

Emotions Will Always Rule the Day

If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest rather than intellect.

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

I want to show you some examples of when all the sound, logical reasoning in the world was still no match for people's emotions. Did you know that 80 percent of all new products fail or don't even come close to projected forecasts?³ Large corporations spend billions on focus groups to see if their product or service is viable. Then, even after focus group participants are sold on the idea, follow-up shows that only a small minority actually buy the product. Logic made it sound like a good idea to focus group participants, but on the actual sales floor, the product or service failed to inspire action.

Let's look at some specific business flops. Did you ever notice that the videophone concept never really took off? Logically, it made sense to be able to see your loved ones as you talked with them. Emotionally, we were not ready to have people see us in the morning, to have them witness that we were not paying full attention to them, or to have them catch us making faces at them.

What about the "see-through fridge" that was going to save everyone loads of money on energy costs? This was a great idea—a transparent refrigerator door that allowed you to see what you wanted before grabbing it, without having the door hanging open while you mulled it over. Logically it made sense, but emotionally the see-through refrigerator made us feel a little vulnerable. Who knew the refrigerator could be just as personal as the medicine cabinet? We simply don't want others to see the rotting lettuce we still haven't thrown out, the juice that spilled three months ago that we never wiped up, or the seven cartons of Ben and Jerry's ice cream that are still in the freezer, even after we proclaimed that we were going to lose twenty pounds by the new year.

And what about when Intel introduced a faulty chip? Statistically, it would only matter in 0.00001 of all computers. Logically, consumers should not have worried about

it, but emotionally, the chance of having a faulty chip in a new computer was more than they could bear.

My all-time favorite example is when Coca-Cola launched its new Coke flavor in the 1980s. In the past, Coke was very comfortable at the top of the cola market. Up to that point, Pepsi was not even in the running. Then something strange happened in the 1980s—and Coca-Cola saw their market share suddenly decline. During this time, Pepsi had come within one percentage point of Coca-Cola's market share, even though Coke had spent \$100 million more in annual advertising than Pepsi had. Pepsi came out with the "Pepsi Challenge," which in head-to-head blind taste tests against Coke showed that consumers preferred Pepsi by 57 percent. Coca-Cola concluded that it must be because Pepsi was sweeter, so they decided to alter Coke's formula to make it sweeter. Coke tested this new soft drink and found in their own blind taste tests that it consistently beat "old Coke." Given such a response, it seemed like a sure thing. Well, the rest is history. Consumers went berserk and demanded that Coca-Cola bring back the old flavor—even those who had preferred "new Coke" over "old Coke" in blind taste tests!

Coca Cola COO, Donald Keough, said:

There is a twist to this story which will please every humanist and probably keep Harvard professors puzzled for years. The simple fact is that all the time and money and skill poured into consumer research on the new Coca-Cola could not measure or reveal the deep and abiding emotional attachment to original Coca-Cola felt by so many people.

The passion for original Coca-Cola—and that is the word for it, passion—was something that caught us by surprise It is a wonderful American mystery, a lovely American enigma, and you cannot measure it any more than you can measure love, pride, or patriotism.

The bottom line is that people's emotional attachments ran deep, even though they predicted the sweeter-tasting cola to hold the day.

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