

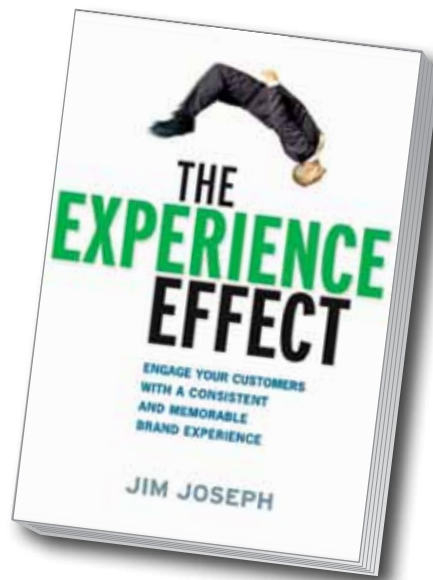
## The Experience Effect:

*Engage Your Customers with a Consistent and Memorable Brand Experience*

By Jim Joseph

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REVIEWED BY ROBERT EHRLICH



There is no shortage of how-to books on advertising and marketing. Advertising agency executives are the most prolific of writers. Jim Joseph feels, as the head of an agency, that he also has something to add to the discussion of how best to create marketing and advertising programs. Every writer needs a short description of what their unique point-of-view is that differentiates their book from the many competitors. Jim Joseph focuses on consumer experience with brands and how that experience makes or breaks a brand.

While that consumer experience may seem like a simple concept it is not. Brands need to make sure that actual day-to-day experience matches consumer expectations and those set by the advertising. While this sounds obvious, Joseph points out several major brands where inconsistencies appear.

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He takes on McDonald's as an example of how the squeaky clean, relaxed, family-friendly look in their ads does not match the actual experience of sometimes hectic and messy restaurants. Starbucks also is an example of negative experience in that each location has a different quality of service and appearance and Joseph feels it is no longer the brand he knew years ago. Joseph finds that the best brands really are differentiated and all consumer touch points deliver a consistent experience. He cites J. Crew as an example of consistency, while using the Gap as a retailer who has tried to be all things to all people. Joseph fills his book with real-world examples of brand experiences that are both positive and negative; weaving a convincing story that what sounds simple is not. That is, making a brand live successfully requires a constant re-evaluation of whether the experience effect is consistent and matches consumer expectations.

Joseph tells us that people can be brands and those celebrities who are most successful market themselves as a brand.

Madonna is a very successful brand because she constantly evolves, but always within consumer expectations of her as an edgy performer.

What seems relevant for drug marketers is that drug brands can do a lot to improve their experience effect. Most drug brands do not have ongoing consumer relationships for legal and regulatory reasons. In fact, drug companies are unique in trying to avoid touch points, choosing to rely on physicians to represent them to end-users. Perhaps with more personalized genomic medicine we will see a greater effort to follow-up with consumers, adding depth to the drug brand experience.

Joseph's book is basic and many experienced marketers may find some of it in the "I already knew that" category. I consider myself a veteran marketer, but I also found Joseph taught me a lot about the value of a consistent experience. Sometimes we fail to do the simple things that enhance a brand experience and we fail to constantly improve. As marketing books go, Joseph teaches us without being pedantic and uses examples that we all can understand. He is jargon-free and in plain language gets his points across. He will make you think and change how you act and for a marketing book that is the ultimate praise.

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**Robert Ehrlich**, chairman and chief executive of DTC Perspectives Inc., regularly reviews books about the pharmaceutical industry, marketing and advertising for DTC Perspectives magazine. He also writes a weekly e-newsletter providing insights on pharmaceutical marketing trends. To subscribe to this free weekly analysis, sign up at the Web site, [www.DTCPerspectives.com](http://www.DTCPerspectives.com). Ehrlich can be reached by e-mail at [Bob@DTCPerspectives.com](mailto:Bob@DTCPerspectives.com).