

the CROW Chronicle

live in a mature consumer society well-supplied with goods and services. For most of us, thankfully, we have moved beyond physiological needs. And too many innovations don't add genuine category value. They're not offering anything really new or standout. So, perverse though it sounds, the 'is it really needed?' questions gets us to push our insight and innovation efforts harder. If you want to talk more about how we help companies innovate in cluttered categories, drop up as line.

Caw! Hello, Crow Friends! It's time for a little update from the beaky bunch here at The Crow Flies. As we emerge from our summer staycations, it's the best time to get your brand thinking straight and plan for future success before the Christmas madness sets in. We've been taking stock too, over a platter of deep fried twig and worm bites – and have a few updates and hopefully useful pointers for the year ahead.



1 Think like a start up (whatever your age)

It's a funny thing, but we often hear comments that building brands is only for established companies with deep pockets. However, as we've worked with companies of all ages and stages of development, it's never been more clear that the best time to build your brand is always 'now'.

- If you're a **genuine start up** – don't think 'we'll get to that later'. Even on tight budgets and tight on time, understanding your potential customer base deeply and establishing the brand properly from the off will serve you well. Doing it later is always harder and more expensive.
- If you're in the **early growth phase**, it can be easy to think 'we don't need a brand, it's about our product'... but brands drive and accelerate growth. Awareness leads to trial. Reinforcement leads to habit.
- If you're an **established brand** then remember to be brutally honest about where your brand is at – particularly how well established it is in your target audiences' minds. Honest and accurate diagnosis is frequently overlooked.

If you can think like a start up – assume that your audience isn't aware or isn't yet convinced - you're more likely to make the important sacrifices that allow you to impact the market with scale.

2 Ask: is it really needed?

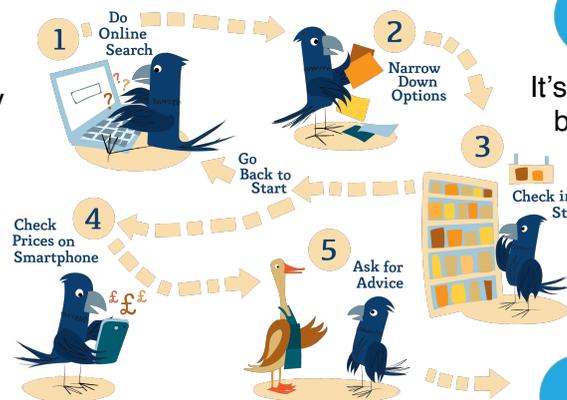
We love innovating here at Crow, but as all of us reflect more on resource usage and the climate emergency, it's more important than ever to ask one, really important, question; *is this really needed?* This doesn't just come from considering our resource footprint, vital though that is. The truth is, we

3 Mooove, closer, move your body real close to me

Let's talk **closeness**, Crow Friends. Just recently we've been working with one of our partners on an on-going **consumer closeness** programme, something we've been helping our clients with since we started. And gosh... we'd encourage everyone to consider doing this! The idea is to get *the people that matter closer to the people that matter*. It's too easy to think you're close to your target audience until you watch and hear them tell you otherwise. The effects are powerful, long-lasting and can profoundly affect your brand building efforts as well as get hard to influence stakeholders on your side. So whether it's accompanied shops, joint connections or facilitated groups at head office, Crow's your bird!



4 Journeys and the Path to Purchase



It's pretty ironic that during a period when we haven't been able to make physical journeys that a lot of our projects have been about customer journeys. Whether you're a product or service brand, or a retailer, understanding how customers interact with you in an increasingly omni-channel environment is crucial. Talk to us about the different techniques we use, including our general nosiness into others' affairs.

5 Parish Notices!

A few things to update you on Crow Friends:

- **Face to face research:** is returning, but it's slowly, slowly. Many participants are still nervous, rightly, about strange rooms with strange people but the opportunities are beginning to open up – the future looks brilliant, with more hybrid online / physical research with participants who are more comfortable doing either or both.
- **Crow Visualisation**– don't forget about our new Crow Visualisation service – our aim is to create hard-working visuals that help you create internal momentum. Our flock of talented design-birds are waiting to help you fly!

Stay safe and well and speak soon!

