

# Humanizing Brand Personalities: Analysis of Consumer-Brand Relationships through an Anthropomorphism Lens

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## Abstract

*Brand loyalty develops as an intermixing of self-image and brand image, and anthropomorphized brands succeed when their ideal traits are utilized as brand personality components. To test the relationship between anthropomorphism and ideal traits, the researcher surveyed 211 Elon students and compared their preference for four brands from two industries. One brand from each industry utilized anthropomorphism techniques in the form of a spokescharacter, while the other brand did not. The results of the survey found that the use of a spokescharacter affected brand preference: It created significant brand preference when compared to a similar brand without a spokescharacter.*

## I. Introduction

When Apple first came on the scene, it was the odd one out. Microsoft and IBM were the corporate giants with a firm and seemingly unshakable grip on the personal computer market. Apple computers were peculiar looking, expensive, and had a completely different type of user interface. So, how did Apple go from being a nobody in the shadows of successful traditional PC companies, to becoming an icon of the millennial generation and an integral part of many people's identity? The answer lies in branding.

Apple knew it had a great product. The marketing department just had to figure out how to communicate that to consumers. In one of its longest running advertising campaigns, Apple personified itself in the form of "Mac," a character played by Justin Long, and it personified the competition through "PC," played by John Hodgman. The two could not have been more different. Mac was the charming, kind of quirky hipster who was smart and full of clever remarks. PC was frumpy, awkward, and not too bright (Jaffe, 2014). By personifying its brand through a likeable spokescharacter, Apple provided its customers with someone to connect to, identify with, or aspire to be. Not only did consumers know who Mac was, perhaps most importantly, they also wanted to be that person.

The purpose of this study is to provide insight into the nature of successful brand strategies that utilize spokescharacters as a personification technique through an extensive literature review and survey analysis. It will explore the development of brand loyalty as an intermingling of self-image and brand-image, and the level of success brands enjoy when employing personified traits popularly viewed as desirable.

**Keywords:** branding, spokescharacter, brand loyalty, brand personality, identity

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## II. Background

While Apple is a marketing innovator in the technology sector, many companies have favored personification techniques for many years, granted, with varying degrees of success. Geico has its gecko, Progressive has Flo, and Pillsbury has the doughboy. However, while brand personification strategies may offer more success in relation to non-personification, they do not guarantee market leadership or strong brand loyalty. Starbucks and Nike, for instance, have incredibly loyal consumers and have both achieved the rank of a Fortune 500 company. Instead of creating brand characters, they personified their brands through strong brand personalities.

In today's marketplace, more products, more services, and more advertising are bombarding consumers than ever before. The abundance of options is great for consumers given that they can have their pick of the lot, but for companies, the competition can be overwhelming. Loyal customers are important to understand, because they tend to be behind the majority of brands' sales (Sutikno, 2011). The Pareto principle, also known as the 80/20 rule, states that 80 percent of a company's profit comes from 20 percent of its customers. This 20 percent is often the most loyal segment of consumers as well (Kaufman, 2012). In order for business owners and marketing executives to create or grow a loyal following, they have to understand how to form brand loyalty and what type of marketing techniques garner the strongest impact.

## III. Literature Review

Researchers have been studying the relationships that brands have with their customers for many years. In an attempt to understand the secret to successful marketing and brand building, almost every aspect of the brand-consumer dichotomy has been picked apart and analyzed. Several major themes have arisen from all of this research, the most prevalent theme being the nature of brand loyalty. Researchers have also found that the price consumers are willing to pay for a product or service is a strong indicator of their relationship with a brand.

The literature also paints a picture of the development of consumer-brand relationships. Looking at how these relationships grow and the factors that affect them will help marketers and business owners to better understand how their product or service is connecting to consumers.

### ***What are Brands?***

Brands are the connection between the consumer and the product, and arguably "the most valuable intangible asset for a company" (Sutikno, 2011). Consumers use brands to organize and store the information they gather regarding a product or service. Brand experience, the culmination of the consumer's interactions and exposure to a brand, creates this cognitive structure (Jones & Runyan, 2013). Four dimensions of the brand experience, set forth by branding scholars Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, assert that encounters with the brand are qualified as sensory, emotional, intellectual, or behavioral (as cited in Jones & Runyan, 2013).

The brand experience has a strong impact on cognitive attitudes for brands. If the consumer is having a consistently positive brand experience, he or she will most likely be satisfied with the brand and its associated products as an extension. The feelings of favorability and satisfaction that stem from the brand experience are the catalyst to brand identification (Jones & Runyan, 2013).

