Different Dimensions of a Brand

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Since earliest times producers have used their brands to distinguish their products. Modern branding and acquiring of individual brand names has its origin in the nineteenth century. In recent years brands have become very popular and familiar to the consumers. Brands are very important for the survival and success of a company. A brand must necessarily deliver value and the value must be defined in consumer terms. According to David Ogilvy, 'Brands are a part of the fabric of life'. A brand has an existence that is greater than an actual product or service. A brand has a life of its own and feeds not only on the original product, but can also carry forward its values and identity into new product areas. According to Stephen King, 'A product is something that is made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a consumer' (1990.) Thus, a brand is a holistic combination of product and added values.

Brand can be defined as a means of creating an identity for a product. It is the sum total of the particular satisfaction which it gives to the consumers who buy that specific brand. This sum total encompasses the name, ingredients, price, packaging, distribution, reputation and ultimately its performance. In fact today's modern brand has outgrown from the mechanical aspects of product differentiation and has acquired a personality of its own. For example, brand Coca-cola.

Brand Personality
Brand personality is that which distinguishes one brand from another or a particular brand from a product. Brand personality can be classified into three approaches as follows:
(1) Emotion centered approach
(2) Human centered approach
(3) Other approaches

(1) Emotion centered approach - Christine Restall of McCann Erikson states that is because of an emotional pre-disposition that customers choose one brand instead of the other and the difference between them is not discernible. Thus, she describes brand personality as the emotional link between the customers and the brand.
Example: Brand and Brand personalities

Brand	Personality
Rin	Humor
Set wet	Sensuality
Nerolac Impressions	Wonder
All-Out	Fear
Dispirin	Irritation
Vicks	Compassion

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Brand description using adjectives

Brand	Adjectives
Liril	Vivacious, fresh
Bajaj	Long lasting
Sunsilk shampoo	Feminine
Gillete	Macho, tough
Dove	Caring
TATA	Reliable
Thums-Up	Fun
Mysore Sandal Soap	Traditional, nurturing

(2) Human centered approach - Southgate defines personality as 'the human characteristics of the brand in question, whilst taking special care that it is the brand that is being described and not the target customer'. This definition transforms a brand into a human being. Aaker sees brand personality as the set of human characteristics, which are associated with a brand. For example, Coke's personality is ' REAL' ('It's the real thing')

Human characteristics can be demographic traits such as gender, age, and socio-economic class besides subtle personality traits like warmth, concern and sentimentality. Brand personalities can thus have demographic characteristics, for example, Feminine (Lakme) vs. Masculine (Gillette) and Old (Hamam) vs. Young (Fair-glow). It could have psycho graphic characteristics like Upper class (BMW) vs. Blue Collar (Breeze) and sophisticated (D'damas) vs. rugged (Mahindra Tractor)

(3) Other Approaches -

(a) David Arnold treats essence to be synonymous with brand personality. Essence is the basic idea behind the brand and translates itself into benefits. These benefits must be converted into specific attributes. Finally, it is these benefits and attributes that form what Arnold calls brand anatomy. Some examples how essence gets translated into benefits and attributes:

Brand	Essence	Benefits	Attributes
Paragon Slippers	Modern	Comfort	Casual wear
Bag Piper Soda	Macho	Socially admired	Strong Soda
Nakshatra diamond	Forever	Sophisticated	Large number of designs
Godrej Colour Soft	Long lasting	Trendiness	No ammonia
Maruti 800	Reliable	Fuel efficiency	Sleek body
Hero Honda Splendour	Youth	Low maintenance	Four-stroke engine
LG Air Conditioner	Health	Maintains air quality	Acro DNA System
Sony Music System	Superior	Robust after sales service	State of the art technology

(b) Chris Macrae divides brand personalities into 6 types as follows:

1. Ritualistic brands - These brands are associated with particular occasions. For example, Cadbury's chocolates are also promoted as gift packs for Rakshabandhan and Diwali.

