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BRAND POSITIONING IN THE COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

In this article, we have shown the place occupied by a brand on the competitive market according to image and packaging. Attributes are the functional and mental connections, and the benefits are the reasoning of the purchase decision.

Keywords: brand, image, positioning

1. Introduction

According to Kahle, due to increasing market growth, consumers have to choose between a variety of alternatives, similar in price and in properties. Thus, the brand is associated with the notion of image, which makes a positive brand relevant and easy to remember by people (Aaker, 1997). Brand image is a key factor, which refers to the general perception of the consumers and their feelings as a whole, which subsequently results in influencing consumer behaviour. For specialists, regardless of the marketing strategies of the companies, the main purpose of their activities is to influence perception and attitude, to create a favourable image and to stimulate effective purchasing behaviour, the brand, thus increasing sales, maximizing market share and ultimately developing the concept of value.

Although consumer decision is generally influenced by the characteristics and attributes of the brand, it is determined by consumers' perception in a deeper sense. Despite the change in consumer lifestyles and the way information is being processed, the image of the brand remains the dominant impact factor.

Brand image not only evokes an emotional value but also a mental picture, which is perceived as the character of an organization, an accumulation of data that highlights the mission and vision of the entity in question. The main elements of a brand's positive image are: the unique *logo* that reflects the image of the organization, the *slogan* describing the purpose of the organization in brief, and the brand identifier that supports key values.

The idea behind the image suggests the consumer's intention to buy not only the product, but also the associated image. The images must be positive, unique and instantaneous using a variety of techniques, such as: advertising, attractive packaging, other promotional tools, etc.

A unique image develops and conveys the character of the product in a different way from the alternative offered by its competitors. Brand image is made up of various associations in the minds of consumers - benefits and attributes. Attributes are the functional and mental connections of the consumers reported to the brand, and they may be specific or conceptual. The benefits are represented by the reasoning of the purchase decision. There are three types of benefits: functional benefits, emotional benefits and rational benefits.

Brand image does not need to be created, it is automatically created. This includes product appeal, ease of use, functionality, fame and value. When consumers buy the product, they also buy its image. Image is the objective and mental feedback of consumers.

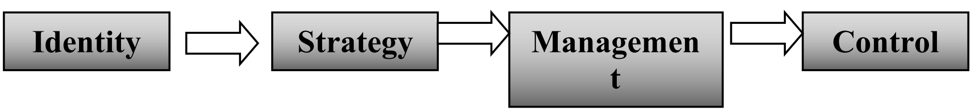
Drezner (2002) emphasized the tendency of people not to react to the reality offered, but rather to the reality they perceive. Thus, brand image is assimilated as a set of associations that consumers receive in a given period as a result of their contiguity with the brand, either directly or indirectly.

Therefore, the carefully outlined image is the general impression of brand positioning in the context of competition with other brands in the same category - how strong the position that remains in the minds of consumers is.

2. Brand management

The concept of brand management is important for both companies and consumers, but for complementary reasons. According to Kotler (2000, p. 408), businesses use brands because they facilitate the processing and tracking of orders, they provide legal protection to the characteristics of a single product, facilitate expansion, and target various markets, leading to a global approach, and subsequently to the emergence of high profits.

On the other hand, as far as strategic management is concerned, it can be defined as the process of management oriented towards capital growth and the achievement of brand synergies in order to reach a predetermined set of organizational goals, among which, strengthening the image and reputation of the company by shaping a brand personality.



Thus, capital accumulation is marked by the moment when the goals listed above are being met successfully, and consumers start to perceive brands as a reflection of the self (Malar et al., 2011). The capital is associated with the notion of commercial and financial value for the company, resulting from consumer awareness, loyalty, quality perception and other associations (Aaker, 1991, p. 17; Ferrell & Hartline, 2005, p. 177).

Brand management is therefore the assembling of various marketing environments into a whole, in order to provide an identity. It is nothing but capturing attention by offering an image of an experienced and reliable business.

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Brand management is therefore the assembling of various marketing environments into a whole, in order to provide an identity. It is nothing but capturing attention by offering an image of an experienced and reliable business. The reason for using brand management is relatively simple. By creating a long-lasting impression and a meaningful relationship with users, organizations can keep customers and stimulate a sense of loyalty.

Loyal customers are cheaper, and happy customers are more likely to talk about the company in a positive light. As a result, brand construction is a key to success in an enormous number of industries. There are many approaches to this, both traditional and modern, and the understanding of both the strategy and the possible tactical channels available is essential for decision-making in the development of a smart brand, namely:

Individual Branding - This strategy has proven to be extremely beneficial to a large number of organizations offering a wide range of goods, preventing the likelihood of the parent company being affected by an individual brand and allowing a sense of competition between brands. It also allows companies to simultaneously capture a variety of demographics by placing each brand in large groups of consumers.

Multi-branding - in some ways, multi-product branding allows companies like Samsung, Apple, Sony and Virgin focus consumer loyalty on the main brand. This creates efficiency in promoting the brand, but also assigns the risk to a single name.

Sub-branding - This tactic allows an organization to create relatively larger sub-brands for certain product groups. A good example is Honda and Acura, one is located in a higher price category, but both belong to the company Honda.

Co-branding - As the name suggests, companies often collaborate on projects. This allows each organization to benefit from loyal consumer bases.

Iconic Branding - The iconic branding involves the building of a character, which then has the role of establishing a counter-culture, respectively a community. The Nike brand is iconic by promoting the “Just Do It” mentality, offering a perspective alongside their products. This type of branding is complex and extremely difficult to achieve, but can form a strong and loyal base.

So displaying basic values has become easier and more difficult at all times than ever. Just by a click, organizations can make a huge impression on the general public.

However, the digital landscape is noisy, and the process of making yourself heard can be extremely challenging.

3. Conclusion

In researching consumer behaviour, considerable attention has been paid to the *built brand personality*, which refers to the set of human characteristics associated with a particular brand. The researchers discussed how the brand's personality allows the consumer to express his or her own self (Belk 1988), an ideal self (Malhotra 1988) or specific dimensions of the self (Kleine, Kleine and Kernan 1993) by using a brand.

Although the personality traits of humans and of brands could have a similar conceptualization (Epstein 1977), they differ in how they are formed. Perceptions of human personality traits are deduced from physical behaviour, physical characteristics, individual attitudes and beliefs, and demographic characteristics (Park 1986). Instead, the perceptions of the personality traits of the brand can be shaped and influenced by any direct or indirect contact that the consumer has with that brand (Plummer 1985).

Apart from authenticity, it can also be defined as "*the degree of confidence in the exchange of partner's reliability and integrity*" (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), notably in brand management descriptions (Aaker, 1996, Keller, 2003 Haugtvedt et al., 2008).

On the other hand, the notion of engagement is a valuable interaction between the customer and the brand and it is frequently used as a measurement system. According to Keller (2001), *brand commitment* is one of the key components of its customer-driven capital model, a model that suggests that managers can take the necessary steps to create brand capital by making relevant connections to customer preferences. The end result is marked by the emergence of intense and practical relationships that stimulate commitment by the willingness to talk about the brand, to learn more about it, and to promote it through the word of mouth (Goldsmith, 2011).

In other words, commitment aims to connect points between the employees involved, customers and profitability, in order to create a loyal platform that adds value to the brand in question. Known for combining two essential concepts, namely, loyalty and marketing, commitment presupposes emotional involvement, so knowing the brand is not enough.

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