### ***Brand Identification***

Every person has his or her own personally perceived identity. Known as the *self-concept* in psychology, it is based on a personal evaluation of unique attributes and traits (Sigelman and Rider, 2009). Brand identification is "a social construction that involves the integration of perceived brand identity (or brand image) into self-identity" (Lin & Sung, 2014). This occurs when a consumer has a consistently positive experience with a brand and finds a similarity in their personal image and the brand's image (Sutikno, 2011). Once brand identification takes place, the brand becomes a representation of the consumer's self-concept. This leads to strong attachment to the symbolic brand, as well as its associated products. Attachment is important because it reflects the consumer and brand's shared attitudes and beliefs (Jones & Runyan, 2013).

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We also have a social identity, which is how we identify as members of a group. Social identity provides a sense of belonging to the social world (McLeod, 2008). People are drawn to others they perceive to be like them, and brands have evolved into a way of recognizing those similarities. Individuals see brands they have identified with as external symbols of their self-concept, so when an individual finds another consumer with the same brand preference, they take it as a sign of deeper similarities. Consumers use the symbols to identify with others who share similar attitudes and beliefs.

Based on the social identity theory, we seek those who are similar to us to establish an “in-group.” Conversely, people can use external symbols that mark dissimilarities to establish an “out-group.” Once a person identifies as a part of an in-group, he or she tends to “discriminate against the out-group to enhance their self-image” (McLeod, 2008). The social nature of today’s society has led to greater fluidity of self-identity, making brands attractive as sources of identity stability (Jones & Runyan, 2013). Another method of enhancing self-image is to act as a brand ambassador by adopting aspects of the brand’s identity in behavior and personality, which is the antecedent of brand loyalty (Sutikno, 2011).

### **Brand Loyalty**

Although many scholars have differing definitions of brand loyalty, the strongest defining element is always behavior. Brand loyalty is most commonly defined as an attitudinal and behavioral construct determined by prolonged repurchase actions and favorable feelings for the brand. Consumers gain favorable feelings during the positive brand experience and consistent satisfaction that caused brand identification (Sutikno, 2011). Loyalty is established when consumers makes a commitment to the brand (Kim, Morris, & Swait, 2008), in that they intend to continue purchasing the brand in the future, speak positively about the brand to others, and disregard negative brand information (Sutikno, 2011).

Jones and Runyan (2013) uses a construct Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) conceived for brand loyalty. The concept includes six elements: “First, the consumers’ actions must be non-random or biased toward an outcome. Second, there must be a behavioral response which can be measured in purchases.

Third, those behavioral responses must be exhibited over time. Fourth, the solution set must relate to some consistency when engaged for a similarly defined purchase target. Fifth, the behavioral response from the decision must relate to one or more brand(s), relative to an acceptable solution set, and sixth the exhibited behavior must result from the engagement of an evaluative decision-making process.”

As in brand identification, brand loyalty is rooted in the consumer’s self-concept. Those who construe themselves as independent (vs. interdependent) are less influenced by situational factors and are likely to remain strong in their stance with a brand. Consumers who construe themselves in relation to other tend to have weaker attitudes and are more susceptible to situational and social influences (Sung, Choi, & Tinkham, 2012).

### **“Brand Love”**

Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012) took a slightly different approach to understanding brand loyalty. In their study “Brand Love,” the researchers make the argument that consumers can experience a type of love for brands. This *brand love* exists based on the presence of ten major components. First, the brand has to be of superior quality (or qualities). Second, the brand must hold values and beliefs consumers can identify with. The researchers found that “brands were more likely to be loved when they also connected to something the respondent believed was deeper, such as self-actualization, close interpersonal relationships, existential meaning, or religious or cultural identities.” Third, loved brands hold intrinsic rewards (provides feeling of personal satisfaction and/or achievement) because they create desirable psychological states that blend with the brand experience. The difference between brands that consumers use vs. brands that consumers use and love is the dual presence of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (tangible). Consumers do not claim to love a brand if it provides extrinsic rewards, but lacks intrinsic ones. Fourth, brand personalities must express “existing identities and enact desired identities” for consumers to identify with them as something they love. Fifth, consumers need to have positive feelings toward the brand. The sixth component, passion, sometimes referred to as the first dimension, indicates a sense of natural fit between the consumer and the brand. Seventh is the presence of an emotional bond between consumer and brand. Consumers can identify this type of bond if they anticipate being upset when the brand is lost or made unavailable. Eighth is willingness to invest. If the consumer loves the brand, he or she is likely to put more time, money, and energy into it. The ninth compo-

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ment is “frequent thought and use.” Consumers must interact with the brand frequently to form a relationship as strong as brand love. The final component is prolonged length of use. Consumers must engage with a brand over a length of time so that not only brand identification takes place, but also the brand becomes a part of the consumer’s personal narrative.

