



A STUDY ON IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON CONSUMER BRAND SELECTION

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Abstract

India is a country where people love to live in dreams. They worship celebrities. Celebrities may be Cricket stars like Sachin Tendulkar, Mahendra Singh Dhoni or film star like Salman Khan John Abraham. They treat them as God. Marketers used this very preposition so as to influence that target customers may exist or potential one. Celebrity endorsements are Omni present feature of present-day marketing. The modern corporation invest significant amount of money to align itself and its products with big name celebrities in the belief that they will (a) draw attention to the endorsed products/services and (b) transfer image values to these product/services by virtue of their celebrity profile and engaging attributes. Celebrity appeal is prevalent as a method of persuasive communication. But does this celebrity act as a source of brand building and have impact over purchasing behaviour of customers. To answer this question the article will examine the relationship between celebrity and brands and the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumers buying behaviour as well as how consumers make brand preferences.

“A sign of celebrity is that his name is often worth more than his services.”

INTRODUCTION

Brand is the proprietary visual, emotional, rational and cultural image that you can associate with a company or the product. Few examples will bring home the meaning i.e, Amul- Utterly Butterly delicious, Coke- Thanda matlab Coca-Cola, Pepsi- Yeh Dil maange more, Kurkure- Masti bole to kurkure and Dewoo ka India. Advertisement enforces what exactly the brand stands for and what to expect by its assumption and above all for factors, features and attribute makes it better for competition.

CELEBREITY AND A BRAND

Star power in India can be gauged by the successful endorsements done by Shahrukh Khan (Pepsi, Hyundai, Santro, Sunfeast and Navratan etc), Amitabh Bachchan, Sachin Tendulkar and others. The inevitable question is, if and how the lively interest of the public can be efficiently and effectively used by companies to promote their brands and consequently to increase their sales revenue.

This fact can be brought out by using certain examples i.e, Mr Amitabh Bachchan promoting Cadbury chocolate after the fiasco of infestation when the image of Cadbury India went very low in the eyes of people. Soon the company found a perfect fit and a reliable celebrity to transmit the correct message and help regenerating and lost trust. The fit between the product and celebrities is evident as Mr Bachchan and Cadbury chocolate both of tested troubled times and still they stand tall and love the trust they both share with the people all across India. This is a live example of how a celebrity brought certain attributes to a product like chocolate.

A celebrity endorsement is powerful, has become evidence from the above example but, why is it so? This power is offered by the following elements, which also creates a “Top Mind of The Position”.

- Instant awareness, knowledge about the brand and easy recall.
- Value and image of the brand is defined, highlighted and refreshed by the celebrity.
- The celebrity adds new edge and dimension to the brand.
- Celebrity, trust, association, aspiration and connectivity to brand.
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Factors Driving the Celebrity's Impact On the Brand

Attribute Machine Impact of the celebrity used on the brand will be determined by the process chosen to select the celebrity for the concerned product. The kind of celebrity chosen will depend on the objective of endorsing the kind of product. Attribute matching is one of the most important factors when it comes to choosing a celebrity for the above objectives and also has a positive or negative impact on a brand.

Establishing a Perfect Match: Research proves that a spokesperson especially for a service product or organisation (ICICI- first Amitabh Bachchan, now Shahrukh Khan) interacts with the type of brand being advertised. These stars communicate the values of the product and transform an ordinary service into miracle solution for all problems of an ordinary customer.

The product and the celebrity were a perfect match, following are few examples.

CELEBRITY ENDORSER	PRODUCT/COMPANY
M S DHONI	
VIRAT KOHLI	
AMITABH BACHCHAN	
SHAHRUKH KHAN	

Primary data States, for celebrity spokesperson to be truly effective they should be knowledgeable, experienced, mature and a benchmark in their respective field and qualified to talk about the product.

Celebrity power

Celebrities possess different types of social power- expert power, reference Power, legitimate power, coercive power and reward power that enable them to have an effect on consumers. Apart from that a celebrity attains a power to influence the consumers by his various attributes say Credibility Attractiveness

Source credibility

Central goal of advertising is the convincing of consumers and persuasion to purchase, the ultimate objective, though not openly spoken is to somehow attract consumers to the market offering of the company, generating positive attitude, reinforce positive associations and ultimately to generate sales, maybe at trial purchase. At later stages, the sponsor may work towards creating a brand loyalty but generating initial sales or increasing the existing sales is the primary objective. In this respect, the credibility of an endorser along with the advertisement place an important role in convincing the target audience of the attractiveness of the company's brand generate sales. Pursuing a celebrity endorsement strategy enables advertisers to project a credible image in terms of expertise, persuasiveness, trustworthiness, and objectiveness.

Source attractiveness

It refers to endorser's physical appearance, personality, likeability and similarity to the receiver, thus to the perceived social value of the source. This behaviour mainly goes back to halo effects whereby person who performs well on one dimension: example-physical attractiveness or top professional performance, social status are assumed to excel on other levels as well i.e, happiness and coldness. This is evident from the use of Fardeen Khan, modern, dynamic, outgoing and smart personality for Provogue, he translates the modernism of the brand well. Titan uses Aamir Khan and his different avatars for communicating to the public that their watches are as reliable and passionate as Amir Khan is for films. Certain elements that generate a perfect match or compatibility between the celebrity and brand image are:

Celebrity's fit with brand image along with celebrity- target audience match.

