

Insight specialist tells marketers to research the consumer to ensure brand design success

Contributed by Bonamy Finch
Thursday, 05 March 2015

As Bacardi rum celebrates its 153rd anniversary by rolling out the first update to its branding in more than a decade, customer insight agency Bonamy Finch says that brands could be doing more to ensure their corporate identity and brand designs stand a greater chance of market acceptance.

The agency says that, whilst consumers cannot and should not replace designers, marketers often by-pass the role that consumer research can play in providing feedback on proposed new or revised branding options. A consumer research approach, it says, would enable brands to check understanding, communication and legibility, and benchmark proposals against existing branding. Heavily influenced by Art Deco style, the new Bacardi bottle design reflects the brand's heritage and provenance. Its timeless quality is intended to ensure it looks just as good in bars today as it did in the 1920s. "Your branding is a major commercial asset that performs a lot of important functions," explains Dr Leigh Morris, Managing Director of Bonamy Finch. "It points people towards your offering, helps your products or services to stand out from others, and increases your options for brand architecture. We have shown how using research and advanced analytics we can deliver a clear consumer response on what can be a complex question. Getting this consumer point of view when making strategic decisions on logo design is essential." "Updating iconic branding like Bacardi is always going to be a risk but you can see by the way they have retained a strong heritage feel, whilst making it contemporary, that they have taken steps to consider the impact on and acceptance of their customer base," continues Morris. "Compare this for example, with the attempt to rebrand Tropicana orange juice in 2009, which underestimated how attached customers had become to the original design. There was a consumer backlash, sales dropped 20% almost overnight and within a month or so, the brand had retreated to its former design." Bonamy Finch's GoLogo service captures a consumer perspective to show brand owners the relative strength of different logo options. The research recruits a broad sample of consumers across key audiences to assess the various candidate designs. The consumers rate the logos on the hygiene factors necessary for a great design: easy to recognise, stand out, "gut reaction", and appeal across the relevant markets and customer groups. Competing designs are also assessed against the key success criteria for that particular brand given its intended positioning. A scorecard approach across the generic and brand specific criteria is used in conjunction with a trade-off exercise to identify the consumers' most preferred design.