

AN APPROACH FOR FORMING THE BRAND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary conditions many companies are striving to develop strong brands. This gives them opportunity to win the consumers trust, to differentiate themselves from competitors and to provide additional profit. Prerequisite for brand influence of the organization on market success are its basic functions, which are implemented in the process of the brand interaction with the consumers. Its communication strategy has an important role in this process. This article is dedicated to the analysis of this topic. In the paper is clarified the brand essence and its place in the market strategy of the business organization. It is pointed out that the brand contents are based on two components: on the process of formation of the symbol of the brand and on the system of consumer relations with the brand. In this connection the communication strategy is determined as brand leading component. The main principles, to which the strategy has to meet, are pointed out and its basic elements are examined.

Keywords: *brand, branding, brand loyalty, brand communication strategy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The mechanisms for increasing competitiveness of the entrepreneurial structures are constantly improving and developing. One of them is the brand. The theoretical and practical problems, which are connected with it, are gaining more and more significance.

On the present markets the competition between trademarks is intensifying, the contest between their advertising images for place in consumer's consciousness is deepening. Often in the consumer's attitude the emotions predominate over the rationalism. Often as a result of all of this the success of goods and services on the market is based not on objectively defined competitive advantages, but subjectively perceived by consumers. These advantages are contained in the trademarks uniqueness and in the consumers' ability to identify them. They provide the appearance of effective brands, which are designing in the branding process.

Recently the branding is an independent trend in the scientific studies. Its different aspects are researched in the studies of the specialists as Aaker. D., Kapferer J.N., Chernatony L., Maslow A., Schultz D., Trout J., Keller K., Al and Laura Ries, Jacoby J. etc.

The scientists pay attention on the human nature of the brand. It connects the identification of the trademark with the consumers' loyalty, which is expressed in preference for the respective product. [Keller, K., 2008]

The branding is examined as one of the trends of the market strategy of business structures at all, which is playing an important role for providing its competitiveness [De Chernatony, L., 2010].

Unfortunately the experience in brand building is not enough generalized and formalized, which impedes its wide distribution. In this problem the practice is ahead of the theory. In recent years the scientists' interest in branding is increased, but the theoretical and methodical researches are not enough. There is a lack of unified conceptual approach to the branding process.

The scientists do not have a unified opinion even in relation to the terminology.

On the other hand the development of the economic relations in contemporary terms stimulates companies to develop their brands. This gives them opportunity to win the consumers' trust, to differentiate themselves from the competitors and to gain good profits [Kapferer, J.-N., 2004].

Each brand has its own characteristic, i.e. totality of specific distinguishing marks and advantages. The brand ensures interaction between itself and the consumers via practical proof for mark position and value and persuasion the consumers in its advantages. Its communication strategy has an important role for this.

2. BRAND AND ITS PLACE IN THE STRATEGY OF THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

On the different stages of marketing development the scientists have been proposed different definitions for the very complicated and multifaceted term “brand”. The brand was received a wide distribution at the end of XIX – in the beginning of XX century.

Many famous brands were designed simultaneously with the appearance of the modern concepts about branding at the end of XIX century with the building of companies like Procter&Gamble (1882 – the first national brand), Coca-Cola, American Express, Kodak film, Heinz (1896 – the first umbrella brand) etc.

The development of the economic relations moves brand on higher level. The brand is determined as mechanism for achievement of competitive advantage for firms via differentiation of their products.

There are many points of view for the term “brand”. The closest to the author is the suggested by the company “Interbrand”:

“Brand – this is a sum of all seeing and hidden characteristics, which are making the proposal unique”.

Analyzing the brand definitions, which are given by different dictionaries and experts in the field of branding, we can presume that the basic argument from which they

are guided is the role of the brand, which is expressed in the design of unique impression.

For this reason not every mark can be called brand, but only this, which:

- Are capable to create something important and valuable for its consumers;
- Are capable to express this in attributes and communications;
- Are capable to gain the desired recognition and long-term consumer preference, i.e. loyalty.

Specialists from the BBDO company are defined the brand as sustainable promise, given by the company. This is the face of the company, its representative side.

The brand can be determined as mechanism for achievement of competitive advantage for firms via differentiation of their produced products.

As we said, between definitions "brand" and "trademark" shall not be placed equal sign. Brand – this is the degree of knowledge of the trademark and goods and services, which are standing behind it.

The brand is certain idea, philosophy, which defines all business trends. Here can be defined brand elements such as:

- Brand Essence;
- Brand Attributes;
- Brand Name;
- Brand Image;
- Brand Power;
- Brand Identity;
- Brand Value;
- Brand Development Index;
- Brand Loyalty.

We suggest including the Brand Society Value in the set of constituting elements too. This term means the reflection of the social responsibility of the business in the brand.

Depending on addressee the brand is performing different functions.