Celebrity associated values and celebrity- product watch.

Costs of acquiring the celebrity and his her popularity among the controversy risks associated with the celebrity.

Advantages of a Celebrity Endorsing A Brand

Brands have been leveraging celebrity appeal for a long time. Across categories, whether in product or services, more and more brands are banking on the mass appeal of celebrities. As soon as new face ascends the popularity charts, advertisers queue up to have its splashed all over. Witness the spectacular rise of Sania Mirza Irfan Pathan in endorsement in a matter of few months. The accrument of celebrity endorsements can be justified by the following advantages that are bestowed on the overall brand:

Establishment of credibility: Approval of a brand fosters a sense of trust for the brand among the target audience- this is especially true in case of new products. We had Shahrukh Khan- Santro campaign. At lunch, Shahrukh Khan endorsed Santro and this ensured that brand awareness was created in a market awareness was created in a market, which did not even know the brand.

Ensured attention: Celebrities ensures attention of the target group by breaking clutter of advertisements and making the ad and the brand more noticeable.

PR Coverage: is another reason for using celebrities. Managers perceive celebrities as topical, which create high PR coverage. A good example of integrated celebrity campaigns is one of the world's leading pop groups, The Spice Girls, who have not only appeared in advertisements for Pepsi, but also and launching and PR events. Indeed celebrity-company marriages are covered by most media from television to newspapers. (The Spice Girl and Pepsi.)

Higher degree of recall: People tends to commensurate the personalities of the celebrity with the brand thereby increasing the recall value.

Associated benefit: a celebrity's preference for a brand gives out a persuasive message- because the celebrity benefiting from the brand, the consumer will also benefit.

Psychographic Connect: Celebrities are loved and adored by their fans and advertisers use stars to capitalise on these feelings to sway the fans towards their brand.

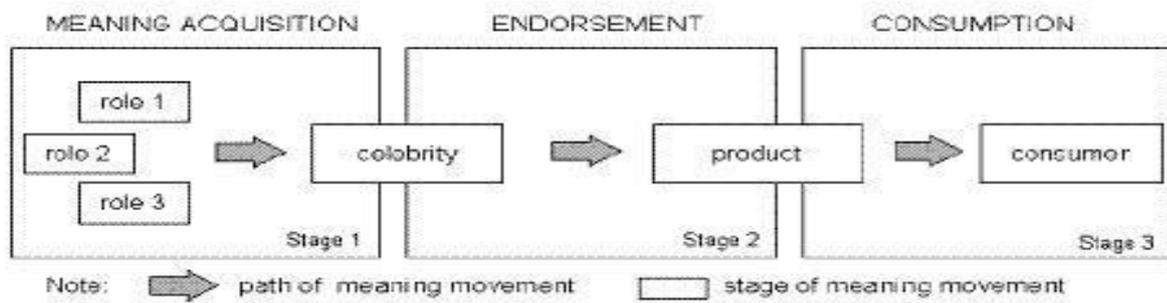
Democratic Connect: Different stars appeals differently to various demographic segments (age, gender, class geography etc)

Mass appeal: Some stars have a universal appeal and therefore prove to be good bet to generate interests among masses.

Rejuvenating a stagnant brand: With the objective of infusing fresh life into the stagnant Chyawanprash category and staving off competitions from various brands, Dabur India roped in Bachchan for an estimated rupees Rs 8 crore celebrity endorsement cans sometimes compensate the lack of innovative ideas.

Transferring Meaning Model

McCracken (1989) explains the effectiveness of celebrity spokesperson by assessing meanings consumers associate with the endorser and eventually transfer to the brand. McCracken suggests meaning transfer model, which is composed of 3 subsequent stages. First, the meaning associated with the famous person moves from the endorser to the product or brand. Thus, meanings attributed to the celebrity become associated with the brand in the consumer's mind. Finally, in the consumption process, the brand's meaning is required by the customer. The third stage of the model explicitly shows the importance of a consumer's role in the process of endorsing brands with famous persons



Source: Meaning Transfer in the endorsement process (Adopted from McCracken 1989)

Conclusion

It has been proved from the discussion that celebrity endorsements are a powerful and useful tool that magnifies the effect of a campaign but the word of caution to be followed seriously; celebrities alone do not guarantee success nor does the great advertising campaign or the best possible product. It is the combination makes consumers rather more cynical about the product and celebrity endorsements. Majority of the consuming population also knows what is advertising and how it actually works and this knowledge of consumer makes the task of celebrity endorsement all over more difficult and of several factors and elements that work together for the success of a brand and its expectance in the minds of consumer as well as for its marketing offering.

Modern day consumers are well educated and smart, they know celebrities are being paid for these endorsements and this knowledge challenging for the advertising companies and sponsors. Indian companies both advertising and product offering companies have to make an effort to overcome this ever-mounting challenge.

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