

GET STICKY How to harness the power of the Post-it Note for your brand

By Andrea Syverson

Sometimes you just can't beat low tech. Yes, there are many ways my high tech laptop, tablet and smartphone with all those apps make my life easier and more efficient, but it is the simple and humble and happy yellow Post-it® Note that makes me smile and inspires some of my best thinking. I use them in all sorts of everyday ways from writing notes to myself across all the piles on my desk to brainstorming with the large flip sheet Post-it Notes in client meetings to leaving little messages for my husband in unexpected places around our home when I am on the road. Post-it Notes just can't be beat.

I've always loved the serendipity behind their story. Here's how their website summarizes their brand history:

“The Post-it® Note was invented as a solution without a problem: Dr. Spencer Silver developed a unique, repositionable adhesive, but the 3M scientist didn't know what to do with his discovery. Then, six years later, a colleague of Dr. Silver, Art Fry, remembered the light adhesive when he was daydreaming about a bookmark that would stay put in his church hymnal. The rest is history. Today, Post-it® Brand boasts more than 4,000 unique products, and has become one of the most well-known and beloved brands in the world.”

What I love even more is the power of the Post-it Note. The other day, this ad stopped me in my speed reading tracks:



**“FOR MY FAMILY, ONLY
THE BEST IN NUTRITION.”**

Compared to ordinary eggs:

- 25% less saturated fat
- 10 times more vitamin E
- 3 times more vitamin B₁₂
- 2 times more vitamin D
- Double the Omega 3
- 38% more lutein
- 175 mg cholesterol (58% DV)
- Good source of vitamin B₆
- 125 mg choline

Eggland's Best eggs are different. As soon as you open a carton of EBs, you see that red EB stamp on every egg—the sign that you're getting the very best in freshness and quality.

Besides giving your family superior nutrition, EBs also give them more of the farm-fresh taste they love. Better taste and better nutrition also add up to better value—which is something all families are looking for these days. So, why give your family ordinary when you can give them the best? Eggland's Best.

Also available in cage-free and organic varieties

Better taste. Better nutrition. Better eggs.™

www.EgglandsBest.com

On one little yellow piece of paper, the Eggland's Best egg company told their entire brand story in nine bullet points. Simply, powerfully, profoundly and memorably. This Post-it Note visual treatment grabbed my “continuous partial attention” (CPA, a term invented by Linda Stone to explain our society's skimming of many things superficially) and actually prompted me to purchase these eggs on my next grocery shopping trip. Their brand promise rings true. I haven't bought “ordinary” eggs since! They are, indeed, as their tagline claims: better tasting and more nutritious.

GIVE IT A TRY

This condensed Brand Story-On-A-Post-It-Note got me thinking. Would all my clients be able to tell their brand stories this succinctly? Could they whittle their brand elevator pitches even further? So, I gave it a try. In one meeting, I placed these yellow sticky notes in front of each seat at our conference table and asked each brand leader (from marketing, finance, product development, customer care, operations) to create a short five-point bulletin about the brand. I challenged them: “Pretend we were going to run a brand campaign like Egglund’s Best just did. What would our sticky note say?”

This was a very powerful exercise. As you might imagine, they did not all have the same bullet points. If the company’s brand leaders were not all on the same proverbial sticky note, how powerful could their brand’s external messaging be? While some of the nuances behind the words might differ around the table, it is imperative that all the brand leaders are focused on the same tight message if they want to create a meaningful, deep and lasting brand impression. This exercise led to an important brand story hierarchy conversation.

Try it with your team. See what happens.

TRY IT AGAIN

Now, try the same exercise focused on each of your key programs, services, products. One Post-it Note per concept. Try tightening your message further with this challenge: Write 3 bullet points about why your customer can’t live without this program/service/product. OR three reasons why your offer is better than the competitors. OR three reasons why this solves a problem or pain point for your customer. OR three reasons why this makes your customers’ lives easier or simpler. That’s it.

Practice making sure you have a point of differentiation in all you do.

Practice editing all your messages in a way that customers can quickly absorb.

Practice everyone singing off the same sticky note.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

AND AGAIN

Now, put the power of the Post-it Note to use in another way: Write down the name of your top three partners/vendors on three separate sticky notes. Now jot down 3 ways they each enhance your brand. Pause, smile, call them and say thank you! Next, write down three partners/vendors that you believe could do more for your business. Write down three specific ways they could improve their business dealings with you. Pause, evaluate, pick up the phone, ask those partners/vendors to go the extra mile.

Practice making sure you know who is really supporting you.

Practice gratitude.

Practice continual improvement and raising the bar.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

AND ONE LAST TIME

Now, put the power of the Post-it Note to work in one last way: Repeat the last exercise but with your employees/team members (I like to think of everyone internally in a company as brand ambassadors). Write down the name of your top three brand ambassadors on three separate sticky notes. Now jot down 3 ways they each add significant value to your brand. Pause, smile, look them in the eye and deliver a meaningful thank you! Next, write down three brand ambassadors who need to step up their game. Write down three specific ways they could improve their contribution to your brand. Pause, evaluate, and have a heart-to-heart chat with each of them asking them to recalibrate their efforts accordingly.

Again, practice making sure you reward the best of the best.

Practice gratitude.

Practice letting the others know what more you need from them.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

See why Post-it Notes is one of the most well-known and beloved brands in the world? See why I love these things? They just can't be beat. Go out and buy a pack today! You'll be glad you did.

Andrea Syverson is the founder and president of IER Partners, which has guided and strengthened brands of all sizes with savvy best practices for creating customers for life. Combining her passion of adventurous listening and working across diverse industries, her “outsider-insider” creative branding and merchandising expertise and objectivity has been valued by companies as diverse as Ben & Jerry's, Celestial Seasonings, CHEFS, Boston Proper, SmartPak, Spanx and World Vision. She holds an MBA and has dedicated more than 20 years to providing clients both domestic and international with innovative approaches to branding, product development and creative messaging. She is the author of two books in which she shares her hands-on approach for both brand building and creating customer-centric products that enhance brands: *ThinkAbout: 77 Creative Prompts for Innovators*, and *BrandAbout: A Seriously Playful Approach for Passionate Brand-Builders and Merchants*.