

# The Power of Brand Charisma

## *Why it Matters and How to Measure It*

### Introduction

As competition gets tougher and people become more careful about their spending, the brands that connect with consumers emotionally will be the most successful in building long term relationships. Brands that people believe “speak their language,” are “for people like them,” are “fun,” “trustworthy,” and “respectable” are able to weather short-term cut backs and build emotional bonds (or engagement) that drive purchases, loyalty, and advocacy despite the fact that most products have similar features (functionality) and benefits.

### What is a Charismatic Brand?

Charismatic brands attract and retain a group of loyal followers (customers) who would go to extremes before switching brands, often going out of their way to recommend the brand to others. They provide a sense of identity, community, longevity and delightful experiences.

In many ways, charismatic brands are like a best friend in that they:

- Share values, lifestyle, ‘speaks the same language’
- Help in good/bad times (fulfills needs/wants)
- Deliver on promises that they have made
- Provide a sense of belonging, support, loyalty



### Leadership Brands Have Charisma

Because our relationships with brands are similar to our relationships with people, we view strong, leadership brands in a similar way to strong leaders in our society, the best of whom are characterised as charismatic leaders.

Charismatic leaders attract a group of loyal followers who are willing to go to any length necessary to remain a devotee. Furthermore, charismatic leaders provide their followers with a sense of identity, belonging, motivation, commitment and ever-lasting security. Strong brands have charisma and charismatic brands attract loyal users who feel and think the brand is indispensable in their lives.

### Brand Charisma Separates Strong Brands from Everyone Else

The fact that people have emotional connections to brands is nothing new. From the beginning, brands were developed to integrate trademarked products with the things that had the most meaning for consumers such as “consistency,” “quality,” “performance” and “value.” With most of today’s products and services functionally at parity, the notion of “charisma” matters more than ever before.

Even in today’s recessionary times individual brand decisions are often driven more by the tug of the heart than calculations of the mind. We buy for emotional reasons and then rationalise these purchases. That’s why many consumers are hard-pressed to replace their favorite brands with generics even though rationally they know that they should.

To be successful in building, sustaining and/or reviving market share, brands have to work harder than ever to achieve charisma and in turn, the benefits of having charisma are magnified.

### Measuring Brand Charisma

The benefits of Brand Charisma are obvious, but without strong qualitative and quantitative insights to understand a specific brand's personality and charisma from the consumer perspective, marketers do not have the foundation to build from.

To effectively build and sustain charismatic brands you need to utilise measurement that is a true balance of art and science. This measurement starts with a well-crafted scientific model that is adapted to incorporate your specific brand attributes and initiatives. Using a wide array of qualitative and quantitative techniques (including projective techniques) enables you to develop an accurate benchmark of where your brand stands today and monitor it over time to account for changes in the market. It also puts the measurement in context by including your key competitors in a similar exercise

### The Three Tenets of Brand Charisma

While every category has different attitudinal drivers, through our extensive experience measuring and managing brands, we have uncovered three prevailing tenets of Brand Charisma that cut across industries:

- Brand Commitment (“I’ll go out of my way to find it”)
- Brand Affinity (“A brand I feel good associating with”)
- Brand Honor (“It delivers on what it promises.”)

## iReach Market Research

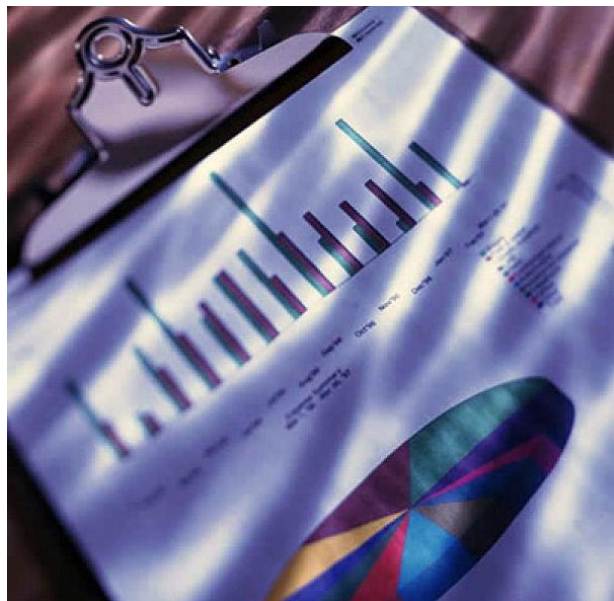
To understand Brand Charisma levels and how to grow it, you need to put the right measures in place directly relating to each of the three tenets. iReach Market Research can support your efforts by providing the required services to measure the 3 tenets of Brand Charisma.

### 1. Brand Commitment

Brand Commitment is the degree to which a customer is committed to a given brand in relation to their likelihood to re-purchase/re-use in the future. The level of commitment indicates the degree to which a brand's loyal customer base is protected from competitors.

### 2. Brand Affinity

Brand Affinity is the close connection or bond between the consumer and the brand. It is marked by a feeling of 'sympatico,' shared values, interests and character traits. Research has shown that consumers purchase from brands they personally relate to, identify with and receive peer-group approval in using the brand.



### 3. Brand Honor

Brand Honor speaks to the integrity of the brand and whether the consumer can trust it to deliver on its promise. Similar to knowing which friends are honorable, brands that are honorable can be trusted upon to consistently fulfill consumers wants and needs in a delightful manner and are therefore, more likely to be purchased than those consumers cannot trust.

### Summary

Brand Charisma is the combination of factors that connect people to brands emotionally and garner fierce loyalty and word of mouth beyond what rational product features and benefits are capable of.

In order to reap the benefits of being charismatic, brands must be successful at generating a feeling of commitment to the brand (“I’ll go out of my way to find it”), affinity with the brand (“A brand I feel good associating with”) and a sense of honor for the brand (“It delivers on what it promises”). Because of the strength of their relationships with consumers, charismatic brands experience continued success in the face of product and service parity and economic downturn.

To fully understand and influence brand charisma you need to systematically conduct interlaced qualitative and quantitative research that tells you the extent to which brands have charisma, why, and what to do about it.

iReach Market Research has the experience and capability to help you measure your Brand Charisma as well as benchmark this with your competitors using a mix of quantitative and qualitative research approaches in a cost effective and integrated way. See [www.ireach.ie](http://www.ireach.ie) or [www.ireachonline.com](http://www.ireachonline.com) for more details.

Sources include Forrester Research, Invoke Solutions, MA and MRS

