



A General Study on Can Everything be Branded?

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ABSTRACT

Having a recognized brand is critical to your business success because customers buy products or services they know and trust. Confidence is earned through positive customer interactions and experience with your brand. Creating favorable impressions will result in potential customers considering your brand at time of purchase. No matter what your product or service is, it can be branded by creating the right brand expectations in the minds of your target customers. Brand identity will be established through an ongoing effort to enhance your offerings and customer experiences while sharing a consistent, compelling message of product benefits. The more you are able to differentiate your brand the more customers will understand your unique selling proposition and gravitate to your brand. Beyond things, brand is also everywhere. What will be important is that, as a brand, you can be everywhere that your customers are and expect you to be.” “Ultimately, brand is about caring about your business at every level and in every detail, from the big things like mission and vision, to your people, your customers, and every interaction anyone is ever going to have with you, no matter how small.”

Keywords-- Favourable, Impressions, Compelling, Brand Identity

some consumers value enough to buy. At the operational level the function of the brand is to convey the identity of the brand, that it embodies a specific set of unique features, benefits, and services to the consumers.

Each brand represents a level of quality. Irrespective of the fact which brand is purchased certain degree of level of quality can be expected of the brand. A brand is much more complex. Apart from the attributes and benefits, it also reflects the following.

➤ **Values:** The values which govern a producer are reflected by the brand. Thus Tata stands for quality, fair price and so on.

➤ **Culture:** A brand represents certain culture, e.g., Coke is an icon of American culture, while Shilpa Bindis are typically India.

➤ **Personality:** A brand projects personality. Had the brand been an animal or an object or a person, what would come to our mind? MRF suggests a muscle man, Rin suggests a lighting flash.

➤ **User:** The brand suggests its own target audience. We expect a Mercedes to be driven by an executive or a top-class businessman. These users correspond to the values, culture and personality of the brand. Because of the imagery associated with the brands, they actually have the power to enhance or limit a consumer's perception of self-image.

I. BRAND DEFINED

According to the American Marketing Association, a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from competitors.

A product becomes a brand when some dimensions are added to it to differentiate the product in some way from other similar products. The dimensions can be rational, functional, and or tangible or they can be emotional, symbolic, and/or intangible. In the former case, the dimensions can be related to the performance of the brand and in the latter case, related to what the brand represents. Thus a brand can also be defined as a product that provides functional benefits plus added values that

II. CONCEPT OF A BRAND

Producers sold goods or commodities to fulfill our core or basic needs like thirst, hunger or energy. These products did not have any identification mark of them. Therefore, historically most products were unbranded. The company enhances the value of the commodity functionality. Branding is an important aspect of marketing that creates an identity for the product and the organization. The challenge that can be faced by the marketers in branding as follows.

➤ **Whether to brand or not:** The question is whether to sell a product as a commodity or to brand it? A brand once created has to be very cautious about its quality

and the consumer's experience with it, as any negative issue can be determined for the brand. A commodity on the other hand, will not die quickly even if there is accident or crisis. If the situation demands it, an organization can even change the name of the commodity and sustain in the market. Although the initial stages of the branding may be difficult, an established brand creates a lot of opportunities for organizational success and results in increased earnings for the company.

➤ **How to build brand equity:** Just building a brand is not sufficient. The idea is to build a brand equity that translates into profits and earnings for the organization. Building a brand that resonates with the customers' expectations and self-belief is important. Brand equity is to be measure from time to time, so that strategies can be guided by the feedback from the market and the customers.

➤ **Understanding customers and how they purchase a brand:** An understanding of the customers' perceptions and attitudes towards a brand is important. It helps marketers decide on their branding and product mix strategies. An understanding of the customers is also imperative, as the marketers have to try and influence this behaviour in such way that it is favourable to their brand.

➤ **How to design brand strategies:** The task of brand manager is not over even after a brand has been established. Managers have to design their brand architecture and the number of brands they need to keep in their portfolio in the different product categories that they intend to cater to. A major task is to choose whether to opt for brand extensions or to own different brands. If a brand manager opt for brand extensions, they can leverage their brand using the existing brand equity of the established brand.

