

# A Branding What If...

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What If... your business operated entirely through the eyes of your customer? Imagine if you adopted a business environment that completely immersed you in the experiences of your customer? Would that help you do a better job of branding?

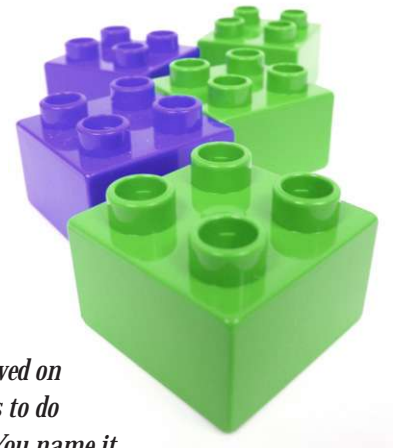
A philosopher once said, “To truly understand someone, you must walk in their shoes for a mile.” Can we apply that to a business? Absolutely. What if you were in the toy business? What would your company look like? How would it act? Hmm...maybe it would be something like this:

*To start the workday, you are picked up in a bright yellow school bus. Once you arrive at the “office,” you hop on a scooter, ride down a small winding road until you get to your work area. The outside of your work area is covered in bright colors - like the façade of a big dollhouse. Your nameplate reads, “Johnny. Toy Maker.” As you notice other brightly colored work areas, you notice that everyone has the same title - Toy Maker. No “Chief” this, or “VP” of that. Everyone is in the business of making toys. Everyone has input. Everyone.*

*After you sit down at your curvy, colorful plastic desk, you see a children’s book. The cover reads, “See Johnny Work.” As you flip through the illustrated picture book, you discover that this is your employee manual. Lots of pictures. Few words.*

*Around lunchtime, everyone goes to the cafeteria for a hot lunch served on a cardboard tray, followed by 30 minutes of recess. There are things to do like play “Wiffle” Ball, video games, putt-putt, Legos and games. You name it.*

*On your way back to your “office,” you notice paychecks being passed out. The person passing out the checks asks each person a trivia question only a child would know the answer to. If they get it right, they get a snack and a video game. If not, they just receive their original check.*



OK, so certain business realities are ignored. That’s exactly the point. Sometimes you have to tear down your own personal paradigms to get to a better understanding of your market. I’m sure in many toy companies, the “COO” has no idea of the butterflies a child (their target market) has when waiting for that big yellow school bus in the morning. Would this insight help his company create a better toy? Maybe - maybe not. But, as that philosopher once said, “To truly understand a child, you must peddle on their tricycle for a block.”

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