### ***Outcomes of Brand Loyalty***

As previously stated, brand loyalty results in willingness to pay premium prices, engagement in positive word of mouth promotion (Sutikno, 2011), and resistance to negative brand-related information (Folse, Burton, & Netemeyer, 2013). According to Sutikno (2011), willingness to pay premium is the “consumer’s intention to pay more for specific brand of product and service than competitor brands of products and services unless in the same quality.” Willingness to pay premium is one of the reasons loyal customers are a highly profitable group.

Consumers are constantly seeking ways to better their lives (e.g. make them easier), and maintaining a long-term relationship with a brand they have identified as having all of the qualities they are seeking motivates consumers to pay a premium (Sutikno, 2011).

### ***Anthropomorphism***

The reason people are able to adopt brands as part of their self-concept is due to the natural tendency to humanize non-human objects. *Anthropomorphism* is the term for this tendency to give human traits to non-human objects, and it is responsible for the personification of brands. Human traits are those naturally found in living beings (e.g. beliefs, desires, values, etc.) (Lin & Sung, 2014). Since consumers identify more strongly with brands that share similar values, anthropomorphism has been an obvious tactic for marketers.

The most apparent tactic of anthropomorphism is the spokescharacter, or advertising icon. Spokescharacters are the embodiment of the human traits tied to a brand through a visual image (cartoon or human). Originally developed for promotional purposes, marketers quickly realized their effectiveness in communicating brand personality and connecting with consumers. Some of the most famous spokescharacters include the Geico Gecko, Mr. Clean, and the Michelin Man. To be a successful spokescharacter, he or she has to have both likeable traits and traits associated with expertise in the brand-relevant industry or category.

Research has also found that spokescharacters may provide brand-equity protection. Consumers can more easily identify with spokescharacters than an abstract idea of a brand, thus accelerating brand identification and resistance to negative information. In previous studies, researchers found that the presence of characters can lead to increased brand and advertisement recall. Regarding product promotion, research ascribes improved brand claim recognition and positive brand attitude to the presence of a spokescharacter, as well. For services, spokescharacters are especially effective in promoting pleasure-related brands (Folse, Burton, & Netemeyer, 2012).

### ***Brand Communication***

With all of the brands and companies today, humanizing a brand is not always enough. Marketers need to be able to effectively communicate the brand personality to the consumers, or they will never make that connection to brand identification. María Ángeles Navarro-Bailón (2012) conducted a communication study to shed light on the “synergistic effects derived from an *integrated marketing communication* (IMC) strategy following strategic consistency,” meaning IMC campaigns based around one message spoken in one voice to achieve a single goal. For IMC to be effective, consistency is key. It enables the brand image to maintain cohesiveness, providing the stability that consumers crave in long-term brand relationships (brand love).

It is a commonly held belief that repetition facilitates memorization and learning. In advertising, researchers have examined the effects of repeated exposure to an advertisement and found that at first, the repetition did as expected and had a positive impact on learning. Once the consumer was over-exposed to the same advertisement though, he or she became bored with it and had a negative reaction. Thus, to effectively communicate a single message, researchers concluded the communication of a message should occur through a variety of executions that provided consumers with novel and diverse stimuli (Navarro-Bailón, 2012).

The existing literature provides a strong and in-depth understanding of how consumers form a relationship with brands. According to the existing research, repeated exposures to a brand allow the consumer

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to have a brand experience. During the brand experience, consumers anthropomorphize the brand and identify similar traits and values they hold in their own self-concept. Once brand identification has occurred, the brand-image and self-image intermingle, and as the consumer continues to engage with the brand and purchase its associated goods or services, brand loyalty develops.