➤ **How to manage brands across geographical boundaries:** The world is a global village, and brand managers need to market their brands across geographical boundaries to remain competitive and enhance profitability. While marketing a brand beyond existing borders, an organization has to consider a number of issues before a branding strategy.

III. HOW TO SELECT A GOOD BRAND NAME

A Good brand name should possess as many of the following characteristics as possible.

➤ **It should be indicative:** A well-chosen name or symbol should be indicative of quality, or may be associated with superiority or a great personality. For example the term VIP Classic for travel-wares is suggestive of a superior quality for a distinct class of people.

➤ **It should be appropriate:** Many products are surrounded by a certain mystique in the minds of

consumers. Carefree is an appropriate brand name of a sanitary towel.

➤ **It should be easy to remember:** It should be easy to read, pronounce and spell, Tide, Surf, Sony are examples of such brand names.

➤ **It should be adaptable to new products:** Hot line was a good name for gas stoves but is definitely not a suitable name for TVs.

➤ **It should be distinctive:** The market is filled with over-worked names and over-used symbols. A unique and distinctive symbol is not only easy to remember but also a distinctive feature. Bata shoes have a distinctive name.

➤ **It should be registrable,** under the Indian Laws of Trade Marks and Copyrights.

Can anything be branded? Should everything be branded?

These are two big classic questions that have haunted every branding expert for ages. The first one is about "possibility" of branding anything; the second one is about "appropriateness" of branding everything around us. To answer these questions from the fundamental ground of branding, we need to focus on defining a brand in the first place. While there are numerous definitions, let us choose the most simple yet the comprehensive one. Branding has necessarily two dimensions that even all debating scholars will agree upon: (i) identification, and (ii) significant differences from others within and outside its native category. Evidently, everything around us, including a banana tree in your backyard that is not branded, has these two characteristics in it. Therefore, anything can be branded. Now it is upon you whether you would promote this as a brand or not.

Here comes the second question. Should everything be branded? Should that banana tree in your backyard be branded? From business point of view, you can brand a banana tree, provided the benefit outweighs the cost. Does that tree have any historical significance for which people will pay to visit your place and see the tree? Does it have any special feature for which it will generate revenue? So everything does not need to be branded. Here is a word of caution: having no branding is like having no face, and having "no face" is a type of identity and differentiation that leads to some sort branding. A brand is what it does. Therefore, even if you do not go for promoting an active brand, whatever you deal with will gradually take over an image synonymous to a "brand". Therefore, even though not everything needs to be branded, it would be wise to see and manage everything by keeping the concept of branding in mind.

What is branded?

- Physical goods
- Services
- Retailers and distributors
- Online products and services
- People and organizations

- Sports, arts, and entertainment
- Geographic locations
- Ideas and causes

Physical Goods

Physical goods are what are traditionally associated with brands and include many of the best known and highly consumer products. Like Coca-Cola, Mercedes-Benz, etc. As more and more different kinds of products are sold or promoted directly to consumers, the adoption of modern marketing practices and branding has spread further.

Services

Although service brands like American Express, British Airways, have existed for years the pervasiveness of service branding and its sophistication have accelerated in the past decade. One of the challenges in marketing services is that they are less tangible than products and more likely to vary in quality, depending on the particular person or people providing them. Branding a service can also be an effective way to signal to consumers that the firm has designed a particular service offering that is special and deserving of its name. For example British Airways not only branded its premium business class service as Club Class but also branded its regular coach service as World Traveler a clever way to communicate to the airlines regular passengers that they are also special in some way and that their patronage is not taken for granted. Branding has clearly become a competitive weapon for services.

