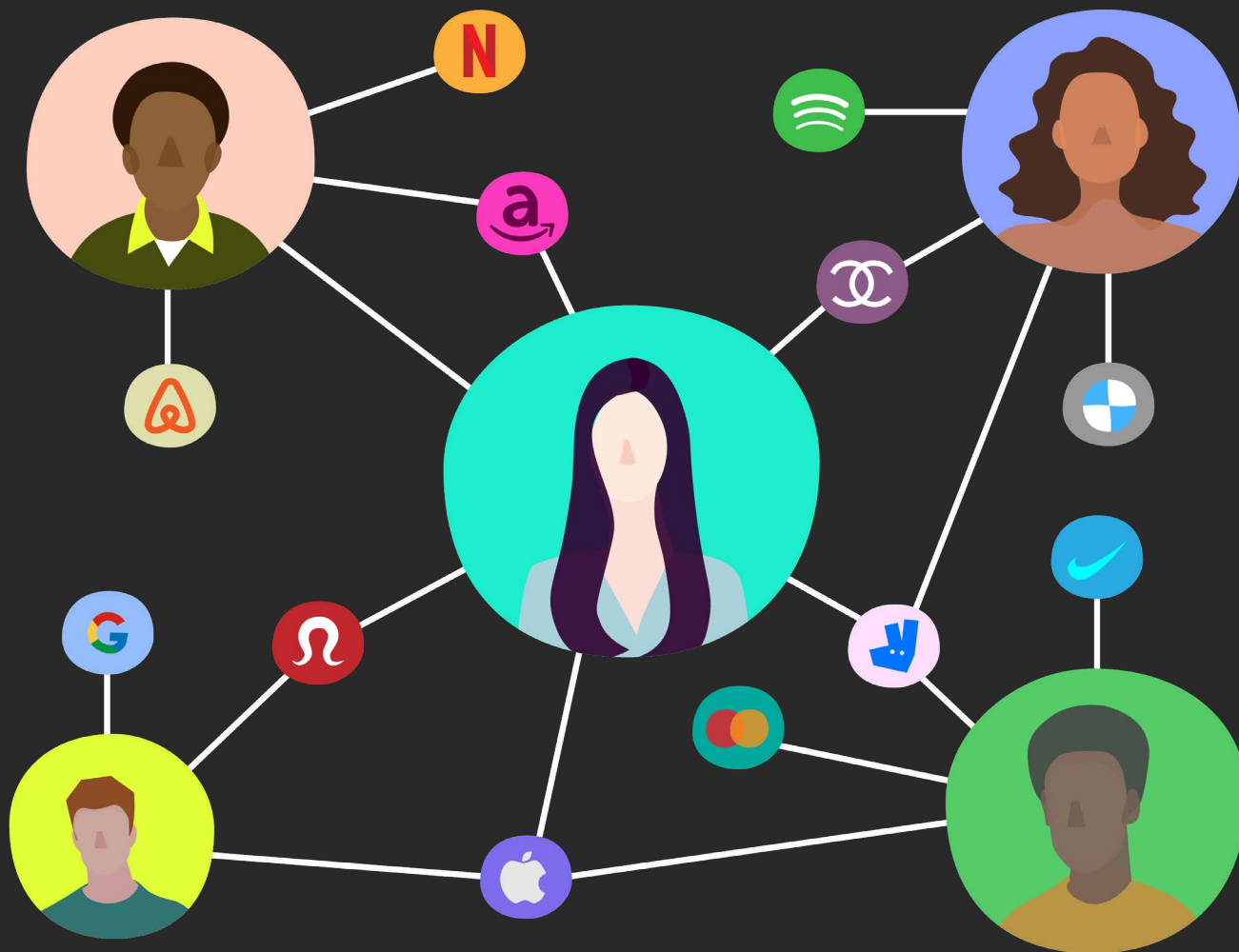




How PR can unleash your **brand attachment** potential

What are you doing to create a stronger consumer connection and greater awareness for your brand in 2024?

People's allegiance to brands is under threat with reports saying that a staggering three-quarters of brands could vanish, and consumers simply wouldn't care. In a sea of brand sameness, for shoppers, finding an alternative brand or product is child's play.

For both established and emerging brands, the landscape is challenging. Add whispers of a looming recession and the evidence of product inflation surpassing

wage growth, and it's clear that brands need to be smarter than ever to weather the storm.

Covid-induced supply chain disruptions, evolving shopping habits, financial pressures pushing consumers towards deals, and the rise of agile challenger brands have all played a role in reshaping how people relate to brands.

