

Marketing and Promotion of a Single Product in Different Regions

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ABSTRACT

One of the common and mistaken practices is to promote a product in all its different markets uniformly without making any differentiation with respect to consumer choice and outlook. 'One size for all' does not work well in all marketing situations and markets. Consider India, with all its cultural and linguistic differences every 100 km or so. One cannot use the same language for promoting the product, not to speak of other variables. A few years ago, this was not appreciated by many marketing companies, but today, due to competition from local brands marketers are constrained to find alternative ways and means of promoting the same product in different regions. Digitalization has made tremendous progress, but still Hindi and English and a few other local languages find favor in such communications. One usually finds English script is used whereas the language is local. Such consumer preferences have made marketing more challenging and communicating marketing messages are crafted accordingly. This aspect needs a refocus and reorientation in the mindset of marketers for getting a better share of the piece of cake. This paper attempts to find ways and means of doing it successfully based on the experience of marketing companies all around the world.

Keywords-- Product promotion, one size to fit all, cultural and linguistic differences, challenge posed by digitalization, experiential market planning.

I. INTRODUCTION

Marketing has been a challenging profession from the time it was recognized as a separate profession. With the growth and dispersion of population over vast geographic markets the challenges of marketing and distribution has become quite vast and varied. Because the market for a product is dispersed by geographic spread no company can take for granted the consumer preferences to be uniform in all the areas of its operation. This is the crux of the problem. While the effort of companies to promote their products is appreciated, they need to appreciate the differences in the market likes and dislikes. This challenge becomes more pronounced promoting single product or

products without much differentiation. As the art of marketing is to create meaningful differences, this needs to be strategized based on customer preferences and tastes even in markets which are not geographically so distant but the distance 'is perceptual'. Promoting similar products in contiguous markets is also equally challenging for this reason of differential perception which needs to be addressed through the promotion and campaign.

The art of Product positioning is in the creation of meaningful differentiation based on customer perceptions and company promotion. If this definition is accepted then the product promotion becomes more focused and successful. A good example for such promotions and campaigns is 'COLGATE' tooth paste. The brand has been in India for a long time but their promotion strategies have changed. Colgate as a brand name is remembered even in rural households. But the company's success has been in 'repositioning' and marketing differentiated products to different markets in India rural as well as cosmopolitan. This differentiation may be marginal and may be 'skin deep' but the perceptions have been created for pushing the brand. From a single product brand the toothpaste is offered in different packaging, color of the paste itself, taste and ingredients to suit local preferences. Other brands have followed suit, with the result of confusing and compounding the decision making process of consumers. But that is another matter, as long as the product sells!

For companies existing in the market for long time and with international and multinational brand support, it is easier, because they have learned their lessons much faster. It is for the also ran companies, relative new comers, to make creative and meaningful differentiation or strategies to sell their product. Mind you, the competition from multinational brands is not to be underestimated ever.

II. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Companies marketing their new products with innovative approaches and marketing companies who

expand their markets to new geographic territories have captured most of the reporting pages on marketing. But there are a few companies who have specialized in marketing a few products and sometimes a single product and gained significant success in their efforts. The present research paper is about such companies who have made a big success story in their own line of business. This paper aims to understand their success mantra particularly with the following objectives.

1. A brief review and understanding of business environment
2. Challenges of Marketing in the current environment
3. Marketing and Promotion and challenges of product differentiation
4. How companies have fared in promoting a single product.
5. Future scenario and challenges

On a comprehensive search for available literature, it was found that a large volume of information is available in web pages and printed papers on the subject. This further attracted the author to do a comprehensive data

analysis and interpretation to arrive at the answers to above research questions. I am glad to say that sufficient literature was available so that the need for a separate questionnaire survey and data collection did not arise. On the basis of data analysis and interpretation conclusions have been arrived and listed in the paper at the end of the review.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Today if you pick any company doing well in business, you will find about 20 different product divisions that it is responsible for creating. As the business grows in revenue and stability there is this tendency to create new businesses and products to expand the profits and bottom lines. Some brands have preferred and done well to stick to what they do best, however, leaving the desire to bring on new product lines to the other guys. These companies take repetition and reputation to a whole new level, offering reliability and quality via a single product concept.



Figure 1: Crocs shoes

These, kind of ugly, but super-comfy, foam clogs have been a huge hit since they were first released to the public. Over 100 million pairs of the Crocs shoe have been sold to date, and the footwear giant shows no signs of stopping. With a wide variation of the basic clog from which to choose (toddlers, women, men, athletic, dress and beach-inspired, to name a few), the sky really is the limit for this business.

