

inside-out

HARD AND FAST: What can we learn from Peter Andreou's UK Passport Office service encounter? **2**

TOOLBOX EXERCISE: Help your staff relate their customer service delivery to satisfaction ratings. **2**

CREATING A SUPER BRAND — 3 **BRAND POWER TOOLS:** Many business owners dream or aspire to become a super brand. Obviously, that is not easy, but what about some simple concepts to start the journey. **3**

WHO SAID WHAT?: Comments and feedback from those in the know... **4**

KNOW HOW—CAN DO: More products, more tools, and more opportunities to equip you and your company with the capability and resources you need to become an on-brand organization. **4**

Psst! Don't be shy. **on-brand** | **off-brand** is free to print, rip, or post. Just remember to retain our copyright, or we might haunt you in your dreams!

We'd love your feedback:
Janelle.Barlow@brandedservice.com
Paul.Stewart@brandedservice.com

Subscribe to **on-brand** | **off-brand** at www.brandedservice.com

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list please click here: unsubscribe@brandedservice.com

Don't trust the signs. Service may be better than you think!

If you have ever been in a situation where you needed to get someplace and you'd like to blame the government, or just about anyone (but really it's your own fault), then you can understand the frustration that Peter Andreou felt when he was trying to travel to the On-Brand Simulator Camp—without a passport valid for the US! Check out this remarkable story.

on-brand

Peter, with People Achieve in the Middle East, recently traveled to Las Vegas to become a Certified Consultant of Branded Customer Service. Unfortunately, while transiting to the United States from Heathrow airport, he discovered that his valid, but old, UK passport did not have the necessary bar codes for him to get into the U.S. Less than four hours before his London-U.S. flight was to take off, he was a “no-go” and had a major issue. Even worse, it was a Saturday. First off, he tried the U.S. Embassy to see if they could help with an exemption, but they were CLOSED. Then Peter recalled from his days living in the UK many years before that, even on the weekend, one UK passport agency would be open in Victoria Street Station. Or at least it used to be.

And it was. A mad dash was made from Heathrow into London. Unfortunately, immediately after arriving at the Victoria Street passport office, Peter encountered another challenging sign: “Absolutely no passports reissued in less than 4 hours, and this with a pre-set appointment.” Brand expectations were set!

That wouldn't do for Peter, he'd miss his flight and as a result at least the first day of the On-Brand Simulator Camp. Imploring to a security guard that he needed a new passport within 2 hours, the guard laughed and pointed to the sign.



Peter persisted. He talked to, cajoled, and persuaded several people, each time using his best and most influential communication skills. Believe it or not, he managed to have various staff make telephone calls for him, accept faxes, and generally work their tails off for him. They even helped him find a photographer to get the right type of pictures.

The impossible happened. Peter got his passport reissued with the appropriate bar codes in one hour and 45 minutes!

With just minutes to spare Peter rushed back to the airport only to be told that his seat had been given away. It couldn't be! After winning the gold medal in getting a new passport issued in record time (a path-breaking story that the airline staff simply would not believe for some time), it looked like he might not make it after all. Fortunately fate intervened and one seat became available.

While reflecting on the experience, Peter noted that the way he communicated with the Victoria St Station passport agency helped his case. But Peter was mostly struck by the emotional impact it had on him to be able to coax exceptional service that exceeded brand standards from a group of strangers.

By any rights, Peter should have known his passport style was outdated, though perhaps his travel agency does share some of the blame for that one. But the minimum time required to accomplish the task was so clearly stated, that even if the passport agency had not been successful in getting him his newly issued passport it would still have met its promise to the public.



LINKING INSIGHTS TO ACTIONS

PAGE 1

PRINT

EMAIL

EXIT

NEXT >

skills **HARD AND FAST**
LINKING INSIGHTS TO ACTIONS

What we can learn from the UK Passport Office Experience

- At any given time an organization is capable of delivering extraordinary service that exceeds brand promises. Maybe not all the time, but when presented with a situation where someone is in a real pickle, it's amazing what people can do, and the difference it can make. This is an experience that will resonate for Peter, and he will no doubt tell the story over and over again to many audiences. And, of course, we're spreading the tale in this newsletter.
- Who benefits?** Because of the nature of the services, Peter won't use the Victoria Street agency many times in his life, if ever again. But the example makes the entire UK Government look good. Many great brands have been built primarily through good public relations and reputation, not advertising.
- "Customers" can help organizations be even better than what they promise. Everybody wins when service representatives of a brand periodically exceed their promises. Customer loyalty is enhanced and they start to become strong advocates for the brand. You can also imagine how exhilarating it was for those service representatives to set what must have been a world record for their office.

That becomes on-brand for everyone!



Setting levels of On-Brand Service to create loyal customers

Most organizations use surveys to measure customer satisfaction. Customers are usually asked to rate their service experience on a scale of say, 1 to 5. Psychologists have established the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty by analyzing the underlying emotions of customers.

