

UZU

Monthly
Review

Be The Center Of The Whirlpool



**Emotion in B2B
Marketing**

**Brand Loyalty
in Japan? Myth
or Reality?**

**Japan's Social
Media
Landscape**

**Japanese
Business
Etiquette 101**



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FROM THE EDITOR



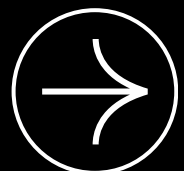
Paul Ashton
Founder
ULPA

Welcome to the first-ever edition of Uzu, Ulpa's monthly review! As we continue our journey to support market entry and growth for foreign businesses in Japan, this first issue will discuss some of the issues raised in our recent blog articles from Ulpa.

As time progresses, I plan to build on this first edition and interview foreign and Japanese business leaders, adding guest articles and if there is enough interest, we might include a monthly language section.

Where does the name Uzu come from? Well, it means "whirlpool" in Japanese and is inspired by the philosophy of 渦の中心になれ, "Be the center of the whirlpool", coined by Inamori Kazuo. This philosophy leans into making your own whirlpool by involving others in your own efforts. This is what I intend for this magazine's future: not to make it a mouthpiece for Ulpa, but to build a magazine where a whirlpool of ideas are shared and insights gained from many perspectives. But for now, this is all me, so enjoy this first edition, and I look forward to your open and frank feedback.

"We look forward to taking you on a journey with us as you grow your business in Japan."

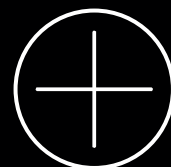




EMOTION IN B2B MARKETING

BY PAUL ASHTON

03



The Emotional Edge

In Japan, where business is as much about relationships as it is about results, emotive storytelling is indispensable. Japanese culture places immense value on trust and personal connections in business dealings. Humanizing your brand by sharing authentic narratives that reflect your mission and values helps in building that trust. It transforms your company from a faceless entity into a relatable character, making it easier for Japanese audiences to connect with and remember your brand. This approach fosters deeper connections and enhances your brand's credibility and loyalty among clients.

Engaging your audience effectively means delving deep into their motivations, aspirations, and challenges. Understanding these elements is crucial in Japan, and Japanese business professionals appreciate thoroughness and sincerity. It is vital to craft stories that address their specific pain points and demonstrate how your product or service can offer tangible benefits.

Take, for example, a scenario where a company specializes in eco-friendly packaging. Instead of merely presenting statistics on environmental impact, the company could share a story about a Japanese business that successfully integrated its packaging solutions, leading to improved sustainability practices and enhanced corporate image. By balancing these emotive narratives with concrete data, you capture and retain the audience's attention, making your pitch persuasive and memorable.



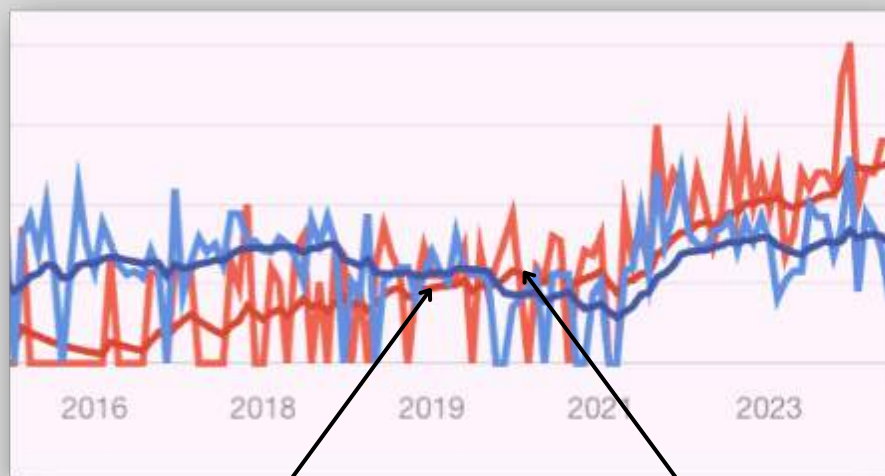
“BY BALANCING THESE EMOTIVE NARRATIVES WITH CONCRETE DATA, YOU CAPTURE AND RETAIN THE AUDIENCE’S ATTENTION”



Lessons from Apple's "The Underdogs"

Apple's "The Underdogs" campaign provides a masterclass in redefining B2B marketing. The series of short films depicts a small business team navigating various challenges, embodying resilience and innovation. This campaign successfully dismantled several B2B marketing myths, proving that creativity and emotion can thrive in a traditionally logical domain.