In a day and age where most companies have almost too much going on, Michelin has remained faithful to the cause of strictly manufacturing quality tires. Planes, cars, bikes and more have benefited from over 100 years of tire-making success, giving the creator of the first radial tire a customer base that spans the globe. While this

company has dabbled in the fine art of creating rocket fuel components and designing road maps, the famous tire division is what keeps this company moving forward.

More recently and almost a baby to the consumer market, Roku is an up-and-comer with an innovative solution for the need to connect to the world at the click of our TV remote. Its Roku player is a small electronic box that, when linked to your television and an internet connection, offers access to Amazon, Netflix, Hulu, Pandora and many other entertainment accounts. There's a strong possibility that it may create new and different product lines, as Roku has expanded to include more high-tech versions of its original Roku player. In the meantime, the company is aware of what it is doing: adding more

features to the existing product is what keeps Roku's customers happy.

The commercials speak for themselves: Select Comfort is all about a good night's sleep, and this company hasn't attempted to do anything but beds and pillows in their over 20 years of business. Best-known for the adjustable Sleep Number mattress, Select Comfort has been consistently ranked a top option for bedding, and offers its wares in-store, online and via its convincing infomercials. Even with an expanding accessory line that includes pillows and sheets, it's the bed that gives this company its thunder. While it is becoming increasingly difficult to find successful companies that keep their product offerings simple, many have proven it to be both effective and profitable to do just that. These flourishing companies know that you don't always need to alter the formula in order to keep thriving in a changing world.

People do business because they need things, but not all people need the same things at the same times. To compete successfully in a crowded market dominated by larger and more powerful rivals, small businesses often try to find one small segment of the market that needs something the bigger companies don't provide. People who go out for Chinese food form a separate segment, but of this those who prefer vegetarian Chinese food form a 'niche'. Thus the strategy of segmentation succeeds in a competitive environment. Most startup companies start in a small way, thinking to expand after learning some valuable lessons, and also making sure that they do not release bad products that could sink the company. Making bad decisions that could do the same. With this aim in mind, most startups focus on building one product at a time, which may be their only product for the first several years of the business. But there are pros and cons to selling only one product. For some startups, it may make sense to stay focused on one product, where as others would be happier and more successful if they sold multiple products.

The Pros of Selling One Product

You get to narrow your focus on creating one really awesome product. Without all the distractions of building, managing and selling multiple products, you get to really hone the finer details of your main offering, making it much better than any others in the market. It also allows you razor-sharp focus in your marketing tactics, in picking the highest quality channels and in sourcing traffic that quickly converts into happy customers. You have the ability to be incredibly niche, and instead of building a product that serves all, you can build a product that is serving an under-served market exceptionally well. Targeting the long tail of the market can lead to great success because you will be able to easily capture most of those who feel under-served. With razor-sharp focus on one product, targeting one type of consumer, you can

rapidly develop your product rather than splitting your efforts across multiple channels. In fact, you get to really know your customer, becoming more sensitive to their changing needs. At the same time, you become agile enough to reiterate your product offering to cater to those needs.

The Cons of Selling One Product

When you only have one product, you can't multiply your revenue by cross-selling complimentary products to your already-existing customer base. Doing so increases the lifetime value and average order size to your company, improving cash flow and increasing your marketing budget. Companies selling one product can't easily sell anything more than more copies of the same product. Although some smart businesses partner with other companies selling complimentary products to cross-sell and share revenue, that's a tricky relationship and won't generate more revenue than you would if you sold those products yourself. People only need so much of the same thing. Unless you're constantly innovating and updating your product offering, making it drastically different from and better than the last, it will be hard to incentivize customers to return. This will limit the revenue you can make from your customers.

While you can certainly sell a single product and live comfortably, running a \$1 million-plus company, it's a bit hard to find opportunities to market to your customers. There are only so many quality channels you can tap into to effectively target your niche. To reach your full market capacity, you would have to engage in more general marketing tactics, which are costly and inefficient. What's your preference on how many products your company should sell? Would you do better if you were narrowly focused on making one awesome product? Or can you benefit a lot more from selling several different products? These are the critical questions one should ask before plunging into the market.

IV. VISUAL CONTENT AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

While embarking on a content marketing campaign, you need to know exactly what will stimulate online growth and engagement. Text-based content is always going to be an integral part of marketing, but to really set yourself apart in the digital era, visual content must play a pivotal role in all of your efforts. When you consider that 65% of people are visual learners, 90% of information that comes to the brain is visual, and presentations with visual aides are 43% more persuasive, it makes sense to use content types which people have an innate psychological resonance with.

