

HIRE THINKERS.



THE
FAQTORY
EST. 1984

What's Your High-Q?

By Sharon Lancaster

There are 26 letters in the alphabet but, as any Scrabble enthusiast will tell you, somehow the letter Q is much more valuable than the others. While the 17th letter of the alphabet has won its share of notoriety, in the world of marketing it has reached rock star status. In 1963, Marketing Evaluations Inc., a New York based company, developed a survey and rating system called the Q Score. Since that time, the Q Score has become globally accepted as the industry standard for measuring the likeability and appeal of a brand, a company, a celebrity (alive or dead), a cartoon character or a television show. The higher the Q Score, the more well-liked and highly regarded the item or person being rated. Q rating, Q factor or simply "Q" are used interchangeably in marketing when referring to something's or someone's Q score.

Many marketers place more value on the Q Score than other popularity measurements such as the, as Q Scores rate not only how many people are aware of a product, but how people *feel* about the product. For example, placing an advertisement for your company or product within media with a high Q rating may increase product awareness and likeability more than promoting it in media that may be highly visible and circulated, but that people don't like as much.

Knowing the Q Score of a brand or product helps determine the market value. Non-profit organizations or charities may benefit from knowing the Q score of their brand in order to determine its value or worth prior to entering into cause marketing ventures. Cause marketing is a form of marketing designed to enhance the profitability or competitive growth of corporations, media, educational institutions and non-profit organizations by aligning with the other in advertising or marketing strategy. The CIBC Run For The Cure is an excellent example of cause marketing benefiting both organizations.

High emotional attachment to a brand equals high Q; therefore, a high Q Score nets the brand more market value or profitability. Similarly, movie stars, public figures and even animated cartoon characters have their Q Score ratings available for companies soliciting their endorsement for commercial purposes.

But use caution before making a marketing decision based singularly on a brand or celebrities high Q. The public can be a fickle and judgemental audience. Q Scores are forever moving, and a brand with a high Q may plummet to the bottom of the ratings overnight, taking your product with it. Call it "The Kobe Factor." Before NBA superstar Kobe Bryant's indictment on sexual assault charges in 2003, and his subsequent legal battle (since settled), he had a positive image and multiple endorsement deals. He had High Q. However, once his legal troubles hit the media, his Q score sank quicker than you can say "O.J. Simpson."

Brought to You by the Letter Q ...

Major Boothroyd a.k.a. "Q"- a friend and mentor to James Bond
The Q Continuum - omnipotent immortal beings of Star Trek fame

Q&A's – Question and Answer periods

Q-Tips – well known cotton swabs

Q Parks – the U.K.'s luxury airport accommodations for motor vehicles

Who's Got Q

- James Gandolfini, star of The Sopranos, has a Q score of 36 (the average Q score for a male in a prime-time series is around 19).
- Tom Hanks Q score is 56.
- Bill Cosby (the highest ever recorded) charts in at 71.
- Julia Roberts, Sean Connery and Lucille Ball are all under 19.
- Albert Einstein's Q score was 56.
- Deep Blue, the supercomputer that defeated chess Grandmaster Garry Kasparov, had a Q score of 9.
- Other 9's include Carman Electra, Howard Stern and Batman.
- Larry Ellison (Oracle CEO) and Scott McNealy each rated a 6.
- Connie Chung had high Q with CBS, but low Q with CNN.
- CSI has Q scores higher than NBC's long-running ER.

On the other hand, attaching your product to a 'Dead Q,' a deceased celebrity who has had a consistently high Q for your target audience, such as Elvis Presley, may net you years of brand success.

So what's the best way to elevate your Q Score? Market charisma, combined with a focus on exemplary performance, quality products and honest business practices, is probably the best and quickest way to raise your brand's likeability factor ... and your high Q.