For brand consumers the brand is performing the following functions:

- Communicative function;
- Function for minimizing the risk of purchase;
- Function for self-identification.

For producers the brand is performing the following functions:

- Opportunity to sell the goods at higher price (price premium);
- Stimulation of consumers loyalty;
- Minimizing the risks of purchase;
- Increasing the brand equity;
- Decreasing the brand expenses.

The contents of the term "brand" are based on two components:

- On the process of formation of the symbol of the brand
- On the system of consumer relations with the brand. They are forming on basis of the marketing communications and the information about the product or the trademark.

Depending on contents of symbols in the trademark and the brand image are formed tree types of relations with consumers:

- *Emotional* – they are formed on basis of feelings arising from the emotional brand perception (positive or negative) in the consumer;
- *Behavioral* – they are arose when consumers carrying out actions motivated by brand to practical result, i.e. acquisition of goods;
- *Rational* – they are formed on the basis of buyer's evaluation, conviction and awareness for the commodity. [Keller, K, 2008].

Practically all these relations are closely interacting. From their harmonic interaction, which provides an effective and full-value brand image, depends how correct the symbols of the brand communications are formed.

Main signs of the brand are:

- *Functionality* – reflection of the commodity qualitative features and purpose in the brand contents. This sign allows consumer to identify his own consumer interests with the use of the brand reflecting the commodity features;
- *Sociality* – reflection on the form of the trademark of the commodity features and interests, which are identified with the contents of the trademark;
- *Sociability* – ability of the trademark to form relations with consumers.

The brand effectiveness and viability depend on the interaction of the mentioned signs and on how full they are shown in the trademark [Kapferer, J.-N, 2004].

In the brand building is necessary to be guided by following requirements:

- The brand signs have to be included in the trademark considering the interests and needs of consumers;
- The external form of the brand has to contribute to the creation of the communication provision in order to form relations between the brand and consumers;
- The brand image has to be objective and convincing, but not rude and intrusive arising negative emotions in the buyer;

The effectiveness of the brand functionality depends on formation of relations with the consumers. The creation of an effective communication strategy has an important role in this process.

3. APPROACH FOR FORMATION OF BRAND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The task for creation of an effective communication strategy in branding is not examined in the scientific literature. All opinions are undefined and contradictory in respect to the practical implementation of this task. On the other hand the communication strategy is one of the most effective elements of the branding strategy. It establishes the brand image in consumers mind.

In our opinion the branding communication strategy has to meet the following principles:

- *Adequacy*. The created brand has to correspond to this, which already exists. The degree of discrepancy must be clear defined;
- *Originality*. Brand has to be easily recognizable and easy to remember;

- *Direction*. Brand has to have an exact address, i.e. to attract certain market segments and consumer groups;
- *Plausibility*. If the brand causes mistrust, it is not carried out its functions;
- *Concrete definition*. The reflected qualities of the object in the brand must be well considered and distinguishable.

To create successful brand we have to admit maximum factors, including: development history of the product; development history of the product producer; examples for its use etc.

It is necessary to influence the consumers by means of all known marketing communication resources.

In accordance with the study of D. Aaker because of the many barriers during the trademarks development, only 20% of them are transformed into brands [Aaker D. A., 2009].

By means of interviews carried out are identified the typical barriers in the brand positioning and methods for their elimination are suggested (table 1).

Table 1. Typical barriers in the brand positioning and features of their elimination

Name of the barrier	Barrier characteristic	Methods for eliminating
Knowledge	Low level of advertising provision	Estimation of optimal advertising budget and its performance
Interest	Weakness of the emotional/rational elements	Deepen study of consumers
Experience in using	Weak call to purchasing and inaccessibility to the commodity	Personnel stimulation, trainings, use of an effective distribution channels
Brand loyalty	Price actions, which destroy the brand loyalty	Optimal price strategy based on research of the demand and price policy of the competitors

The examination by elements of the brand configuration allows to be carried out following conclusions:

1. When the consumer chooses brand, he is influenced by the following product characteristics:
 - high quality and reliability;
 - good functional characteristics;
 - level of knowledge(popularity);
 - experience in using;
 - convenience in delivery;
 - “price-quality” ratio;

- good service;
 - efficient advertising.
2. The effective brand gives answers to following questions:

- related with consumers – who, where, how, why the product is using;
- related with the producer – where, from who and how is produced.

When the earmarked audience is determined we have to agree with the D. Aaker’s opinion, who determines five levels of attitude of brand consumers:

- lack of brand loyalty;
- the consumer has no reason to change his attachment to the brand;
- the consumer suffers a loss when changing the brand;
- the consumer values the brand;
- the consumer is loyal to the brand [Aaker, D., 2009].

Determining of the earmarked audience allows us to choose the optimal method for influence on consumers mind.

