Brand Ambassador Based Branding an Impact on Consumer Behaviour

*M. Bharath Kumar and **S.R. Pandian

Abstract

Brand Ambassadors serve as the face of their client company at promotional events. They offer the company a chance to make a good impression on prospects. An effective brand ambassador is one who is interested in the product they are promoting, who can easily connect with the product. “During the live brand experience they become the identity of the brand, because they are the only human interface between the brand personality and the consumer. They are the people who have the potential to appeal to the desires of the participants and strengthen their relationship with the brand.

The Purpose of this study is to investigate the influencing factors on consumers buying behaviour, Attitude towards the celebrity or brand ambassadors based advertisements and purchase intentions of the endorsed product and the qualities required to make the celebrity advertisement more effective. This study facilitates an understanding of the consumer attitude towards the advertisement, and their choice of celebrities. Studies reveal that there exists a wide difference in the perceptions and attitudes of consumers in Urban, Semi urban and rural areas. The study offers an extended scope for further research. It provides latest information about brand ambassador’s selection in advertisements. With the help of the findings of this study the telecommunication service providers can formulate the appropriate new strategies in selecting the brand ambassador’s to change the customers buying decisions.

INTRODUCTION

A brand is the identity of a specific product, service, or business. A brand can take many forms, including a name, sign, symbol, color combination or slogan. The word brand began simply as a way to tell one person’s cattle from another by means of a hot iron stamp. A legally protected brand name is called a trademark. The word brand has continued to evolve to encompass identity - it affects the personality of a product, company or service. The psychological aspect, sometimes referred to as the brand image, is a symbolic construct created within the minds of people and consists of all the information and expectations associated with a product or service. Careful brand management seeks to make the product or services relevant to the target audience.
Effective brand names build a connection between the brand personalities as it is perceived by the target audience and the actual product/service. Brand identity is fundamental to consumer recognition and symbolizes the brand’s differentiation from competitors.

Brand identity is what the owner wants to communicate to its potential consumers. However, over time, a product’s brand identity may acquire (evolve), gaining new attributes from consumer perspective but not necessarily from the marketing communications an owner percolates to targeted consumers. Therefore, brand associations become handy to check the consumer’s perception of the brand.

Brand identity needs to focus on authentic qualities - real characteristics of the value and brand promise being provided and sustained by organizational and/or production characteristics.

The main motive behind total branding or Brand Identity may be decocted as an attempt to mix various activities to win customer preference for which celebrity branding would be one of the tool to reach customer minds. “Brand Ambassador based branding is a global phenomenon and it assumes paramount importance in developing countries like India where celebrities are given the status of “demi” Gods by the masses.

According to Saurbh’s quote on branding, “Any brand can get a celebrity. That is easy. But getting a celebrity consistent with the right brand, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way... that is not easy.”

The most popular forms of celebrity influenced brand lines are for FMCG, Electronics in Indian Sectors. Many singers, models and film stars now have now become Brand ambassador of at least one product or service.

Lately there has been a trend towards celebrity voice-overs in advertising. Some celebrities have distinct voices which are recognizable even when they not present on-screen. And example of such an advertising campaign is Shilpa Shetty for the Pantene Shampoo.

More recently, advertisers have begun attempting to quantify and qualify the use of celebrities in their marketing campaigns by evaluating their awareness, appeal, and relevance to a brand’s image and the celebrity’s influence on consumer buying behaviour. For example, Omnicom agency Davie Brown Entertainment has created an independent index for brand marketers and advertising agencies that determine a celebrity’s ability to influence brand affinity and consumer purchase intent. According to the Wall Street Journal, the Davie-Brown Index (DBI) will “enable advertisers and ad-agency personnel to determine if a particular public figure will motivate consumers who see them in an ad to purchase the product advertised.

Motives of Brand Ambassadors

- Instant Brand Awareness and Recall with reference to the Celebrity.
- Celebrity values explain, and refresh the brand image.
- Celebrities add the fourth dimension to the brand image.
- Convincing clients.

