

DEMANDING BRANDS

Screw 'the customer is always right': these 'demanding brands' are taking the (painful) lead again.



If you don't believe that the number one *raison d'être* for brands is to (profitably) help create a more sustainable, more ethical society – and that brands that ignore this imperative will regret it one day – then don't read on.

For the rest of us: this month we bring you a full Trend Briefing on how ambitious, responsible brands are instigating daring changes in the relationships they have with their customers. Make way for DEMANDING BRANDS.

DEFINITION

Switched-on brands that are embarking on the journey towards a more sustainable and socially-responsible future **will demand that consumers also contribute**. Even if that means some pain – financial or otherwise – for their customers.

From Pain to Respect



Yes, consumers will be **surprised** to find a brand making real, meaningful demands on their time, energy or wallet. Yes, they'll feel the **pain** when it comes time to make their contribution. But ultimately, consumers will have deep **respect** for a truly DEMANDING BRAND: one that pushes them towards taking action that – while painful – they know to be right.

Indeed, being a DEMANDING BRAND might well be the *only* way there is left to earn the respect of consumers.

From Pain to Respect

What makes for a meaningful DEMAND? Here are a few places to start:



The planet:

DEMAND action that is good for the environment: right now, or in the long-term. Think reduce, re-use, recycle. Start by looking at the examples below of governments from LA to Manila DEMANDING environmental actions.



Lifestyles:

Create products or services that DEMAND customers live healthily, or behave well. Check out the Kitchen Safe example below for inspiration.



Society:

DEMAND action that is good for other people. From friends and family to the broader community.



Nonprofits:

Make DEMANDS on behalf of an established nonprofit, and insist that customers do something to support them.



NOT FOR EVERYONE

DEMANDING BRANDS, almost by definition, **will** alienate some people. But brands that back down at the first sign of resistance will simply come across as half-hearted, weak and uncommitted. And, given that even the biggest, most successful brands can't satisfy everyone, best to just get on and do the right thing, **before** being made to.

SINCERITY IS EVERYTHING

Consumers aren't going to take painful action at the behest of brands unless they believe in that brand's vision of - and activities for - a 'better world'. So any brand being DEMANDING had better be 100% transparent and be taking real, meaningful, painful positive action itself first. If that's too much, then stick to being a **SERVILE BRAND** ;-).

DEMANDS ARE NOT REWARDS

That means no money off, no added extras, no fun games with prizes. DEMANDING BRANDS don't reward consumers for taking positive action. They DEMAND it as a condition of engagement. And while some brands might be unwilling to go all out and DEMAND action from consumers, many governments around the world are **already** moving ahead, especially in the environmental arena, as shown by the examples below. Something for brands that want to be seen as forward-thinking to consider.

ACTIVITIES SHOULDN'T BE ONE-OFFS

It's one thing being temporarily demanding as a stunt to grab consumers' attention, like the Casa do Zezinho example below, but quite another to make **meaningful** demands on an ongoing basis.

EXAMPLES

Ready? Then dive into the examples below for inspiration.

Packaging-free grocery stores: from London to Texas



Packaging is one obvious area where brands that are serious about reducing their environmental impact can DEMAND their customers contribute. Check out grocery stores [Unpackaged](#), which in December 2012 opened a new store in London, or [in.gredients](#) which opened in 2012 in Austin, Texas. Shoppers bring their own containers and can buy as much or as little food as they need, reducing wastage as well as the amount of packaging required.

“91% of global consumers believe that companies must go beyond the minimum standards required by law to operate responsibly.”

***- Cone Communications/
Echo, May 2013***

EXAMPLES

Plastic Bag Bans: from LA to Manila



Following San Francisco's 2007 ban on plastic bags, a number of other cities around the world have also taken similar measures. In June 2013, **Los Angeles** became the largest city in the US to ban free plastic bags in grocery stores. In the same month, **Makati City** became the 9th district of metro Manila in the Philippines to ban plastic bags, Styrofoam containers and plastic cups in an attempt to reduce the plastic waste that increases the severity of the floods that frequently affect the city.

