Chapter 17
Emotional Branding and Social Media:
Positive and Negative Emotional Appeals

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ABSTRACT

Emotional branding is increasingly being used by marketers to win customers for their products or services. And, social media has become a growing and popular forum where marketers use emotional branding. This paper/chapter explores the concept of emotional branding and the role of emotional branding in marketing contexts such as in social media. Positive and negative emotions are explored with practical examples of advertisements that use emotional appeals. The paper provides a literature review on emotions and emotional branding and offers theoretical perspectives on the emotional branding concept. The paper also provides a brief discussion on the theoretical and practical implications of emotional branding in the realm of marketing.

INTRODUCTION

In the current competitive marketplace, it is important for businesses to capture the attention of potential customers. But, how can businesses successfully gain the attention of customers and make them buy goods and services? Creativity and the generation of new ideas are essential in helping businesses to successfully compete and acquire new customers. As the business landscape evolves, marketers are generating new ideas and helping businesses find creative ways to successfully compete by highlighting the *emotional* aspect of products or services. The highlighting of this emotional aspect falls under a concept known as emotional branding, which has been conceptualized as the successful attachment of a specific emotion to a brand (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012).

Emotional branding is about a brand's engagement with consumers on the level of senses and emotions; how a brand comes to life for people and forges a deeper, lasting connection (Gobe, 2009). Marketers can use emotional connections to develop a sense of loyalty and passion among consumers towards a brand (Gobe, 2009). This loyalty and passion can help brands to compete successfully in the marketplace. Researchers have argued that emotional branding usually appeals to consumers not through rational arguments related to the positives and negatives of using a product or service (Gobe, 2009). However, it appeals to consumers through the use of storytelling, narratives, and other tactics that demonstrate an empathetic understanding of customers' inspirations, aspirations, and life circumstances (Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006).

Research has suggested the importance of branding that takes into account people's emotions or feelings (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). From the mid- 2000s on, influential brand consultants, researchers, and writers such as Kevin Roberts and Marc Gobé began educating marketers on the fact that brand aware-ness and loyalty are not enough and managers now need to seek emotional commitment and create brand love among customers (Koiznets, 2014). Therefore, this chapter seeks to further develop and understand the role and usage of emotional branding in the marketing context. The objectives of this chapter are:

1.   To gain an understanding of emotional branding in the realm of social media marketing.
2.   To explore the usage of positive and negative emotions by marketers through practical examples.
3.   To provide theoretical and practical implications on the usage and role of emotional branding.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section of the paper provides a literature review on emotional branding, emotions, and emotional branding and social media. The next section offers practical and theoretical implications, followed by a section that provides concluding thoughts on emotional branding appeals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a literature review and discussion on emotions, emotional branding, and emotional branding and social media. It also explores the positive and negative emotions that marketers often use to appeal to consumers. In addition, the section provides practical examples of advertisements that use these positive and negative emotions.

Emotional Branding

Emotional branding is defined as the consumer's attachment of strong, specific, usage-relevant emotions such as love, hate or fear towards a brand (Roberts, 2004; Rossiter & Bellman, 2012). It suggests that customers form a strong bond with brands, which are meaningful to them, captivate them, and compel-lingly enrich their lives (Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009). The emotional branding appeal generally involves the generation of warm feelings among customers for the brand. Emotional branding is based on the idea that beyond a product's functional benefits, people wish to buy an emotional experience (Peterson, 2006). Beyond promoting and building awareness and loyalty for the brand, emotional branding is about the creation of brand love among consumers. Emotional branding is based on emotions, which are an affective state of consciousness distinguished from cognitive and volitional states of consciousness

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