

How do you build your brand and your sales success on substance, not spin?

- What reaction do you get when you ask the ultimate core offer question about your company or your products?
- What do you think prevents more people buying from you more often?
- What do you do to keep your core offer fresh and relevant, all the time?

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STOP focusing only on the marketing sizzle of promoting what you do for your customers

START seeking a stronger more relevant and distinctive core offer for your products and services



1. The 'ultimate core offer' question can reveal a valuable way to better market your products and services.

The interior designer in the Business Bitesize report learnt that her potential clients had a problem with commissioning an interior designer for two reasons:

- Home owners worry about interior designers imposing their views/ideas rather than helping them express their own ideas
- The cost and time needed to use an interior designer is believed to be excessive

The interior designer then tested a 'training offer' that doubled her sales. You too can ask your clients and potential clients a core offer question. Try one of these:

What drives you nuts?

What gets under your skin?

What really riles you?

What are you worried about?

Think about it. You may think that your customers don't have any problems with buying your services or products but actually they do... everyone does. So start asking this type of question.

Here are a few different purchasing scenarios that you might be familiar with. See what happens when you ask the core offer question:



Plumbing Core Offer Question

When you need a plumber what are the things that you worry about?

Will they turn up on time?

Will they tidy up after themselves?

Will they rip me off?

Find a plumber that allays these worries and you'll stick with them. You'll recommend them to your friends, family and colleagues too.

When you find a plumber that reinforces these worries... you ditch them. You are likely to avoid recommending them. You may even say to your friends, family and colleagues – “avoid that plumber like the plague!”

Restaurant Core Offer Question

What drives you nuts, or really frustrates you about eating out locally?

Having to wait ages for the food to arrive

What you had in mind to eat often isn't available

The toilets aren't clean

Lack of parking

What could that local eatery do to address these frustrations and concerns?
What could they do to make these frustrations and concerns disappear for their local prospective customers?

These comments suggest the core offer for this eatery should address

- Staffing levels/training - offer a waiting time guarantee and deliver it
- Menu availability – simplified menu with all dishes always available
- Parking - Suggested parking places on the website and refund parking costs
- Refurbishing the loos

To win more regular local customers and keep their existing ones the eatery must make a **core offer promise** and **DELIVER the promise – every single time, without fail.**

Printing Service Core Offer Question

What are the barriers or frustrations that you might encounter when dealing with the printers?

Repeated amendments because of spelling mistakes?

Poor communication on progress of job?

Price uncertainty?

Brief not adhered to?

What could the printers do to minimize these concerns?

- Invest in excellent proof reading services



- Promise and deliver a 'commitment of communication' guarantee...
- Transparent, simple and clear pricing...
- Implement a 'listening to the client' process internally that ensures all client brief details are captured and followed up.

How can the printers then inform their existing and prospective clients of the new improved core offer? This is where the marketing sizzle comes in, but without a good solid **100% reliably delivered** core offer (sausage) all the sizzle in the world won't work.

2. David J Taylor's 2 Pillars of Marketing Common Sense

- a. Recognise that branding is not just about logos or even communication. Branding is about aligning and engaging the whole business with customer requirements
- b. Linked to this, there is the need to deliver both a great product/service "sausage", not just emotional "sizzle" (the more touchy, feely bit of branding)

For example, people often talk about Apple being a "lifestyle" brand. But really, if you listen to Apple's Chief Design Officer Jonathan Ive, the company is all about brilliant design of both hardware and the user interface. The "coolness" of the brand is created by the product.

3. Core offer buying challenge [1 hour]

Gather together your team and in groups of 2 or 3 people (stay in a single group if there are 4 people or less in your team) run through the four tasks below.



- i) Think of a service or product that your business purchases, and that you are not 100% happy with at the moment. Ask yourself the 'what drives you nuts' questions [allow 15 mins for this]

What's **driving you nuts** about this service or product?

What's really **getting under** your skin?

What really **riles** you when you are purchasing this product or service?

What **worries** are always in the back of your mind when you are purchasing the product or service?

- ii) In your teams create a list of four or five frustrating, annoying or worry-making aspects of purchasing that particular service for you.

Come back together as an entire group and share and discuss your answers together [allow 15 mins for this]

- iii) What in your view could that service provider do to eliminate the 'driving you nuts' aspects of using their service?

