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Building brands identity

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Abstract

It is generally known that the decisional process regarding to choose or not to choose a brand is determined by anecdotal evidence. Having a great product without a strong identification is not enough. If a potential customer can relate to previous experience with the identity of a brand, he surely developed a brand image and is more likely to prefer that specific brand.

In this research paper the components of a brand identity are going to be studied in order to have a hierarchy of the importance of the elements and an impact dimension. All this will also result in arguments for the relevance of a brand identity strategy.

Even though a vast amount of academic research regarding brand identity is available, there is not enough research regarding the correlation between brand identity strategy and brand image and no simple basic brand identity framework can be found.

Associating your product with a strong brand identity is a key factor in competitive advantage and leads to great financial rewards. The smaller is the difference between the perceived brand image and the entity's aimed brand identity; the more efficient was the brand identity strategy.

It is important to note that Nescafe brand is subject for the testing of the developed framework and is used to support the findings of this work paper.

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1. Introduction

In these days, a product or a service is almost irrelevant without the brand. It cannot be identified or associated with what influences in fact our purchasing process. It is the overall effort of a brand identity what actually determines the success or failure; and a better understanding of it and its result, namely the brand image, is an important matter.

Some of the problems identified by me are the complex processes of testing, designing, evaluating and comparing brand identities. Consequently, a simple brand identity framework will be created tested and compared to an existing brand identity blueprint. When we speak about identity and image management, we discover a high degree of unpredictability, uncertainty and a creativity factor added to the management lines. In order to have consistency within the company, it is the best situation to reduce risk and doubt associated to certain departments by the skeptical entities that are involved.

In the process of building a brand identity, more important an active brand identity, we prefer to have certain guidelines or frameworks in order to do it right from the first attempt. As we all know, according to (Lord Kelvin) what can be measured can be improved. Considering this, having the dimension of impact of the general brand identity on a consumer's perception, we can increase predictability, reduce risk and increase the efficiency from the beginning of the development of a brand.

2. Literature review

2.1. Conceptual delimitations

To define the well-known but confusing concept of brand, we acknowledge the definition presented by AMA (American Marketing Association). Name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.

Another concept about brand would be Van Den Heaver's, (2000) opinion that the definition earlier mentioned does not characterize a brand, but the following one does. He says that brands are what the entity wants its target customer to think and feel about their products or service. If we adapt this definition to the work paper, we could say that he refers to an approach of the brand identity.

According to Shiva N. (2005), it is said that the brand is not a tangible asset and has no physical existence and the value of such thing cannot be determined, excepting specific business transactions. Therefore, we consider that a simple non-physical evaluation system of a brand identity for guidance purpose can be useful.

Many other opinions can be discovered and perhaps accepted. But in literature we can identify an agreement between Kotler P., Keller K. L., (2006), Keller K. L., (2003), Shiva N., (2004) and Duncan T., (2005) that states that a brand is a product or service differentiated by its positioning relative to the competition. From our point of view, these authors were referring especially to what produces the differentiation and we consider it a fair approach based on most primitive form of the brand.

Another definition and conceptualization of a brand, which we consider accurate and also links the brand to identity to brand image is the one that says that a brand is not necessarily a product; but it is the product's essence, its meaning, and its direction, and it defines its identity in time and space. Too often brands are examined through their component parts: the brand name, its logo, design or packaging, advertising or sponsorship, or image or name recognition, or very recently, in terms of financial brand valuation; but it is not enough. Real brand management however, begins much earlier, with a strategy and a consistent, integrated vision. Its central concept is brand identity, not brand image. This last definition might seem to contradict the course of our work paper; but we must remind you that we are focused on the brand identity and not the entire brand which is formed by brand identity and brand image.