

Brand Identity and Brand Image

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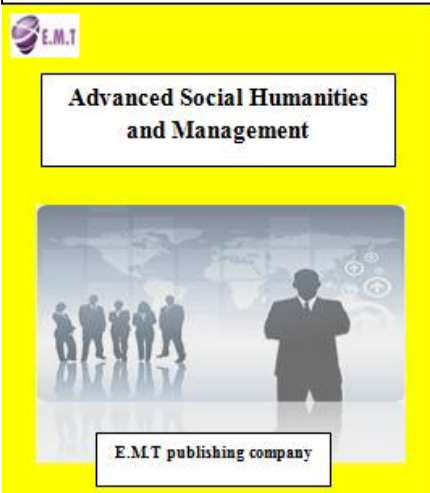
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Abstract

Considering the increased competition in today's society it is important that companies' brand managements create differentiation in their communication to consumers, making them stand out of the competition. Apart from differentiation, companies also need to manage the brand communication and make sure that the intended messages reach the chosen target group. If brands fail to achieve this, companies can gain the same problems explained in the introduction when inconsistencies in the communication between the Brand identity and Brand image have arisen. the aim of this article are to investigate relationship between brand identity and brand Image based on review of past research.

Keywords : Marketing , Brand , Brand Identity , Brand Image

Introduction

A recognizable brand name could be one of the most valuable assets of an organization, as it can lead to higher sales. If consumers have positive associations or feelings about a certain brand, then they will typically be more likely to buy products in that range than generic products or products from other brands. This is often because the consumers trust the company: they know the quality is good (Aaker, 1996). But what makes a winning brand name? Brands are able to differentiate an organization from competitors. If comparable products are offered to a customer the brand name is usually able to distinguish one product from another. When people see a brand they could have associations with it. The brand will be successful if these associations are a reflection of what the brand stands for. If an organization that claims to be innovative sells old-fashion products, the customers notice the incongruence. Customers are watching to see if their brand experience matches up with the organization's brand identity. If these two don't align, the brand identity is likely to get lost in the confusion (Srivastava & Thomas, 2010). This indicates that a potential gap could arise between how a brand intends to be viewed by target customers and how it is actually perceived. It is important for organizations to ensure compatibility between the projected brand identity, and how this is received, in order to attract consumers.

Competition with other brands can be reduced by building a strong differentiated brand identity (Zaichkowsky, 2010). Important for building a brand identity is the vision of brand managers. They should determine what they want their brand to represent and then use the appropriate identity elements to build the brand (Zaichkowsky, 2010). Brand identity is the outward expression of a brand. Since brand identity is developed by the branded organization, it reflects how the organization wants the consumer to perceive the brand. Brand identity is based on a thorough understanding of the organization's customers, competitors, and business environment. A successful brand identity can be achieved by realizing what the brand stands for and effectively expressing that identity (Ghodeswar, 2008).

Brand identity is not the same as brand image. Brand image is a consumer's mental picture of a brand (Neumeier, 2004). The brand identity reflects the company's perspective and the brand image reflects the customer's perspective. Brand image is the set of brand associations in the mind of a consumer (Aaker, 2004). The brand image is created by marketing communications, but ultimately by the sum of all consumer's experiences in relationship with the brand.

Brand

Brand means a specific product, service, or business identity. 'Brand love', or love of a brand, is an emerging term encompassing the perceived value of the brand image (Keller, 2003). A name, term, sign, symbol, design, a good or service which are identifying the sellers to distinguish them from their competitors. Watkins (2006), Aaker (1991), Doyle (1994) and Kotler et al. (1996) adopt this definition. In order to achieve goals of product and brand management, it is important to build a strong brand. Strong brands will result in higher profit stream, either in long term or short term (Aaker et al., 1991). Pearson (2005) explains a brand is constructed by features, customer benefits and values. A brand is invented when the marketing is adding value to a certain product within the process to distinguish the similar features and benefits from the other products.

Brand identity

According to Janonis et al. (2007), Brand identity includes everything that makes the brand meaningful and unique. De Chernatony and Harris (2001) suggest that Brand identity includes values, aim and moral image that together constitute the essence of individuality that differentiate the brand. Brand identity offers a possibility to position a brand and encourages strategic approach while managing it (De Chernatony & Harris, 2001). Kapferer (2008) suggests that Brand identity involves many dimensions and any communication from the brand; whether it is formal or informal, verbal or non-verbal, should be sync with its Brand identity. Sääksjärvi and Samiee (2011) propose another definition of Brand identity, describing it as a unique set of brand associations that firms aim to create or maintain. According to the researchers, Brand identity represents how companies aspire to be perceived. They also suggest that the purpose of Brand identity is to establish a relationship between the brand and the customer (Sääksjärvi & Samiee, 2011).

According to Kapferer, the brand identity prism is a good tool for analysing brands. It gives a description of how the brand owner wants the target group to perceive the brand identity. (Apéria, T., Back, R. 2004)

The brand identity prism consists of physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image. These concepts together define the brand identity that can be communicated to consumers. (Kapferer, J-N. 2004)

Physique : The physique consists of the salient objectives, which are the features that immediately come to mind when thinking about a brand. Furthermore it is the brand's strength of character and its intangible outer value. Relevant questions when defining the physical facet are what is it concretely? What does it do? What does it look like? For Volvo it is the security that represents the physical facet. (Kapferer, J-N. 2004)

Personality : This is a way in which the company is communicating its products. It describes what kind of a person the brand would be if it were human and its characteristics. A spokesperson can easily form a brand's personality. An example of brand personality could be a famous athlete or a fiction, like the Marlboro Man. (ibid)

