

Step Two

Module Four

Mini Lesson Guide

the
marketing
Democracy™

Welcome!



You've heard the saying before, "Actions speak louder than words." And when it comes to marketing, this is so true! You can say whatever you want. But your behavior has to back it up. Every action and interaction with your customers provides an opportunity to either reinforce or break your brand promise. In this module, we are going to introduce you to the concept of brand experience and provide you with helpful tools to audit your brand experience in the marketplace to ensure that every touchpoint-- not just the marketing stuff-- makes a lasting and positive impression.

- Judy

Module Overview

In this module, we are going to focus on four key ideas:

- In [Lesson One](#), you will learn about Brand Experience: what it is and why it matters.
- In [Lesson Two](#), you will learn how to use The Marketing Democracy's BrandSpy tool to audit your brand experience in the marketplace.
- In [Lesson Three](#), you will learn about the exponential power of small acts in creating a positive brand experience.
- In [Lesson Four](#), you will learn about the devastating impact of a negative experience on the overall customer/brand relationship.

To help you audit your brand experience in the marketplace, you can purchase a "BrandSpy" framework. This downloadable PDF is fully functional if you open it in Adobe Acrobat Reader. Be sure to click on the "listen" icon in the lower right-hand corner to learn more about this helpful tool. And, for additional inspiration, you can watch the real-world example video to see this lesson in practice.

Congratulations on taking this important step in your journey to developing world-class marketing for your business.



Lesson One

Actions Speak Louder Than Words An Introduction to Brand Experience

Why This Matters

We've all heard the saying, "Actions speak louder than words." Brand promises are made (or broken) by every action and interaction with your customers. This lesson introduces you to the concept of brand experience. Brand experience is quite simply the sum total of all the interactions your customers have with your brand. While we talk about brand experience as part of marketing, it's much more than that. It's everyone's job in the company to help reinforce the brand promise at every turn. You need to learn how brand experiences are created and how you can audit your experience through the eyes of your customers in the real world.

5 Key Takeaways

-  Marketing is only one small part of the brand experience. Brand experience is created by any and every interaction between the brand and its customers.
-  It's important to audit your brand experience in the real world and through the eyes of your customers. In order to be truly customer centric, you need to see your brand from your customer's point of view.
-  Brand experience is both controllable and uncontrollable. While you can't control every aspect of the experience, knowing every aspect and evaluating its impact is still a necessary part of brand management.
-  Brand experience is based upon the preconceived notions of each person who experiences the brand. The more established your brand is in the marketplace, the clearer and more consistent your brand expectations will be.
-  Every member of your team (internal and external) who has some responsibility in shaping the brand experience should be well-versed in your brand promise and the expected behaviors of your brand.



Ask Yourself

Before moving on to Lesson Two, take the time to reflect on this lesson.

Do you understand the five key takeaways that were presented at the beginning of the lesson?

When was the last time (if ever) you conducted an audit of your brand experience in the marketplace? If it's been a while, or if you have never conducted an audit, what steps can you take to make this happen?

Can you list all the different ways (beyond your marketing) that customers encounter your brand?

Can you think of all the ways your brand experience is impacted by things that you cannot control? What are they? And what can you do to address them, even if you can't control them?

Lesson Two

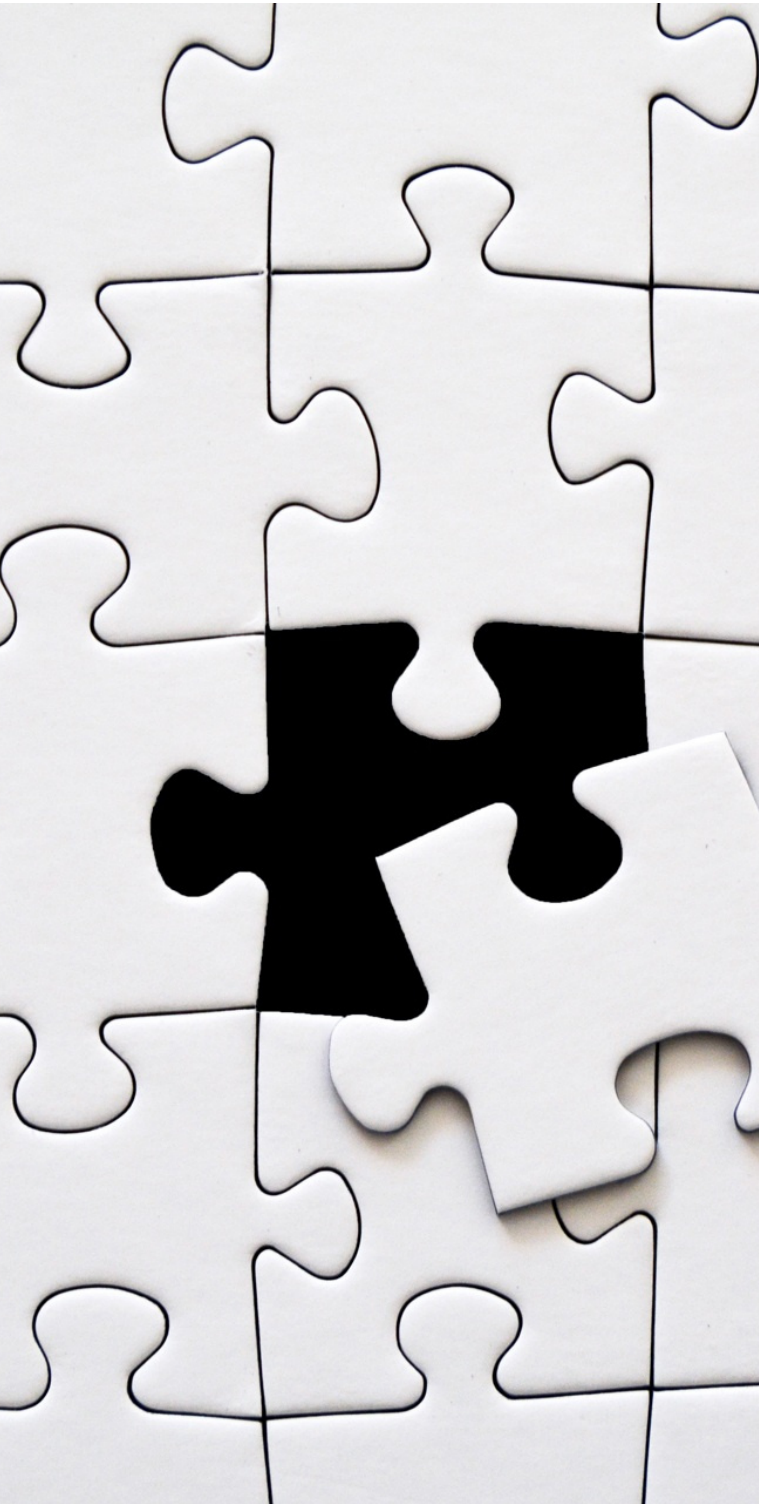
Audit Your Brand Experience in the Marketplace Using TMD BrandSpy