First we have to distinguish and to aware the consumer for the “unique feature of the product”, which this and only this product can provide him. This unique feature must not create artificially. If we do this we will lose the consumers.

When examining the different methods for influence on consumers’ feelings, on first place in our opinion, should create trust to the brand. This could be achieved via informing for the high qualitative raw materials used and ecological methods for producing.

An effective way for implementation of the brand idea in the consumers’ mind is the logo.

The basic requirements for good logo are:

- Easy to remember and originality – starting from the position of the trademarks as an instrument for identification and recognition of the product;
- Associativity – a graphic decision, how an unusual it can be, it has to cause certain image, which is directly connected with the company activity or product features;
- Universality in measure change – this is the one of general criteria for qualitative logo. The reason is that in the process of the advertising campaign usually it has to be used for variety of advertising materials – from business card to banners for external advertising;
- Color universality.

Strong influence on the consumer has the most important, in our opinion, brand component - the name.

The name plays an important role in the brand building process. It is the most memorable element of the brand individuality. All other elements can be reexamined and modified in time, but commonly the name is inviolable. It is changed very rare, i.e. the name is a sustainable element in the brand building process. It defines the connection between brand and consumers [Aaker, D., 1991].

It is important that the chosen name has to express the nature of the brand, to leave a good impression and to be correct in structure sense. The name determines the

brand position in the consumers mind and it is an insurmountable barrier for competitors.

When is organized the work for forming the name it is necessary for us to be guided by following principles:

- The name has to include general element of emotional and rational profits;
- The name has to be legally protected and do not allow forgery of goods;
- The name has to be easy to read and pronounce;
- The name has to make good impression on consumer.

The objective reflection of the product features in the name makes the company proposal unique, and this turns it on the most effective marketing instrument. The name has to point out these product profits or value that occur positive emotions in the consumer.

The good name has to:

- occur positive associations;
- make sense, which is connected with the general product characteristics;
- be easy for remembering;
- sound good and to be easily pronounced in different languages.

Other verbal problem of the brand is the slogan.

Among specialists there is no unified opinion for that if the slogan is differed from advertising title. Some of them determine these two elements separately. The opponents of this opinion consider that both the slogan and advertising title are built by the same rules and carried out same function.

In our opinion the title is more particular instrument, which is adaptive to conditions changing and less durable than the slogan. If there is a qualitative slogan, which contains attractive and unique commercial proposal, the title is non-compulsory. The slogan unlike the title can be used independent for advertising purposes.

Examining the communication strategy as general, we can say that the “slogan” is more complete and conceptual characteristic of brand than advertising title. Besides the slogan is an effective instrument for distinguishing from the competitors. Exactly the slogan is used for creation of brand image and unifies a series of advertising messages, which are connected with the general theme of the campaign.

The slogan ensures a connection between the company mission and the brand (fig.1).



Figure 1 Connection between the mission of the firm and the brand

The slogan has to abet to action. In this connection it has to contain only this information that will be interesting for consumers. It is established that the people, who notice the slogan are 4-5 times more than people, who read the whole advertisement.

In principle the consumers are reading a print advertising “diagonally”, watching a TV advertisement with “half-opened eyes” and listening to a radio-advertisement “with one ear”. Only if they notice something important for them they are carefully familiarizing with the whole contents of the advertisement [Belch, G., Belch M, 2004].

The effective slogan influences on the conscious and subconscious of the consumer and occurs in him the necessary for the advertiser emotional reaction.

The advertising title is an important component of other element of the marketing communication – the advertising message. The title has to contain not less than 25% of the important advertising information to remain the main idea of the advertisement in the consumer’s mind. The creation of advertising title is based on the principle: “People love to talk with them and about them”. The main accent has to be the profits for the consumer.

The emotions of the consumer, which arose in result of the influence or the advertising title, are instantaneous and reflect the quality of the relations between the brand and the consumer, and also the efficiency of the information for the product and brand image.

4. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this paper the following conclusions can be done:

- 4.1. In practice and theory of marketing there is no unified opinion about the terminology in branding.
- 4.2. The contents of the term “brand” are based on two components: on the process of formation of the symbol of the brand and on the system of relations of consumer to brand on basis of the marketing communications and other information about the product or trademark.
- 4.3. When the elements of the brand are examined we suggest including one more - the Brand Society Value.
- 4.4. The communication strategy is determined as leading component of the branding.
- 4.5. Here are pointed out the general principles, which the communication strategy has to meet.
- 4.6. The most common barriers for brand positioning are identified and methods for their elimination are suggested.
- 4.7. The name plays an important role in the process of brand building. It is the most memorable element of the brand individuality. Its efficiency depends on how correct the name reflects the features and value of the product.

4.8. The connection between the mission, the brand and the slogan has shown. In this connection the effective slogan influences on the conscious and subconscious of the consumer and abets the desired emotional reaction for brand owner in him.

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