

Your buyers don't belong to you

 By [Clive Evans](#)

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In the perennial quest to build strong brands marketers have traditionally sought to move would-be customers from first awareness through to purchase, on to loyalty and then post purchase evangelism. Some argue that the 'funnel' is outdated and prefer to talk of the 'consumer decision journey' but both arrive at the same end point: Brand Advocacy, the so-called 'pinnacle of marketing'.



The harsh reality is, however, that most of your customers will only buy your brand once. This and the following facts are revealed in the Kantar WorldPanel 'Brand Footprint' global study of FMCG Brands. There is a pattern that is universal to all (FMCG) brands across all categories whereby the largest proportion of buyers will only buy once, the second largest proportion only twice, and so on. The catch-22 here is that one cannot ignore the light buyers – their collective contribution is very significant, and some could potentially become loyalists or even advocates.

The research goes on to show that the constant churn is not always a conscious rejection, but more often the result of circumstance; you weren't listed in that store, you were out of stock, you were not on promotion, you were not top of mind.

Importantly the study also shows that consumers, by nature, are not monogamists, they are polygamists – they enjoy a repertoire and are happy to flit around your brand and those of the competition. Of the 10 biggest brands in their biggest categories, loyal shoppers accounted for only 8% of brand spend; the point being is that your buyers don't belong to you.

That said, the challenge remains to grow the brand – and it is now widely accepted that to do so we need to grow our brands penetration; both in the trade and in the mind of the consumers. As marketers we have to give ‘our buyers’ reasons to stay, not excuses to leave. In today’s digital world this is not about buying ‘likes’ – rather it is about being true to the brand; its purpose, its beliefs, its heritage. The same can be said for advocacy. Advocacy works because it is real, authentic and truthful. So, precisely because our buyers don't belong to us and because we live in a hyper-connected world, building advocacy still remains a huge opportunity for brand growth.

ABOUT CLIVE EVANS

Well versed in leveraging information into insights, opportunities and ideas to help build strong brands. As a master of the brand building discipline, I have both the the experience and people skills to help earn me the position of 'trusted advisor' among both clients and staff. Specialties: Brand and Communication Strategy

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