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Retailing ***Are You Authentic?***

You've created a solid retail concept based on a thorough understanding of your customer, your products and your location. A lot of time, thought and effort has gone into the development of your brand and its image. But is it genuine? Is it authentic? Is it 'real'?

The truth is that every brand has its own authenticity that must be carefully communicated to (and ultimately validated by) your audience. You need to ensure that everything you show, say and do with your products, stores and company is seen as authentic in the eyes of your loyal customers. It must 'ring true' to your concept. "Authenticity is the benchmark against which all brands are judged." (John Grant, *The New Marketing Manifesto*)

What do we mean by all of this? Let's consider a couple of very familiar brands – Jaguar and Ford. Notice the distinct differences in 'feel' as both brands are communicated in a wide variety of ways, always with a strong focus on their authenticity, origin, and roots.

The Jaguar customer expects a particular experience when she enters the showroom. There is no room for anything shoddy here. This is about British heritage, exuding prestige and style, being part of a legendary race history and enjoying the craftsmanship of a hand made automobile. All of this makes a distinctive, outward statement about who she is and her place in the world. To sell her a \$100,000 car, every touch point in the showroom must reinforce these vivid images.

The Ford experience is similarly distinctive, but aligned with a different set of values. In this showroom, everything is about 'all-American know-how' delivering style, safety, performance, reliability and security. Again, these key issues are reinforced everywhere you look.

What about your brand? Is it authentic? Is it 'true' to its roots? Is it 'real'? If so, congratulations! You're sending a clear and distinctive message to your customers and enjoying the rewards.

If not ... back to the drawing board. Get it right and watch your customers respond with a loyalty enjoyed by the most successful brands throughout the world!

Do you need to know more about this right away? E-mail us at info@rlwdesign.ca or give us a call at 905-845-2255 and we'll lend a hand!

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