

# Characteristics of a Passionate Brand

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You might wonder why brands care about passion. Why not simply focus on sales? The truth is that the way consumers feel about brands is a proven driver of sales.

One of the indicators we use at BrandZ to determine how passionate people are about a brand are the words they use to describe the brand's personality. Choosing to describe a brand as "rebellious", "fun" or "creative" from a medley of adjectives that also includes softer options such as "innocent", "kind" and "friendly", for example, is a clear indicator of the greater or lesser passion elicited by the brand.

Our key measure also assesses whether a brand polarises consumers. The greater the BrandZ "clarity" score, the more a brand divides opinions. It might seem counterintuitive, but polarisation is an important measure of passion; after all, products

and services that are all things to all people are generally bland and less distinctive: an unhappy position, as far as brands are concerned.

## Four Areas of Passion

So what exactly do consumers think about when they rate some brands more passionately than others? Our studies suggest that there are four key areas:

1. Adventurous/Rebellious
2. Desirable/Sexy
3. Playful/Fun
4. Creative

All four areas are active, positive actions that embrace powerful and passionate descriptors of relationships with brands. We know from experience that there is a huge disparity between brands in the degree to which these words are mentioned. This shows us that passion is not something that is just casually given, but rather something that is earned by brands that are meaningfully different and deserving of such accolades.

As a recent publication of Millward Brown Optimor's Top 100 Global Brands shows, there are clear frontrunners in each of these four areas:

Adventurous/Rebellious: Red Bull, Nike, Apple

Desirable/Sexy: L'Oréal, BMW, Apple

Playful/Fun: Disney, Coca-Cola, Apple

Creative: Google, Intel, Apple

Passion does not only result in sales. The brands that are the most passionately rated are also the ones that earn the most online buzz (which, in turn, feeds sales and brand value).

Is this connection surprising? I think not. The social space is where we interact freely on matters of interest, consequence or fun. Brands that participate in this space (without

disrupting or interfering with the party) are engaging freely with willing audiences.

Finally, a key learning from our studies is that low price does not buy passion. Instead, our data clearly shows that consumers with the greatest passion for a brand name price as their least powerful influence. Only those lacking a passionate relationship put price at the top.

## A PASSIONATE AFFAIR: 10 KEY RULES

1. A distinctive brand is more likely to attract consumer passion.
2. Passion adds value to a brand.
3. Building a single-minded brand promise entails understanding which passion to emphasise.
4. Tone of voice is vital to underline passion in an interesting way.
5. Media selection not only plays a part in targeting relevant consumers, but also implies the character and passionate nature of the brand.
6. Brand relationships are built on personal experience.
7. Being true to yourself as a brand is essential to a passionate experience. A brand's entire value chain must deliver on this truth to ultimately affect customers.
8. Passionate users are a brand's best advocates and should be cultivated.
9. Do not worry about polarising your audience – passion is not about being all things to all people.
10. Think about the brands that inspire your own passion and consider what personal

insights can be applied to your brand.

## BrandZ

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