



Our Favourite Brands (2/3)

Last time I wrote about how much fun it is to work with start-ups: the slate is clean, and we can get it right [on their behalf] from the start, from positioning to touchpoint management, people training [not many people around yet] down to logo and design. But start-ups often don't have the funds to look into branding, and funding by government sources is often limited to brands that have been around for a few years.

We also love to work with MNCs: They have the scale, the budget and the understanding about the importance of branding. They are professional, and we speak the same language.

But most of the time, their headquarters are not in Asia, but in Europe or the US. Which means that we cannot touch the brand, cannot change the positioning in order to make it more relevant for Asian consumers or business clients. So how can we help them?



We begin by understanding the brand, where it is coming from and how it wants to be perceived. Then we look at - and often talk to - their target group in Asia, to find out how much they know about the brand, what they think about the brand and whether there are any barriers that keep them from buying the product or service. Based on these findings we help our clients develop a strategy how to close these gaps and become more relevant to local audiences.

Let's look at our friends at Audi <<http://www.audi.com.sg>> .

In Europe, everybody knows the brand and the quantum leap it has made in the last 10 or 15 years, in technology and design. Audi has not only joined the luxury club with Mercedes-Benz and BMW, it has surpassed them in sales worldwide [not counting Mini and Smart].

But in Singapore 3 to 4 years ago, the German carmaker was the 'best kept secret', loved by a few enthusiasts and car buffs and mostly ignored by the general public. When we looked at their target group here, we found that many Singaporeans didn't know enough about the brand [about the technological milestones during its 100 years of innovation, about its racing successes etc.] and thus did not know what to think about the brand and its drivers, with the exception of design highlights like the Audi TT and the Audi R8.

And because the brand is more progressive than its competitors, from its design to the materials used [aluminium space frame], it was not seen as prestigious as BMW and Mercedes-Benz - which is important in a region where social status is often expressed through brands and status symbols.

Through use of through-the-line media, outstanding events [like the Audi Fashion Festival] and a 100 year-campaign that looked ahead at '100 Futures' for 100 days last summer, some of the gaps have been closed - without changing the overall 'Vorsprung durch Technik' [Advancement Through Technology]-positioning one single bit. Audi is seen as the 'up-and-coming' car brand in Singapore and it is no wonder that they have become the fastest growing car maker here.

Hope your year had as busy a start as ours.
And Happy Lunar New Year!

Jörg
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