

# Today's consumers rely on brands they trust

Successful marketing must acknowledge and be relevant to the society in which it operates. Today in the United States, our society sadly is one of distrust and fear.

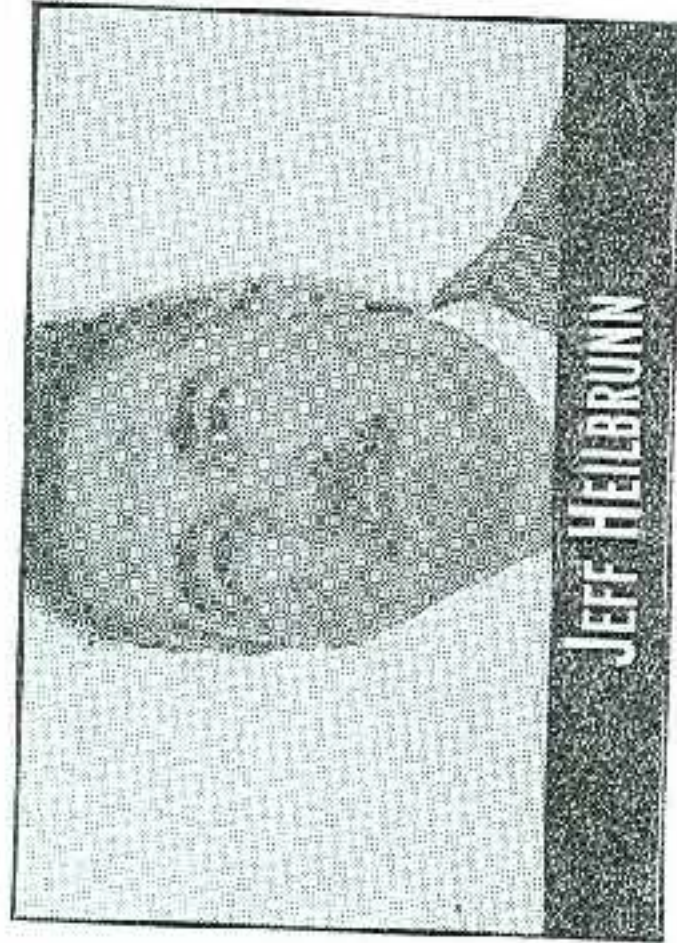
Just look at the evidence: mad cow disease, terrorism alerts, Wall Street greed, corporate criminals and unemployment. Martha Stewart falls from grace, priests are pushed from their pedestals over pedophilia and then there are those illusive weapons of mass destruction. Who do we trust in a fearful and dishonest world?

When we shop, we look for the brand that we trust. We buy Johnson & Johnson Baby Shampoo, because it delivers on its promise of "No More Tears." We buy Bayer Aspirin, because it promises "Fast, Fast Pain Relief."

Branding is the overall image you present in the marketplace. It is your presence in the minds of your customers. We value products in the marketplace based upon this mind-set.

Marketing experts formulate brands to create trust. Brands are created by developing one or more of the following:

■ **Values.** It's what we stand for, such as patriotism, honesty and family. When Wal-Mart says: "We Buy American, So You Can Buy American,"



JEFF HEILBRUNN

## Introducing Heilbrunn

Jeff Heilbrunn, director of Columbia College in Crystal Lake and president of the American Marketing Association from 1985 to 1993, will offer his insights on sales and marketing to our readers three times a year.

His credits include Matsushita's marketing efforts to launch the VCR into U.S. households in the 1970s and pioneering non-profit marketing strategies for the National Safety Council in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

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they are espousing patriotic values that resonate with middle Americans.

■ **Value.** Some brands are defined by the amount of benefit they deliver for the dollar. When you think you are getting a lot for your money, then the value proposition is at work.

■ **Features.** These define the product in real terms. A feature of Johnson & Johnson Baby Shampoo is it is mild. That mildness more importantly translates into a benefit, no more tears.

■ **Benefit.** This is what a feature actually does for you. You can drive a Jaguar, and the features include tires, radio, air-conditioning, etc. But the real benefit of driving a Jag is the prestige you accrue. It has more to do with lifestyle than driving a car.

■ **Personality.** It is very important

promise that is not easily assailable by competition, and a promise that is kept is a powerful way to position a brand.

Keeping your promises and keeping true to your brand image will build trust in the marketplace and create a name for your business that will be hard to compete against.

It is one thing to create a brand based upon the previously discussed elements. It's another thing to have a brand that gains the brain, or obtains a share of the customer's mind that leads to purchasing behavior. To be gainful, the brand must be connected to the lifestyle of the target audience.

Mountain Dew strongly is connected and even emblematic of the young "extreme" target market. Its high-energy caffeine base keeps skateboarders and snowboarders going at high levels of performance.

The persona of extreme is reflected in the advertising for Mountain Dew. This level of connectivity can try to go even deeper, appealing at an emotional level, as well. Recent commercials for Morgan Stanley talk about "Making Your Dreams Their Life Work."

As you make purchases, think about why you shop where you shop and why you buy what you buy. You are probably relying on branding.

for some brands. Can you define the brand in terms suited for people? Mountain Dew was a dying brand, before it received its makeover and suddenly became a part of the extreme lifestyle for the young generation. Now we "Do the Dew."

■ **Promise.** Many brands will make a promise, and that promise is their positioning in the marketplace. The FedEx brand started with the promise, "Absolutely, Positively Overnight." A