Brands start this process through integrated marketing communication (e.g. advertising) to reach the consumer. Effective IMC shares the brand's message in a unique voice through a variety of executions. Thus, we understand how brands are supposed to communicate and how, in turn, the relationship to the consumer is formed. Little research, however, exists on *what* the brand should be communicating and on what type of brand personalities companies should strive for in order to build a strong following of brand loyalists. It is important to understand how these traits are determined and how to best fuse them to the brand. This paper will argue that ideal brand traits target consumers who popularly associate with their perception of an ideal self, and that anthropomorphism in the form of spokescharacters strengthens the consumer's awareness of the brand's traits.

### ***Thesis statements***

When a business develops its brand, it usually attaches human characteristics. The one-for-one shoe brand TOMS, for instance, committed itself to the human experience of helping others. By purchasing a pair of TOMS shoes, the consumer is not only fulfilling a personal want, but they are also aware that somewhere in the world a person in need will benefit from their purchase as well. Thus, buying TOMS is not an extension or by-product of our consumerism culture, it is a good deed. It helped buyers overcome the guilt of buying *another* pair of shoes in a recession-ridden economy and gave action a greater purpose by allowing consumers to incorporate philanthropy into their self-concepts. Through identifying with self-concepts, brands open up a channel for consumers to create a personal connection. However, when forming a brand identity, does it matter which trait, or traits, consumers can relate and connect to? Are some traits more desirable than others are? How overt should a brand be in communicating its personality? By humanizing itself with a spokescharacter, does the brand create a stronger bond? Based on the findings in the literature review, using a combination of a spokescharacter and personality traits that are associated with an ideal self-concept will result in stronger brand loyalty than brands that use non-ideal traits and other identification techniques.

## **IV. Methodology**

This study sought to discover the relationship between brand personality traits, the use of spokescharacters and brand preference by conducting an online survey. Elon University students, 211 students between the ages of 18 and 22 years old, were selected as a convenience sample group, and the brand variables were selected from body wash and beer brands given the high frequency of use and purchase by the survey's sample demographic. Old Spice and Dove Men+Care represented the body wash category, and Corona and Dos Equis represented the beer category. These brands were coded for two major personality traits through extensive reviews of their major marketing campaigns and brand literature, such as mission statements, vision statements, and positioning. Once created, the survey was posted on the researcher's personal Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as shared in Elon University class group. The survey was also distributed via class email rosters to reach individuals more directly. Sixty-nine respondents submitted completed surveys (Appendix B) during the three days that the survey was open to collecting responses. Given the demographics of Elon University, it can be assumed that women were the slight majority of respondents.

### ***Old Spice (Confident & Sexy)***

According to a Forbes analysis of spokescharacters used in American advertising, the Old Spice Man (Isaiah Mustafa) appeals to 66% of consumers. The article describes him as an "impossible debonair heartthrob" and upon his commercial debut, sales increased notably (Bercovici, 2011). "The Man Your Man Can Smell Like" campaign implied that by using Old Spice, you would smell like the Old Spice Man, ergo an impossible debonair heartthrob. Thus, the traits assigned to Old Spice were *confident* and *sexy*.

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### ***Dove Men+Care (Caring & Protective)***

The personality traits *caring* and *protective* were chosen for Dove Men+Care based on analysis of commercial copy and the parent brand Dove. In the television commercial spot, the following copy is used in a voiceover: “Warning: standard body wash can cause damage to man’s skin. Maintain it properly with Dove Men+Care body wash. It cleans man and protects skin from dryness” (Benim, 2009). Copy on the product’s website frequently refers to the care it provides your skin with.

### ***Dos Equis (Mysterious & Interesting)***

“The World’s Most Interesting Man” campaign has launched Dos Equis into being the fastest growing import beer brand in the United States. Jonathan Goldstein, the journeyman actor who plays the Most Interesting Man, has a well-developed mystique that intrigues viewers and leaves them wanting to learn more about him. The tidbits of life experiences he relates during his commercials are always unexpected and, as his name would suggest, interesting (Carr, 2010). The Forbes analysis revealed that Dos Equis’ spokesperson has a 62% appeal rate and 46% found him intriguing. *Mysterious* and *interesting* were suited for Dos Equis’ personality traits (Benim, 2009).

### ***Corona (Laid back & Fun)***

The most popular imported beer in the country; Corona is a firmly established brand. Set to Pocket Submarine’s bohemian track “Drifting Days,” Corona’s latest TV spot, “Shoes,” features a slew of young, attractive adults kicking off their shoes as they enjoy a Corona and walk on to the beach (SpotTV, 2014). Corona has used the beach and its associated mentality of a fun place to go to relax and unwind, to market its product for the past several years. The messaging for Corona centers on the idea that “Corona transports you to a beach state of mind” (Corona, 2013). Given its close association to the beach mentality, *fun* and *laid back* were chosen as its associated personality traits.

