

Brand Positioning Through Celebrity Endorsement

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Abstract

India is a developing country that is flooded with different brands. With too many products flooding the market, companies find it difficult to position their products based on their inherent product features. So, Firms are making vast investments in hiring celebrities for positioning of brands by making organizations with endorser qualities such as trustworthiness, attractiveness and expertise. Celebrities add new dimensions to a brand. As a result of the increase in celebrity advertisements in various media, India has become a celebrity-obsessed society. The majority of celebrity endorsement research has focused on the effectiveness and selection of Celebrity endorsers. This research paper studied the effect of celebrity endorsements on the brand positioning

Keywords: Brand Positioning; Celebrity Endorsement

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Introduction

In today's increasingly competitive industrial scenario, a key challenge for marketers is to cut through the noise of competing and substitute products to attract the attention of the consumer. With thousands of Multinational Companies (MNC's) now competing for attention, brands are becoming substitutable. From the demand perspective, the explosion

in brand choice and brand publicity material has increased the confusion among potential consumers. So, Positioning is considered as one of the key elements of modern marketing management to place the product in the minds of the consumers. Brand positioning defines the brand in question by indicating the differentiating elements in the context of the target group's needs and expectations as well as the competition. Therefore, it is a useful strategic tool which may and should be used in the process of managing an administrative unit

An important aspect of brand's position in a product category is how similar or different the brand is perceived to be in comparison with other brands in the product category but contemporary positioning is facing challenges including hyper-competition, mass good consumption and globalization. These premises affect consumer products and places alike. Countries, regions and cities compete against each other in an increasingly aggressive way (Anholt 2006). This rivalry develops in all aspects of places' operations; at stake is awareness of the inhabitants, tourists as well as investors. The growing number of comparative ranking lists of places further stimulates competition between countries, regions or cities (Florek, 2012). At the same time, it indicates the importance of identifying specific administrative units which may determine a place's competitive potential. Mass consumption is yet another trend affecting administrative units which needs to be considered in the process of place brand management. The Successful Positioning involves 4 C's Clarity: value proposition which they are going to serve to target customer customers. Consistency: first year quality of service, second year product performance. Credibility: believability and trustworthiness Competitiveness: USP .So, to effectively curb these problems of traditional positioning these days firms are making huge investments in hiring celebrities for juxtaposing brands and building organizations with endorser's source based qualities such as source trustworthiness, source

attractiveness and source expertise in order to retain memory space of consumers, which is bombarded by thousands of adverts at a time. These qualities may operate in a transferable way and make optimistic effects. But the qualities of the celebrities at times may be inappropriate, irrelevant, and unwanted, which may make a hue and cry to the stigma and the firm in the positioning of the brand.

The engagement of celebrities as the expression of marketing communications strategy has now become the practice of the companies in positioning of the brand in the consumers' mental space

The celebrity endorser is defined as “any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement” (McCracken, 1989).

Celebrity endorsements is one of the applied strategy among many strategies in raising various types of products, services or brands, as it helps corporations to build up brand awareness and gain acceptance by adopting celebrities. Famous celebrities may be instrumental to the people to take notice of what they are endorsing and create an immediate identity or persona for a product (Cooper, 1984). Celebrities increases attention of the consumers towards the brand and also make it more desirable, credible. This results in advertiser's trusts . In the current study, the factors of celebrity endorsement how affect the brand positioning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The principal cause for employment of celebrity endorsers is that, the celebrities are seen as dynamic in terms of attractiveness and appealing qualities (Atkin & Block 1983). Positioning theory is based on three propositions (Ries & Trout, 1986). First, we live in an over communicated society, bombarded with information on a daily basis. Second, the mind has developed a defense system against the clutter. Third, the only way to cut through the clutter to reach

the mind is through simplified and focused messages. Companies desire to differentiate their brand from others by making association of their brand with the brand image of the celebrity (Buck, 1993).

The brand identity and positioning is central to developing strong customer base and brand equity. The target market and the perceived differentiation from competitors are core concepts of positioning. Rao & Steckel (1998) define a brand's positioning as the relative perception of it within a significant group of customers. At the same time, both authors argue that segmentation and positioning are often treated as independent concepts, in practice and in the literature.

