

Academic Script

Introduction:

Today's session on Brand Management is all about understanding the different steps needed to build a strong brand. The brand resonance model is the base for brand building blocks and creates strong brand equity which is a base for strong brand building. Strong brand equity demands a thorough study of the customers and their mindset for a profitable and a successful marketing activity. We would also be discussing the various sources of brand knowledge and the different techniques and tools used to measure brand recognition, recall, feelings, image, perceptions and relationships. The session on the whole aims to discuss the various ways of building strong brands.



Building a Strong Brand

Brand Resonance model stands as a basis on which a brand is developed. The model describes the sequential steps, one stage leading to another, which enhances and encourages the importance of building a strong brand.

The Four Steps of Brand Building:

1. Ensure identification of the brand with customers and building an image of the brand in customers' minds with a specific product class, product benefit or customer need.
2. Firmly, establish the totality of brand meaning in the minds of customers by strategically linking a host of tangible and intangible brand associations.
3. Elicit the proper customer responses to the brand
4. Convert brand responses to create brand resonance and an intense , active loyalty relationship between customers and the brand

The brand steps enlisted leads to certain evident questions which implies in parenthesis

1. Who are you? (brand identity)
2. What are you? (brand meaning)
3. What about you? What do you think I feel about you?(brand response)
4. What about you and me? What kind of associations and how much of a connection would I like to have with you? (brand relationships)

Source: Keller et al. (2015), Building, Measuring and Managing brand equity, Pearson

The branding ladder indicates that the relationship building is possible only when an identity of the brand is created. The building blocks are assembled as a pyramid and the highest brand equity is considered on reaching the top of the pyramid. The six building blocks are as per the following figure