### ***Survey Format***

The survey (Appendix A) begins by having respondents identify three traits they believed to be apart of an ideal personality. They had to choose from a list of the eight traits associated with the four brands being tested: laid back, protective, confident, mysterious, fun, interesting, caring and sexy. The inherent ambiguity of the question was intentional to replicate the ambiguity that exists in real-life points of contacts with brands, as marketers are not able to control how consumers receive, or interpret, their messaging.

Next, the survey asked respondents to view 30-second commercial spots for Old Spice and Dove Men+Care. The Old Spice commercial featured their spokesperson, the Old Spice Man, and the Dove Men+Care was a computer-generated graphic with a voiceover reading the benefits of Dove Men+Care body wash over other brands’ products. Once they watch the commercials, respondents selected which brand they prefer. Since these products are for men, a note was included under the question asking female respondents to select the brand they would prefer men to use.

The next section asked respondents to watch a 30-second commercial for Corona and a 30-second commercial for Dos Equis. The Corona commercial was its previously described “Shoes” spot, and the Dos Equis commercial was one of the first Most Interesting Man spots that introduced the spokesperson and set the tone for his character. Then respondents selected which of the two imported beers they preferred. The survey did not call attention to the use of spokespersons in either the Old Spice commercial or the Dos Equis commercial in order to preserve the authenticity of the spokesperson’s effect and to prevent biases from forming. The target sample received the survey through social media sharing and direct emails.

## **V. Results**

### ***Ideal Personality Traits***

The top three traits that respondents identified as being a part of an ideal personality were caring (24%), fun (23%), and confident (21%) interesting (16%), laid-back (10%), protective (3%), sexy (1%) and

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mysterious (1%). Corona's traits cumulatively accounted for the majority of the responses at 33% (23% for fun and 10% for laid-back), followed by Dove Men+Care's traits at 27% (24% for caring and 3% for protective). When sorted and compared by brand association, there is a five-percentage point gap between the body wash brands' preferred traits (22% for Old Spice vs. 27% for Dove Men+Care), and a 16-percentage point gap between the beer brands' preferred traits (33% for Corona vs. 17% for Dos Equis).

### **Brand Preferences**

Brand preference results showed an unexpected split. For the body wash category, Old Spice (64%) was the clear majority over Dove (36%), while Dos Equis (51%) and Corona (49%) were neck and neck for the imported beer category. A Chi-Square test revealed the body wash category's results are statistically significant. The respondents showed preference when choosing between Old Spice and Dove Men+Care,  $X^2(1, n=69) = 5.23, p < .05$ . A Chi-Square test of the beer brands resulted in  $X^2(1, n=69) = .014, p > .05$ , thus proving that there is no statistically significant difference in preference for these two brands.

## **VI. Discussion**

Initial analysis of the trait preference results would suggest that Dove Men+Care body wash (the preference rate of 27%) would be preferred over Old Spice (22%); and Corona (33%) over Dos Equis (17%). However, the opposite proved to be true in the survey. Old Spice garnered significant preference over Dove. The same phenomenon was seen between their preference for Corona or Dos Equis. This reinforces the findings of the literature review that anthropomorphizing brands into spokescharacters is effective at creating positive brand attitudes. Even though respondents chose one kind of traits as ideal, the presence of a spokescharacter allowed the consumers to more easily identify with the brand with different kinds of traits. The ease of identification of the brand's personality through the spokescharacter let Old Spice significantly overcome the five-percentage point lead Dove Men+Care's personality traits had. Dos Equis was 16-percentage points behind Corona in preferred traits, yet The Most Interesting Man was able to make up for what the brand personality lacked.

Marketing expert Susan Fournier analyzed consumer-brand relationships through her study "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research." While her research supported the effectiveness of complete brand anthropomorphism through spokescharacters, she suggested brands "need not engage in such blatant strategies" for a relationship to develop (1998). However, personifying your brand by associating it with ideal traits like caring and fun, were not powerful enough to beat out the competition. As long as a comparable brand has at least one trait that consumers associate with their ideal self-concept, the use of a spokescharacter is powerful enough to overshadow non-anthropomorphized brands' ideal traits, including those that consumers have a stronger connection to.

