

Chapter 28

Building Emotional Brand Personalities: Anthropomorphized Brands

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ABSTRACT

Brands are one of the most important assets for companies since they serve as a differentiator. They have personalities like people, which makes them reach consumers emotionally. Therefore, in their efforts put in branding, firms began to give more importance to developing a brand personality. The personification of brands is a form of anthropomorphism. There are various ways to build an anthropomorphic brand. Brand personality models are based on human personality theories in psychology. These models help managers to build a strong and anthropomorphic brand. In this chapter, the authors make a comprehensive explanation regarding the brand personality with benefits, brand personality models, and anthropomorphism and explain the relationship between anthropomorphic brands and marketing communication by presenting some examples.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior is changing continuously with the living conditions and culture of age in which the consumer is included as an individual. The fast lives of consumers, especially those living in big cities, shorten their knowledge processing time and often require quick decisions. For example, the Internet initiated completely new promotional practices that helped consumers reach their everyday lives more easily (such as advergaming, social media marketing, convergence, etc.), as well as ensuring the addition of innovations to channels of commitment in the past decade. Besides, the strong influence of globalization on the approaching attitudes of firms operating in international markets is clearly observed, but the necessity of the messages to exceed the boundaries for these firms to provide permanent and strong brand

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9282-2.ch028

image to the different cultures continues. Creating communication messages that can express meaning close to all consumers and help them to reach them effectively becomes an increasingly discussed issue.

Looking at the developments in the market, it is observed that the quality differences between the products have decreased, and the competition in the market has become difficult; however, there is an increasing number of competing products due to globalization. This situation causes consumers to have difficulty in making purchasing decisions (Can, 2007, p. 225). Therefore, by means of the efforts put in branding, firms began to give more importance to developing a brand personality that can transmit emotional mean which is consistent with company's products, which plays an important role in distinguishing the brand from other brands. The concept of brand personality is based on the assumption that brands have the same personalities as people. This is the reason why creating a brand personality, which is one of the important instruments of marketing strategies, has a more important role for today's companies than ever does before.

This chapter aims at highlighting the most important aspects of brand personality and includes two main parts. Firstly, the researcher answers the questions of what the concept of brand personality is, why it is important, and how to develop it. In the following section, the concept of anthropomorphism, which signifies personalization of inanimate objects, and examples of successful anthropomorphic brand applications are presented by answering the question of which tools to use when developing anthropomorphic brands.

BRAND PERSONALITY

To communicate with customers, all trade companies need a tangible entity. Companies have to display their uniqueness, particularly in the world of signs. Companies which can make successful branding have an advantage in the markets. Contrary to ordinary products, brands have the ability to be visible and meaningful for consumers. Moreover, they can emotionally connect to customers. Since companies want to reach consumers, branding has become one of the most important issues over the years. This is the reason most of the marketing efforts are made towards branding today.

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as "A name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers." However, brands are more than a name or sign for consumers and companies. They serve as risk reducers, a reminder of the personality of a company, and a legal protector for intellectual capital and value creator (Blythe, 2005, p. 153). Building a brand is not an easy job, and it takes a long time. In building a strong brand, there are some steps that brand manager can follow. Branding starts with the quality of product/service, follows with finding a brand name, developing a brand image, brand identity, and brand personality, and finalizes with creating brand equity with all these elements. Subsequently, all the other elements affect the brand personality, which makes it the most important part of branding efforts. Brand personality concept entails assessing the brands as they are considered to possess some human characteristics. Today, a brand alone is not enough to be a functional product/service. Thus, it has more duties such as reflecting the personality of the consumer. Consumers often look for their soulmates in the world of brands. That is, brands cannot live long if they do not have a personality in competitive markets.

Choosing a brand name is the first step in establishing a brand personality and brand value. Brand name not only defines the product, but it also contains rich content of meanings and symbols that the product represents. Meanwhile, brand identity represents the whole of the characteristics used to determine

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