Figure 1: Brand Resonance Pyramid

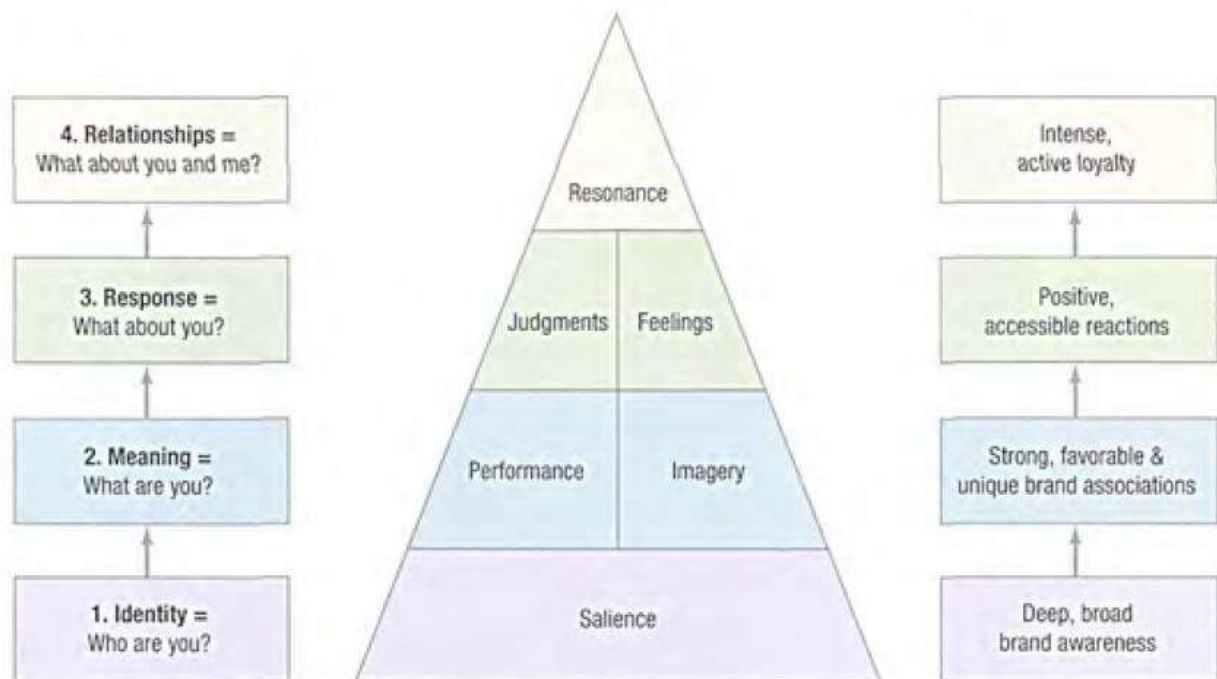


Figure 2: Sub dimensions of Brand building blocks



1. Brand Salience is a measurement of brand awareness, and the frequency of remembering the brand under various situations. It also gives information of the different needs satisfied by the brand. Awareness is associated with the purchase, consumption and usage of the brand. The depth of the brand awareness is associated with frequency of recollecting the brand during the purchase situations. The breadth of the brand awareness is the purchase and usage situations in which the brand elements are recollected. The recollection depends upon the organizational efforts to create product knowledge.
2. Brand Performance is a measure of designing and delivering a product to meet and fully satisfy the customer's utilitarian, aesthetic and economic customer needs. It reflects how well the functional needs of the customers are met by the product or service.
3. Brand Imagery aims to meet the psychological and social needs of the customers. It describes the general image or opinion of the customers which refers more to the intangible aspects of the brand. The imagery associations of the product are formed through direct associations, personal experiences or through advertising or through word of mouth. Some important intangibles linked to the brand are user profiles, purchase and usage situations, personality and values, history, heritage and experiences.
4. Brand Judgments are the personal opinions of the customers with respect to the brand after their personal evaluations of various brand performances and imagery associations. Brand judgments are majorly based on factors namely quality, credibility, consideration and superiority of the brand product or services.
5. Brand Feelings are customers' emotional responses and reactions to the brand. The emotional responses evoked by the marketing program for the brand or by other means. The feelings can be positive or negative and can be mild or intense. There are many important consumer emotions reflected within the brand and types of brand-building feelings are listed as warmth, fun, excitement, security, social approval and self respect.
6. Brand Resonance is defined as the ultimate relationship the customer develops with the brand. Resonance describes the

nature of the relationship and indicates the intensity in terms of depth of the psychological bond, level of activity and synchronization of customers with the brands. These two dimensions are further broken down into four categories namely behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community and active engagement. Some examples of brands with high Resonance/???? are Harley Davidson and Apple. The brand conveys a strong sense of community to the customers.

Brand Communities reflect the sense of community amongst the people using the same brand and they share a strong affiliation or kinship with the community, A stronger sense of community among loyal customer reflects positive brand attitudes and intentions. Some popular brand communities are developed for the brands, Apple, Harley Davidson, Jeep and many more.

Implications of Brand Building

The brand resonance model is identified as a yardstick to measure the effective brand building efforts and also serves as a guide for marketing research initiatives.

The noteworthy branding tenets are identified as

- **Customers own the brands**
The power of the brand and its ultimate value to the firm resides with the customer. The customers response to the various marketing activities decided depends on the knowledge that has been generated in the minds of the people.
- **Don't take shortcuts with brands**
A great brand is not build accidentally but involves careful logical concrete goals. The length of building a strong brand is therefore considered as directly proportional to the amount of time it takes to create sufficient and effective awareness and understanding so that; firmly held and felt beliefs and attitudes about the brand are formed, that can serve as the foundation for brand equity.
- **Brands should have a duality**
Brands appeal to both the head and the heart. Hence the brand has two major ways of building loyalty and resonance. The left and right hand side of the pyramid, represents the two different ways in which brand appeals are formed. Strong brands blend product performance and imagery to create a rich, varied yet a complimentary set of consumer responses to the brand.

- Brands should have richness
The level of detailing is high in the brand resonance model thereby showing numerous ways of constructing meanings with the customers. This collective meanings lead to the development of a strong brand. The various associations build a brand image which is reinforced to strengthen the consumer bonds to the brands. On the other hand the brand may have unique associations creating brand distinctiveness. It is therefore concluded that the strong brands have both breadth (in terms of duality) and depth (in terms of richness). Richness of brands does not necessitate the need for the brand to score high in all brand categories.
- Brand Resonance provides important focus.
Brand resonance is at the top of the pyramid. It helps formulate important marketing decisions and the market building brands consider brand resonance as a goal and a means to interpret the marketing activities. The key dimensions of brand resonance are taken as consumer loyalty, attachment, community or engagement with the brand. The imagery associations, consumer judgments also support the brand dimension resonance.

Measuring Sources of Brand Equity: Capturing Customer Mindset

Building and managing brand equity specifies the need to know and understand the customer's brand knowledge structures. It is important for the marketers to know the customer perceptions, thoughts, feelings, images, attitude towards different brands. These mental outlines provide marketers to form a good brand positioning with the correct point of parity and difference to help make good brand decisions. However, there is no such effective way of measuring the brand knowledge structures as these exist only in the customer's minds.

The brand value chain also shapes the consumer mind set as the source of brand equity. It is important for the management to understand the consumption, usage or purchase behavior of the customers to create successful and profitable marketing programs.

In order to understand the potential sources of brand equity or understanding and capturing the customer's mindset, qualitative and quantitative research tools are linked with them.

Qualitative Research Techniques

The qualitative research techniques mostly identify with the possible brand associations and sources of brand equity. There are many ways of finding the different associations linked to the brand and their responding strength, favorability and uniqueness.