2. Symbol brands - In these brands the logo or the name of the brand is more important than what it contains. For example, the devil has a given a lot of publicity to Onida T.V.

3. Heritage brands - These brands have pioneer advantage and can set the agenda for the category or segment they are in. For example Coca-cola ('It's the real thing').

4. Exclusive brands - These brands are also called 'aloof' or 'snob' brands. These brands help a person give signals that he or she is different. For example, Mercedes Benz.

5. Belonging brands - These brands make the consumer feel part of a larger family with which they want to identify. For example, Benetton Clothes ('The United Colours of Benetton') endorse a multiracial global village.

6. Legendary brands - These brands have a great history and have acquired a demi-god status. For example, Lux Soap.

Brand Personality	Celebrity	Product
Ritualistic brand	Amir Khan	Titan
Heritage brand	Amitabh Bachchan	Parker
Legendary brand	Aishwarya Rai	Lux
Exclusive brand	Kajol	Asmi Diamond Jewellery
Belonging brand	Sachin Tendulkar	Adidas

Brand Image

Image of a brand is that which exists in the minds of consumers. It is the sum total of all the information, they have received about the brand from their experience, word of mouth, advertising, packaging, service, etc. The information so gathered is modified by selective perception and social norms. Sengupta has defined brand image as the totality of the impressions about the brand. According to him this includes the physical, functional and psychological aspects of the brand. Christine Restall states that brand image is measurable aspect of the brand. On the other hand, Kapfer thinks that brand identity is from the sender's side while brand image is from the receiver's side (consumer's). Brand image will stem from three sources, which are as follows:

1. Provider-driven image - This image is derived from the company or brand. For example, Godrej signifies quality in everything it makes from soap to refrigerator.

2. Product-driven image - This image is the result of the performance of the product. For example, Lux White Glow promises skin care. It contains fruit scrub, turmeric and sunscreen.

3. User-driven image - This image is driven by the life style of the consumer. For example, Reid and Taylor Suiting are an expression of a particular life style.

Aspects of a brand	Image	Celebrity	Product
Attractiveness	Beautiful Classy	Aishwarya Rai Amitabh Bachchan	Lux Reid and Taylor
Trustworthiness	Dependable Reliable	Bajaj Kapil Dev	Bajaj Scooter Action Silencer Shoes
Expertise	Qualified Skilled	Shehnaz Hussain Zakir Hussain	Shehnaz Hussain Fairness Cream Taj Mahal Tea

Brand Identity

Brand identity is that which we transmit to the market place - It is something, which is under our control, provided that we understand the essence and expression of our brand. Aaker defined brand identity as the sum of the brand expressed as product, organization, person and symbol.

1. Brand as product - It deals with acceptance of the brand as a product itself. For example, Nirma for its reasonable price is seen as a good product.

2. Brand as organization - Also because of the organizational value it upholds, brand is considered successful. For example, Hindustan lever has offered to the consumers a wide range of products.

3. Brand as person - It deals with transformation of the brand into a human being. For example, Lakme is considered feminine.

4. Brand as symbol - It deals with heritage and what the brand stands for. For example, Mercedes symbolizes the German dream.

Brand Positioning

Brand positioning is the art of creating a distinct image for a product in the minds of the consumers. For example. 'ATM' - 'Automated Teller Machine' is a product, but the consumer's perception would be 'any time money'. Positioning thus emphasizes that the key is as to how the offer is presented to consumers and how they, rather than ingredients of the offer perceive it. Branding is all about positioning. There are three approaches to positioning as follows:

1. Mass market position - In this position, the company offers only one brand and hopes to pick up customers from all parts of the market. In a young and unsegmented market, this position is most effective and the focus is on the need rather than overlying wants. For example, brand Nirma is very much strong and part of Indian consumers. It enjoys mass-market position.

2. Niche position - The essence of this position is that the company offers only one brand and targets it at only one segment. This is done on the assumption that at least one segment is distinct from the rest of the market. For example, Fair and lovely focuses on the segment that aspires to be fair.