Culture : Culture is a set of values that are the brand's inspiration. It is the source of a brand's core values. Culture links the brand to the firm and plays an essential role in differentiating the brand. A question which can be asked is; what are the values for which the brand stands for? An example of culture are banks, such as American express gold card which symbolizes dynamic, triumph and capitalism where money is shown and flashed about. (ibid)

Relationship : Every brand has to maintain a good relationship with their customer, which marketing measurements are intended to do. A question to be asked is; how does the brand want to be seen by customers in marketing communication? Dior symbolizes a relationship that is extravagant and grandiose, with a desire to shine like gold. (ibid)

Reflection : It is a description of the way customers wishes to be seen as a result of using a brand. This reflection becomes identification. The company needs to answer the question; what would the

users imagine while using the product? The reflection is the idealized vision of the company's target group and is its outward reflection. For example Coca-cola that has a wider clientele than the narrow segment it reflects. This is because the younger segment identifies Coca-cola as a dream and the older as a way of living. They segment their target group based on customers' lifestyles rather than age. (ibid)

Self-image : Self-image is the target's internal reflection. It is individuals' attitudes towards certain brands and by purchasing certain brands customers send out a picture of who they want to be. (ibid)

Brand Image

Akaah, (1988) conclude that consumers are more likely to purchase well-known brand products with positive brand image as a way to lower purchase risks. This argument is also supported by Rao and Monroe, (1988) that a brand with a more positive image does have the effect of lowering consumers' product perception risks and increasing positive feedback from consumers. Therefore, consumers generally believe they can make a satisfying purchase by choosing well-known brands and also lower any purchase risks by doing so. How much is a brand worth? How does a brand represent the product? Keller, (1993) defines a brand image as an association or perception consumers make based on their memory toward a product. Thus, brand image does not exist in the technology, features or the actual product itself, but is something brought out by promotions, advertisements, or users.

Thakor et al. (1997) said that through brand image, consumers are able to recognize a product, evaluate the quality, lower purchase risks, and obtain certain experience and satisfaction out of product differentiation. When it comes to experiential product evaluation, a positive brand image may make up for an inferior image of the origin country and raise the possibility of the product being selected. According to Grewal et al. (1998) the better a brand image is, the more recognition consumers give to its product quality. Consumers are usually limited in regards to the amount of time and product knowledge to make an informed purchase decision when facing similar products to choose from. As a result, brand image is often used as an extrinsic cue to make a purchase decision.

Kotler, (2000) contends that brand is a name, term, symbol, design or all the above, and is used to distinguish one's products and services from competitors. For example, Nike adopts a check mark as its brand image, which creates a positive effect indicating approval. According to Kotler, (2000) image is the way that public perceives the company or its product. Image is affected by many factors beyond the company's control. The consumer develops a set of brand beliefs about where each brand stands on each attribute. The set of or its product. Image is affected by many factors beyond the company's control. The consumer develops a set of brand beliefs about where each brand stands on each attribute. The set of beliefs about a brand make up brand image. The consumer's brand image will vary with his or her experiences as filtered by the effects of selective perception, selective distortion and selective retention.

Romaniuk, (2003) studied the relationship between association of a brand with different types of image attributes and subsequent purchase of the brand. The image attributes incorporated were based on the product categories, situations and benefits offered. While mention of the brand for an image attribute was positively related to future purchase, this relationship did not vary between attributes once brand and attribute size was taken into account. However, a positive relationship was found between the number of attributes associated with the brand and future purchase.

Brand identity and Brand Image

The Brand identity is passed on to stakeholders that reflect and interpret the identity as a presentation (De Chernatony, 1999). As previously stated in the introduction, Brand image is presented as the consumer's perception of the brand.

Brand identity is placed on the company's side and includes everything that makes a brand meaningful and unique. It represents how a company wants their brand to be perceived by others.

The brand identity is the internal desired image that the company wants to communicate to the target group. Brand identity specifies the frames of a brand's uniqueness and value. In the process of positioning the brand, marketers build those associations to express a particular message. But while a brand communicates its identity,

what is perceived by consumers is its image. Identity resides with the sender (Kapferer, 2008) who is responsible for specifying the meaning, aim and self-image of the brand and should be based on the core competences of the company, flowing directly from their superior skills and resources (Alsem and Kosteljik, 2008).

Conversely, image is regarded as a reflection of consumer's perceptions of a brand and can be gauged by the associations held in the memory (de Chernatony and McDonald, 1998; Keller, 2008). Brand image is based on consumer's attitude towards the interpretation of brand image and brand value. A customer experiences more than he understands, but it is experiences, not understanding, that influences his behavior (Aaker, 2002).

Brand image reflects consumers' perceptions of a brand's characteristics and can be determined by their associations. The image refers to the way in which consumers' interpret all of the signals coming from the products, services and communication covered by the brand. In an ideal situation, brand image should convey the product's distinctive benefits and positioning (Aaker, 2002).

Scientific literature presents different models including the concepts of brand identity and brand image.

It can be concluded that most models of brand identity agree that brand identity has to be transferred to consumers, where brand image is the final result. The brand image is a result of the way a brand identity is positioned (Janonis, Dovaliene & Virvilaite, 2007), and is therefore describable by the same facets as the developed brand identity.

Conclusion

Brand identity is placed on the company's side and includes everything that makes a brand meaningful and unique. It represents how a company wants their brand to be perceived by others. The brand identity is the internal desired image that the company wants to communicate to the target group. Brand identity specifies the frames of a brand's uniqueness and value. In the process of positioning the brand, marketers build those associations to express a particular message. But while a brand communicates its identity, what is perceived by consumers is its image. If brands fail to achieve this, companies can gain the same problems explained in the introduction when inconsistencies in the communication between the Brand identity and Brand image have arisen. In this research we defined Brand Identity and Brand Image and the relationship between them.

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