Qualitative research techniques are unstructured research approaches permitting a range of questions and answers. It is a good research tool during exploratory research and aids in consumer brand and product perceptions.

In this section, we will identify the various quantitative research tools to gather customer knowledge to identify outcomes of brand equity such as price elasticity, brand choice and preference.

1. Free Association

This is an effective way to profile brand associations through free association techniques. Here the customer is asked to note the cue or any other specific trait of the product category to form a rough mental map for the brand.

Managers use this free association technique to form possible brand associations and the possible favorability, strength and uniqueness of the brand. The answers to free associations clarify a range of possible associations for the marketers. Consumer responses recorded can be either oral or written.

Examples of some useful questions include

What do you like about the brand? What are its positive aspects or advantages? What do you find unique about the brand? How is it different from other brands?

2. Projective Techniques

Projective techniques are diagnostic tools to uncover true opinions and feelings of consumers when they are unwilling or otherwise unable to express themselves on specific issues. This method draws some true beliefs and feelings. This method is useful to bring out deeply rooted motivations or personality or socially sensitive subjects. Some types of projective techniques used by the marketers to study the consumer mind set are:

- Rorschach test is a positive projective technique in which experiments present ink blots and the marketers ask the people to identify and what do they recollect after viewing these blots.
- Completion and Interpretation tasks
This projective technique uses the incomplete or ambiguous stimuli to draw customer responses. Empty bubbles are placed as given in cartoons to the customers to depict and express their feelings and thoughts
- Comparison tasks
These tests are used to understand the imagery associations of the consumers by noting the comparisons made by the people with regards to, countries, animals, activities, fabrics, occupations, cars, magazines, nationalities or even brands. Eg. If you were an animal, which one would you choose? If Amul yogurt was a car, which would it be?
- Archetypes
Archetype research is a technique for bringing out deeply rooted consumer attitudes and feelings. This technique is used when the conventional research techniques are insufficient to understand the customer mind set. Different cultures have different archetypes for the same objects. In France, the archetype for cheese is “alive.” whereas the US archetype for cheese is “dead.”

3. Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique(ZMET)

ZMET is a technique which assures better understanding of the consumer behavior. This technique reveals the interconnectedness constructs that influence thoughts and feelings. This technique is based on the idea that most social communications are build on non verbal constructs.

In this technique, the study starts with a group of participants who are asked in advance to think about the research type in hand and collect a set of images from their own sources like magazines, catalogs and family photo albums. The participants bring these pictures for a one to one interview with the study administrator who explores the images to understand the deep ideas, emotions, themes and archetypes through a guided conversation.

The interview consists of a series of steps with a specific intention

Story Telling: Exploring individual visual metaphors

Expand the Frame: Expanding to understand the metaphoric meaning of images

Sensory metaphor: Eliciting metaphors about the research topic from each sensory modality

Vignette: Using the mind's eye to create a short story about the research topic

Digital image: Integrating the images to create a visual summary of the research topic

4. Neural research methods

This technique is an extension of ZMET test, where the marketers try to understand the subconscious feelings of customers. Neuromarketing, is the study of how the brain responds to the marketing stimuli and brands. The findings give a better picture of the purchase decision and are based more on an unconscious habitual process than any rational, conscious, information-processing model.

5. The Big Five

This research technique is more suitable to understand and measure the brand personality and values. In this method, the brand personality is assessed through an adjective checklist or ratings. Jennifer Aaker created a personality scale based on a research study of 114 personality traits, 37 brands in various product categories by over 600 individuals as the US population representative. The figure 1 depicts the specific traits of the Aaker brand personality scale. The scale reveals how descriptive, each personality scale can get for an individual trait.

Figure 1



6. Ethnographic and Experiential methods

These techniques are in addition to the other qualitative tools to understand the customers in their natural environment to understand their purchase decisions and consumption patterns.

Conclusion: The qualitative research techniques uncover perceptions of the consumers, the effectiveness of the techniques depends on the creativity of the researcher. However, the sample sizes are small and hence cannot be generalized to larger populations.

Quantitative Research Techniques

Brand Awareness is remembering or considering the brand during purchase decisions. Awareness is created through various brand elements like the logo, slogan, jingles, characters, packaging under different conditions.

- Recognition describes the brand recognition, of the brand under various circumstances and identified or remembered by any specific brand element. Packaging uses this feature of creating a higher visibility through brand recognition by using creative and attractive packaging patterns. Brand recognition is also indicative of the brand recallability. To determine if consumers actually recall the brand under various different situations, the marketers make a study of brand recall.
- Recall is the brand recall where the customers are made to remember or recall the brand from some associated brand elements. It is a tough memory test for the customers. Types of Brand recalls are
 1. Aided brand recall : cues are given to aid the customer recall the brand
 2. Unaided brand recall: all brands are given as a cue to identify the strongest brands.