Today firms at huge level are hiring the superstars and athlete endorsers for market communication by making huge investments to associate their brands with the endorsers (Erdogan, 1999)

Soundararaj & Rengamani (2002) have studied the inevitability of positioning in the present marketing scenario, with special reference to Indian marketing conditions. According to them, positioning is not what you do to a product, but what you do to the minds of the prospect customers; that is, you position the product in the mind of the intended client. It is understood that a product's position is the way in which the product is defined by consumers on important attributes and the place the product occupies in the minds of the consumers relative to competing products. In brand management, two important points of reference: the target group and competition should be taken into consideration. This approach necessitates a concept of brand positioning in the process of management (Kunde 2002). It is very common for many countries to use celebrities in the form of actors, actresses, entertainers and sports celebrity endorsement for the positioning of the brand (Pornpitakpan, 2004).

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alike. Countries, regions and cities compete against each other in an increasingly aggressive way (Anholt 2006). This rivalry develops in all aspects of places' operations; at stake is awareness of the inhabitants, tourists as well as investors. The growing number of comparative ranking lists of places further stimulates competition between countries, regions or cities (Florek, 2012).

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The hiring of celebrities in the advertisement as the voice of market communication is going to be common phenomenon for the companies (Erdogan, 1999). The word celebrity itself is the broad word, it includes actors, models, athletes (or sports celebrities), the purpose of the study is to identify and explore the indicators and variables for construction of instruments of the brand positioning and the effect of celebrity endorsements on the brand positioning

Celebrity endorsements are effective in positioning of product due to their high profile presence in the media. Their physical attractiveness is central to their ability to position products among an impressionable audience. Celebrities are also effective because they are what many people aspire to be like; they act as symbol of personal desire. Marketers have often chosen to use celebrities as a positioning agent; the use of celebrity people has always been a favourite strategy among agencies. Marketers are well aware of how easily celebrities influence consumer habits; it is the combination of their physical appeal and their high status that draws the public. Celebrities are popular and followed by many people so it makes sense that marketers benefit from using them in order to get their message across. A celebrity can capture consumers' attention; link the brand with their personal image and associate positive attention with those of the product concerned. In this present era of information explosion and media influence, celebrities play a major role in changing the settled perception and thinking of

1. Celebrities demonstrate a number of dynamic qualities that can be transferred to products through marketing.
2. Celebrities have the ability to attract and maintain the attention by their presence in adverts.
3. Celebrities also have the power to influence a company or product image makeover by repositioning an old brand or introducing a new one. These ways, celebrities impact to create brand loyalty on products and services.

THEORIES OF CREDIBILITY

Source credibility theory

This theory was given by Hovland C, and Weiss W, in 1951, holds that the perceived credibility of the originator concludes how the receiver will respond to the message. This theory involves that the thoughts that the participants display when they receive a message to a great extent is dependent on how they see the source; how and what they recognize the source to be. It can be defined as the communicator's positive distinctiveness that affects the receiver's reception of a message, (Ohanian, 1990). The source credibility model studies the factor leading to perceived credibility of the communicator. It also posits the beauty of the source.

The source credibility theory survives between attitude change and the source of a message, (Asemah, 2011). When the right source is used to transmit a message, it boosts the chances of having an effective message but when the wrong channel is used, the response will be poor. According to Anaeto & Anaeto (2010) in Asemah (2011), the source credibility is categorized into three models. These are the factor model, functional model and the constructivist model. The factor model according to Anaeto & Anaeto

(2010) helps to decide the extent to which the receiver judges the source as believable; the functional model views trustworthiness as the degree to which a source satisfies a receiver's personality needs while the constructivist model analyses what the receiver does with the source scheme. Consequently, advertisers must use the right media to distribute his messages to the audience. Source credibility advises that the effectiveness of a message depends on the expertness and trustworthiness of the source.

The advantage of this theory to this research work is that any advert message which is aimed at capturing the attention of the audience must be persuasive enough to arrest the attention of the receiver. Credibility is an attribute to which the recipient sees the source as having relevant knowledge, skill or expertise and trusts the source which is the celebrity used for the advertisement to give unbiased, objective information. The celebrity source must be trustworthy, honest, ethical and believable. When an advertisement is well designed, it draws the attention of the receiver which in turn creates the audience act absolutely to the message and these celebrities have the ability to attract and maintain attention by their presence in adverts. Therefore, if customers perceive a celebrity as similar to them and they like the celebrity, they tend to find the celebrity more attractive.

