

# When “Extremely Satisfied” Isn’t Good Enough

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Marketers go to great lengths to create customer satisfaction surveys, in which they rank customer satisfaction on a linear scale from “dissatisfied” to “extremely satisfied,” but this scale has become overused and lacks a critical dimension that can’t be measured so easily. According to Scott Magids, CEO and co-founder of [Motista](#), that dimension is the data-driven representation of the emotional connection consumers have with your brand.

You may have a perfectly acceptable product delivered in a competent and friendly manner and at a reasonable price, and you may boast a high rate of customer satisfaction – but the fact remains that in an environment where differentiation is a moving target that is increasingly hard to define in a commoditized world, “satisfied” just isn’t good enough.

There are dozens of light beer products for example, with very little difference in taste, price, or availability, yet beer is one of those products with which consumers have an emotional connection that transcends traditional customer satisfaction rankings. Bartenders throughout the country hear “Gimme a Bud,” uttered by diehard fans who would never consider switching brands, even though there are a hundred other lager beers that taste approximately the same.

Tapping into that emotional connection has always been hit or miss. But in today’s era of big data and predictive analytics, companies are starting to take a more scientific approach. Companies have been using big data to spot trends and derive information like who is buying what, where, and under what circumstances. Magids says that “So many traditional approaches to building brand awareness and customer satisfaction have become short-lived and commoditized. But we’ve always known that consumers are fundamentally motivated by their emotions. This is a universal truth.”

Like many commodity products, beer marketers tends not to focus on traditional factors like taste or price, but rather, the emotional differentiators that resonate with the target audience. Beer companies don’t sell large quantities of beer because it tastes better than other brands, they sell it because they appeal to what Magids calls “emotional motivators.” Customers of beer companies want to have fun. They want to be different, they want to be surrounded by interesting and beautiful people, and they want to be seen as interesting and beautiful themselves. They want to be invited to all the “A-list” parties. Dos Equis has sold a lot of beer simply because of the “most interesting man” commercial which resonates with this emotional need.

The best example of all time is the landmark “Hilltop” [Coca-Cola](#) commercial from 1971 created by McCann-Erickson, featuring the jingle, “I’d like to buy the world a Coke.” According to McCann’s ad man Bill Backer, who created the ad, he was fogged in at an airport en route to London, and while sitting at the café, noticing stranded travelers sharing stories over Coca-Cola. He wrote, “In that moment [I] saw a bottle of Coke in a whole new light...[I] began to see a bottle of Coca-Cola as more than a drink that refreshed a hundred million people a day in almost every corner of the globe. So [I] began to see the familiar words, ‘Let’s have a Coke,’ as more than an invitation to pause for refreshment. They were actually a subtle way of saying, ‘Let’s keep each other company for a little while.’”

At that moment, Backer made an emotional connection with his audience that not only transcended all of the traditional motivators for why people buy soft drinks, it defined an entire generation. That’s the emotional connection that Magids says grows customer value by up to 200 percent, and which can now be scientifically measured.

McCann-Erickson got lucky that day when Bill Backer was fogged in at the airport and was struck with the greatest advertising idea of all time. They did have market research in 1971, but predictive analytics and a scientific approach to measuring the emotional connection was not yet available. “We’re bringing predictive intelligence that ties emotion to behavior, and to predict behavior. We’re bringing intelligence that shows which consumers are more likely to become

emotionally connected with touchpoints across the customer experience, and are most likely to build emotional connections. That kind of intelligence is a breakthrough in the market.”

Historically, marketers like McCann and Coca-Cola believed in the powers of emotion, but it may have taken years – and a lot of good luck – to truly develop an understanding of it. “What we have tried to do,” said Magids, “is to be able to say that we can still tap into that universal truth that humans are motivated by emotion, but now instead of spending two or three years trying to figure it out, we have predictive intelligence that looks across a billion data points and says precisely, for this industry and this brand, and for this group of customers, these are the precise emotions that if a brand taps into, they are going to drive the most profitable behavior.”

### **What is the emotional connection?**

According to Magids, “When we talk about satisfaction, we’re talking about a measurement of quality, price value, and whether customers trust a particular company to buy from. When we talk about emotional connection, we’re talking about how the brand transcends those functional benefits of satisfaction, and actually connects with the deepest and most important, intrinsic motivations of a customer. It’s helping a customer feel better about their life. Helping them to stand out socially, have more confidence in the future. When a brand goes beyond ‘highly satisfied,’ they set a new bar.” Even some of the most powerful customer satisfaction metrics like the Net Promoter Score is still about, “How do you like me.” “Emotional connection is about ‘What can we do for you,’” said Magids.

True to the big data model, Motista’s emotional connection score is derived from a complex map of over a billion data points that pinpoint each emotional connection in a given category, and what a brand can do to actually drive those motivators for the highest possible ROI. Using the emotional connection is a very different way of approaching marketing. Magids said, “If you think about a traditional marketing funnel, we’ll find a bunch of people who might buy our product and build some awareness, get them to try it, maybe price discount, and then see who hangs around. Then we see what we can learn about the people who hang around, and try to find some more of them.”

The emotional connection approach turns that around. “Let’s start with the people who have the highest propensity to love us, or who love us already, who are generating the highest purchases and highest lifetime values. Let’s go deep on that, and expand the customer experience from there. It’s a whole different way of looking at it.”

### **Can buying office supplies really be an emotional experience?**

Tapping into emotional connection isn’t just a B2C play, it applies to B2B environments as well. Is there really an emotional connection you can make to somebody buying a piece of software, some office furniture, or a box of paper?

Absolutely, said Magids. While B2B products are often commoditized, “We’ve seen first hand that when a large software company can cultivate an emotional connection with buyers and influencers, it has a direct and positive impact on internal advocacy, on purchasing those products, and on price insensitivity. Certainly, in parts of technology hardware where there is increased competition from white-box and genericized competition, building an emotional connection with buyers to transcend the product features and functions alone is something we’ve seen as having a very significant impact.” Those emotional connections are often not even about the product or brand, and there is a double layer of emotional connection in a B2B environment. It’s about career, how you are perceived in your company if you buy a given brand.

What makes gaining that emotional connection even more challenging though, is the fact that in many instances, the face-to-face connection that was once an essential part of the sales process is gone, especially as more companies move to cloud-based and as-a-service sourcing. “That makes the science of this approach even more important,” said Magids. “Twenty years ago you had an assistant branch manager or a clerk in a store who was there judging and making these emotional connections person-to-person, on the fly.

But now you don’t have anybody working at the customer interface, and you have to be more scientific about which sites you’re advertising on, what your content is, and how you are engaging people who visit those sites. You can base all that on the emotional connections, and get very precise about where you ought to be digitally, what you ought to be saying, and what you ought to be offering. We’ve seen one retailer that was already doing a lot of digital prospecting.

They were looking for new customers, and they were doing pretty well. Without a change in the marketing budget, by looking through the lens of emotional connection, they doubled their ROI in the space of a year and a half.”

Marketing textbooks dating back to 1910 talk about the psychology of advertising and the importance of emotion, but until now, it has not been measured. To be able to use the kind of analytics that is now have available to measure that is a major breakthrough, and represents a new phase of scientific marketing.

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