

WHAT WAS Willy Wonka's Secret? HOW GENIUS BRANDS HARNESS PASSION AND PEOPLE

Willy Wonka was a genius. Not only did he create amazing, mind-bendingly wonderful chocolates and confectionery, but his people — the Oompa-Loompas — shared his passion. In the sixth of this series of branding articles, **Neil Osborne** explains how great brands are fuelled by a passion that's reflected through the face of its people.

Chocolate has been tempting us for over three millennia. Serious — dare I say passionate — trade wars have been fought in its name. And while someone once said in jest, "Forget love. I'd rather fall in chocolate" those seven words sum up our love affair with the delicious brown stuff.

Willy Wonka was a master of chocolate. He made thousands of temptingly gorgeous treats that tapped into the passionate, almost child-like feelings and physical reactions it created in his customers:

"Charlie felt it worst of all ... He desperately wanted something more filling and satisfying than cabbage and cabbage soup. The one thing he longed for more than anything else was ... chocolate."

Walking to school in the mornings, Charlie could see great slabs of chocolate piled up high in the shop windows, and he would stop and stare and press his nose against the glass, his mouth watering like mad."

Similar to Mr Wonka, a successful brand knows all too well the thrill it gives and the difference it wants to make. A product is created, values articulated and a business model built that is capable of serving its market.

One of the last of the seven branding elements you need to harness is passion. It's the fire behind any great brand, and is often born when your



heart gets carried away with a purpose greater than yourself. And, like all fires, passion sparks other flames that become contagious — in turn igniting the passion of owners, staff and customers.

The magic of Willy Wonka and his chocolate inspires such a passion. It's also the perfect metaphor for how your brand should make your people feel.

Part Six: Passion & People

As the sixth of the 7Ps of salon industry brand building, passion and people are the drivers at the coalface ... on the front line. Although often overlooked, these two Ps are the most obvious, external things your customer sees and experiences.

Your people need to sing your brand story, with passion. For them, on the inside, it's a powerful or compelling emotion or feeling. On the outside, others see it as a passion for their brand, their customers and their job. It's so real their passion is almost palpable.

"But there was no question at all," said Grandpa Joe, "that the factory was running. And it's gone on running ever since, for these last ten years. What's more, the chocolate and sweets it's been turning out have become more fantastic and delicious all the time."

Passion is when you put all your energy into something that's going to make everyone it touches (not just yourself) better in some way.

Square sweets that look round

I'm sad to say though, that passion can't be manufactured. Or given as a prize — even if you find a golden ticket. Nor can you fake it or turn it on or off at will. It has to emanate from within — grounded in a belief or a purpose — but generally once it's on, it tends to stay on. Just like an everlasting gobstopper.

It's easily sensed when a brand has passion. From how it is presented in the media to how it interacts with customers, passion can be seen, felt, heard and even tasted.

There's very often a unique culture within the business and customers definitely notice a difference.

"They are wonderful workers ... They love dancing and music. They are always making up songs. I expect you will hear a good deal of singing today from time to time."

Perhaps it's a genuinely, friendly smile and hello at the door, or an unexpected follow-up on how a recent therapy worked. Or you're greeted by someone who is eager to find out how they can serve you and you're struck by the personal satisfaction they get from helping you. It doesn't happen often does it? But when it does, it's empowering, inspiring and motivating.

That's what passion feels like in action.

Oompa-Loompas anyone?

However, not everyone can find and import their own dedicated, passionate workforce to live-breathe-and-eat their brand.

"I brought them over from Africa myself — the whole tribe of them, three thousand in all ... when I found them they were practically starving to death ... Poor little Oompa-Loompas! The one food they longed for more than any other was the cacao bean. But they couldn't get it ... oh, how they craved them!"

Every person in your business — from the receptionist to the therapist to the salon owner — is a reflection of your brand. No one should just care about it — they need to **love** it!

Brands that are known for their passion magnetically attract people who share those beliefs and want to be part of that, too. Those people become more than just your staff. They proudly become your evangelists.

That said, if you don't already have a clear message that is attracting, then your first step is to ignite passion within your existing people. By defining your passion, purpose (more on this in the next, final article) and difference, you can then start preaching it — everywhere — and outsiders will eventually feel it too.

Your message needs to ignite a fire that is obvious to everyone inside and out of the business. You need to build a culture.

The chocolate room

Culture begins at interview and stretches on forever. It's built from tangibles and intangibles that constantly change and grow over time. Indeed, your job is never done when it comes to culture.

Sitting at the centre of your culture and ethics are your values and beliefs. They are the starting point in conveying the personality of your business, its leaders, what your brand stands for and what you care about. The rest is built from there.

Fundamentally, if you tear away the trappings of culture ... you're left with a feeling. And that feeling is fuelled by passion.

"An important room, this!" cried Mr Wonka ... 'This is the nerve centre of the whole factory, the heart of the whole business! And so beautiful! I insist upon my rooms being beautiful! I can't abide ugliness in factories!"

FIVE WONDERS OF WONKA-STYLE BRAND MAGIC

One of the world's most loved children's books — Charlie and the Chocolate Factory — is full of brilliant branding benchmarks.

Written by one of the world's greatest storytellers, Roald Dahl, the book has touched, shaped and twisted the imagination of three generations of children and is still as relevant to them today, as when it first appeared in 1964.

Yet when it's read from a branding viewpoint, the book also contains countless marketing lessons that still resonate, fifty years later:

Curiosity:

"And...nobody...ever...goes...in!"

Reward:

"He's brilliant!" cried Grandpa Joe. "He's a magician! Just imagine what will happen now! The whole world will be searching for those Golden Tickets! Everyone will be buying Wonka's chocolate bars in the hope of finding one! He'll sell more than ever before!"

Scarcity:

"Mind you" said Grandpa Joe, "there is just that one tiny chance that it might be the one, don't you agree!"

Anticipation:

"I think," he said quietly, "I think... I'll have just one more of those chocolate bars. The same kind as before, please."

Celebrity:

"Cameras were clicking and flashbulbs were flashing and people were pushing and jostling and trying to get a bit closer to the famous girl."

Passion creates a higher order feeling. It lifts people to a different plane, one that motivates them to incredible — Wonka would say delectable — heights.

How so? A brand fuelled by passion, that offers the same service or product as another with no passion, magnetically draws stellar staff, enduring customers and booming business. A passionate team with vision and the ability to execute an idea will achieve miracles.

Dare I say it ... passion creates magic. Just like how Charlie found and unwrapped the miraculous last golden ticket. ■

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