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Marketing Positioning: The Road to Success

Presentation

We constantly see, not only on TV but also on billboards and social media, endless advertisements of the infinity of brands out in the market. Each of them provides us, the consumers, a diversity of feelings and thoughts. However, what intrigued me about the art of getting the buyer's attention was not that. What was interesting to me was the work and the process behind that logo, slogan and commercial.

Methodology

During summer I had the chance to attend a four-week program abroad and take a course on marketing and advertising which helped me set the bases for my project. The lessons allowed me to better understand how brands position themselves in the market and what the key aspects to reach the desired expectations are. My project is divided in two main parts. Firstly, a theoretical part in which I explain everything the brand needs to achieve its goals, such as define its target market, where it wants to sell its products, compare and contrast what it offers, and so on. Secondly, a part where I apply all those concepts and create an advertisement of an already existing brand, in this case, Levi's.



Project Body

We are all well aware that in our business world we have two types of people: those with goods who chase those with money, and those with money who chase those with goods. They need to find each other in order to make some profit, but sometimes that does not happen and here is where marketing takes its place.

Marketing's main objective is find what the customer wants and provide it, although sometimes it is not that easy. The company needs to match their capabilities to customer's needs and become more competitive. If they can not do it, other companies offering the same exact product will get the advantage on the market, which means they will get not only all the profit but also the attention of the customers.

The enterprise needs to always have in mind that the needs of the customer remain constant whereas the ways of satisfying them change. Thus, they need to stay on top with the new technologies, social media, advertisement campaigns and every factor that is going to make a difference between them and another company.

What do they need to keep in mind? What do the companies need to ask themselves? The first thing they need to make clear is which product they are selling, the price they are setting, the place where they want to sell it, how they want to sell it and most importantly, who they expect will buy their product. These 5 p's are called the *Marketing Mix*.

Other strategies are used to reach similar objectives, such as the SWOT, which analyses the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats the company faces in the marketplace.

Nevertheless, all these things are of no use if the enterprise does not have a strong interdependent relationship between their marketing and their advertising campaigns. They need to make sure they know the difference between both concepts because the line that separates them is very thin.

On one hand, marketing defines the brand and attracts the market share they want by providing the consumers reasons to buy the product or service they are offering. On the other hand, advertising focuses on informing potential customers about the product, service or business; it helps stimulate sales and change a firm's image in the eyes of a consumer. Unless both parts do their job right, the message sent could be confusing and reach a customer they did not desire.

All this leads me to the next point, which stands out the importance of defining precisely the customer you are, who you want to be and who people perceive you to be. These key points tell the customer what they can expect from products and services, and it differentiates a brand's offering from its competitors. That is the definition of a strong brand.

But it is not always as easy as ABC, at the end of the day, brands are built by consumers, not companies. It does not matter what you think your brand promises. The

only thing that matters is how consumers perceive your brand. Companies need to work to develop the consumers perceptions that accurately reflect your brand. Otherwise, your brand is doomed to limited growth potential.

In essence, you are promising something to consumers any time they purchase a product or service with your brand name on it. That promise evokes emotions that can be very powerful, because it is those emotional connections to your brand that lead to repurchases, word-of-mouth marketing, and brand loyalty.

Brands that offer a clear promise, which appeals to consumers, and deliver on that promise through every touch point, have a significant advantage over less focused and less trustworthy brands. And that is the point you need to realize. A brand that does not meet its promises to consumers is typically labeled as undependable and thus, untrustworthy.

Before you can determine what your brand promises to consumers, you need to research your target audience, your competitors, your market, and the environment where you do business. Identify what you do well, what customers want and need, and how you can add value to their lives. Those pieces of information are the foundation of your brand promise definition. In other words, if your brand does not promise something that customers want and can not already get, it will fail.

