

# Autodesk®

## IMAGE-IDENTITY GAP ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

Autodesk is a leading company creating design and modeling software used by engineers, animators and architects. Popular Autodesk products include AutoCAD, Maya, and Revit. As engineers, we were familiar with the company's products, however many of our non-technical friends were not, making it an interesting brand to run an Image-Identity Gap Analysis on.

### RESEARCH: THE COMPANY

We spoke with several employees of Autodesk with various roles within the company. These employees included Erin Bradner (Sr. Manager, User Experience), Tatjana Dsambazova (Product Manager, 123D), Maurice Conti (Innovation Strategist, Creative Director), and Christy Canida (Sr. Manager, Partnerships & Community Marketing).

### RESEARCH: THE CONSUMERS

We interviewed a number of undergraduates and graduate students in the engineering, design and architecture departments about their perceptions and experiences with the Autodesk brand. Overwhelmingly, students that hadn't used Autodesk software before viewed the company as distant and highly technical, even if the suites were highly relevant to their program of study. Conversely, students with meaningful interactions with the brand had positive things to say about the brand.

### CLOSING THE GAP

Autodesk as a brand has a strong belief in making their tools accessible and usable to professionals and students. They run a huge breadth of outreach programs and have a strong user research program they feel have been successful in making their products friendlier and more approachable.

Autodesk's consumers are divided into two camps: those who have used Autodesk products and those who haven't. For consumers that have had direct interactions with Autodesk products, the company is seen as engaging and generous. For those who have not had direct interactions with Autodesk products, the company and its products are seen as unapproachable.

In order to close the gap between consumer perceptions and company values, Autodesk should focus on creating deeper experiences with its customers to complement its numerous shallower outreach programs. These deeper experiences are also opportunities to introduce non-technical people to their new 123D software suite that gives users the ability to do 3D modeling on an iPad with multi-touch rather than by using a powerful, but complex computer program. In this way, the company will be able to really showcase the improvements it's made in user-friendliness and dispel the notion that its products are not for everyone. It can also create a network of unofficial brand evangelists and authentic sticky experiences that can be shared with other prospective consumers.

## PRIMARY SOURCES

*They were unapproachable. I had never wanted to get in contact with them nor reach out to them*



*I tried to learn AutoCAD once but I really couldn't get the hang of it. The user interface looks like it's geared towards professionals - I really didn't appreciate being made to feel like I'm stupid.*



*I think they have like a student liaison so we email him and he's always been really responsive*



*I like that Autodesk launched its new product last year by offering a free student version. It seems like Autodesk's products are really powerful but there seems to be a huge barrier to entry*



*We do a lot of software giveaways and run contests with schools. We're actually running contests in 23 different countries right now!*



*This is the future of manufacturing - we want to make sure students know that*



*We have a strong user research program and are actively working to take away the "I feel stupid" experience.*



*The line between "professionals" and everyone else is blurring. We want to create opportunities for non-professionals to make.*





## SINGLE FOCUSED GOAL

### INTRODUCTION

In our Image-Identity Gap Analysis, we found that there is a disconnect between Autodesk's perception of itself as an approachable, "everyone's a maker" brand, and consumers' perceptions of it as a highly-technical, not user-friendly brand. Furthermore, we discovered that this gap was most pronounced among consumers without direct interactions with the brand whereas consumers with direct interactions with the brand had more positive things to say about Autodesk.

### THE GOAL

Our goal is to create an in-depth, sticky experience for college students in less technical fields, that introduces them to relevant Autodesk products and leaves them feeling empowered and excited to use Autodesk products to create and share things with their friends. Specifically, we want visitors to our experience to come away with a physical artifact they helped create and shift their perceptions about what it takes to become a "maker."

### METRICS

We will measure the success of our brand experience in a couple of ways.

#### **Surveys.**

In the weeks before our experiment is run, we will create and distribute electronic surveys to various mailing lists on campus and gather quantitative data on peoples's perception of

Autodesk and their overall comfort level with building or creating things using modeling software. After our experiment is run, we will distribute the same survey again and look for statistically significant differences in results. This metric will help us determine how sticky and social our experience was and how well we were able to encourage visitors to share things about the brand with their friends.

#### **Interviews.**

While a visitor is going through our experience, we will be asking them questions about their previous experiences with the brand, how much they feel the experiment challenges or reinforces their perceptions of the brand. In this way we hope to measure on a qualitative and individual level the change we are affecting on perceptions.

#### **Social Media.**

We will create a Facebook event for our experiment, and seed our experiment location with specific hashtags. By tracking the number of visitors/attendees to our Facebook event page, and mentions of our hashtag on Twitter, we will get another data point on how successful we were in creating a shareable experience.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Fun! We want to make sure our experience is not only engaging and sticky, but is above all fun and emotional. Recently, the CEO of Autodesk, Carl Bass has spoken about his desire to create "a sense of awe and wonder" when consumers are using his company's products. Driving home this point that Autodesk's tools are not only powerful and competent, but also emotionally engaging and fun will be the icing on the cake for our brand experience.

## OUR DRIVING QUESTION

*how might Autodesk create **deeper, stickier experiences** with customers in a way that engages non-technical consumers and highlights their existing outreach efforts?*