3. Differentiated position - In this position, the company offers several distinct brands to attract the various segments. It can either launch new brands or launch brand like extensions. For example, each of Ford's vehicles is targeted at particular segments of the market; the Ford portfolio in total covers almost the whole market.

Brand Extension

Companies are increasingly extending their brands for their need for growth. It is observed that consumers are more comfortable with a brand that they are familiar with rather than an unknown one. Consumers also use established brands as quality cues. Thus, brand extension is beneficial to the company. The new offerings will refresh and enhance the total offering of the existing brand. This in turn improves the cost effectiveness of resources spent on supporting the brand family. Brand extension can be of two types as follows:

1. Related Category brand extension - These are as following:
(a) Brand and category related - In this extension, products and their benefits are slightly different. Consumers may be same or different. For example, Parent brand Colgate has offered new variants in the form of Colgate Max Fresh, Colgate Gel etc.
(b) Brand and image related - In this brand extension, there is a relationship that transfers the emotional benefits and image of the parent brand to extension brand. For e.g., Parent brand Cinthol has offered a different product variant in the form of Cinthol Talcum powder.

(2) Unrelated Category brand extension - In this brand extension, almost no relationship with the parent brand is there, except the brand name. For example, Godrej offers different types of products like typewriter, hairdryer, furniture, safety locks, refrigerator, animal feed etc.

Brand Name

The name of a brand has come to represent not only a distinct identity for the company's product but also certain values. The brand marketers play a very critical role in selection of a brand name. The brand name can be a very straightforward one for easy recognition, memorability and pronunciation. The brand name could be suggesting about the product or could be a stand apart unique name. The name of a product is carefully selected and nurtured over the years so as to become successful nationally as well as internationally.

Following are the common sources of brand names with examples:
1. The initials/Acronyms of the Firm's name. For e.g., General Electric Products go by the name GE.
2. Individual or numbers or words combined with numbers. For e.g., Hay word 5000 Soda.
3. Geographical and historical name. For e.g., Taj Mahal Tea.
4. Company's name in total or parts. For e.g., Colgate Palmolive.

5. Personal/Family or founder's name. For e.g., Tata salt.

6. Mythological and culturally associated name. For e.g., Shri Ram Saria cement.

7. A combination of two words. For e.g., Heads and Shoulders Shampoo.

8. Foreign sounding words. For e.g., Proctor and Gamble called its detergent powder Ariel.

9. Names of animals. For e.g., Tortoise mosquito coil.

10. Adaptation names. For e.g., Titan Industries has launched a range of exotic jewellery watches under the brand name 'Tanishq'. The name is an adaptation of a Sanskrit word 'Nishka', which means necklace of coins. The prefix 'Ta' stands for 'TATA' while the last 'a' is an element of style.

Concluding Observations:

Brands provide an assurance of quality and reliability to the consumers. Choosing a brand is timesaving and gives the consumers dependable and risk free choices. The brand owner also derives immense benefits from brands. They enable them to communicate directly with consumers. Brands also allow brand owners to earn consumer loyalty, add value to his products and capture the market by building brand values. For creating superior values, the company must develop deep understanding of the consumers. It also denotes total commitment to quality as perceived by the consumer. In today's competitive business world, it is increasingly important that the brand offers something that consumers can identify and which makes it different. This involves taking into account the brand's core values, i.e., what it stands for and whom it is for. Since the marketers expect the brand to last many years, they must look not only for consistency but also for evolution. This necessitates updating and improving a brand without loosing its loyal consumers who have been using the product for years. Thus, brand management is very vital for the marketers for increasing the brand's apparent value to the customers, thereby ensuring and increasing the product's brand equity. Brand management requires planning, developing and directing marketing efforts. This encompasses refining the brand's quintessence, identifying the competitors and potential threats within the category, recognizing marketing opportunities, revamping marketing strategies and efficiently communicating the USPs of the brand to the target consumers. .

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