Brainstorm ideas and agree four actions the service provider could take to resolve the 'driving you nuts' stuff? [take 15 mins for this]

- iv) How could they convince you that their service wasn't going to 'drive you nuts' any more, ever again?

Back in your groups choose an issue you would want resolved and identify what you would need to 'see' from the service provider that would make you feel comfortable again. What would they need to do to **convince** you that things were going to be **different**?

Each group should then present their findings and insights to the rest of the team.

Now that you are in a 'critical frame of mind' about services and products try the exercise in section 4 to improve the core offer of your own business.



Where's the sausage?

Support tools and resources

Even better, ask your clients and prospects and get your people to brainstorm solutions.

4. The four steps to a powerful core offer.

a) Seek insight

Look back at what made you successful or got you started in the first place. And then look at what is changing in the market place. What do you need to KEEP, UPDATE, LOSE

But how?

Ask your customers and other stakeholders:

- What are their frustrations?
- What are their worries?
- What are their difficulties?

The answers to these 'frustrations, worries and difficulties' questions are your 'UPDATE' or 'LOSE'

Ask your customers and other stakeholders:

- Why are they staying with you?
- Why do they recommend you?
- What are you known for?

The answers to these 'staying, recommending and known-for' questions are your 'KEEPERS'

You can explore this more deeply using the 'Searching For Brand Truth' infographic in the appendices kindly shared with us by David J Taylor, author of 'Never mind the sizzle... Where's the sausage?'

b) Generate ideas



Using the insights above get together with your people and examine each and every one.

But how?

Rank the power and importance of your insights. Then brainstorm the most important ideas and how these ideas will help make your core offer more relevant and more distinctive (see David Taylor's infographic in the Appendix). Use the following list as a guide to promote discussion:

- Manufacturing – unique aspects of how the product is made
- People – distinguishing features of front-line staff
- Consistency – reliability of service
- Sensory experience – when using product (smell, relaxation, comfort, mood)
- Company Values
- Ingredients/contents - food or manufactured products
- Form – distinguishing characteristics
- Users – current or past users who could help define the product
- History – when was the product/brand first created
- Founders – principles and personality of brand founders



c) Explore possibilities

Examine the leading ideas and bring them to life. Test your ideas.

But how?

- Create ideas cards
- Create a business case for each idea
- Build prototypes for testing with customers
- Share and discuss with customers and record their responses

d) Take action and clarify

- your PURPOSE (why you are in business)
- your PROMISE (what you offer to clients).
- Identify what's distinctive about your product, service or business PROPERTIES (service style, slogans, colours, characters and music) – UPDATE but don't completely change them as these are what consumers remember more than anything.

Here are some examples of brand properties that have been retained AND updated with the passage of time - keeping the core message **consistent** and **relevant** to consumers.



Each of these examples delivers FRESH CONSISTENCY over time

Here are two examples of **FRESH CONSISTENCY** delivery by brands and products that you know ...

WD40

Established in 1953. The core product was originally designed to repel water and prevent corrosion on the Atlas space rocket, and later was found to have numerous household uses. Their company mantra was 'we are in the squeak, smell and dirt business'. WD40 have enjoyed sustained and profitable growth over many years through a single product.

WD40 **still** comes in a spray-can these days too...

WD-40® Smart Straw® was the solution to consumer feedback.

A permanently attached straw that:

- could never be lost (see the previous image)
- could flip up and be used for spraying into difficult to reach places
- could flip down for the general wide spray application

You can almost hear customers' responses to the question: "What frustrates you about using WD40?" that resulted in the Smart Straw.

Heinz Baked Beans

Established in 1869, and on our shop shelves in the UK since 1886. How come Heinz hold a hefty 64% share in the baked bean market amongst dozens of other baked bean manufacturers?

1.5 million cans of Heinz Beans are sold every single day in the UK!

Question: what has frustrated you over the years about tins of baked beans?

Answer: Heinz Beans don't just come in a can these days...



Where's the sausage?

Support tools and resources



Heinz Beanz Snap Pots™ – a portion of beans, but without the mess and hassle of opening a can and dealing with the leftovers.

Heinz Beanz Fridge Pack™ – a re-sealable 1Kg pack so portion sizes are controlled by the 'bean eater' not the packaging. It makes having a spoonful of beans on a jacket potato an easy solution. It also makes sausage and beans for four hungry teenagers an easy solution too.