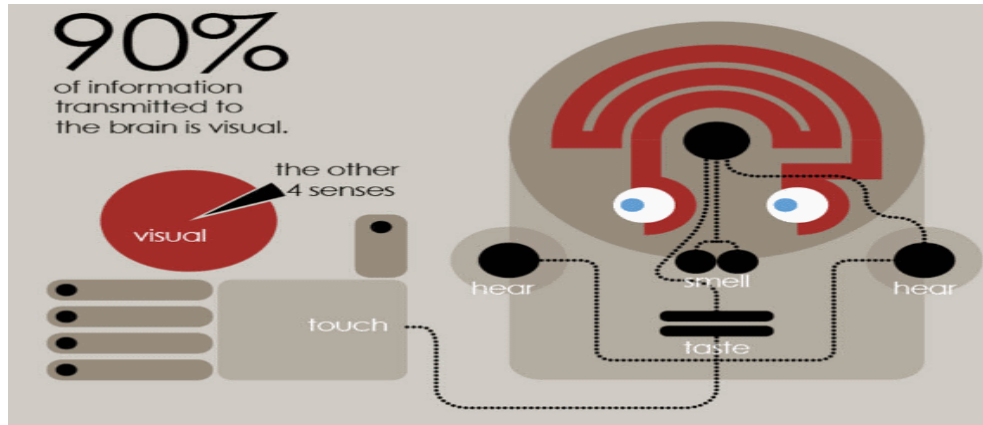


Figure 2: Visual content in Marketing Campaigns

When you split up a body of text with some compelling images, people are more inclined to finish reading what you've written (provided that the images are high quality and contextually relevant). Marketer Jeff Bullas cites that articles with images get 94% more views than those without. Due to the oversaturation of digital content and the increased adoption of mobile internet access, attention spans are shorter than ever, which makes content presented in the form of big blocks of text very off-putting. It's preferable to use original images or ones taken by you, as this adds a much-desired personal touch to your campaign. High quality, attractive images are often expensive to purchase or time consuming to create. Fortunately, with resources such as Canvas, you can create unique, captivating images for free with a simplistic drag-and-drop interface. Alternatively, there are an endless amount of excellent quality photos on photo-sharing sites such as Flickr and Morgue file that can be acquired for free. Due to the vast amount of photos on these sites, it's unlikely that other businesses within your niche will have

used them already. Just be sure you have the authority to use them.

If you are not creating visually appealing content that captures audience attention, your competition is doing! Graphics can tell your company story, boost awareness and drive additional traffic to your product or service. So how can you create content that helps you better connect with your fans and followers? We look at some brands for content marketing inspiration! Volkswagen claims that all people and all things have a story to tell, and you see this evidenced in each of their Face book posts. Across their Page are visual stories about VW automobiles and their customers. Whether you want to learn about VW history, understand the heritage of the Beetle or find your next car, Face book is the place to do it. Each image is designed to further the culture and experience around the Volkswagen brand. Watch (and learn) as they highlight important milestones within the company by weaving a powerful story into each post.



Figure 3: Facebook post of Volkswagen

Starbucks has a presence on multiple social media platforms, each one successfully expressing what the brand is all about. Their use of visual marketing is bursting with personality and originality, and although Starbucks often

uses posts to advertise products, it's done in a creative and subtle way. This is a lesson many companies have yet to learn: Sometimes less is more... especially when it comes to visual content.



Figure 4: Social media post of Starbucks

Any creative soul will love the Sharpie Pinterest page. Marketing a simple product with a limited variety and few uses can be quite difficult, but Sharpie has

succeeded in turning its Pinterest page into something more! Sharpie provides handy tips and creative ideas -- all of them interesting enough to be shared.