First, the campaign showed that B2B marketing doesn't have to be serious to be effective. The humorous and relatable content engaged viewers, demonstrating that business audiences appreciate creativity. Second, it highlighted the power of social media for B2B marketing, leveraging platforms like LinkedIn and YouTube to reach a wider audience and foster engagement.



The Underdogs first campaign launches in 2019.

Apple overtakes Microsoft for the first tie ever for B2B searches.

Contrary to the belief that long-form content is outdated, Apple's series used extended storytelling to resonate deeply with its audience. The campaign also underscored that the C-Suite doesn't solely make B2B decisions; portraying a diverse team emphasized that messages must reach all stakeholders within a company. Finally, it illustrated that emotions and personal connections, not just logic and data, influence business decisions. Since then, this method has been replicated by many companies worldwide, attempting to leverage emotion to drive their B2B success. Some have succeeded, some not so much.

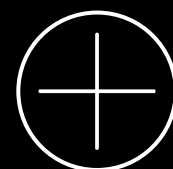
"APPLE'S 'THE UNDERDOGS' CAMPAIGN PROVIDES A MASTERCLASS IN REDEFINING B2B MARKETING."





BRAND LOYALTY IN JAPAN? MYTH OR REALITY?

BY PAUL ASHTON





The Awakening.

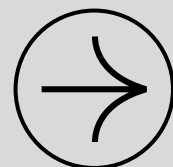
It was almost five years ago when a good friend recommended a book that he swore by as the "Bible of Marketers." I was skeptical at first, having never heard of Byron Sharp's "How Brands Grow." But with his fervent endorsement, I decided to give it a shot. I began my journey on my daily one-hour commute to work, listening to it on Audible at 1.5 times speed to quickly grasp the main points.

After a couple of runs-through, I knew I needed to delve deeper. That weekend, I sat down with a physical copy and absorbed the book's wealth of case studies, charts, and examples. It was a revelation. I realized I had been doing marketing wrong all these years, relying on hearsay and conventional wisdom instead of being driven by the data.

Byron Sharp's book introduced me to the "Double Jeopardy" law, a cornerstone of his market penetration theory. This law posits that brands with larger market shares have more buyers and slightly more loyal buyers than smaller brands. However, the difference in loyalty is relatively small compared to the sheer number of new customers these brands attract. This insight flipped my understanding of brand growth on its head. Sharp's research, backed by the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science, demonstrated that the real driver of brand growth is expanding the customer base rather than merely deepening loyalty among existing customers.

Sharp argues that brands must enhance their mental and physical availability to grow.

**"I REALIZED I HAD BEEN DOING MARKETING WRONG
ALL THESE YEARS"**



Mental availability is about how easily a brand comes to mind in buying situations, achieved through consistent and pervasive advertising. Physical availability ensures that the brand is accessible in various locations where consumers can purchase it. This dual focus on mental and physical availability is crucial for attracting new customers and achieving sustainable growth.

Sharp's theories resonated with me as I looked at brands that had successfully navigated the Japanese market. Take Starbucks, for instance. When Starbucks entered Japan, it didn't just rely on its global brand equity. Instead, it created a ubiquitous presence through extensive advertising and strategic store placements in high-traffic areas, enhancing its mental and physical availability. But Starbucks didn't stop there. They adapted their product offerings to Japanese tastes, introducing matcha-flavored drinks and unique seasonal offerings. This blend of market penetration strategies and cultural sensitivity allowed Starbucks to attract a wide customer base while maintaining relevance in the local market.

Another example is Amazon Japan. Amazon's investment in logistics and distribution networks ensures widespread availability and fast delivery services, making it a convenient choice for Japanese consumers. This physical availability, combined with the ease of online shopping, attracts a broad customer base. Moreover, Amazon focuses on customer satisfaction through a robust



“THIS DUAL FOCUS ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL AVAILABILITY IS CRUCIAL FOR ATTRACTING NEW CUSTOMERS AND ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH”





review system and reliable customer service, building trust and encouraging repeat purchases. This dual approach aligns with Sharp's principles and has helped Amazon secure a strong foothold in the Japanese market.

Despite Sharp's compelling arguments, the Japanese market's strong inclination towards brand loyalty cannot be ignored. Japanese consumers value quality and trust, often forming long-term relationships with brands that consistently meet high expectations. This creates a unique challenge for new entrants aiming to break through established loyalty.

The key to success in the Japanese market lies in balancing Sharp's market penetration strategies with the cultural emphasis on quality and trust. Brands must invest in widespread advertising and ensure broad accessibility while maintaining an unwavering commitment to product quality and customer service excellence. This hybrid strategy aligns with Sharp's principles and respects the deeply ingrained cultural values that drive Japanese consumer behaviour.