We predict that 2024 will be the year that brands will need to put their focus on brand attachment, to keep their customers, win new ones, build brand equity, and ensure they stand the test of time.

PR: Your Secret Weapon

In the last decade, we've all been obsessed with the attention economy. But, heading into the quarter century, brands today need more than mere visibility. This step change needs to address dwindling brand loyalty, and focus on a bond with people that transcends mere transactional relationships and fleeting attention. They need to build brand attachment.

Recent findings from Équité, forecast that half of today's brands could fade by 2030, primarily due to lacklustre brand storytelling.

“Without an authentic and unique story that vividly communicates a brand's ethos, creating lasting value is but a pipe dream.” (Équité, 2023)

If brands need to be better at storytelling to stay on top of their competitors and win customers, then PR is the strategic tool to help them do it. PR is capable of creating stories so powerful that the media feel compelled to write about

them, it's third-party endorsement like no other and one that cannot be beaten on authenticity.

What is Brand Attachment?

The theory of brand attachment goes back to the late 80s and early 90s. Borrowed from psychology's theory by Bowlby on how humans form attachment, in the case of brand attachment, it's the emotional connection between people and brands.

Brand attachment is more than brand loyalty. It's an unwavering love that makes it impossible to go anywhere else.

Brand attachment is the emotional connection a brand wants to have with a person.

When a brand gets brand attachment right, it can rapidly grow its customer base via recommendation but most importantly that person feels a connection to that brand because it fulfils something in them, in essence a person feels like 'this brand gets me'.



The Three Types of Brand Attachment

1. A Sense of Self esteem

Harnessing this brand attachment type reflects how products elevate our self-perception and signal personal achievements. Brands like Apple and Nike excel here.

Case Study:

A great example of a campaign that leveraged this type of attachment was **Lululemon's 'Dupe Swap'**. Responding to imitations of their leggings trending online due to a lower price but similar style, they invited 'dupe' owners to exchange fake leggings for authentic Lululemon ones. Lululemon knew that their brand has a cache with customers, and took this understanding to create an inclusive event where people could feel part of the brand despite the price tag, whilst elevating messaging around their quality.

The result: Lululemon attracted 50% new customers, with half under the age of 30, broadening their reach to younger demographics and setting the stage for future engagements.

2. Connected Freedom

Brands that resonate on an emotional level, aligning with individual values such as sustainability and inclusivity, create deeper connections than those that only offer material association. This bond, grounded in authenticity, especially resonates with Gen Z, who prioritise brands that mirror their core beliefs.

They say we spend time with those who mirror our values, and this holds

true for our brand affiliations as well. Those companies that nurture genuine communities, rather than simply amassing social media followers, witness tangible benefits.

Case Study:

Supplement brand **Wild Nutrition** has a proactive community engagement strategy. Sharing stories, developing products based on customer feedback, and offering personalised interactions.

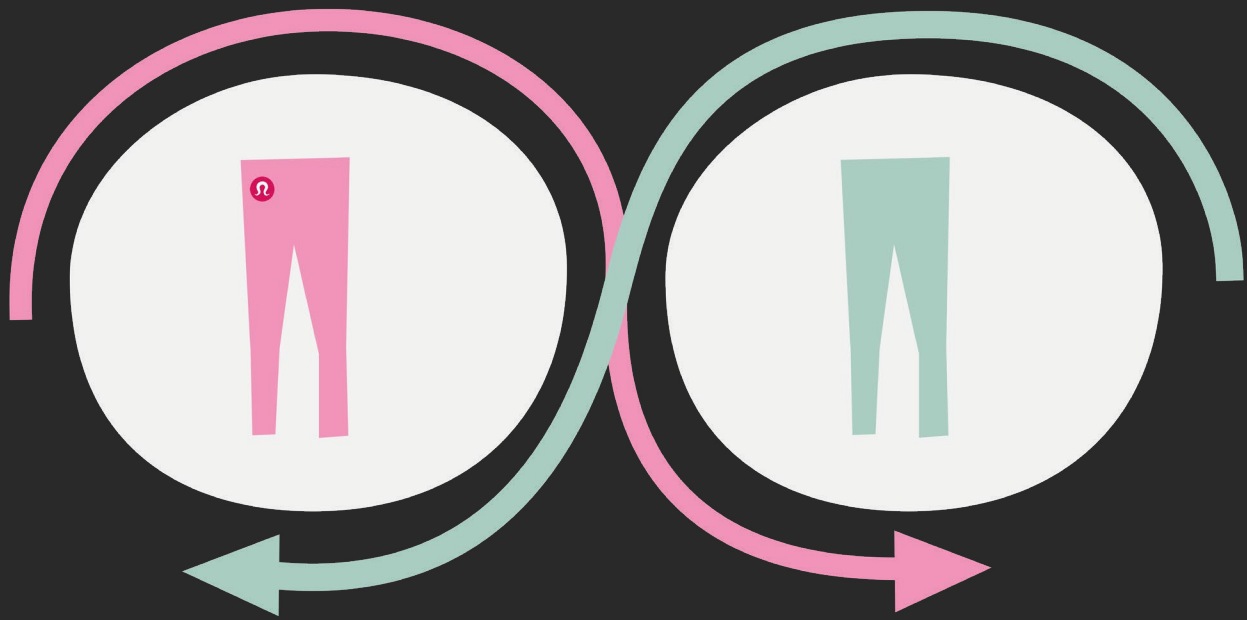
The result: a staggering 30% increase in their subscriber base within three months. An influencer programme that sees a monthly 20% contribution to sales and press coverage of specific products in targeted press driving an 82% increase in web traffic. Their Connected Freedom brand attachment approach, underscored by poignant storytelling and timely values-driven PR campaigns, is facilitating impressive growth.