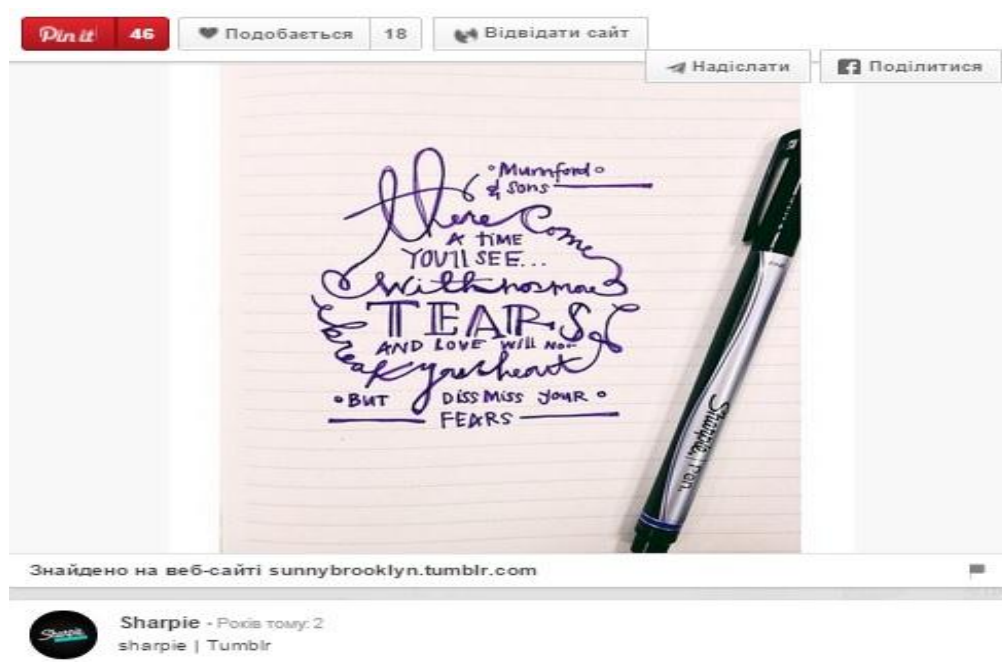


Figure 5: Social Media post by Sharpie Pint rest

Coca-Cola's content marketing strategy is built on visual marketing. They provide their audience with fun, colorful and quirky visuals that are easy to like and share. The company concentrates its efforts on interactive content

to keep their audience engaged. Coca Cola also has uniquely designed that reminds the audience whose page they're on.



Figure 6: Coco Cola example of content marketing

Visuals are all the rage these days and for damn good reason. Our eyes are inundated and bored with text! We've become a society that's too busy to invest in decoding words as a means of communication. That is why we shorten everything to acronyms. We rely on scanning headlines and sub-headlines as a means of determining if deeper exploration is warranted. More than ever, visuals are the superior form of 'pattern interrupt' to the text and bright light ridden overwhelming messages of this technological era. Without realizing it we've come to rely on visuals to communicate with one another. Visuals have the power to evoke emotions in a visceral way. They can tell us whole stories in a fraction of the time reading text would take. Visuals are the least inhibited way we have of conveying our message, while simultaneously being the easiest for others to consume.

Some of the recent research findings on visual content are: Visual content is 40X more likely to get shared on social media than other types of content (Buffer, 2014) Articles with an image once every 75-100 words got double the number of social shares than articles with fewer images (Buzz sumo, 2015). 71% of online marketers use visual assets in their social media marketing (Social Media Examiner, 2015). Researchers found that colored visuals increase people's willingness to read a piece of content by 80% (Xerox, 2014). Research has shown that when people hear information, they are likely to remember only 10% of that information three days later. However, if a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retained 65% of the information three days later (Life Learn, 2015). Info-graphics are liked and shared on social media 3X more than any other type of content. (Mass Planner, 2015).

For these reasons, among many others, visuals have become an intricate piece of business success. Especially in terms of branding and online marketing. The

present day visual movement is proven time and time again with each new visual-based social platform that shows up and quickly grows in popularity. Pinterest may have gotten the ball rolling but Vine, Instagram, Snap Chat, Slide Share and all the others that have popped up over the last few years are capitalizing on the same premise. If you want to stand out online and drive traffic to your solutions you need to utilize visual marketing strategies in your business. True story!

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The business environment is ever changing. Marketing companies are trying to find newer means of communicating with prospects and take a better share of the cake. Product promotion is the area of marketing which poses new areas of challenge for marketers. Print media as a form of advertising is becoming skewed in relevance to many product promotions. In the present fast pace digital age, Consumers and customers have very little time or patience to read through long winding write ups or data. This is true for the advertisements in the web and electronic media. Whatever is to be communicated has to be done in quick time and the communication medium has to be catchy. Businesses have to continue and grow and so they seek new opportunities and strategies to improve their market share and sales.

