

A STUDY ON “RISE ABOVE THE FEAR”- REPOSITIONING OF MOUNTAIN DEW

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ABSTRACT

Brand attempts to establish and keep up a promise. The process of establishing and keeping up the promise happens through well thought positioning of a brand. As a result of never before changes in the market and emerging competition across the globe, brands tend to alter their positioning in order to keep up their promises. This article titled “A Study on Rise Above the Fear – Repositioning of Mountain Dew” is carried out to understand how the new positioning of the carbonated beverage is seen by the consumers.

This research study was carried out with 83 respondents who have had a recent experience of going through the new commercial and had bought the drink. The study was done to understand how customers felt with the new positioning of the drink. Dimensions of a desirable differentiating factor by Keller (2008) was adopted to find the factors of Distinctiveness, Relevance and Believability that the consumers associated with brand post its new positioning.

Key words: Branding, Brand Repositioning.

INTRODUCTION

Brands over years have seen a shift in their role. They are no more just a differentiating tool but are seen as an important part of the firm's success. Brands conceptualized as personalities facilitate a firm in the process of positioning associated with emotional attributes. (Anees Ahmed & K S Thyagaraj, 2014). This apart from resulting in successful positioning, also results in increased brand equity. A strong brand identity is formed when a company blends its differentiation with relevance. Brand differentiation is the ability for a brand to stand apart from its competitors. A brand should be as unique as possible. A brand is built and maintained via offering a set of differentiating promises to consumers and delivering those promises to the consumers as leverage value. Relevance is the perceived importance of the brand to a large market.

Uncovering your brand's differentiation and relevance through an unbiased brand analysis is of utmost importance when trying to distinguish your brand from competitors. It is important to uncover your brand features that consumers can relate to. Investing in a strong brand identity is an ongoing process. In today's economy building a strong brand identity is a work in process. Brand Repositioning is changing the positioning of a brand. A particular positioning statement may not work with a brand. Repositioning has been a very hugely talked about concept in the field of marketing and it has been a very difficult concept also to be implemented. There have been brands that have been successfully repositioned over the years, like Airtel and even the most trusted brand of India TATA's had to undergo a makeover to appeal to the younger and more knowledgeable generation.

Indian Soft Drinks Industry: As of 2012, Indian Soft Drinks Industry accounted to over 50 billion rupees. The Industry is growing at 6 to 7% annually. In India, Coke and Pepsi have a combined market share of around 95% directly or through franchisees. Campa Cola has a 1% share, and the rest is divided among local players. Industry watchers say, fake products also account for a good share of the balance. There are about 110 soft drink producing units (60% being owned by Indian bottlers) in the country, employing about 125,000 people. There are two distinct segments of the market, cola and non-cola drinks. The cola segment claims a share of 62%, while the non-cola segment includes soda, clear lime, cloudy lime and drinks with orange and mango flavours. The penetration level of soft drinks in India is still low compared with other developing markets. Increasing demand for healthy and hygienic products is expected to fuel the growth of the soft drink sector. Increasing penetration in rural areas will also contribute to considerable sales increments.

PepsiCo: PepsiCo entered India in 1989 and has grown to become one of the largest food and beverage businesses in India. PepsiCo India has been consistently investing in the country and has built an expansive beverage and snack food business supported by 37 beverage bottling plants and 3 food plants. PepsiCo India's diverse portfolio includes iconic brands like Pepsi, Lay's, Kurkure, Tropicana 100%, Gatorade and Quaker. Within 2 decades, the company has been able to organically grow eight brands that generate Rs. 1,000 crore or more in estimated annual retail sales and are household names, trusted across the country.

Mountain Dew: Mountain dew is a carbonated soft drink targeted at the youth. Owned by PepsiCo, mountain dew was launched in India during 2003 which was 4 years after the launch of Sprite by its competitor, Coca-cola. The main formula of Mountain Dew was invented in Virginia. The drink was named and first marketed in Johnson City, Tennessee and Knoxville, Tennessee in 1948. Targeting youth and highlighting the spirit of adventure, PepsiCo has taken all measures to ensure that the brand remained young and fresh in the minds of the consumers. In the year 2007, four year old product was modified and launched with an intensive 9 month program where only the name of the

original product was left unchanged. In the next 3 years, Salman Khan was roped in as the first brand ambassador in December 2010. Hithik Roshan was made the new brand ambassador during February 2013. December 2014 witnessed a regional repositioning by bringing in two south Indian actors as their brand ambassadors to boost up sales in South India.

Research Methodology: This study was done using an exploratory research design to explore how consumers felt with the new positioning of Mountain Dew. A sample of 83 respondents was selected through convenience sampling method. Data was analyzed using simple percentage analysis. The research focused on understanding how consumers respond on the three factors of brand differentiation coined by Keller. Keller identified three desirable differentiating factors namely Distinctiveness, Relevance and Believability. Distinctiveness refers to the ability of the brand to stand ahead of its competition. Relevance is referred to as the ability of the brand to relate itself with the consumers need or wants. Believability on the other hand is the belief that the consumers have on the brand or the ability of the brand to keep up its promise.

DISCUSSION

Data collected was analysed based on the three desirable differentiating factors of Keller using simple percentage analysis and the results are discussed in the ensuing text.

Brand Distinctiveness: When respondents were asked about how they felt Mountain dew was different from any other carbonated drink, they gave a positive feedback with 86% of respondents agreeing that the new positioning with south Indian actors has helped them look at the brand as an international brand with a local spirit. Around 40% of the respondents felt that other competing products were not impressive in coming closer to them as the brand ambassadors were not known people. Another 30% of the respondents said they felt the student brand ambassador of the competitors, did not have a strong differentiating appeal as the new mountain dew's positioning. To sum up in comparison to competitors, the new positioning of mountain dew had an upper hand when it comes to positioning the brand as a distinct brand.

Brand Relevance: Relevance of a brand is the ability of the brand to relate to the consumers' needs or wants. The youth market today looks at an adventure drink like mountain dew to help them gain new spirit to face their challenges. 65% of respondents strongly agreed that mountain dew gives them a new energy to face their challenges. Another 28% agree the same. So it is evident that the new positioning of mountain dew has brand relevance.

Brand Believability: Believability of the brand is its ability to deliver its promise. The brand promise of mountain dew is "avoid fear and reach new heights". 76% of respondents communicated that the brand Mountain Dew has the ability to energize the consumers to fight fears. In summary, Mountain Dew is successful in its new positioning.

CONCLUSION

This study conducted with 83 respondents concludes that Mountain Dew is successful with its new brand positioning. This conclusion is arrived in with the simple percentage analysis made on three desirable differentiating factors coined by Keller.

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