

Emotional Branding: A Journey Where Success Becomes A Shared Experience

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Abstract - Price, quality, quantity and features have come of age for creating a competitive niche in the market. Time is ripe for the companies to connect emotionally with people. It has become significant that the companies communicate in a way which helps customer associate with the brand and creates loyalty within the customer. Emotional branding is the new mantra and has helped companies in creating loyalists. This paper explains the need for emotional branding and shows how the success of the company is a shared experience with the customers because of the emotional connect.

Keywords : Branding, Emotional Connection, Loyalty, Apple

I. INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of the year 2014, aerated drinks giant Coca Cola released a song central to the theme of being positive and staying happy. The song does not promote the product directly. It is a song with a catchy tune and inspirational wordings. Cadbury Bournvita launched advertisement campaign based on mother and son duo which gained much popularity. Ad campaign based on the tagline 'Ghar Ka Khana' by Fortune Oil became the topic of conversation. These brands and many more such products can be illustrated which appeal to the emotional side of the customers and public in general. What is special about creating such advertisements? How can a promotional campaign not directly talk about the product but still promote the product in an effective way? Why does a company, which majorly aims to earn profit, still takes the emotional route to stand out among the competitors. The answer to all these questions can be wrapped up in a word known as 'Emotional Branding'.

Today, a customer who wishes to buy a shampoo and goes to a departmental store would be in for confusion because of the variety of shampoo available. He would be able to differentiate among them only on the basis of name and the image the company has created for itself. For example Head & Shoulder (a product of Procter and Gamble) has pegged its image as an anti dandruff shampoo. Thus here branding comes as a rescue. Branding is a process involved in creating a unique name and image in the customers mind mainly through promotional campaigns. A customer would be able to differentiate a product among sea of other products on the basis of goodwill, image and uniqueness the company has created in their minds. Branding creates customer loyalty. For years brands have helped the companies achieve the desired edge to their products. Branding helped the companies to create a premium and accumulate larger returns. Today the scenario has changed. The competition is so stiff that branding alone cannot do the trick. A major question which haunts every marketer is how to differentiate their product in the minds of the customer and how to reinforce it so strongly that the customer does not think twice before buying the product. Creating a brand and goodwill is no longer a luxury, i.e.it has become a necessity. Every company tries to give its product a different logo, image, packaging and a sense of uniqueness. It is important for a company to make the customers remember their products. Creating a connection with the customers so strong that they remember and demand a product is essential. Cut throat competition has made it necessary. It has become important to create hard core loyal customer base for the companies. Emotional branding is a major one step in this direction. Emotional branding emerged in the late 1990's and challenged the traditional method of branding. It is a method to communicate with the customers by appealing directly to their emotional side. Emotional branding has been described as the practice of building brands that directly appeal to customers emotional state, ego, needs and aspiration. It is way to connect irrationally with the customers. Christie Barakat, assistant professor of media and psychology in Florence, Italy, says that while "traditional consumer decision-making models are grounded in the theory of rational choices and are largely cognitive and sequential in nature, emotional branding is irrational." It is irrational in the sense those consumers might place an attachment to a product in the abstract or the way a product makes them feel or appear.

It is imperative for the companies to strike the right cord while touching the emotions of people. It is important to understand the psychology and thinking of the customers targeted by the company.

II. OBJECTIVES

- To understand the shift of focus from branding towards the concept of emotional branding.
- To understand with the help of examples how brands can re-establish themselves in the minds of customers to secure life long loyalty.

III .LITERATURE REVIEW

Yoo and MacInnis, (2005) identified Emotions acts as a leveraging force in the attachment of consumers to brands and how emotions play an intimate role in brand attitude formation for the consumers who live and store the brand experience. Emotions are a strong means of captivating experience-driven consumer attachment to brands and proactively integrating brands into their lives and identity projects. They further explained that as opposed to conventional benefit-driven branding approach, emotional branding focuses on brand meanings that interact with consumer lives and inspire their passion, life stories, memories, and experiences.

• Thompson, C. J., Rindfleisch, A., & Arsel, Z. (2006); discuss how the tenets of emotional branding paradoxically encourage the formation and propagation of doppelganger brand imagery, there developed the counterintuitive proposition that rather than merely being a threat to be managed, a doppelganger brand image can actually benefit a brand by providing early warning signs that an emotional-branding story is beginning to lose its cultural resonance. Their research further demonstrated that emotional-branding strategies may unintentionally foster the cultural development of a doppelganger brand image. They suggested that consumers avoid brands when their emotional-branding promises are viewed as inauthentic and conversely, that emotional branding strategies succeed when they can function as an authenticating narrative for consumers' identity projects. These ideas are congruent with research indicating that consumers' most valued brands are those whose symbolic meanings play an important role in their self-conceptions.

• Mohit jamwal and Vishal Soodan in their paper talks about the Role Of Cognitive Dissonance with 'Emotional Appeal' through their offerings. Cognitive Dissonance and Emotional branding always rely on the fundamental rationale of the basic principle of striking human's feelings. They also reviews that Creation of dissonance is always accompanied by some regret, desire or sorrow in customer's mind, branding with emotions touches a chord with attacking views and in turn, makes a perfect association with the product. Dissonance in customers occurs due to a predetermined commitment to a chosen alternative which leads the customer to compromise with the attractive features of the alternative which has not been chosen. This is something which is not consistent with the desire for those features. Hence it can be said that the decision which are habitual and limited and do not include much of the customer involvement will not produce post purchase dissonance as in such decisions one hardly consider any attractive features in an alternative brand that do not exist in the selected brand.

