compared to five years ago, is your life more complex, less complex or about the same?



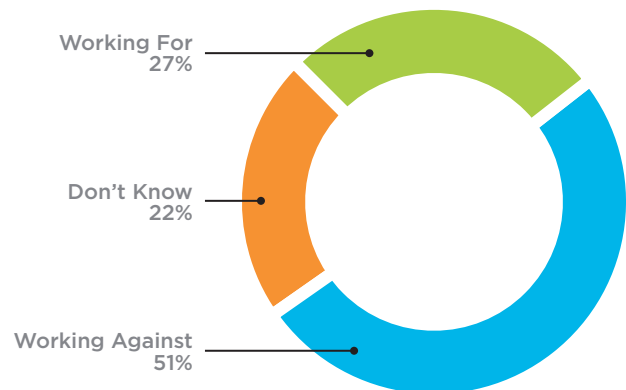
Source: Meyocks Consumer Survey (2014)

Plural, Clash-of-Cultures Society

Today, we have far more contact with different cultures and value systems than our parents or grandparents ever did. At the same time, we have all become minorities in some respects. To cope, we often retreat to the most homogenous neighborhoods, networks and news organizations we can find.

It leaves many of us anxious about our new place in the world and apprehensive about what or who is working for or against us. *Brands have the opportunity to be a **champion** for their customers.*

In general, would you say the economic system is working for you or working against you?



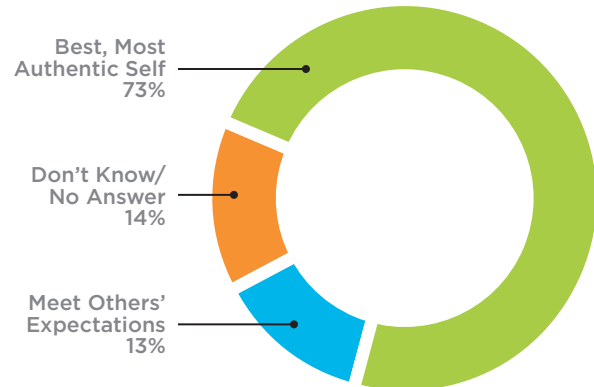
Source: Meyocks Consumer Survey (2014)

Happiness, Self-at-Center Society

We face uncertain futures for material prosperity. And we recognize that beyond a certain point, money won't make us happier. In the past, we looked to family, tight-knit geographic communities and religious institutions for guidance. Today, we sense such wisdom should help us become our best, most authentic selves rather than conform to some external standard. The "selfie" is a metaphor for the focus of our culture.

We strive for happiness, well-being and self-actualization, but we don't know how to get there. *Brands have the opportunity to be a **motivator** and **role model** on our journey.*

Is your goal to be your best, most authentic self or to meet the expectations of others important to you?



Source: Meyocks Consumer Survey (2014)

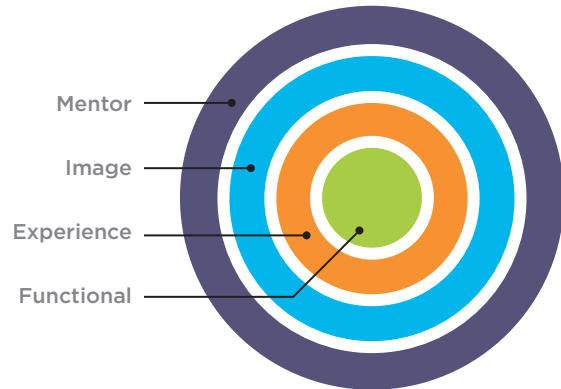
Brand Opportunities

With these major cultural shifts, brands have greater opportunities to play different roles in the lives of their customers:

- **Counselor** - Gives the customer advice, information and guidance; helps solve problems and build problem-solving skills
- **Resource** - Connects customers to people and information, and opens doors through connections
- **Champion** - Advocates for customer
- **Motivator** - Inspires the customer, offers encouragement, builds customer confidence
- **Role Model** - Serves as an example of values, ethics and practices

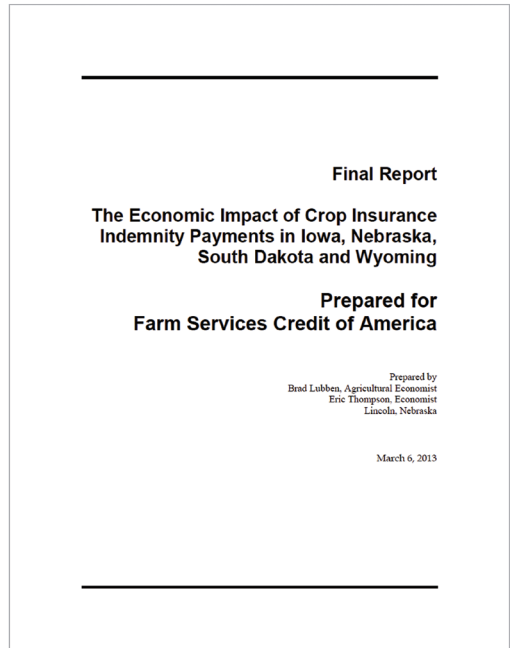
*In aggregate, these five roles share a common thread; they are the roles of a **mentor**. Collectively, mentor branding provides an additional opportunity for brand differentiation through customer advocacy, value-added information and serving as a source of inspiration.*

Brand Differentiation Opportunities



Mentor Branding Examples and Their Success

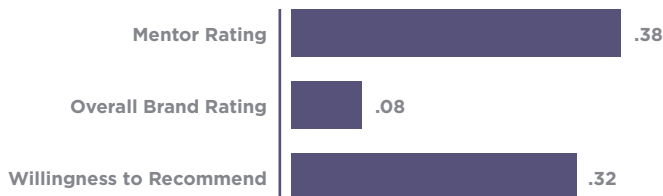
Meyocks has worked with a number of clients on mentor branding programs. For example, the agency helped Delta Dental of Illinois differentiate itself on the information and expertise it offers related to dental benefits and oral health. Meyocks helped Hy-Vee, a leading supermarket chain, work with celebrity chef Curtis Stone to inspire customers with delicious, affordable menu ideas. And, the firm helped Farm Credit Services of America advocate for the interests of its customers by sponsoring an analysis of the economic benefits of crop insurance beyond the farm gate.



The Business Opportunity for Mentor Branding

Mentor branding can be very good business as well. Across seven categories, mentor branding scores are more strongly correlated with revenue growth than other brand measures.

Correlation with Revenue Growth



Source: Meyocks Consumer Survey (2014) and Revenue Analysis

For More Information

For more examples of mentor branding and opportunities for your brand, please visit meyocks.com or call **515-225-1200**.

Meyocks is a brand communications agency that shapes marketplace meaning for food, ag, health and mentor brands.