Why This Matters

In lesson one, you learned the importance of understanding your brand experience from your customer's point of view. This lesson will introduce you to a simple and practical tool to gain this feedback from your customers. The BrandSpy framework enables customers to express what they expect from you and whether you met their expectations. It also captures the surprises and delights that go a long way to reinforce your brand promise. BrandSpy also highlights any negative encounters that need to be addressed. The BrandSpy framework is easy to use, and it will enable you to summarize findings across all the BrandSpy missions that you launch in the marketplace.

Key Takeaways

- BrandSpy is a proprietary tool to help you organize the results of the brand experience audit into expected vs unexpected brand experiences and positive vs negative brand experiences so that you can form an action plan.
- BrandSpy identifies what your customers view as basic expectations based upon how your business/ brand fits into their lives.
- It's important to get the basics right and fill in the gaps if something your customer views as a basic expectation is missing.
- BrandSpy will also highlight surprises and delights—whether small acts or grand gestures— that go above and beyond basic expectations to create a lasting impression.
- BrandSpy will call attention to negative encounters that can damage the brand experience if they aren't addressed.



Ask Yourself

Before moving on to Lesson Three, take the time to reflect on this lesson.

Do you understand the five key takeaways that were presented at the beginning of the lesson?

Can you name the four key variables of the BrandSpy tool?

What are the key differences between the basics and surprises and delights? Why are they both important?

What actions should you take if your BrandSpy audit uncovers something missing or something negative? What priority should you place on addressing these areas?






Lesson Three

Small Acts Can Yield Big Results

Why This Matters

Brand experience audits have shown time and again that it's oftentimes the small details that delight us. Yet, all too often, the small details slip through the cracks. You need to recognize these small acts and make them a consistent part of your business practice. This lesson illustrates the power of small in delighting customers and reinforcing your brand promise. While small acts may seem somewhat random, they actually have common characteristics that we will explore. Once you have a mechanism for recognizing them, you can make small acts a more formal part of your marketing strategy.

Key Takeaways

-  Sweat the small stuff. Seemingly small acts can create big results.
-  Small acts are often personal in nature. In today's digital age, a human interaction can go a long way.
-  Small acts are often small budget (or free) activities. You don't need to spend heavily to surprise and delight customers.
-  All business stakeholders (internal and external) can contribute to the mission. Every aspect of the business has the potential to deliver.
-  Small acts all share two key ingredients. They surprise (go beyond the expected) and they delight (create goodwill).



Ask Yourself

Before moving on to Lesson Four, take the time to reflect on this lesson.

Do you understand the five key takeaways that were presented at the beginning of this lesson?

Is your brand personality easy for others to recognize?

How can you simplify your personality so there is no room for mistakes?

Have you ever veered from your personality? What happened? How did your customers respond? What can you do to stay true to your personality?

Lesson Four

One Bad Experience can Spoil Everything

Why This Matters

All the work you have done to build your brand will be for naught if the customer has a negative experience with your business. One bad action can spoil everything. Remember that brands are promises, and a broken promise can break up any relationship. This lesson is designed to help you understand why negative experiences can be so damaging. There's neuroscience behind this and it's your job to identify when these negative experiences occur so that you can remedy them as quickly as possible. The BrandSpy framework that was introduced in lesson two can help you spot them. This lesson will help you understand and address them.

Key Takeaways

- One negative brand experience can spoil everything. All the positive experiences cannot counterbalance a negative brand interaction.
- There's science to back this up. According to the theory of cognitive dissonance, you cannot move forward if something negative is standing in the way.
- A negative experience has the ability to spread far beyond the individual that experiences it. Negative word of mouth can spread fast and far.
- It's difficult to overcome a negative experience and rebuild trust once it's broken.
- Some negative experiences are obvious while others are more nuanced.



Ask Yourself

Before moving on to the action plan, take the time to reflect on this lesson.

Do you understand the five key takeaways that were presented at the beginning of the lesson?

What steps can you take to address a negative experience when they (inevitably) show up? Come up with tangible solutions.

Have you dealt with a negative experience that you felt was unfair/unjustified? How did you resolve it?

When negative experiences do show up, can you identify which part(s) of your business operations are the culprit? Do you see any recurring themes that you need to address?