By embracing this balanced approach, brands can navigate the complexities of the Japanese market, achieving sustainable growth and building enduring customer relationships. The path to success involves understanding and leveraging the paradox between loyalty and penetration, ensuring that brands remain competitive and relevant in a market where both are critical to success.

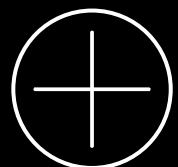
"BY EMBRACING THIS BALANCED APPROACH, BRANDS CAN NAVIGATE THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE JAPANESE MARKET"





JAPAN'S SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE

BY PAUL ASHTON





The Double-Edged Sword of Social Media

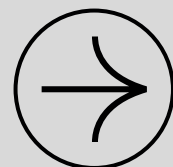
Having spent four years leading a world-renowned cybersecurity firm in Japan, I've learned firsthand the dangers lurking online, often triggered by seemingly insignificant mistakes. This experience has profoundly shaped my understanding of the digital world, particularly in a country like Japan, where social media is both a necessity and a burgeoning force. As a father of three, these insights bring a personal dimension to my concerns, especially considering the pervasive use of social media among young people in Japan.

Social media has become indispensable in Japan, deeply woven into the fabric of daily life. Platforms like LINE, YouTube, and TikTok are not just tools for communication and entertainment; they are integral to how people connect, share, and consume content. However, this widespread usage brings significant risks, particularly for the younger generation, who are often the most active users.

While at the cybersecurity firm, I've encountered numerous cases where small oversights led to severe consequences. Personal data leaks, identity theft, and cyberbullying are just a few of the dangers that can arise from a momentary lapse in judgment. These incidents underscore the importance of understanding and mitigating the risks associated with social media usage.

As a father of three, I am constantly worried about the proliferation of social media among young people in Japan.

**“SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BECOME INDISPENSABLE IN JAPAN,
DEEPLY WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF DAILY LIFE.”**



Like many others, my children are avid users of platforms like Instagram and LINE. While these platforms offer numerous benefits, they also expose them to potential hazards such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and the risk of oversharing personal information.

The challenge lies in striking a balance between allowing them to enjoy the benefits of social media and ensuring their safety. Educating them about online safety, setting boundaries, and monitoring their activities without infringing on their privacy are all crucial steps. However, the ever-evolving nature of social media platforms makes this a daunting task.

Japan has been proactive in addressing these concerns through stringent social media regulations. The country's regulatory framework aims to protect users, particularly minors, from online threats. These regulations mandate data usage transparency from social media companies and impose strict penalties for violations. Additionally, platforms must implement robust mechanisms to combat cyberbullying and ensure user privacy.

Despite these measures, users must also remain vigilant. Understanding the terms of service, utilizing privacy settings, and being cautious about the information shared online are essential practices for safeguarding personal data.



“THE CHALLENGE LIES IN STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN ALLOWING THEM TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ENSURING THEIR SAFETY.”





In Japan, mega apps like LINE have gained immense popularity due to their multifunctionality and cultural integration. LINE, for instance, offers a suite of services beyond messaging, including payments, shopping, and gaming. Its localized features, such as region-specific stickers and themes, resonate deeply with Japanese users, enhancing its appeal.

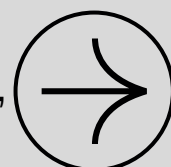
From a cybersecurity standpoint, these mega apps present both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, their comprehensive services provide convenience and streamline digital interactions. On the other hand, they become attractive targets for cybercriminals due to the vast amount of personal data they hold. Ensuring the security of these platforms is paramount, requiring continuous vigilance and advanced security measures.

The Role of Young People

Young people in Japan are at the forefront of social media usage, driving trends and shaping digital culture. Their engagement with platforms like TikTok and YouTube is not merely passive consumption but active participation, often involving content creation and interaction with global audiences. This active participation, while fostering creativity and connectivity, also exposes them to unique risks.

Witnessing my children navigate this digital landscape brings a mix of pride and concern. The skills they develop and the opportunities they access are invaluable, but the potential pitfalls are ever-present. Guiding them to use social media responsibly

“FROM A CYBERSECURITY STANDPOINT, THESE MEGA APPS PRESENT BOTH OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.”





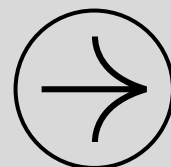
is a continuous effort requiring open communication and awareness of the evolving digital environment.

Despite the challenges, social media in Japan has been harnessed for remarkable and uplifting purposes. One of the most significant examples is using LINE for disaster response. LINE emerged as a crucial communication tool after the devastating 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami. Spurred by the urgent need for reliable communication during disasters, the platform's developers created features that have since become lifesaving.

