



A STUDY ON IMPACT OF BRAND AND CELEBRITY INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR: A CRITICAL VIEW POINT

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Abstract

Customers are the resource and assets of the organization upon which the organizational success depends. Without customers, organizations would not exist. There is a commonly saying that achieving success may be somewhat straight but to maintain that success is a real thing and task to do. Since market conditions are constantly changing, the new role of brand management as an integral part of holistic marketing is more important than it ever was. Primarily, consumers are influenced by their individual attitudes, professed values but also by the environment in which they spend their lives. In our opinion, brand is a factor that has got an impact on consumer purchase preferences and therefore we decided to investigate the impact of brand on consumer behaviour in connection with the age category of consumers. . Due to the current global conditions, the marketplace is becoming a place of a super-saturation of products resulting in brand loyalty disappearance. These conditions can be avoided when companies create loyalty relationships with their customers. Therefore it is necessary that the value proposition of the offered brands meet consumers' values and desires.

Key Words: Customers, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Brand, Brand Loyalty.

Introduction

Customers are the resource and assets of the organization upon which the organizational success depends. Without customers, organizations would not exist. There is a commonly saying that achieving success may be somewhat straight but to maintain that success is a real thing and task to do. Since market conditions are constantly changing, the new role of brand management as an integral part of holistic marketing is more important than it ever was. According to the situation on current retail market, it is very important that enterprises manage their brands so they can flexibly fulfil desires and wishes of their customers. In order to create a competitive brand, they need to pay attention to their customers constantly. In current retail environment, consumers are overwhelmed with plenty of brands and products. Primarily, consumers are influenced by their individual attitudes, professed values but also by the environment in which they spend their lives. In our opinion, brand is a factor that has got an impact on consumer purchase preferences and therefore we decided to investigate the impact of brand on consumer behaviour in connection with the age category of consumers. In the first decade of the new millennium, because of the speed and the growth of the internet, celebrity spokespersons have paradoxically been easier than ever to reach and sign deals with, and advertisers have been able to quantify better than at any other time the effect that a celebrity can have on the bottom line for a given brand. However, Celebrity endorsement cannot guarantee fool-proof success. The wrong match between brand and celebrity, and any misconduct in the private life of a given celebrity can be an instant brand killer, just as the celebrity's career can be short lived indeed from private misdeeds, as well as if the endorsee qualities may be inappropriate, irrelevant, and undesirable.

Objectives of the Study

1. To know about different issues related to brand and brand selection process.
2. To identify the impact of brand name on purchase decision.

Literature Review

“Brand is something what remains us when our factory is burned”. These are the words of David Ogilvy who is considered “the father of advertising”. Brands are important to brand owners at two quite different levels. Firstly, they serve as a focus for consumer loyalties and therefore develop as assets which ensure future demand and hence future cash flows. They thus introduce stability into businesses, help guard against competitive encroachment, and allow investment and planning to take place with increased confidence (Loken, Ahluwalia, Houston, 2010). Brands are business assets, legally protected and shielded from duplication. They are valuable, rare, non-substitutable and provide sustainable competitive advantages – and therefore superior financial performance. A brand is built over time, by the impressions one has of the company, its products or services, and is confirmed (or destroyed) by experiences.



People use brands to categorize their choices (Transparency, 2005). On the basis of existing definitions of the brand we define brand as: "Perceptible sign of the organization and its products to the human senses, through which the customer is able to differentiate an organization and its products from others" (Bab anová, 2010). Branding ultimately works as a signal. It allows consumers to quickly recognise a product as one they are familiar with or one they like. It acts as a memory cue, allowing consumers to retrieve relevant information from memory. This information may be about past experience of the brand, brand perceptions or brand associations. The information we have stored about brands is crucial in guiding our decisions (Winkielman et al, 2000). Branding has become one of the most important aspects of business strategy. Branding is central to creating customer value, not just images and is also a key tool for creating and maintaining competitive advantage (Holt, 2015). Branding is the process of creating a relationship or a connection between a company's product and emotional perception of the customer for the purpose of generating segregation among competition and building loyalty among customers (Hislop, 2001). Brand management is the integral part of holistic marketing (Kotler et al, 2013). It is, in our opinion, a specific area of marketing, which uses special techniques in order to increase the perceived value of a brand. Branding and brand-based differentiation are powerful means for creating and sustaining competitive advantage. According to Aggarwal (2004) prior research has examined differences in how consumers perceive and evaluate brands, for example, through investigating brand equity, brand personality and brand extensions. More recently, researchers have noted that consumers differ not only in how they perceive brands but also in how they relate to brands. This line of research has suggested that people sometimes form relationships with brands in much the same way in which they form relationships with each other in a social context (Aggarwal, 2004). Branding has become one of the most important aspects of business strategy. Branding is central to creating customer value, not just images and is also a key tool for creating and maintaining competitive advantage (Holt, 2015). Activities within brand management enable to build loyal customers through positive associations and images or a strong awareness of the brand. Brand image is the key driver of brand equity, which refers to consumer's general perception and feeling about a brand and has an influence on consumer behavior.