A key conclusion is that only when customers are awarding the very highest ratings, does the proportion of positive emotions they have towards the brand outweigh their negative emotions. Even at the mid-point (e.g. a 3 on the 1-5 scale), negative emotions can be more than twice the positive emotions (refer diagram). Consequently, customers have minimal or no loyalty at the mid-point. Only at Level 4 service, or the point where the customer experience matches their expectations that are set through brand promises (On-Brand Service), do you exceed break-even and start to create customer loyalty. Here's how you can get staff to relate the branded customer service they deliver to satisfaction ratings.

- Ask staff to choose one service task and to describe precisely what they do for the customer.
- Now ask them to describe what service delivery would look like at Level 4 (On-Brand Excellent Service) for this particular task they perform for their customers. Explain that this is the standard that they want to aspire to on a regular basis. It's their way of delivering their brand. (In the UK passport example on page 1, Level 4 service would be a passport issued within 4 hours).
- Then ask them to move to Level 3 and describe how this same task would be performed at an Acceptable Generic Service level. Then repeat this process for Levels 1 (Off-Brand Service) and Level 2 (Minimal Generic Service).



4. Finally, ask them to describe Level 5 (Extraordinary On-Brand Service) for this particular task and, because it is not feasible to achieve this all the time, to then identify the best opportunities to deliver Level 5 service to customers.

You may find that many of the examples they provide at Level 5 do not take a lot of time, nor do they cost a lot of money. But if done every once in awhile, they will begin to shape their brand's service reputation in a highly positive way. Note: In this exercise it is often best to have groups work in their functions units, so that the examples they choose are directly relevant to their branded customer service delivery.

If you would like more Toolbox exercises to help you become an on-brand organization, join the online Resource Center. www.brandedservice.com

Both chefs magnify their unique behavior, passion, and attitude. Gordon Ramsay, "Chefs with Attitude," V 2002, weekend edition: Two UK star chefs, Gordon Ramsay extraordinary food in the kitchens of Michelin stars. But personal recipes. Gordon Ramsay engages in customers. Ramsay...



Based on research by Michael Edwardson, University of New South Wales

Creating a Super Brand: 3 Brand Power Tools

Many businesses would love to become a super brand. It's easy and fun to dream big. We all aspire to occupy that top-of-mind space in the consumer's mind, so that our brand is their first choice. Dreaming is easy. Achieving super brand status is not easy at all.

It would be best if the DNA blueprint for super brand status were built into the design of your brand right from the very beginning. Unfortunately, most company brand concepts aren't sufficiently capitalized to make that happen. In fact, most owners struggle to ensure their business survives its initial year. The challenge for most brands is to take a successful organization with lots of habits in place, and convert these behaviors so they align with the design of a strategically, and uniquely defined brand.

One way to approach the pathway to super brand status is to focus on what we call the three brand power tools: **likeability**, **consistency**, and **reinforcement**. These brand building blocks are sufficiently broad, yet easy to understand, and have the scope to impact almost all customer touch points.

LIKEABILITY. Likeability is an easy concept to grasp. The most likeable brands are those that have multiple points of likeability that are embedded into eye-catching logos, powerful tag lines, solid product choices, engaging design, relevant pricing, and an appealing service delivery style.

Not every element of the brand presentation does have to be likeable. However, components of the brand that are likeable have to more than make up for the brand components that are not. For example, Southwest Airlines' engaging and humorous cabin crew go a long way to make up for the lack of pre-assigned seating, business

class seats, or in-flight food service on their aircraft.

In order to deliver an appealing customer experience, management and staff must have a clear and consistent knowledge of what the likeable elements of their brand are, and then ensure they are putting priority on these through their decisions, actions, and behaviors.

CONSISTENCY. The most successful brands are usually those that are quite narrowly defined. The outstanding brand identifiers of super brands are readily knowable in the consumer's mind, because they ensure these brand identifiers are delivered in a consistent fashion through time and across different touch points.

A few tightly controlled brand elements make for the most powerful brands, in contrast to those organizations trying to be all things to all people. We cringe every time we see signs posted that read, "Our goal is to achieve 100% customer satisfaction." It's simply not going to happen. Because consumer preferences are wide and varied, there will always be some people craving something different than what you offer.

REINFORCEMENT. Finally, those few essential and likeable brand identifiers must be continually repeated so consumers have them reinforced through every interaction with the brand. If one of the dominant brand identifiers is friendliness, then the consumer must see it in your logo and graphic system, your marketing, your

website, your product performance, AND your staff. And getting your service staff to reinforce your brand is usually the most difficult part of brand management, particularly as the organization grows. Consistency, in the concrete aspects of a brand such as logos, colors, and packaging, is fairly easy to manage. However, service staff are wireless, in effect, and it is not so easy to control them and how they interact with customers. And that is another reason for making sure your brand position is narrowly defined. If you are going to succeed in getting thousands of front-line staff to deliver your brand space in their behavior, that message needs to be simple.

