

Monthly Musings



courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

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NOT-SO-

SMART CAMPAIGN:

Gillette TV Commercial

The concept probably made a lot of sense after three or four beers: Let's make a commercial that shows how men can misbehave in today's world, and then we can juxtapose it with imagery that shows how good men are when they live up to their potential.

And then tie it to our tagline: "The Best a Man Can Get."

I can just imagine the reaction, particularly if the speaker was the big boss. Nobody was bold enough to ask:

- While this may impress those who have been bullied, how will it play to those in our existing customer base who don't feel they've made these mistakes?
- Are we painting the entire category of men as bad actors in today's society?
- Will this commercial alienate more people (customers) than it impresses?

Nobody was bold enough to ask those questions, so Gillette moved forward with a risky concept. The question is not so much why they did it, but rather, "How did you read your market so inaccurately?"

Here is the world that Gillette was facing at the time the commercial launched:

1. Positioning statement: *The Best a Man Can Get*
2. Market trend: A category that was once dominated by major players Gillette and Schick has been redefined by subscription shaving competitors like Harry's and the Dollar Shave Club. Even Gillette offers a subscription service now.
3. Market profile reality: 30% of the brand's customers are currently women
4. The #MeToo movement has a lot of momentum
5. Men's "grooming" products that trim day-old beards are growing in sales as "shaving systems"

Gillette was once a renowned case study at Harvard for its then-brilliant concept of selling an inexpensive razor and earning most

of its money on the razor blade refills.

Following the TV commercial and disastrous follow-up interview, Gillette was left in a cloud of public relations dust. No, make that a mountain of public relations dust. They took a chance at impressing women with an eye toward growing sales within

that market, which represents 30% of their business. Unfortunately, Gillette simultaneously offended much of its primary market – men, which represent 70% of their business.

Gillette's executives forgot that their male customers watch TV to be entertained, not to be preached to. Even if much of the message is true, the commercial portrayed the brand's core customers as bad people.

These men tune in to watch shows they enjoy. If they wanted a serious documentary on the role of men in society, they might have watched PBS or the Science Channel.

"The Best a Man Can Get" is now in the midst of damage control because it misread its market.

SMART/NOT-SO- SMART CUSTOMER RELATIONS:

Burger King vs. Cathay Pacific

Recently, two major international brands dealt with a negative customer experience. You may be surprised when you learn which one made the smart move.

A customer in Portland, Oregon, found himself trapped inside a Burger King restroom for an hour when a faulty lock trapped him inside.

According to the Willamette Weekly Newspaper, Curtis Brooner experienced a humiliating situation. Burger King employees apparently slid a flyswatter under the door for him to pry open the lock, but he cut his hand. He alleges that the employees laughed at his situation.

The concept probably made a lot of sense after three or four beers...

Following the TV commercial and disastrous follow-up interview...

"The Best a Man Can Get" is now in the midst of damage control because...



"Boys will be boys"? Isn't it time we stopped excusing bad behavior? Re-think and take action by joining us at TheBestMenCanBe.org. #TheBestMenCanBe



John Fletcher is a recognized authority on the subject of effective communications.

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**1 BURGER A WEEK
\$7.89 FOR 22 YEARS = \$9,026.16**

After he finally escaped, Curtis claimed the event triggered his PTSD and left him too shaken to drive. He said, "The cleanliness of the place was less than desirable – highway bums use it as a changing room. It's not a pleasant-smelling place. Being locked in there for over an hour, you smell like that when you get out."

The manager seemed to save the day when he said, "Any time you come in here, it's free meals on us." Curtis eats at Burger King nearly every day, so he was understandably grateful for the offer.

Now, here's the second story. [Fox News reports](#) that Cathay Pacific Airways made what appeared to be an extremely expensive error, accidentally selling round-trip business and first-class tickets from Vietnam to New York City for \$675 instead of the standard \$16,000. The airline made the mistake for a few hours on New Year's Eve.

Here's the question: Which company was the hero?

Back to Burger King. It's a simple solution, since the manager was empowered to make binding decisions, right? **Wrong!** After two weeks, the district office told the restaurant manager that the comped meals had to stop.

That decision led Curtis to file a lawsuit requesting that Burger King honor its original offer. He demanded either continued food or



damages in the very specific amount of \$9,026.16 – the value of just one \$7.89 Whopper combo a week over the span of 22 years. When you consider that the actual food cost of a Whopper combo is around

30% of the total charge, or \$2.37 per week, Burger King drew an embarrassing line in the sand. Burger King took a dedicated fan and turned him into a victim and vigilante.

Not their finest hour!

Compare Burger King to Cathay Pacific, whose mistake cost \$15,325 of lost revenue for EACH TICKET SOLD that day. A lot of those tickets were sold, too. I'm sure travelers called their friends and

used social media to promote the outrageous deal.

The company took to Twitter: "Happy 2019 all, and to those who bought our good – VERY good surprise "special" on New Year's Day, yes – we made a mistake, but we look forward to welcoming you on board with your ticket issued. Hope this will make your 2019 'special' too!"

Burger King could have solved its situation for 34¢ per day (averaging the food at cost), but instead refused and even went to court. Cathay Pacific, on the other hand, recognized that each of these beneficiaries would become future customers with incredible stories to tell.

They employed my philosophy: *Determine how far you would go if your customer pushed you to the wall, and then go there immediately and gladly!*

As you read about these two corporate cultures, consider a few questions:

- Which company would you want to work for? (Realizing, of course, that this Burger King operation was based on a district office and may not reflect the company's corporate culture.)
- Which company would you want to spend your money with?
- What are you doing within YOUR company to avoid the poor decision-making skills that Burger King's district manager employed?

Companies employing short-sighted solutions will always struggle, while those with the long game in mind tend to succeed. Best wishes, Cathay Pacific.

My only question about Curtis Brooner is: Will his attorney take his 30% fee in Whopper combos?

SMART LEGACY:

Herb Kelleher

When Southwest Airlines co-founder and former CEO Herb Kelleher died recently, accolades rolled in. One of the most touching was the full-page tribute ad that ran in the January 5 edition of the Wall Street Journal.

You and I can only dream of being such a beloved and dynamic leader that we would deserve such a message. The copy read:

Dear Herb,
 Thanks for always remembering our names.
 For keeping our airline flying high and our spirits higher.
 For always being there.
 For giving everyone (and we do mean everyone) a kiss on the lips.
 For arm wrestling for our slogan.
 For being both the hardest worker and the life of the party.
 And for turning a Company into a Family.
 We will be forever in your debt, and we will aspire to keep your spirit alive.



With love and gratitude,
 The Employees and Retirees of Southwest Airlines