Match-up hypothesis theory

The match-up hypothesis or matching hypothesis is proposed by Elaine Hatfield and her colleagues" in 1966 which suggests why people become attracted to their partner. It claims that people are more likely to form and succeed in a committed relationship with someone who is equally socially desirable. The hypothesis implies that the physical attractiveness of a celebrity endorser may only enhance both product and advert based evaluations if the product's characteristics match-up with the image conveyed by the

celebrity. Empirically, it was found that for an attractive related product. The use of physically attractive celebrity was observed to significantly enhance measures of spokesperson credibility and attitude towards an advertisement. Match-up hypothesis suggests that the message conveyed by the image of the celebrity and the image of the product should converge in effective advertisement implies a need for a match-up between product image and celebrity image on an attractiveness basis.

According to Kahler and Homer (1985), when a celebrity's physical attractiveness matches up with then presence and degree to which the product advertised enhances attractiveness. The match-up hypothesis would predict a positive impact upon product and advertisement evaluation

Okorie et al (2012: 145) citing Cooper et al (2005) note that all firms must be aware of some of the important aspects in the use of celebrity endorsement as stated below:

1. Consistency and Long Term Commitment: As with branding, companies should try to maintain consistency between the endorser and the brand to establish strong personality and identity. Companies should also be able to view celebrity endorsement as a long term strategic decision that affects a brand/product.
2. Three Pre-requisites to Selecting Celebrities: Before signing celebrities as brand ambassadors to endorse their brands, companies need to ensure they meet three basic pre-requisites:
 - The brand ambassador who is the endorser should be attractive.
 - Have a positive image in the society.
 - Be perceived as having the necessary knowledge.

3. **Celebrity Brand Match:** companies should ensure a match between the brand being endorsed and the endorser so that the endorsements are able to strongly influence the thought processes of consumers and create a positive perception of the brand.
4. **Constant Monitoring:** Companies should monitor the behaviour, conduct, and public image of the endorser continuously to minimize any potential negative publicity. One of the most effective ways to do this is to ensure that celebrity endorsement contracts are effectively drafted.
5. **Selecting Unique Endorsers:** Companies should try to bring on board those celebrities who do not endorse competitor's products or other quite different products so that there is clear transfer of personality and identity between the endorser and the brand.
6. **Timing:** Since celebrity command a high price tag. Companies should be on the look-out for emerging celebrities who show some promise, potential and sign them on in their formative years if possible.
7. **Brand over Endorser:** when celebrities are used to endorse brands, one obvious result could be the potential of the brand overshadowing the celebrity. Companies must realize this and ensure it does not take place by formulating advertising collaterals and other communication steps.
8. **Celebrity Endorsement is just a channel:** Companies must realize that celebrity endorsement is not a goal in itself rather it is one part of the communication mix.

REASONS FOR CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

Celebrity endorsements act as credible means of “money burning”, Kirma Sharma and Shashi (2013), this is because there is a world of products the value of which customer obtains purchase of any given variety which could be the reason for social standing.

People want to wear the right clothes, use the right products. Celebrity endorsement is more likely to be observed for those products having a high price production cost margin and a large customer base. They are typically for naturally marketed products such as shoes, soft drinks, telecommunication networks and the like for which the price cost margins are apparently large. Promoters of certain product require co-ordination over multiple customer groups like different age, income, education groups and even different location. A product of this sort and set of advertising messages communicated to all customers is a more effective and co-ordinate mechanism. Since the celebrity is recognizable nationally; it is a low cost way to achieve cross group co-ordination (Clark and Horstman, 2003). When you tell people that a product/service can help them, they may or may not believe you. After all, you have a vested interest in selling your services. But when celebrities say that the particular product/service has helped them, and it could help others, people tend to listen and believe. After all, most people assume "he wouldn't say it if it weren't true." Rawtani (2012)

CELEBRITY CHARACTERISTICS

1. Perceived Personal Qualities: The role play of likeness, physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and credibility has been discussed widely in the use of celebrity endorsement. To McCracken (1989), "likeability indicates affection towards a celebrity as a result of his or her physical appearance and behaviour". According to Chaiken (1979) in institute of marketing and media marketing journal (2011), social psychology research shows that physically attractive persons are more successful in changing beliefs than unattractive persons. Khale and Homer (1985) find that a highly attractive celebrity generates a significantly more positive brand image than those of a less attractive celebrity.