These two products have taken the product that made Heinz **famous** and **made it better** in the eyes of the consumer. They have **listened** to their consumers' feedback on what were **barriers** to using baked beans – in fact the barriers were the way the product was delivered not the product itself. Heinz beans sales are increasing year on year as a result.

By addressing the 'messy half eaten tin' issue Heinz created two new packaging solutions and improved their core offer.

5. Core offer stories - Persil and WD40

Persil – defined through story telling...

In 2005 Persil's new story was shifted from 'whiter than white whites' and sizes of molecules to one that focused on getting dirty rather than clean. The new story around Persil spoke of dirt being good and dirt equating to creativity. A world where parents could aspire to have creative, free-thinking and playing kids. In fact the focus became stories of the happy kids not the whiter than white laundry.

Persil spoke one-to-one with their own teams and with consumers across the world. The consumers' comments were challenged with the question 'why is that important?' Through this process Persil uncovered the emotion that was buried deep inside the dirty washing! The insight Persil uncovered was that 'If you are not free to get dirty, you cannot experience life and grow'.

David Arkwright (former global brand director for Unilever's laundry business) describes the Persil approach to building the Persil core offer.

1. Locate the point of relevance between your team and the product/service or business's past (Arkwright calls this - ideological connection).
 - *What your people see as important about your product or service or business can be an important source of insight.*
2. Define how the brand can connect with a consumer's life at a deeper level of purpose and emotion - the 'why' beyond the 'what'.
 - *An important source of insight and a way to filter your insights for the best branding ideas is the reason the product or service exists, and the reason your particular product or service or business exists.*
3. Find the brand's point of resolution. **What is the deep desire the brand realises, or the deep problem it resolves?**
 - *Like the interior designer in the Business Bitesize report, any product or service has to solve a problem or take away a frustration or concern.*



Your offer is much stronger when your offer resolves a pressing problem or a thorny issue the buyer has.

4. Define where and how the idea can be experienced by ritual, so that the story is told in experience as much as in words.
 - *Persil focused initially on painting as a way children express themselves and how therefore 'dirt is good'.*
 - *Persil then went onto do the same with sport. How can children truly express themselves in sport unless we see 'dirt is good'.*
5. Create new brand chapters via innovation, which is conceived through the brand's story and central idea.
 - *Here Arkwright confirms David J Taylor's need for 'Fresh Consistency'. Work out your core offer and stick to it, but keep it fresh by working on new innovative chapters around the core theme.*

Arkwright's emphasis is on storytelling. Can you find a story like 'dirt is good' that will distinguish your product or service offer for your customers and from your competition?

Read more of what David Arkwright has to say on the 'dirt is good' core message here -

<http://www.marketingmagazine.co.uk/article/1287039/dirt-good-storytelling-gave-persil-boost>



WD40 – Consistent and Fresh

WD40 had done a lot of brand and target work in Europe. The result of which showed there were 7 different countries with:

- 7 different customer profiles
- 7 slightly different propositions

A lot of time had been spent creating the 'sizzle' but the end result was quite unwieldy and not very practically useful because they were marketing 7 different offers to 7 different groups.

David J Taylor (Author of 'Never mind the sizzle...Where's the sausage?') worked with the teams at WD40 to find a simpler more single-minded proposition and customer target. The aim was to help them all get on the same page, work to the same objective and produce something much more practically useful.

1. Through workshops and brainstorming in small groups the shared values and a common vision emerged across all the European markets.
2. With a shared vision of who WD40 was at a European level they were then able to start to generate ideas for their annual promotion and do it collaboratively.
3. Instead of having 7 different promotions running in different countries they were able to generate ideas for a single promotion – with local adaptations. 1 agency, 1 set of materials and 1 idea saved a lot of time and money and was also more effective.
4. It wouldn't have been possible for WD40 to have achieved the single promotion idea if they hadn't done the investigative work to understand



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and to communicate who they are, what they are and why there are like that - at European level.

5. Over a 3 year period and through this European level collaboration the idea of the 'WD40 road trip promotion' was born – an opportunity to win a trip to drive a legendary road.

6. THE BOOK: Never mind the sizzle...Where's the Sausage?

This brilliant book by David J Taylor was written to cut through the BS and buzzwords of branding and show you how to build your brand based on substance, not spin. It's refreshing to be shown how some brands fail when they're seduced by branding BS, whilst others succeed because they focus on their 'sausage'.

