

Concept of Branding

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Introduction

In the past decades, branding was mostly through proper advertising via monitored broadcast channels such as radio and TV. Hence, building a successful brand had much to do with successful marketing on these platforms and ensuring consistency. However, much has changed in branding due to the introduction and advancement of concepts, and technologies that have changed the relationship between the consumer and the business. To organizations, the reach of marketing messages is now vast, and it is easier to create a brand. Hence, branding has increased, and more organizations want to be attached to entities that reflect their mission and have been recognized on different platforms.

On the other hand, consumers are now knowledgeable, able to interact with each other and understand that they have a voice. Hence, they readily share their experiences with others online and through other platforms. Therefore, in this digital age consumer profiling as well as organizational efforts, immensely contribute to the formation of a formidable brand (Hanna, & Rowley, 2015). Ideally, the success of an organization is closely tied to its brand more than other traditional determinants such as price or mission.

One of the potential causes for this shift and high emphasis on brand image is the social media. The internet and social media applications have provided an avenue for consumers to interact with each other, the business and the business to relate to the consumer directly. Unlike the past where interactions were primarily on telephones, TV or Radio, the new scene involves direct reach and interactions with the consumer. For instance, before a customer purchases a particular product or pays for a service, it is highly likely that she will check customer reviews made by other consumers and having a recognized brand is a huge addition. Hence, branding has

shifted to ensuring a customer has a positive experience with the organization. This has substantially increased the branding efforts of companies as having an unrecognized brand or poor brand image online through reviews affects the profit margins of the company (Wind & Hays, 2016).

The Virgin Group known mainly through the Virgin Atlantic airline is one of the most recognizable company brands that has successfully existed and ventured into different industries other than transport. The Virgin brand has invested in virgin trains, virgin mobile USA, Virgin Holidays and other successful businesses around the globe. Branding has been one of the core drivers of performance in the organization. The company has successfully created a brand image, name, symbol, and also perception by developing its brand equity. Through the elements of brand equity notably; brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association and brand loyalty, Virgin group has established its brand and associated specific attributes to its brand such as quality, fun, and a good customer experience.

Even though the brand existed before the information age, the company adapted to the new dynamics by using the internet and social media to create awareness. Most of the awareness efforts done by the company have been by sharing the experiences of the customer and creating a formidable online presence (Clarkson, 2018). The Virgin has centered on its brand associations which include their interactions with employees, advertisements, the efficiency of payment and quality perception. The Virgin group has managed to lead in customer service and empowering of the employees. Also, the brand CEO, Richard Branson has achieved celebrity status and created publicity through interactions and charity for the organization. The brand has managed to attain high-quality service and also showcase this to the target customer. For instance, Virgin Atlantic has its executive lounges in airports that offer consumers an unforgettable experience

other than the flight. These efforts have assisted the company in developing brand loyalty which is also affirmed through issuance of loyalty cards and vouchers for usable in all Virgin group companies (Clarkson, 2018).

Brand recognition and equity have helped the Virgin group as it has a recognizable name and stature in the market. The company brands close to 400 subsidiaries and association with the Virgin brand has helped businesses grow. Branding has a positive effect on an organization's Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in that it associates the firm to perceived quality. In this, potential customers will associate the organization with the quality associated with the brand. The brand name also associates the organization with the customers who are loyal to the brand and the experience they had with the brand on a different service (Smolkova, 2018). Branding puts a reliable name and experience to an organization and allows a business to access a broader market.

References

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