Scope of Celebrity Based Branding

Through Celebrity Based Branding the health of a brand can definitely be improved up to some extent. An appropriately used celebrity can prove to be a massively powerful tool
that magnifies the effects of a campaign. But the feeling of cautiousness should always be there. The fact to be emphasized is that celebrities alone do not guarantee success, as consumers nowadays understand advertising. They know what advertising is and how it works. People realize that celebrities are being paid a lot of money for endorsements and this knowledge makes them cynical about celebrity endorsements.

Celebrity and the Brand a Compatibility Study

A celebrity is used to impart credibility and aspirational values to a brand, but the celebrity needs to match the product. A good brand campaign idea and an intrinsic link between the celebrity and the message are musts for a successful campaign. Celebrities are no doubt good at generating attention, recall and positive attitudes towards advertising provided that they are supporting a good idea and there is an explicit fit between them and the brand. On the other hand, they are rendered useless when it comes to the actual efficiency of the core product, creating positive attitudes to brands, purchase intentions and actual sales.

Parameters required that relate compatibility between the celebrity and brand image are:

- Celebrity’s fit with the brand image
- Target audience match
- Celebrity associated values
- Costs of acquiring the celebrity
- Product match
- Celebrity controversy risk
- Celebrity popularity
- Celebrity availability
- Celebrity physical attractiveness
- Celebrity credibility
- Celebrity prior endorsements
- Whether celebrity is a brand user & Celebrity profession

Recently we could see a lot of Brands using Brand Ambassadors for their Products, example Shah Rukh- for Airtel campaign in the north and in Tamil Nadu the same Ad is campaigned by the Actor Karthik with the objective of mitigating the impediment cellular services in the market. The objective was to garner faster brand recognition, association and emotional unity with the target group. India is one country, which has always idolized the stars of the celluloid world. Therefore it makes tremendous sense for a brand to procure a celebrity. In India there is an exponential potential for a celebrity endorsement to be perceived as genuinely relevant, thereby motivating consumers to go in for the product.

Advantages of a Brand Ambassador

- Product Credibility
- Confirmed Audience Attention
- Higher degree of reach and quick recall
- Associative Benefit
- Extenuating a flecked image
- Psychographic Connect
- Demographic Connect
- Group Appeal
- Rejuvenate a stagnant brand
- Celebrity endorsement can sometimes compensate for lack of innovative ideas

Disadvantages of a Celebrity in a Brand

The celebrity approach has a few serious risks:

1. The reputation of the celebrity may derogate after he/she has endorsed the product
2. The vampire effect: This terminology pertains to the issue of a celebrity overshadowing the brand. If there is no congruency between the celebrity and the brand, then the audience will remember the celebrity and not the brand.
3. Inconsistency in the professional popularity of the celebrity.
4. Multi brand representation by the same celebrity would lead to overexposure
5. Celebrities endorsing one brand and using another (competitor)
6. Mismatch between the celebrity and the image of the brand
CONCLUSION

A brief assessment of the current Indian market situation and the explanation above indicates that Brand Ambassador based advertising strategies can, indeed justify the high costs associated with this form of advertising. Thus the choice of celebrities to fulfill that role has become common practice for brands competing in today’s cluttered media environment.

There are several reasons for such extensive use of celebrities. Because of their high profile, celebrities may help advertisements stand out from the surrounding clutter, thus improving their communicative ability. But it would be presumptuous to consider celebrity endorsement as a panacea for all barricades.

Brand Ambassadors if used effectively, makes the brand stand out, galvanizes brand recall and facilitates instant awareness. To achieve this, the marketer needs to be really disciplined in choice of a celebrity. Hence the right use of celebrity can escalate the Unique Selling Proposition of a brand to new heights; but a cursory orientation of a celebrity with a brand may prove to be claustrophobic for the brand. A celebrity is a means to an end, and not an end in him/her.

REFERENCES

Khatri, Dr. Puja, *Celebrity Endorsement :A Strategic Promotion Perspective.*
www.coolavenues.com/.../impact-celebrity-endorsements-overall-brand-0.