**The Man Your Man Could Smell Like.** When the marketing team at Old Spice saw that their category was filling up with competitors and their product was losing ground to them, they realized the need for a new advertising campaign. Based on the insight that women make more than half of all body wash purchases, "The Man Your Man Could Smell Like" campaign is meant to spark conversation between men and women about body wash. Old Spice wanted to tell consumers that by purchasing its manly-scented body wash, a man could become the perfect man (Grant, 2010). Dove Men+Care also wanted to play on the idea of what being a man means: "Dove is a brand that understands real men and provides real care through the products in the region" ("Dove men+care," n.d.).

Though Dove Men+Care identified the right traits, caring and protective, the messaging strategy failed to communicate how they are a part of its brand image. Dove Men+Care lacks a clear attitude that consumers would be able to incorporate into their self-concept or social identity. Old Spice chose slightly weaker traits than Dove Men+Care, yet "The Man Your Man Could Smell Like" campaign created the perfect opportunity for brand identification to occur by demonstrating its beliefs and values in an easily relatable way.

**How Dos Equis Closed the Gap.** Corona is the number-one imported beer in the country (Cramer Krasselt, 2012). Its brand personality traits are significantly preferred over Dos Equis' traits. Yet, Dos Equis closed the gap in brand preference. Like Dove Men+Care, Corona failed to communicate its idea of "find your beach" so that its brand personality traits could be easily transferred onto a consumer's self-concept or social

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identity. It is a call to action focused on finding a state of mind, which is not the same as a call to action to adopt a behavior. The Most Interesting Man represents a philosophy. He embodies living life to its fullest in the classiest way possible: “Stay thirsty, my friends” (Arnold, 2012). The rules he sets forth give consumers clear behavior parameters, giving Dos Equis the power of a lifestyle.

**Earning Brand Love and Loyalty.** When compared to the criteria for brand love set forth by Ahuvia, Batra, and Bagozzi, the shortcomings of Corona and Dove Men+Care’s marketing communication become obvious. All of the brands are of comparable, superior quality and they all hold values with which consumers can identify. The four brands each have intrinsic and extrinsic rewards; however, Old Spice and Dos Equis communicate the intrinsic rewards more effectively by demonstrating, firsthand, how the product can positively affect the consumer’s life. Where Old Spice and Dos Equis shine the brightest is their expression of “existing identities and [enactment of] desired identities.” Old Spice does this by calling attention to the man’s current self-concept and showing him, and his lady friend, what his ideal self could be (in the form of Isaiah Mustafa’s character). Dos Equis gives consumers an aspirational character to identify with. The Most Interesting Man is not a young, hotshot athlete or celebrity, like most beer commercials use. He is someone with real experience who has gained his wisdom through a full life. By making him older than Dos Equis’ target demographic, it is easier to create a desired identity that the consumers feel like they can aspire to be.

The success of the four brands is a statement to the fifth component of brand love – positive feelings. Passion for the brands exists across the board but is stronger for Old Spice and Dos Equis as their brands’ personification techniques enhance the feeling of natural fit. The emotional bond needed for brand love, again, is present more in Dos Equis and Old Spice. Spokescharacters give the consumer a direct line to form a relationship. They do not have to take the extra step of unpacking an abstract brand to pull out the shared attitudes and personality traits. This study did not measure the willingness to purchase but was based on the brand preference. Although the study did not look at frequency of use and thought for the products, it can be inferred that the sample group has had experience with both as common household items (Ahuvia, Batra & Bagozzi, 2012).

## VII. Conclusion

Though they may not be right for every brand, this study shows that spokescharacters have an undeniably positive effect on brand personalities. The results indicated that having personality traits that the target demographic associates with an ideal self-concept or social identity is not always enough to guarantee the brand’s success. Intelligent and clever use of spokescharacters can personify a brand so effectively that consumers will develop a real relationship with the brand, perhaps one that results in brand love. Spokescharacters support the abilities of consumers to interact with, identify to, and aspire to be what the brand chooses to represent. Marketing professionals should not underestimate the power of spokescharacters and the integration of ideal traits in their own communication strategies or in the strategies of their competitors. Future research will permit the advertising industry to better understand how this personification technique can help elevate brands’ success.