• Connole et al. (1977) focused that the previous studies on dissonance doesn't have the analysis of dissonance that individuals experience through the various stages of product diffusion through the categories of consumers. Korgaonkar and Moschis (1982) elaborated the relationship between involvement level and post-purchase evaluations in case of products. The study highlighted that the more the expectations before the purchase, the more will be the favorable evaluation in products which involve high consumer involvement.

• Mowen and Minor (1998) studied the importance of emotions as an important component of attitude in their research. The emotional aspect has gain importance over the years and more and more studies are being carried out by keeping in mind the emotions in the purchases of customers.

IT IS TIME TO GET EMOTIONAL

Dale Carnegie, American writer and lecturer says, "while dealing with people let us remember we are not dealing with the creatures of logic. We are dealing with the creatures of emotions". Emotions are the way of life. They affect every facet of life from how one thinks and how one behaves. People make decisions emotionally but tend to explain them rationally. Companies can make their products stand apart by communicating with the customers in such a manner which evokes a strong emotion within them. The communication should have the strength to make people think about the emotion they felt so that the product is able to create a space within the minds of the customers. The concept of emotional branding is not only developed by marketers but also supported by Neuroscientist. In his book *Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things*, cognitive scientist Donald Norman explains how emotions guide us. He states that "Emotions are inseparable from and a necessary part of cognition. Everything we do, everything we think is tinged with emotion, much of it subconscious. In turn, our emotions change the way we think, and serve as constant guide to appropriate behaviour, steering us away from the bad, guiding us toward the good".

The concept of emotional branding can be related to the act of story telling. Story telling which has been a tradition since thousands of years has an emotional appeal to it. A story tends to have a moral and teaches lessons of life. We remember these lessons because of the story behind it. The story is appealing and so is the lesson with it. Same is the logic behind emotional branding. A company creating the advertisement tries to portray the brand along with a touching incident or story or relationships. The product and the brand is not shown till the end. First an emotional communication takes place with the customers and then like the moral of the story the brand and the product make its appearance. It is important to understand that people do not care for the companies or the brands in itself. They care or indulge in only because they feel that these brands are making their life easier, helping them out and providing what they need and satisfying their emotional needs. Striking the right emotional chord is crucial. Hurting the sentiments of the people can do more harm to the brand than good.

Apple is a brand loved by its customers. Customers usually turn into hard core loyalist once they start using Apple. According to news report of Financial Express Apple had a 3 point marketing philosophy which still remains the core of the company. The first one is Empathy, which stated that Apple would understand its customers better than most other brands. Second one is Focus which stresses on eliminating all other frills and to concentrate on one main event. The third and the last is Interactions, which is done at the Apple stores. Following this three point strategy, Apple has created a never dying love among the customers. Marc Gobe, author of *Emotional Branding*, says Apple is the archetypal emotional brand. It is not just intimate with its customers; it is loved. "Apple is about imagination, design and innovation. It goes beyond commerce". This brand is a very good example for how brands can share their success with customers. Apple in 1990s was facing the danger of going out of business. But then Apple was rebranded and this new brand had more connectivity with people. Gobe stresses that Apple is always about people. it provides more power to the people through technology. Thus

Marc Gobe, author and public speaker have provided a breakthrough in emotional branding in 2001. In his book, *Emotional Branding: the new paradigm for connecting brands to people*, he explains that emotional branding is about amazing relationships and connection people have with brands. He has given four pillars of emotional branding. These four pillars can be used to create and sustain an emotional relationship and dialogue. Below given are the four pillars and how they connect with customers to form an emotional bond. Relationships, sensorial experience, imagination and vision are the four pillars. These four pillars help connect emotionally with the customers. These pillars affect the senses of the people and have an emotional connect with them.

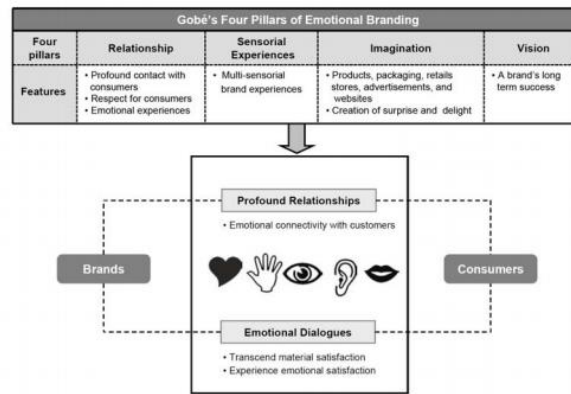


Fig 1: Gobe's Four pillars of Emotional Branding.

Brands should not just connect with people but they should be loved and respected by the customers. When the trust and love for a brand goes beyond logic in the minds of the customers, the brand stands out in the crowd.

III. CONCLUSION

Emotional branding has become a much talked and popular concept. In tapping the emotions of the customers brand have to be careful and hit the correct nerve. Emotional branding is not just about portraying emotions to connect with the customers but it is an effort to understand the psychology of people and their reactions. When brands connect with their customers emotionally, customers become partners in the company's growth. Customers remember the emotions brand had evoked. Emotional branding is a risky yet successful method to make a brand preferred one among the sea of other products.

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