

# What a bad cup of coffee can teach you

Do you always start your day with a extra-big mugful of coffee like I do? If so, you'll appreciate just how terrible it is to start your day with a bad cup of coffee. A cup of coffee that lacks the delicious aroma of perfectly roasted coffee beans. A cup of coffee that just tastes awful.

A bad cup of coffee just gets your day off to a bad start, and for that I blame myself. You see, I had just finished a package of coffee and needed a replacement ASAP (it is a DEFCON 5 situation around here if there is no coffee). Normally, I buy my coffee at Trader Joe's but I had forgotten to do so during my weekly shopping trip. And so I found myself shopping in a gourmet store for something else, and thought I would pick up a brand of coffee that I enjoy (and for which I am willing to pay a little extra). Apparently, this store no longer carries that brand. They did have another brand that I have tried in the past, but I didn't feel like paying the gourmet store price for it.

So I made a very big mistake: I grabbed a bag of coffee simply because it was cheap. It was not a brand I knew or recognized or had even seen before, but I figured a bag of medium roast Costa Rican coffee from a gourmet store can't be all that bad. Well, I figured wrong. It was the worst coffee I have ever bought in my life. It tasted horrible. It had no coffee aroma. It was so bad I actually threw what was left out.

Then I hustled over to Trader Joe's and bought my go-to coffee. Now, my mornings are back to normal.

A bad cup of coffee taught me never to buy an unknown brand. And it's really not about the cost. You can get very good yet

cheap store-brand coffee like I do at Trader Joe's or at stores like Target, *where you trust the brand*.

Brands are quite literally markers that serve to identify. They let you separate one product from all the others like it. Once you've experienced a brand, you can then look for it if you liked it or avoid it if you didn't. *Brands provide a shortcut* that consumers can use to know what to buy quickly and without much research.

Remember this the next time you are out of coffee: Unless it's a brand you know already, buying just anything based on price alone will get your morning started on the wrong foot.

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Do you know what your brand stands for? Are you communicating it well enough? If not, perhaps you should invest in my new Brand Identity Kit. Check it out!