Everything you do to market your brand depends on how consumers perceive it. You can not tell consumers again and again that your product is the best, but until they experience it, believe the brand promise, and develop perceptions of it, your brand has little chance for growth. It simply does not matter what you think about your brand. What matters is what consumers think of your brand particularly your target audience.

Brand perceptions can evolve over time. Your job is to execute marketing programs that perpetuate the brand perception both in existing customers minds and to new audiences. You need to do research to determine what consumers want and need, and then build a brand strategy that makes consumers perceive your brand as the one to meet those needs. If your brand is already established, you should continually survey your existing customers to learn what their current perceptions of your brand are.

In addition, your brand must meet or exceed consumers' expectations for every customer interaction and experience.

When your brand fails to meet consumer expectations for it, consumers become confused. They are disappointed and leave your brand behind in search of another brand that does meet their expectations all time.

You need to do research and make sure you are on the same page as your customers. A brand must never over-promise or under deliver. On the contrary, it must ensure that it is clear what the brand will and will not achieve.

Your brand is a promise that helps create consumer perceptions and expectations through its own unique personality. Your brand is represented by tangible elements that create a visual, auditory, and olfactory brand identity. If one element does not fit into the brand identity, it can damage your entire brand.

Logos can also become powerful representations of a brand promise; it is a value asset that must be protected. Your brand elements must consistently represent your brand promise as well as consumers perceptions and expectations for your brand. In order to make sure that the business knows what its brand identity is, J.N. Kapferer created the *"Brand Identity Prism"* which defines six aspects of brand identity: (1) physique, (2) personality, (3) culture, (4) relationship, (5) reflection and (6) self-image. He states that these aspects can only come to life when the brand communicates with the consumer. Strong brands are capable of weaving all aspects into an effective whole, as a way of coming to a concise, clear and appealing brand identity. Brand relationship is the repeated interactions between a brand and a customer that start to reflect similar characteristics of relationships between people, such as love, connection, interdependence, intimacy, and commitment. For marketers, understanding the difference between the kinds of relationships is essential to making sure you know how to deal with customers.

Your brand strategy is how, what, when and to whom you plan on communicating and delivering on your brand messages. Where you advertise is part of your brand strategy, as well as your distribution channels and what you communicate both visually and verbally. It brings your competitive positioning to life, and works to position you as a certain "something" in the mind of your prospects and customers. Consistent, strategic branding leads to strong brand equity, which means the added value brought to your company's products or services. And that allows you to charge more for your brand than what identical, unbranded products command. The most obvious example of this is Coke vs. generic soda. Because Coca-Cola has built powerful brand equity, it can charge more for its product - and customers will pay that higher price.

Brand personality is the way a brand speaks and behaves. It means assigning human personality characteristics to a brand so as to achieve differentiation. These characteristics signify behaviour through both individuals representing the brand as well as through advertising. When brand image is expressed in terms of human traits, it is called brand personality. Understanding brand personality also helps select the most appropriate message and media, or more effective and suitable sponsorships or partnerships. Ultimately, understanding a brand personality enables the brand owner to deliver a consistent brand experience that connects with consumers and leaves a deeper and more sustainable impression.

All these concepts and strategies helped me execute the brand repositioning of

Levi's, which was my practical part. In order to reach the target market I had set, I had to create different campaigns that were reliable to both, teenagers and young adults because those are the age rates that the brand is missing. I compared the brand with other three brands that produce jeans and studied what had been the mistakes the brand had committed. My conclusion: they had not followed trends and grown as a brand, and that had been their big mistake.

Conclusion

All in all, I must say that even though it was a hard work, in the end I was able to realize that in order to elaborate a brand you need planning and consistency. That things are not as easy as they seem, most of the time there is a very difficult line of work after every marketing and advertising campaign we see on television or magazines.

There is hard work and specific thinking behind every brand and it never stops brands from keeping evolving with time. Indeed, they need to do so in order to keep up with not only the trends but also with what society wants.

Web links

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