Chapter 44

Influence of Marketing Mix Decisions on Emotional Branding and Its Effect on Customer Appeal

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ABSTRACT

Emotional branding has become a necessity for most brands today. Brand loyalty can be developed by brands only when there is an emotional connection between the brand and its consumers. This chapter deals with the nuances and meaning of emotional branding and how it appeals to consumers. There is also a lot of discussion on how the elements of the marketing mix (4Ps) help the brands to attract and retain consumer loyalty over a long period of time. Marketing mix decisions are part of the overall marketing strategy of the firm as well as the brand, and more often than not - considerable changes have to be made in order to establish an emotional connection with the consumers. Research shows that today's consumers are more experience-oriented and hence, a positive experience motivates the customer towards repeat purchase and ultimately brand loyalty. The marketing mix should then be geared to provide a great product/service/brand experience to its consumers.

INTRODUCTION

What Is a Brand?

According to BusinessDictionary.com, a brand is a "unique design, sign, symbol, words, or a combination of these, employed in creating an image that identifies a product and differentiates it from its competitors. Over time, this image becomes associated with a level of credibility, quality, and satisfaction in the consumer's mind. Thus brands help harried consumers in crowded and complex marketplace. Legal name for a brand is trademark and, when it identifies or represents a firm, it is called a brand name."

A brand can be thought of as a mixture of tangible and intangible attributes, symbolized in a trademark, which if properly managed, creates preference and generates value. It is also a collection of images, thoughts and feelings in a person's mind. A brand is a two-way pact where in return for the customer's preference and loyalty, a shortcut to the best purchase decision is offered. All brands offer functional as well as non-functional benefits. Functional benefits are physical, tangible, and real – like: color, flavor, shape, size, and price. Non-functional benefits are emotional/sensory, intangible, and perceived – like: gentle, caring, sexy, glamorous, macho. The emotional and self-expressive benefits are most meaningful and most difficult to imitate, but hardest to deliver.

Why a Brand?

The ultimate aim of any brand is to generate loyalty, and this is mostly driven by reason and logic. The traditional marketing believes that the brand has to give the consumers a reason to buy. However, in this age of me-too products, this may not be sufficient. Reason and rationale is in the functional benefit area which does not give the brand a good enough POD (Point Of Difference). Reason generates respect and most brands are operating in this domain. In order to really become a part of the consumers' life, one needs to generate love for the brand – and that is something which goes beyond reason. A brand starts off being an unknown entity, and then reaches a point when it is known for something good. However, one has to go beyond this state and identify with the consumer such that it is known for something that the consumer cares about. In the journey from the unknown product to a well-recognized brand, the product earns a lot of respect. Most brands become stuck here – they offer functional benefits, and it stops there. Consumers need them but do not crave or love them. The goal is to establish an emotional connect with the target consumer. This creates real impactful value and the consumer pays back with loyalty and love. In between, there are 'fads', which are high on love and low on respect. However, they are not remembered and do not have a long life span.

Respect is about superior performance, earning the trust of consumers, and building a reputation; while love is about creating a mystery, and a feeling of sensuality and intimacy. Superior performance is demonstrated by innovation, quality, and service. It creates its own identity and delivers value to the consumers. Trust is obtained through reliability, sustainability, ease, openness, and security. Reputation is built through leadership, honesty, responsibility, and efficacy. Mystery is created through great stories, by tapping into the dreams of the target segment, creating myths and icons which are the source of inspiration to the consumers. Sensuality is about sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. Intimacy is created through commitment, passion, and empathy. Brand loyalty is built on the respect and love of the customer. This phenomenon is beyond reason. It is very clear that when it comes to driving customer appeal and developing brand loyalty, the heart rules over the mind. As Jeff Bezos (Founder, Amazon) puts it: "Your brand is what people say about you, when you are not there" (Gattiker, 2008).

History of Origin of Brand

The word, *brand*, derives from Dutch *brand* meaning "to burn", recalling the practice of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) burning their mark (or brand) onto their products (Brandmerk) (Rijksmuseum – Het museum van Nederland - te Amsterdam, n.d.). The oldest generic brand, in continuous use in India

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