

perception IS REALITY

Marketing report by Ben Simpson



Recently heard of a breeder who would not engage in any marketing activity until every font size and colour was established for every situation that the stud would encounter over the next ten years. Six months has passed and from what I hear, nobody as yet has heard of the enterprise except of the city based graphic design team.

The idea that perception is reality is true and can make or break a company in any sector but it is important to understand what drives perception. Some believe the most important part of a marketing campaign is the style guide. In my opinion, whilst guides are necessary, and perceptions come from all forms of a company's public profile, in my opinion, the most powerful perception is made from personal relationships.

This evolves from a rich tapestry of human responses and relationships that you form with other people. Face to face contact firstly, backed up with an interesting and enlightened media campaign and finally ending in the delivery of a great product is what enables many of my diverse clients to communicate effectively with the public.

Lets face it, by the time a cattle breeder makes a genetic decision and sees the result that covers all forms of the production spectrum, it takes over 4 years at least. That means that most breeders only get around 10 cycles of getting it right on their own before succession or other matters take over. As a result, most seedstock cattle breeders are dedicated and focused on this task, firstly, and secondly on the task of selling their product.

Red Polls need to be perceived as a strong commercial alternative for producers.



Red Polls have the advantage of a wide genetic base to breed from.

Why then, you may ask, do some people have successful sales with no campaign and some have successful sales with great campaigns and vice versa? You will find that many successful breeders that have been in the industry for many years have the natural ability to simply be genuine, honest and likable. These qualities are more important in building perception than any other process.

If we break it down further, a bull has a meat value of lets say \$1,500. The money paid over this value is for the perceived value of that animal. So if an animal makes \$5,000, its perceived genetic value is \$3,500.

We now need to look at the drivers of that perception. Certainly EBV's, GeneSTAR , and raw data are important tools. Additionally the phenotype (current appearance of the animal) comes into play when making the decision. However whilst these tools are important, the emotional aspects of a purchase need to be filled in addition to the above mentioned traits for a successful sale.

The reason for this in my opinion, comes from the perception the potential customer has about the breeder. Knowledge, Trust and Comfort in 90% of cases, will override the genetic and phenotype package presented. Hence why many city bases breeders of seed-stock have such a difficult

time selling to commercial cattle breeders, although what they produce might be sound and of genetic merit.

In other words they have bred a sound package but they have failed to fill the emotional needs of their customers in the areas of, personal contact, safety and trust.

So no matter how flash your web site is, how colourful your newsletter is (as important as they are), if you are not making genuine connections with 'people' backed up with a great product, you will not improve your sales.

Getting out there and making connections, not via the internet but genuine face to face – 'pressing the flesh' contact, is where the rubber meets the road and sales are made.

So bull breeders, next time you have a spare day, go and visit a client. Have lunch and a few beers - enjoy yourselves. It will last longer in their memory than the colour you use in your next advertisement. ❖

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