The advantage of brand recall shows how consumers store the brand knowledge in the memory and the types of cues or brand elements to initiate recall of the brand and this assists to understand the customers creating consideration sets for purchase decisions.

Brand Image

Brand image reflects the customer's perception of the brand. It helps the marketers to make a distinction between the lower and higher consideration related to consumer perceptions of specific considerations, related to overall judgments, feelings and relationships. There is an obvious connection of the brand between the two levels of brand image/ ??? due to the consumer's overall responses and relationship with the brand.

Beliefs are descriptive thoughts that people hold about things. Brand association beliefs are related to specific attributes and benefits related to the brand and its competitors. These belief associations can be accessed on the basis of key dimensions like favorability, strength and uniqueness of brand associations. Open ended measures are used to tap the associations.

Brand uniqueness is measured using a multidimensional scaling and perceptual maps. Multidimensional scaling is used to determine the perceived images of a set of objects such as products or brands.

Brand Responses is measuring higher level considerations to find out how consumers combine all the more specific, lower-level considerations about the brand in the minds of the people to understand different types of consumer responses.

Purchase intentions are another set of measures related to brand attitudes and the consideration made during purchase intentions. These purchase intentions are predictive of the actual purchases when there is a correspondence between the two dimensions.¹

Action(buying for own use or gift)

Target (specific type of product or brand)

Context(in the type of store , prices and other conditions)

Time(within a week , month or year)

For example we could ask the consumer

"Assume your refrigerator broke down over the next weekend and could not be inexpensively repaired. If you went to your favorite appliance store and found all the different brands competitively priced , how likely would you buy a General Electric refrigerator?"

Brand Relationships

Brand relationships are characterized in terms of brand resonance and have a measure for the key dimensions: Behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community and active engagement

¹ Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior and When do purchase intentions predict sales

A measure of brand engagement scale² developed has statements like

1. I have a special bond with the brands I like
2. I consider my favorite brands to be a part of myself
3. I often feel a personal connection between my brands and me
4. Part of me is defined by important brands in my life
5. I feel as if I have a close personal connection with the brands I most prefer
6. I can identify with the important brands in my life
7. There are links between the brands that I prefer and how I view myself
8. My favorite brands are an important indication of who I am.

Summary

Brand Resonance model stands as a basis on which brand equity is developed. The model describes the sequential steps, one stage leading to another, which enhances and encourages the importance of building a strong brand. The four major brand building steps stated are recognizing and identifying brands in its specific category of product class, customer need or product benefit, establishing brand meaning and the various tangible and intangible brand linkages to brand associations. The next stages aim to encourage appropriate responses for the brand and converting brand responses to create brand resonance for an active and intensive relationship with the customers. In the succeeding part of the session, there was a detailed discussion on the six brand building blocks, namely the Brand Salience, Brand Performance, Brand Imagery, Brand Judgments, Brand Feelings and Brand Resonance. The sub-dimensions of brand building were also discussed and the implications of brand building were identified as an important yardstick of measurement of brand equity and marketing research initiatives. It was therefore concluded that the strong brand according to the brand resonance model involves 1) establishing breadth and depth of brand awareness; 2) creating strong, favourable, and unique brand associations; 3) eliciting positive, accessible brand responses; and 4) forging intense, active brand relationships. In the second half of the session the discussion was about the need to identify the different sources of brand equity to capture the customer mind set. The

marketers having identified the need to understand the customer's mind-set during the purchase decisions, usage or consumption pattern for effective marketing activities. The study of the knowledge structures of the customers was of prime importance and different qualitative and quantitative techniques were applied to understand the customer's sources of brand equity and understanding the customers thought process. In the quantitative research techniques, the tools were identified to test the possible brand associations to measure the brand linkages to key dimensions like the strength, favorability and uniqueness. This is an effective research tool during exploratory research and assists to study the consumer brand and product perceptions. The tools studied are free associations, projective techniques, bubble drawings, story telling, ZMET, Big Five and neural marketing. The quantitative research tools and techniques help identify and understand the process and measure the level of brand awareness or recognition, brand recall, both aided and unaided measures, brand image through the dimensions strength, favorability and uniqueness. The brand responses are one more factor measured by the quantitative research tools by understanding the higher and the lower level of consideration in the purchase intention of the customers for the brand. The dimensions considered during purchase intentions are action or the act of buying, the target or the specific product or brand, context in terms of store, price and other external conditions and finally the time of purchase like: within a week, , in a month or year. Brand Relationships are again a strong measure of brand resonance which indicates a strong brand equity resulting in a strong brand.