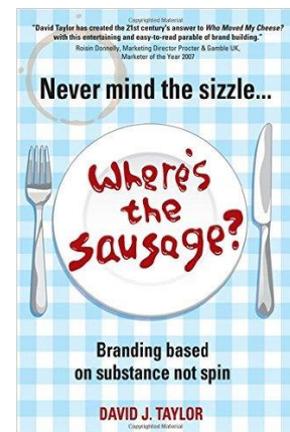
'Never mind the sizzle' is written in the style of a novel, and focuses on the main character Bob Jones. Bob, a salesman for Simpton's sausages, gets seconded into a marketing role for a year.

As Bob learns the tools & tricks of the marketing department, so do you. You also learn what doesn't work!

Throughout the book are references to further reading on everyday brands. You can also find more on the 'brandgymblog'.

There are lots of tips to be picked up and applied.

It is also the sort of nice easy read that is perfect for a short train journey or flight (or just a quiet afternoon at home!)



7. References

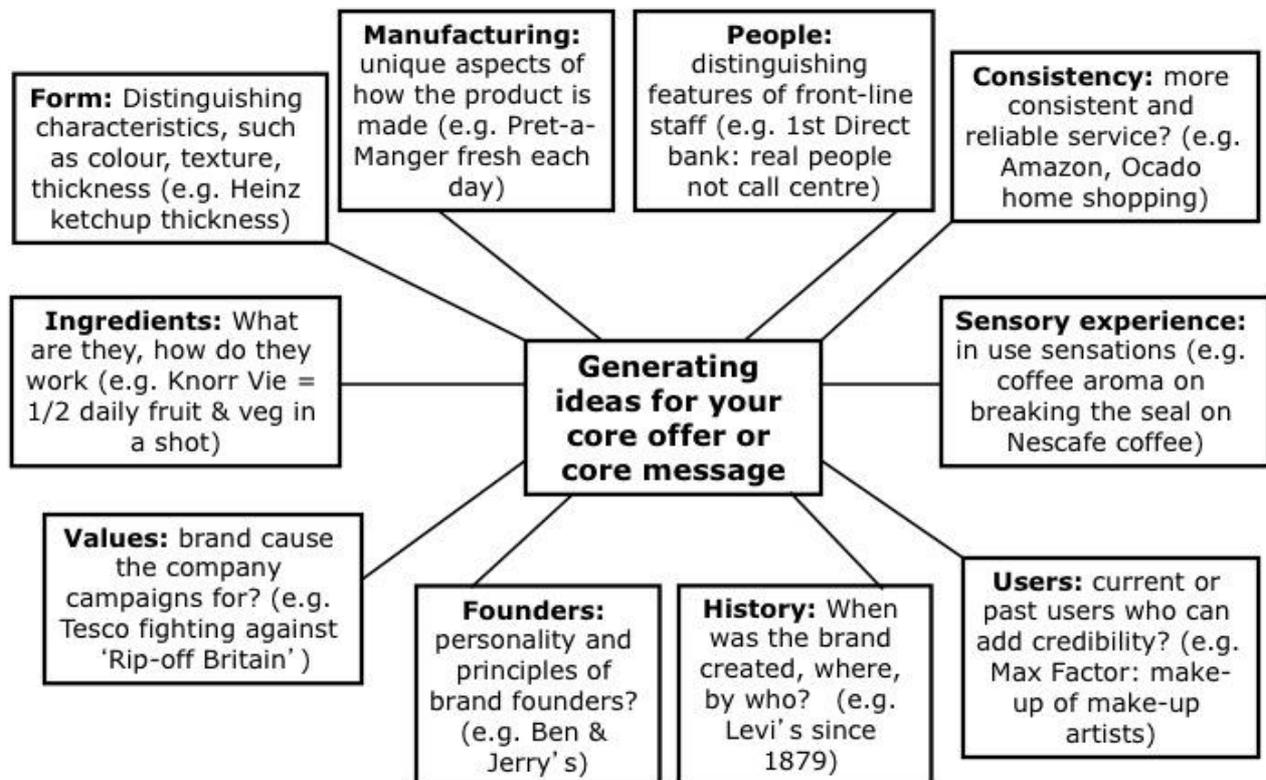
David J Taylor's blog: Brandgymblog www.wheresthesausage.typepad.com

David Arkwright on Persil's 'dirt is good' campaign

<http://www.marketingmagazine.co.uk/article/1287039/dirt-good-storytelling-gave-persil-boost>



8. Appendix



Examples for brand truths, core messages...