US town bans sale of small water bottles



January 2013 saw the US town of Concord, Massachusetts **ban the sale of bottled water** in bottles less than one liter. Carbonated and flavored drinks are excluded from the ban, which is designed to encourage residents to drink tap water instead of bottled water.

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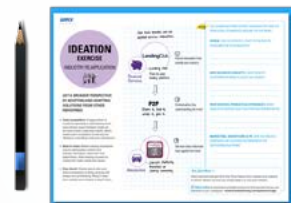
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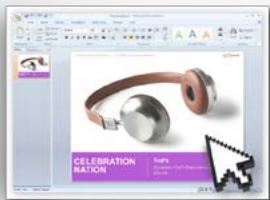
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EXAMPLES

“87% of global consumers believe business should place at least equal emphasis on social interests as business interests, and ‘purpose’ has increased as a purchase trigger by 26% since 2008.”

- Edelman, April 2012

**Hachikyo:
Seafood restaurant fines diners
for not finishing their meal**



February 2013 saw the [Hachikyo](#) seafood restaurant in Japan introduce a scheme where diners not finishing their tsukko meshi (rice and salmon roe) dish, must pay a ‘fine’ and donate to a fund for local fishermen. The menu explains that the donation is designed to highlight the dangerous working conditions for the fishermen who harvest the roe.

EXAMPLES

Organ Donor Foundation of South Africa: Pop-up shop requires customers to register as organ donors



During May 2013, the Organ Donor Foundation of South Africa hosted [The Exchange](#), a pop-up shop to encourage donor registration. The shop was stocked with designer-donated clothing and accessories, but items could not be purchased with cash or credit cards. Instead, only once consumers had signed up to the Foundation's organ donor program, were they allowed to choose one item from the shop.

Kitchen Safe: Time-locked Tupperware container helps overcome temptation



July 2013 saw DEMANDING PRODUCT the [Kitchen Safe](#) reach its funding goal on Kickstarter. The product is a Tupperware box with a time-lock lid, helping customers store oh-so-tempting yet guilty treats or items securely until a future time of their choosing. Suggested uses include anything from snacks to smartphones, credit cards to cigarettes. The Kitchen Safe is available for pre-order for USD 39.95.

EXAMPLES

Vitoria: Soccer team changed uniform color until fans donated blood



To promote its charitable blood donation campaign, Brazilian soccer club **Vitoria** unveiled new player uniforms in July 2012. Although the team usually played in red and black, the team's uniform was changed to white and black (a **big** deal in soccer-mad Brazil), and fans were told that to restore the shirts back to their regular colors, they would have to donate blood. Over 10 matches, the red stripes returned as blood donations increased. Following the success of the initial campaign, the Fundação de Hematologia da Bahia (Hematology Foundation from Bahia) created the "Hemoba Solidarity Cup" in May 2013, inviting football fans from two rival soccer teams - Bahia and Vitoria - to donate blood, with the fans 'competing' via a **Facebook app** as to which fans could donate the most blood.

Casa do Zezinho: Buy one, get half



In 2011, Brazilian nonprofit **Casa do Zezinho** launched its Half for Happiness campaign, which aimed to boost awareness about malnutrition. Several products, including a steak and a head of lettuce, were sold in São Paulo grocery stores, having been chopped in half. In the space where the missing portion was an explanation that the additional proceeds from the items' sale would be donated to Casa do Zezinho to help alleviate malnutrition.

WHAT GOES AROUND...



Ultimately, society **is** heading towards a more sustainable, tolerant, progressive future. Don't believe us? Just look back 20 or 30 years and see the sweeping social and environmental changes that have taken place during that time. Now look at what governments are **currently** doing, and increasingly forcing corporations and consumers to do too.

But then here's a challenge: name five big brands that are truly DEMANDING. How about just one? Nothing? In which case, when was the last time you had the opportunity to be **first** to a deep, lasting consumer trend?

Don't do it for the consumer respect, or the great PR: people will see straight through you, and you'll get neither.

Do it because you – and your customers – know that taking positive action for the planet and other people is the right thing to do. And in the knowledge that today, brand Karma comes around faster than ever.

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PAUL BACKMAN
Client Services Manager
paul@trendwatching.com

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