Earthquake Alerts and Safety Checks: LINE has integrated earthquake alert systems that provide real-time notifications to users. This feature has proven invaluable in a country prone to seismic activity. This tool has been widely used during natural disasters, helping to coordinate rescue efforts and ensure the well-being of affected individuals.

Japan's regulatory framework provides a strong foundation for safeguarding users, but individual responsibility remains crucial. Platforms like LINE exemplify the benefits and challenges of mega apps, offering comprehensive services while necessitating robust security measures. By fostering a culture of awareness and responsibility, we can harness the benefits of social media while mitigating its risks, ensuring a safer digital environment for all.

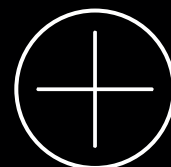
“LINE HAS INTEGRATED EARTHQUAKE ALERT SYSTEMS THAT PROVIDE REAL-TIME NOTIFICATIONS TO USERS.”





JAPAN BUSINESS ETIQUETTE 101 BE ON TIME

BY PAUL ASHTON



Being On Time in Japan: More Than Just a Nicety
In Japan, punctuality isn't just a virtue; it's a fundamental aspect of professional and social life. The cultural emphasis on being on time reflects a deep respect for others' time and contributes to the smooth functioning of daily activities. Unlike in some cultures where being fashionably late might be acceptable or expected, in Japan, even minor delays can be perceived as disrespectful and unprofessional.

The public transportation system best exemplifies the precision of punctuality. Trains and buses are renowned for timeliness, and delays are often measured in seconds rather than minutes. For instance, the Shinkansen, or bullet train, prides itself on an average delay of less than a minute annually. This commitment to punctuality in public services sets a high standard for personal and professional behaviour.

To be accurate, the average Shinkansen delay is just around 24 seconds per year! This impressive statistic reflects the meticulous planning and efficiency of maintaining the Japanese rail system's punctuality, even considering the challenges posed by typhoons, earthquakes, and landslides.

Despite this high standard, occasional delays do happen. In such cases, Japanese train stations provide "遅延証明書" (chien shoumeisho), or delay certificates, which passengers can present to their employers as proof that the train was late. This practice underscores the importance of punctuality in Japanese culture and provides a formal means of explaining unavoidable delays.



"THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BEST EXEMPLIFIES THE PRECISION OF PUNCTUALITY."





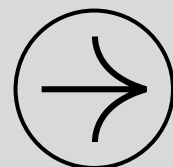
Given Japan's efficient public transportation system, planning your commute precisely is straightforward. Real-time tracking of buses and trains via Google Maps is available, providing up-to-the-minute schedule updates. This makes it easier to plan your route and avoid delays. However, accounting for potential disruptions is still wise by checking traffic conditions or train schedules in advance. Arriving early not only helps you avoid the stress of running late but also allows you to present yourself as composed and prepared.

If an unavoidable delay occurs, it's customary in Japan to call and inform your counterpart at least 45 minutes in advance. This practice shows respect and allows the other party to adjust their schedule accordingly.







Punctuality in Japan extends beyond just arriving on time for meetings. It also includes meeting project deadlines and responding promptly to communications. Being punctual in all professional life demonstrates reliability and respect for others, highly valued in Japanese business culture.

Understanding and adhering to the Japanese emphasis on punctuality can significantly enhance your professional relationships and reputation in Japan. While it may require some adjustment, particularly if you come from a more relaxed culture, the benefits of being seen as reliable and respectful are well worth the effort. And who knows, this newfound punctuality positively impacts other areas of your life as well!

“IF AN UNAVOIDABLE DELAY OCCURS, IT'S CUSTOMARY IN JAPAN TO CALL AND INFORM YOUR COUNTERPART AT LEAST 45 MINUTES IN ADVANCE.”



**The inspiration for the articles in this month's review has come from ULPA's blog.
Find more inspiration yourself at ulpa.jp/blog**

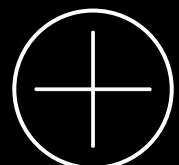
		
<p>U ulpa  Jun 2 • 7 min</p> <p>Mastering B2B Marketing: The Power of Emotive Storytelling</p> <p>For any business, whether a startup or post-IPO, finding new markets and opportunitie...</p>	<p>U ulpa  Jun 29 • 12 min</p> <p>Mastering Brand Strategy: Brand Loyalty in Japan, Myth or...</p> <p>Brand loyalty is a critical component of any successful business strategy. It represen...</p>	<p>U ulpa  Jul 10 • 11 min</p> <p>Social Media in Japan: A Complete Guide</p> <p>Japan is a unique market when it comes to social media usage. While many global platforms a...</p>

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