Simple means easy to understand, easy to engage with, and easy to deliver. It doesn't mean "dumbed down" or simplistic. There's nothing simplistic about friendliness and speed. Simple means a handful of service delivery standards, rather than the dozens we so frequently see posted on shop and restaurant walls that are rarely delivered. It means exploring with staff what it means to consistently deliver to such a narrowly defined brand experience.

Once that brand space is defined, and then communicated to both staff and consumers, there is a chance that the consumer will experience consistent reinforcement of what attracted them to your brand in the first place. You're on your way to super brand status!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Do staff clearly understand the unique brand identifiers that create likeability in your brand?
- Do they have a set of simple, actionable guidelines that empower them to confidently and consistently reinforce your brand?
- Do you maintain the integrity of your brand, by being consistent, even when it is tempting to try to be all things to all people?

who said what

Congratulations to our new Branded Customer Service Certified Consultants, who attended the November 2005 On-Brand Simulator Camp. Here's some great feedback from one, George Aveling (CEO, TMI Malaysia)



Branded Customer Service (BCS) opens up a Pandora's Box of opportunities to add value. BCS is unique in that it provides a comprehensive implementation process that touches all parts of the organization. Its 5-stage process hard-wires branding into the organization, and provides a process to maintain the momentum. If you are looking for something new, something fresh and something with brilliant support, then Branded Customer Service will excite you.

You can read more of George's thoughts at <http://www.brandedservice.com/Default.aspx?PageID=516>

GALLUP RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPACT OF OFF-BRAND SERVICE: "In companies' desperate struggle to gain market share, customers have been forgotten... Companies must promote their brands, so marketing executives continue to pump huge portions of their budget into advertising. But customers are growing increasingly skeptical to traditional marketing efforts; they're also growing skeptical, cynical, and hostile to brand messages. And yet as Gallup's research shows, the most profitable customers are the ones with an emotional attachment to brands."

—Excerpted from interview with William J McEwen, Published by Gallup Management Journal.

"YOU ARE ONLY AS GOOD AS YOUR WEAKEST LINK: DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU'RE VULNERABLE? Today's younger consumers show zero tolerance when a brand makes a mistake. If a Website isn't good enough, they will ignore your brand, and if you get negative PR about something, it will stick no matter what you do to rectify it."

—Simon Williams, chairman of New York-based branding consultancy, Sterling Group
Excerpted from the 10 New Rules of Branding, http://sterlingbrands.com/news_10rules.html

know how CAN DO

HURRY! SAVE OVER 35% FROM THE 2006 TOOL-KIT PRICE

Our special introductory price for the Branded Customer Service Tool-Kit is about to end. From 1st February 2006, the price of the Tool-Kit will be increasing to US\$6,250.

Companies that have already purchased the BCS Tool-Kit (now across 18 countries), say it offers the most comprehensive range of tools, processes, resources, and workshop materials available to help you in aligning your people, organizational culture, and customer service delivery to your brand and business strategy.

WHAT ARE YOU AIMING FOR IN 2006?

- Do you want to increase your marketing ROI?
- Is customer retention and loyalty a key objective?
- Need to build capability in culture change, internal branding, or training?
- Trying to build your employer brand?

View the Branded Customer Service Tool-Kit online at www.brandedservice.com, or contact us at info@brandedservice.com

So, get in now. Place your order by 31st January to secure your Tool-Kit at the introductory price of US\$3,950, saving you over 35% off the 2006 price.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NEW ZEALAND – 5.5-DAY ON-BRAND SIMULATOR CAMP 6TH-11TH MARCH 2006

Become a Certified Consultant:

- Develop indepth knowledge in applying the Branded Customer Service tools and approaches.
- Apply concepts to dynamic New Zealand case-study companies in real time.
- Work with experienced consultants and managers.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

The certification process is designed for Marketing, Human Resources, Customer Services, and Business Strategy specialists looking to grow their knowledge and experience in strategy implementation, brand alignment, culture development, and organizational change.

Sign up now—some places still available, but registration is strictly limited.

For more information and a complete outline go to <http://www.brandedservice.com/Default.aspx?PageID=516> or contact us at info@brandedservice.com



"In 15 years of training I have never seen so much value in a Consultants/ Facilitators Tool-Kit. Used correctly you have tremendous value of being able to:

1. Raise revenue significantly through superior branding
2. Energize and inspire your staff
3. Create increased loyalty from your customers
4. Add brand value to your balance sheet
5. Identify your unique DNA success criteria defined as the brand
6. Align the organization around that successful brand
7. Improve your image and brand delivery at all stake-holder touch-points"



—Peter Andreou, MD of People Achieve (Middle East), President of the Cyprus Management Consultants Association