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The Simple Genius of Old Spice...

Unless one has been living under a space rock without electricity for the past few weeks, chances are you have seen the hilarious Old Spice ads starring a handsome, shirtless gentleman having a rather intimate conversation with the women of America about how her man could smell like this rogue. Now, I could sit here and write about the brilliance of the comedic timing and writing but what has been rather striking to me are the core principles at work here in this advertisement.

In 2007, Old Spice (a Procter & Gamble brand) made a daring move that shook up Madison Ave when they hired the Wieden & Kennedy Agency. The smaller collective was best known for their assertive, daring ads -amongst which were Nike's iconic "Just do it." campaign.

As a product based company, Procter and Gamble has long capitalized on the efficacy of it's products, and used the old-school idea of straight comparison (my brand is better than brand X) to convince consumers their product is the best to buy. The Internet entrepreneur is a product based company as well. Except that product is not detergent or deodorant, it's YOU Inc.

Back to the Old Spice ad. So what is it about this commercial that has resonated so astoundingly with consumers all across the globe? As I type this, the commercial has received over 4.4 million views on YouTube (talk about going viral). One could argue it's the pure comedic quality of the commercial, but I would argue it's something much more simplistic than that.

1. Consumers want you to: "Talk with them, not at them" The character is constantly speaking directly to the audience. Engaging and prompting even your very movements at home (look down, now up...where are you?). This type of conversation keeps the audience attentive, relaxed, and psychologically establishes an immediate bond.
2. Invention of Personality You are what you present. Authenticity stems from an unbridled presentation of your personality. It does no one any good to be overly reverential about yourself, take yourself too seriously, or worse be obviously reverential and taking yourself too seriously! If you want people to know your product or service is fun, rewarding and simple. Be fun, rewarding and simple in your ads!
3. Brand Building Laboratory Brand building is always an experiment. No profitable company, in the history of the modern world, has maintained the exact same marketing or advertising strategy from start to finish. Break rules, try new things, let your imagination guide your experimentation and most importantly of all, be yourself! Who knows what you might come up with!

By the way, I'm on a horse. Have a great weekend.

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