Trustworthiness and expertise are the sub-dimensions of credibility constructs which refers to the perceived willingness to make valid assertions. Expertise interacts with attractiveness so that the favorable impact of high expertise increases with higher levels of attractiveness.

2. External Information: Information constitutes types of external information that affect the perception of the celebrity. Negative information which may disrupt the advertising campaign that includes harmful news about a celebrity which may now become public during or after the advertising campaign.
3. Multiple Endorsements: This happens when one celebrity endorses multiple brands at a time or one brand endorsed by multiple celebrities at a time.

MESSAGE CHARACTERISTICS

1. Number of Exposures to the celebrity: The more exposure effect suggests that repeated contact with a stimulus leads to greater effect towards that stimulus Carsten Erfgen (2011: 13). Enhanced effect toward a celebrity endorser due to repeated exposure may transfer to the advertised brand and may lead to brand loyalty in the long run.
2. Advertising Channel Characteristics: The advertising channel as a variable must be carefully looked at because the channel of advertising may also influence the impact of the celebrity on the brand loyalty. For instance, the MTN Saka I Don Port advert must have a specified vehicle of advertising channel for more effectiveness and it is this channel that will determine the impact the celebrity used which later determines the purchase of the brand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The present study recommends that the following three aspects of a celebrity must be considered. The endorser should be striking to the target audience in certain aspects like physical appearance, intellectual capabilities, athletic competence, and lifestyle. It has been proven that an endorser that appears attractive as has a greater chance of enhancing the memory of the brand that he/she endorses.
2. Brand-celebrity collaboration to be successful, the personal credibility of the celebrity is crucial. Credibility is defined here as the celebrities' perceived expertise and trustworthiness. As celebrity endorsements act as an external cue that enable consumers to sift through the tremendous brand clutter in the market, the credibility factor of the celebrity greatly influences the acceptance with consumers.
3. Thirdly, that the success of the brand-celebrity collaboration heavily depends on the compatibility between the brand and the celebrity in terms of identity, personality, positioning in the market vis-à-vis competitors, and lifestyle. When a brand signs on a celebrity, these are some of the compatibility factors that have to exist for the brand to leverage the maximum from that collaboration.

These three major principles must be adhered to by companies, practically it might be difficult to find celebrities that satisfy all these three conditions. Depending on the nature of the brand and the kind of product being used, companies can selectively emphasize one factor over the other.

Organizations should monitor the behavior, conduct and public image of the endorser continuously to minimize any potential negative publicity. One of the most effective ways to do this is to ensure that celebrity endorsement contracts are effectively drafted, keeping in mind any such negative events. Consistent with the principles discussed

earlier, companies should ensure a match between the brand being endorsed and the endorser so that the endorsements are able to strongly influence the thought processes of consumers and create a positive perception of the brand. As with branding, companies should try to maintain consistency between the endorser and the brand to establish a strong personality and identity. More importantly, companies should view celebrity endorsements as long-term strategic decisions affecting the brand. When celebrities are used to endorse brands, one obvious result could be the potential overshadowing of the brand by the celebrity. Companies should ensure that this does not happen by formulating advertising collaterals and other communications. When celebrities are used to endorse brands, one obvious result could be the potential overshadowing of the brand by the celebrity. Companies should ensure that this does not happen by formulating advertising collaterals and other communications.

Conclusion

The main purpose of the study is to discuss the various theories and reasons for celebrity endorsement and brand positioning from an extensive literature review which may have organizational relevance. The present study mainly identified the area of the sports celebrity endorsement in the positioning of brand especially in the Indian context. In particular, the construct of brand positioning have acknowledged and are combine or unify with the constructs of celebrity endorsement. The blending of the constructs will assist in inward at the preferred consequences. The usage of the celebrity in positioning of brand can be an effective competitive source in differentiate the brands from competitors and gaining competitive lead over others.

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