Brand Related Concepts

Brand Equity

"Brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and / or to that firm's customers.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty shows customer preferences to purchase a particular brand; customers believe that the brand offers the enjoyable features, images, or standard of quality at the right price. This belief and faith of the customer becomes a base for new buying habits. Initially customers will purchase a brand for trial, after being satisfied, customers will keep on buying the product from the certain brand. Brand loyalty represents an encouraging approach towards a brand resulting in regular purchase of the brand over time.

"The brand loyalty of the customer base is often the core of brand equity. If customers are indifferent to the brand and, in fact buy with respect to features, price and convince with little concern to the brand name there is likely little equity. If on the other hand, they continue to purchase the brand even in the face of competitors with superior features; price, and convenience; substantial value exists in the brand and perhaps in its symbol and slogan." (Aaker, 1991, p 39). There are many attributes in the car which helps them creating loyal customer base and even can influence the customers group in such a way that they are using the same brand for generations.

Name Awareness

This is the second category of the brand equity. Brand name awareness plays vital role in consumer decision making process; if customer had already heard the brand name, the customer would feel more comfortable at the time of making decision. Customers normally do not prefer to buy an unknown brand, especially if it an expensive product like motor car, TV, refrigerator, apartment etc. Therefore companies' strong brand name is a winning track as customers choose their brand over unknown brand.

Perceived Quality

It is an essential characteristic for every brand; perceived quality defines a customer's perception and the product's quality or superiority. The perceived quality provides fundamental reason to purchase. It also influences brand integration and exclusion to consideration set before final selection. A perceived quality provides greater beneficial opportunity of charging a premium price. The premium raises profit and gives a resource to reinvest in the brand. Perceived quality will enable a strong brand to extend further and will get a greater success possibility than a weak brand.



Logos and Symbols

Logos and symbols have a long history which shows brand identification of the company. There are different types of logos, which are unique from corporate names or trademarks. Logos and symbol are easy way to recognize a product. It is a greater success if symbol and logos became a linked in memory to corresponding brand name and product to increase brand recall. Customers may perhaps identify definite symbols but be unable to link them any particular brand or product (Keller). Logos helps companies to develop the brand equity through raised brand identification and brand loyalty. Logos are very important assets, companies spend enormous time and money to promote brand logos and symbols.

Logos and symbol are successful way to get a better place in customer mind. If customers find something that is easily identifiable preferably in a positive way, customers feel more comfortable with them. If there is not much difference among brands, then logos and symbols can be a very effective way of differentiating the brands from each other.

Complex Buying Behaviour

Complex behaviour can be defined when consumers are highly involved for making a purchase decision. Complex buying behaviour calls for high level of involvement on the part of the consumer. In case of high involvement, consumers distinguish salient differences among the competing brands. Consumers' are highly involved in case of expensive and highly self expressive products. The consumer engages in extensive information to search and to learn about product category so as to be able a good purchase decision. For example, when a consumer decides to buy a car, he seeks information about the available brands and compares his collected information about each brand and finally makes up his mind (Kotler, 2007).

Dissonance reducing buying behaviour

In case of dissonance reducing buying behaviour the level of consumer involvement is also high. Consumers typically undergo dissonance reducing buying behaviour in case of costly and infrequent purchase. In this type of consumer behaviour the consumers find it difficult to differentiate among the brands. For example, consumer buying carpet may come across of dissonance reducing buying behaviour, as carpets are usually expensive and self-expressive. In case of carpets, consumers may deem most of the available carpet brands in the market within a certain price range to be of the same quality. Consumers may respond primarily to a relatively better price. After the purchase consumer might experience post purchase dissonance (after sales discomfort) (Kotler, 2007).

Consumer Decision making

The consumer decision making process defines different steps when a consumer goes through to purchase a product. If customer wants to make a purchase he or she takes a sequence of steps in order to do complete this purchase. Problem recognition includes when consumer feel a significant difference between the current state and ideal so consumer thinks there is some problem to be solved. The problem may be small or big. In the second step, the consumer seeks information about the product. The extent of information search relies on the level of consumer involvement. In case of expensive products, the level of involvement is high. Conversely, in case of relatively cheap products the level of involvement is usually low. In the third step, the consumer evaluates the different attributes of the brands. Consumer may consider the product attributes and compare brand products. In the final step consumer makes his choice about a product.

It's true that a consumer may not necessarily go through all the decision making steps for every purchase he or she makes. At times, consumer makes his or her decision automatically and the decision may be based on heuristics or mental shortcuts. Other times, in case of high involvement products consumer may take a long time before reaching a final purchase decision. It depends on consumers' importance of the products like purchase of a car or home. More over consumers try to make an estimated brand universe on the basis of available information about the brands, and to make an estimated the utility function on the basis of past consumption experience (Solomon, 2006).

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to create a deeper consideration about the influence of brand. Brand offers superior quality of the service up to the customer's expectation and satisfaction. Furthermore, people are much attached to the branded products, as majority of the people purchase the branded products with the belief that brands show their status and life style in the society. Due to the current global conditions, the marketplace is becoming a place of a super-saturation of products resulting in brand loyalty disappearance. These conditions can be avoided when companies create loyalty



relationships with their customers. Therefore it is necessary that the value proposition of the offered brands meet consumers' values and desires.

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