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Playing the 20% Game

In today's mature, highly competitive convenience industry, you must provide your customers a clear, positive brand differentiation. Connecting your brand (and your store is your brand) to your customers and your customers' network is smart brand management. More than ever before, it's your customers who define your brand; thus, it's up to you to help them mold their definition of who you are in their minds' eye.

Your success relates directly to each of the customer brand touch points you create and sustain. You don't have to do all of the retail details superbly well—just those things your customers particularly value.

There is an old retailing principle: the 80/20 rule. This rule of thumb suggests that 80% of your business results are generated from the 20% of what really matters to your customers. Our view is that this principle applies directly to retail brand connectivity and brand differentiation.

By working within this 80/20 formula for customer engagement, 80% of what you do will be very similar to

what competitors do. Twenty percent of what you do will define you as being uniquely different from your competitors—the “brand touches” highly valued by your customers. You'd better do that 20% very well indeed.

The 80/20 brand connection is as much about attitude as it is about offer. Love your differences and your customers will love them, too.

How to Grow Your Brand

The ISUS short list of brand mechanic tools for your 20% game plan follow. These are categorized according to ISUS's 3-D principles: define, design and deliver.

Define

1. Listen to what your customers believe you stand for compared to the specific experiences you want your brand to deliver. Work the five P's of category management to bring to life your unique brand personality attributes.

2. Question and listen to your customers—every day—for feedback, both positive and needing improvement. Let your customers and your customers'

communities know you've heard their voice by your words and your actions.

Design

1. Risk changing how, when, where and how much you communicate of your brand's personality by adopting a proactive “growth by change philosophy.”

2. Use simple, bold, true words to describe your brand's personality, e.g., fresh, refresh, fast, tasty, hot, made-to-order, thank you, come back.

3. Deploy “Ambient Media” (ISUS's methodology) to bring to life your brand's unique personality and spiritual essence via today's smart electronic technology. (This is your 20% game.)

Deliver

1. Connect: Train, empower and require everyone (store level to executive staff) to master connecting your brand's key customer experience touch points—every day, at every store, with every customer. (This is your 20% game.)

2. Win by authentically engaging your customers and your broader customer community with your brand's spirit. ■

Ambient Media relates to the art and the science of blending form, content and technology to create impactful customer connections to a retail brand's spirit. Its emerging presence is perhaps accelerated by:

▶ The high cost and decline in the effectiveness of traditional media;

▶ A greater demand for improved, in-store brand and offer communications, while targeting brand personality touch points; and

▶ The flexibility to adapt a retail brand's connectivity with its customers and its community as the need or opportunity arises.