### ***Suggestions for Future Research***

While current research proves that the anthropomorphism of brands through spokescharacters strengthens the consumers’ resistance to negative information about brands, little research exists that directly supports the enhancing effect of spokescharacters on brand identification this study examined. Possible follow-up studies could include research that quantifies this effect spokescharacters seem to have on brand identification, as well as further examine the role that specific personality traits play in the brand experience.

### ***Limitations***

Due to the limited scope of this study, its results are subject to dispute. The process of selecting the brands and their traits was subjective. Gender may have played a role in respondents’ brand preference due to the masculine associations of beer and the classification of the body washes as a men’s product. Subjectivity of the traits is also a culpable limitation. Synonyms of the words may have elicited a different response; for instance, being mysterious versus and enigmatic may have differing effects, even though in essence both

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words share the same definition. The traits chosen for each brand do not have the support of quantitative data; other traits may have been a stronger representation of the brand's personality depending on constituent's perceptions. Lack of demographic information was also a limitation, which did not allow me to account for gender bias, among other demographic related factors. Since women are already making more than half of all body wash purchases, gender may not have been a factor in the Old Spice and Dove Men+Care comparison, but it may have played a larger role in beer brand appeal ("Old Spice," n.d.).

Watching the commercials embedded in the survey was also not mandatory and it was impossible to determine how many respondents viewed them. If not all of the respondents viewed the same commercials, their brand experience will vary, along with their relationship with the brand and their perception of the brand.

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## Appendix A: Survey

Title: Capstone Survey

Description: The purpose of this survey is to identify which traits should be incorporated into brand identity to build brand loyalty.

**I. Select three characteristics that you believe are apart of an ideal personality.**

- a. Laid back
- b. Protective
- c. Confident
- d. Mysterious
- e. Fun
- f. Interesting
- g. Caring
- h. Sexy

II. *Section Header:* Please watch the 30-second commercial spots before selecting your brand preference.

III. Embedded Video: “The Man Your Man Could Smell Like” Old Spice Commercial (Old Spice, 2010).

IV. Embedded Video: “Outer Layer Care” Dove Men+Care Commercial (Benim, 2013).

**a. Select your preferred body wash brand.**

- b. *Help Text: Ladies – select which brand you would prefer men to use.*
  - i. Dove Men
  - ii. Old Spice

V. Embedded Video: “Shoes” Corona TV Commercial (SpotTV, 2014).

VI. Embedded Video: “The World’s Most Interesting Man” Dos Equis TV Commercial (LovePinkCouture, 2010).

**a. Select your preferred imported beer.**

- i. Dos Equis
  - ii. Corona
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## Appendix B: Survey Results

Select three characteristics that you believe are apart of an ideal personality.	Select your preferred body wash brand.	Select your preferred imported beer.
Laid back, Confident, Fun	Old Spice	Corona
Confident, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Fun, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Laid back, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Laid back, Protective, Confident, Fun, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Corona
Laid back, Confident, Fun	Dove Men	Corona
Confident, Fun, Sexy	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Laid back, Confident, Fun	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Interesting	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Laid back, Protective, Caring	Dove Men	Corona
Confident, Interesting, Sexy	Old Spice	Corona
Confident, Fun, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Fun, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Corona
Protective, Confident, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Laid back, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Laid back, Protective, Confident, Mysterious, Fun, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Confident, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Laid back, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Fun, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Laid back, Confident, Fun	Old Spice	Corona
Confident, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Fun, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Laid back, Fun, Interesting	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Corona
Laid back, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Confident, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Corona
Confident, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Caring	Dove Men	Corona
Fun, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Confident, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Corona
Confident, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Laid back, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Confident, Fun, Interesting	Old Spice	Corona
Confident, Fun, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Confident, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Confident, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Confident, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Laid back, Confident, Fun	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Laid back, Confident, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Laid back, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis

Confident, Interesting, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Confident	Dove Men	Corona
Fun, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Protective, Confident, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Protective, Fun, Caring	Dove Men	Corona
Protective, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Sexy	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Interesting	Dove Men	Corona
Fun, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Mysterious, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Corona
Confident, Fun, Interesting	Old Spice	Corona
Fun, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Corona
Laid back, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Laid back, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Confident, Fun, Interesting	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Laid back, Confident, Interesting	Old Spice	Corona
Confident, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Fun, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Laid back, Fun, Interesting	Old Spice	Dos Equis
Laid back, Interesting, Caring	Dove Men	Dos Equis
Confident, Fun, Caring	Old Spice	Corona
Laid back	Old Spice	Dos Equis