3. Connected Distinction

This attachment type uses nostalgia as a powerful tool in establishing brand attachment. Fashion brand **Marc Jacobs** masterfully invoked the past with a 90s-inspired collection. With the likes of **Alicia Silverstone**, reminiscent of her iconic role in 'Clueless', they catered to an audience now in their late 30s, evoking memories of adolescence and coveted outfits from the movie.

Case Study:

Creating the feeling of nostalgia is the masterstroke that disruptor brand **Surreal** has used to build its awareness. Positioned as a healthy version of favourite childhood cereals, **Surreal's** satirical play on **Tony the Tiger** and **Snap, Crackle and Pop** has had hoards of sugar-conscious adults reach for their cereal boxes.



How to Create a Brand Attachment Approach in 2024

We've created a 5-step approach to help brands achieve attachment through their comms plans.

1 Context is everything. Look back on the past 12 months, what story lines truly resonated, what did people talk about, what were the key stories in the press, what were your competitors saying and map it against your current target audience. Ask yourself 'does our comms narrative reflect our brand values?'

2 Identify the relevant brand attachment type. Consider which has most resonance with your audience and also helps deliver on brand objectives. There will be some gut feel and your own brand ambitions to consider. This is about what you want to be known for in a few years as much as where your brand is right now.

Then set expected outcomes. Don't apply a one size fits all to your objectives. Set realistic KPIs fit for purpose and consider the attachment type you are fostering - reach and qualitative conversion from events like the Lululemon example, to community building and subscriber growth like with Wild Nutrition.

3 Overhaul your media relations strategy. Map it against the most successful

product lines and media targets that generate clicks. Quality of reach over just any reach is paramount, know your media and where will have the biggest influence. Know where your brand is already liked and build on it. Keeping your brand front of mind will triple your chances of being picked when shoppers are faced with a shelf full of products.

Disrupt online journeys through smart editorial placements. People are served up a whole host of new brands when they do an online search. 'Interrupt' this stage with well-placed digital PR efforts including product reviews, features and influencer content.

4 Think about creating experiences for people to increase their ability to 'attach'. This includes IRL events, exclusive access and content. Utilising a sense of community will bring people into your brand and get them feeling good about it.

5 Keep talking to customers after purchase: Did you know 40% of people still change their minds about a brand because of something they see or learn? Identify gated communities in media outlets and build a relationship with them to maximise their communities exposure to your brand. Offering thought leadership or expert commentary within a publication as well as owned podcasts and customer referral programs can be powerful triggers for the next purchase cycle.



People, brands and what matters in 2024

Remember that customers are people and inherently as people, our psychology means we want to be part of something. In today's ever-evolving market landscape, brands can no longer rely on fleeting visibility or loyalty. They need to delve deeper, understand and resonate with a multitude of emotions, aspirations, and the values of their customers.

2024 will hold challenges, but it's the brands that own their own stories and invite people 'in' that will realise their brand potential.

We're Bound to Prosper,
a creative comms agency
helping brands be the
conscious, easy choice.

**Need help creating a PR
strategy that builds your
brand's attachment potential?**

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