

Claims Design: How Form Follows Function

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Overview

How do you go about the process of designing appropriate claims? 'Better' claims are often thought of as statements that out-claim the competition or which talk about some aspect of the technology. Very often companies operate with a silo mentality which leads people to focus only on what they know; this limits their creativity and the possibilities they will identify. But there is an alternative.

Claims are best developed by taking a holistic view that simultaneously encompasses brand, consumer, and technology. When claims are designed to work with all three, it will lead to a set of claims which, when executed consistently over time, will establish the brand in the mind of the consumer so that future claims become even more credible and appropriate. Claim design, which is defined as getting the right claim in the context of the consumer, the technology, and the brand, cannot be decoupled from consumer understanding, product design and development, or product branding; nor can it be carried out in isolation in any one of these areas.

In industrial and product design the Bauhaus movement adopted the credo that 'form follows function'. This is also true for claim design too. So when we embark on the task of designing claims, we need to decide what the various functions of the claim could be – is it to inform, to educate, to compete, or to create beliefs? Do we want to highlight the physical features and benefits, or the emotional benefits of our product? And then from the universe of potential claims we need to decide what is right for the brand and the consumer. And by exploring different functions of the claims, we can develop a series of claims to be executed in a strategic rather than a tactical manner.

When we use these different possible functions of the claim as starting points, we can not only generate more claim options but also generate them in a more holistic way that breaks out of conventional silos of product and marketing thinking.

The art of claim design therefore requires that we bear three things in mind simultaneously:

What is the function of the claim?

What possible claims can we think of?

What is the best type of claim expression in the context of the product, the brand, concept, and consumer insight?

The seminar explores some techniques and tools that will help to stimulate this type of holistic thinking.