

Apple, Nike, Chipotle Emotionally Engage Millennials

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Emotional engagement of the difficult-to-pin Millennial consumer doesn't directly translate into social networking shares and tweets, according to Brand Keys.

Marketers do that because they mistakenly equate things like sharing and tweets -- usually a direct consequence of entertaining consumers -- with actually creating some sort of relationship with Millennials, which are clearly not the same thing, says Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder and president.

"Emotional values like customization, meeting personal emotive needs, the ability to meaningfully 'talk' to the brand that actually 'listened,' and a sense of authenticity, became more important in the brand bonding decision-process as consumers had more and more access to the Internet and lived hot-wired mobile devices and, consequently, more and more empowered," Passikoff tells Marketing Daily. "Millennials are demanding real reasons to be loyal. They have significantly higher expectations about the products and services they're willing to be loyal to."

Call-out brands include the "usual suspects" like Apple and Amazon, Samsung and Google, but Chipotle (#3), a brand that was *made by* Millennials, Target (#4) and Old Navy (#10) brands that were *re-made* by Millennials, and Sephora (#7) and Under Armour (#11) brands *made especially for* Millennials are representative of the emotional values Millennials are looking for in their top choices of products and services, he says.

Brands that stand for the right emotional values maintain relevance and actually create relationships, and the ones that can better meet higher Millennial expectations show higher degrees of loyalty.

Millennials are rapidly becoming the largest age group in the marketplace. Estimates are that they represent \$180 billion in spending power today, so it's important for marketers to think about how to actually engage them and less time worrying about entertaining them, Passikoff adds.

According to Brand Keys' most recent 2015 analysis, the top 10 list of brands, which best meet Millennial consumers' expectations and, therefore, to which Millennials are most engaged and loyal, are: Apple, Nike, Chipotle, Target, Amazon, Samsung, Sephora, Levi's, PayPal, Old Navy, Under Armour, Beats, Google, Asus, Chevrolet, Converse, Verizon, Victoria's Secret, Ford and Ralph Lauren.

A review of the Millennial loyalty leaders in the 63 categories included in the Brand Keys analysis revealed that 91% of them were the category's leaders, Passikoff says.

“That’s an awfully good barometer that your brand is standing for something that really resonates with these consumers,” he says.