

How do you make your brand irresistible? OVERPROMISE!

The old cliché in business is that you should UNDER promise and over deliver. But in a crowded marketplace, under promising is a one way ticket to oblivion. Because consumers and businesses are moving and shopping at warp speed they won't slow down enough to fully understand your under promise. To grab their attention you must OVERPROMISE.

By Overpromising I don't mean that you should promise things you can't deliver. Instead, I mean that you must make an outrageous claim on which you CAN deliver. Most companies already have such capabilities. That's why their current customers do business with them. But the marketing team has not taken the time to understand EXACTLY why their current customers really stay loyal and then articulated their unique capabilities in an outrageous OVERPROMISE. While doing research for my most recent book, *"Overpromise and Overdeliver, The Secrets of Unshakable Customer Loyalty,"* I was astounded by how many products, services and companies did not have an articulated Overpromise. If you don't tell customers why they should buy from you, but your competitors do... guess who gets the customers.

Here are 3 excellent examples of Overpromises that you can use for inspiration:

- **American Girl** *overpromises* by offering girls dolls that will utterly enchant them... and *overdelivers* by giving each doll a fascinating biography.
- **Google** *overpromises* by offering everything a customer would want to find on the Web... and *overdelivers* with an average search time of 0.2 seconds.
- **Hummer** *overpromises* a driving experience that's "like nothing else..." and *overdelivers* with an attention-grabbing design, extra comfort, and a built in Hummer community.

So how can you create your own OVERPROMISE?

1. **Start by examining the founder's vision.** Why was the company started in the first place? What was missing in the marketplace that the founder vowed to fix on behalf of customers? I often find that the essence of the brand can be drawn from the founder's original thoughts. They could feel it even if they couldn't articulate it. Now is the time to make that articulation.
2. **What is the single most important attribute of your product or service?** What makes it unique? What one word do customers think about or feel when they hear your company's name? Volvo means safety. Lexus means luxury. What does your product or service mean?
3. **Ask your customers why they buy your products.** Then ask them why they don't buy your competitors products. In the chasm between these two answers you'll find a beacon that points to what your Overpromise should be.
4. **Ask non-customers why they DON'T buy your products or services.** Then ask why they buy competitors products. This pair of questions will give you insight into the misperceptions they have about your product or company or will point you toward serious shortcomings in your offerings.
5. **What emotions do your customers feel when they use your products?** Why do customers pay a premium for a Hummer, a Lexus or an American Girl Doll? It's because of the way it makes them feel or because of the way it makes others feel about

them. These are powerful brand building insights that you must consider when you are crafting your Overpromise.

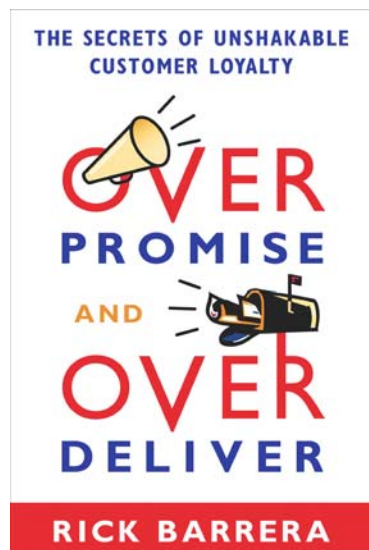
Once you have done your research and have brainstormed some potential Overpromises for your brand, be sure to test them with customers and potential customers for effectiveness in both their ability to grab attention and their ability to accurately reflect your actual brand experience. Too many companies make the fatal mistake of creating aspirational Overpromises that they cannot fulfill. It will take your customers a very short time to find out that you cannot deliver on your Overpromise. You'll know when you've got the right Overpromise because it will resonate with both customers and employees.

NOW, OVERDELIVER!

My research showed a clear pattern in the companies that were able to consistently Overdeliver on their Overpromises. They focused on creating unique customer experiences at three critical TouchPoints: The Product TouchPoint, The Systems TouchPoint and The Human TouchPoint.

The product must reliably perform as promised. Appropriate design is crucial. The product must be easy to acquire, finance, assemble, use, store, fix and dispose of. The greatest product in the world is worth far less if getting it is a hassle or if it is too complicated for customers to use. Your people must clearly understand the role they play in delivering the overall customer experience. How should they dress? What should they say? How should they act? Do not leave these details to chance or your people will make up their own version of your brand.

Overpromise and Overdeliver is a formula proven to be successful by American Express, Pottery Barn, Samsung, Washington Mutual and many others. If you are willing to invest in the research required to get your Overpromise right and the attention to detail required to get your Overdelivery right, your brand too, can join the ranks of the irresistible!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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