Retailers and Distributors

To retailers and other channel members distributing products, brands provide a number of important functions. Brands can generate consumer interest, patronage and loyalty in a store as a consumer learn to expect certain brands and products. Retailers can also create their own image by attaching unique association to the quality of their service, their product assortment and merchandising and their pricing and credit policy. Finally the appeal and attraction of brands whether manufacturer's brands or the retailers own brands can yield higher price margins increased sales volumes and greater profits. Retailers can introduce their own brands by using their store name creating name or some combination of two.

Online Products and Services

The end of the twentieth century saw an unprecedented headlong rush by new and existing business to create online brands. Quickly these businesses learned the complexities and challenges of the task. Many online marketers made serious and sometimes fatal mistakes during this heady time. Some oversimplified the branding process equating flashy or unusual advertising with building a brand. Although such marketing efforts sometimes caught consumer's attention more often than not, they failed to create awareness of what products or services the brand represented, why those products or

services were unique or different, and most important why consumers should buy the brand. The brand needs to perform satisfactorily in other areas such as customer service, credibility and personality. For instance customers increasingly began to demand higher levels of service both during and after their web site visits. As a consequence to be competitive many firms have had to improve their online service by making customer service agents available in real time, shipping products promptly and providing tracking updates and adopting liberal return policies.

People and Organizations

The naming aspect of branding at least is generally straightforward when the product category is people and organisation. These often have well-defined images that are easily understood and liked (or disliked by others). That's particularly true for public figures such as politicians, entertainers, and professional athletes. All these complete in some sense for public approval and acceptance, and all benefit from conveying a strong and desirable image. By building up a name and reputation in a business contact you are essentially creating your own brand. Similarly organizations often take on meanings through their programs, activities and products. Nonprofit organizations such as Amnesty International, UNICEF have increasingly emphasized marketing.

Sports, Arts and Entertainment

A special case of marketing people and organizations as brands exists in the sports, arts and entertainment industries. Sports marketing has become highly sophisticated in recent years. Many sports teams are marketing themselves through a creative combination of advertising, promotions, sponsorship, direct mail, and other forms of communication. By building awareness, image, and loyalty these sports franchises are able to meet ticket sales targets regardless of what their team's actual performance might turn out to be. Brand symbols and logos in particular have become an important financial contributor to professional sports through licensing agreements.

Geographic locations

Increased mobility of both people and businesses and growth in the tourism industry have contributed to the rise of place marketing. Cities, states, regions, and countries are now actively promoted through advertising, direct mail, and other communication tools. These campaigns aim to create awareness and favorable image of a location that will entice temporary visits or permanent moves from individuals and business alike. The brand name is usually preordained by the name of the location.

Ideas and causes

Numerous ideas and causes have been branded, especially by nonprofit organizations. They may be captured in a phrase or slogan and even be represented by a symbol such as AIDS ribbons. By making ideas and

causes more visible and concrete, branding can provide much value.

Benefits of a strong brand

- It will add value to a company
- Requires less persuasion for consumers to use other products from the same brand
- Can ensure a lasting customer relationship due to trust
- It aids recognition in a cluttered marketplace
- Has the ability to command a premium
- Allows differentiation between very similar products, for example still mineral water
- Can attract merchandising contracts
- Leads to the perception of quality

There are two core elements to a strong brand – emotional value and practical value. Get these two right and your brand will quickly grow. However, a brand can be damaged much quicker than it can grow - five things that will quickly damage your brand include:

- Untrustworthy behaviour
- Concern about public safety or health
- Poor customer service (at any level)
- Obvious company financial difficulty
- Poor quality products

IV. CONCLUSION

A strong brand is clear on its mission and continues to stand up for what it believes in, no matter what. The brand owner's conviction (which is motivated by core values) is at the heart of the work they do and is what continues to drive them forward. Get the balance right and your business will go from strength to strength. A Word of caution: having no branding is like having no face, and having "no face" is a type of identity and differentiation that leads to some sort branding! A brand is what it does. Therefore, even if you do not go for promoting an active brand, whatever you deal with will gradually take over an image synonymous to a "brand". Therefore, even though not everything needs to be branded, it would be wise to see (and manage) everything by keeping the concept of branding in mind.

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