Current marketing environment is challenging and it would be 'cliché' to say it is competitive as it is understood by all to be so. Distribution has been a great challenge for marketers for a long time. But the development in the area of Logistics has made it possible for marketers to design and deliver products through augmented systems of communication and transport. But it has put pressures on the price line. Marketers have solved

this problem by optimizing channels of distribution and faster communication. But the digital age has thrown all these out of gear! New ways of promotion through the electronic medium and customer contact and delivery systems through interactive web have thrown up different challenges.

What are the new challenges and how marketers have adapted their strategies to serve the customers better has been seen in the previous pages. The art of creating meaningful product differentiation has been a challenge for all times. Present web and net based promotions are aimed at precisely telling customers their product features that would satisfy their needs better and faster. The role of visuals in promotion of products has been discussed and deliberated at length with examples. The power of social media has been exploited to the full potential and continues with new vigor. It is in this context that we have discussed how single product companies have fared in comparison to their counterparts who offer a range of products and mix to satisfy their tastes.

We have in the previous pages discussed how single product companies have fared in such a competitive environment. Examples from Coca Cola, Volkswagen, Starbucks and a few other companies have shown how their focused media campaigns have resulted in better

product acceptance and sales. The success of Michelin Tire company through a single product of Tires for over 100 years is to be noted with special interest. The so called 'ugly looking' crocs shoe company has been doing well in selling a single product like super-comfy, foam clogs which have been a huge hit since they were first released to the public. Over 100 million pairs of the Crocs shoe have been sold to date, and the footwear giant shows no signs of stopping

To recap, many of the big, important stats on visual content are summed up nicely in this info-graphic from Matter's Studio-C. The stats below paint a strong picture of how vital visuals are for marketers. (Figure 7). The examples quoted above and the growing list of such companies brings to focus one thing – that is creative promotion and product positioning and identifying a 'niche' for their products. These companies have achieved big success in their chosen segments by completely capturing customer needs and imagination. Future holds good promise in the fields of Software, household products, convenience products, specialty products like vintage cars, and so on. Success is not limited to big companies with a wide range of products, but companies with single products can also be equally successful by good strategy and product positioning.

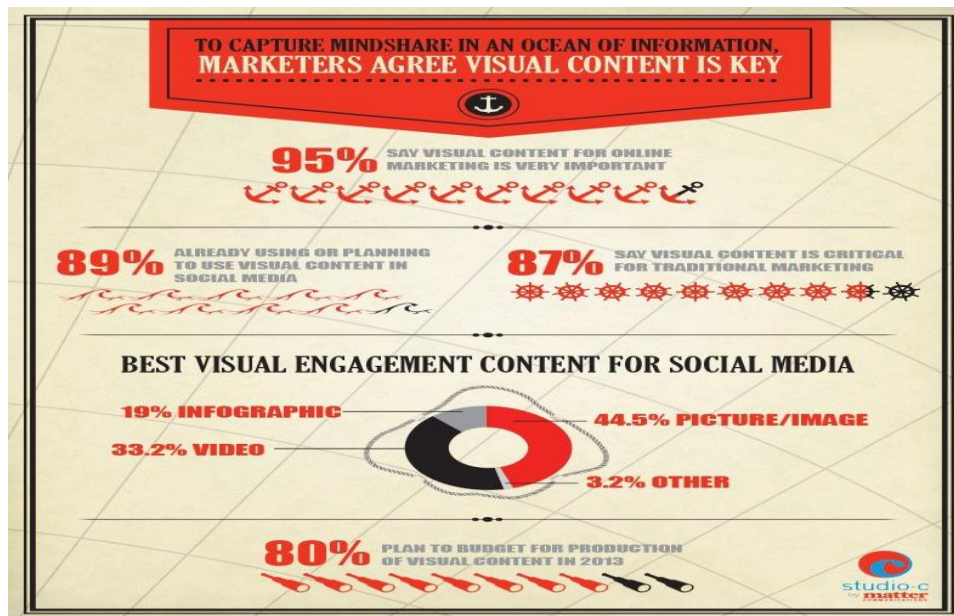


Figure 7: Role of Visuals in Product promotion

RECOMMENDATION

As seen from the above, it is not the big size companies with a lot of product range and investment and manufacturing facilities who are always successful. Success comes to those who are more focused on offering their services to limited clients but doing it better than the best. There is a lot to learn for entrepreneurs from the

examples of over 25 companies and much more if you search the web, that success is related to your effort to serve the segment of customers, however small it may be in the best possible manner by offering competitive products which cannot be offered by even big companies at the price, quality and service of the offering. There is a lot of cheer for prospective entrepreneurs from India!

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