

Media Innovations and its Impact on Brand awareness & Consideration

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Abstract : *The constantly evolving world of marketing ensures each successful idea, concept or technique is ephemeral in nature, what was relevant yesterday can no longer assure success tomorrow. The rapid advancement of technology and fast pace of economic development resulted in a continuous change in the buying patterns of the consumers. Customers became more aware & demanding. Whether it is related to product designing, advertising or use of the product, companies which understands the changing needs of the customers are successful. Along with fulfilling the requirements of their customers it is equally important for the companies to successfully deliver their intentions to its customers. That's why marketers are using the media more skillfully to converse with their customers. In today's world media and marketing go hand in hand. This research sheds light on some successful media innovations done by few famous companies and studies its impact on consumer's brand awareness & consideration. It also summarizes the role of media innovations in brand image building process of these companies through case study research.*

Keywords: *Brand awareness, Brand consideration, Brand image, Consumer behavior, Media Innovation*

I. Introduction

Media has always been an integral part of marketing. Cutthroat competition in the marketplace is resulting in a diminishing product differentiation. To be unique in its approach and getting an edge over the competitors the role of media cannot be undermined. Media propagates the ideas, concepts and information helpful for the customers in taking the buying decision. To keep pace with their customer's changing demands marketers are experimenting with the product's design, its functionality and even usability. But along-with that it is equally important that any message related to the brand & product should reach to a large number of customers and that too effectively. Here media plays a vital role. Trends shows that if this tool is used innovatively & intelligently it could produce phenomenal results and huge impact on the target population. It creates awareness about the brand and help the customers in recalling and recognizing the brand and the product. Statistical evidences shows that media plays a significant role in the brand building process too. According to Park et al. (1986), the construction and maintenance of the brand image is prerequisite to the brand management [1]. A positive brand image is an asset for the company. Keller (1993), suggested that positive brand image could be established by connecting the unique and strong brand association with consumers' memories about the brand through marketing campaigns [2]. Traditional advertising no longer clicks the customers, as the shopping means and ways are changing. Consumers find internet referrals as more feasible and attractive. To decode the changed consumer buying behavior and fulfill consumer expectations marketers are looking towards new media marketing, which is at par with the rapid change.

1.1 Consumer behavior and Media Innovation

The basis of the traditional perspectives of consumer behavior is that consumer behavior is controlled by forces which operate largely beyond the control of consumers themselves (Anderson 1983) [3]. Accordingly, change is not something which consumers do for themselves, rather it is a result of something that is done to them by some internal (e.g., trait) or external (environmental) force over which they have little or no control (O'Shaughnessy 1985) [4]. For example, the behavioural perspective suggests that consumer behaviour is largely determined, or conditioned, by external environmental stimuli (Bagozzi 1975) [5]. With an understanding of these perspectives of consumer behavior marketing campaigns with media innovations can be initialized to win the customers.

1.2 Brand Awareness

According to Rossiter and Prey (1987), brand awareness precedes all other steps in the buying process [6]. A brand attitude cannot be performed, unless a consumer is aware of the brand. In memory theory, brand awareness is positioned as a vital first step in building the bundle of associations which are attached to the brand in memory (Stokes, 1985) [7]. Use of innovative methods while marketing a product can result in better brand awareness and recall at the time of purchase decisions.

1.3 Brand Image

Creating and maintaining image of the brand is an important part of a firm's marketing program (Roth, 1995) [8] and branding strategy (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1991) [9, 10]. The right brand image impacts the bottom line on a number of levels. It provides guidance and direction to the entire organization. For the positive brand image building it is very necessary that consumers have a strong awareness about the brand and they consider the brand while taking their purchase decisions. Understanding the varied importance of brand image building, companies are using innovative methods to enhance their brand image in the market place. There are many companies which work tirelessly to innovate, to offer something new & better to their customers. This study reviews the case study of few such companies and helps in understanding the impact of such media innovations on the brand awareness, consideration and thereby the brand image. Earlier studies on brand image did not take in consideration the role of media innovation. This study tries to fill this gap and thereby highlighting the importance of media innovation in the brand image building process.

II. Research Methodology

This study is a descriptive and conceptual research. In this study secondary data is collected through case studies to gain information about the innovations done by some famous companies. And thereby understanding their innovative techniques and how their brand image got a boost through the process.

III. Objectives

- a) To study the innovative approaches used by various companies to market their product.
- b) To study the impact of media innovations on brand awareness and consideration.
- c) To study the importance of media innovation in the ever changing marketing world.

IV. Analysis & Interpretation

Companies which want to sustain not only for years but for decades always try to innovate their products, services, promotion ways and sometimes distribution too. Most of the companies use the traditional visual appeal to advertise their products but now the trend is changing and marketers are also using sound, smell & touch feel to make such advertisements which involve their customers more. Here we are discussing the examples of some companies which used different media innovations to attract their customers and broke the clutter.

4.1 Volkswagen

One of the companies which thought out of the box and came up with a unique way of launching its product is Volkswagen. In 2010 the company came up with a campaign named 'world's first talking newspaper with Volkswagen Vento' to launch its entry level sedan "Vento". The company's idea was to converse with their customers directly about the new product with a widespread and effective media i.e. newspaper. The company has pasted a voice recorded device on two famous English daily newspapers in few major cities across India and surprised its customers when they opened the paper in the morning. The ad shows a Volkswagen engineer crying looking at a finished Vento and the audio says, "The best in class German engineering is here. The new Volkswagen Vento. Built with great care and highly innovative features. Perhaps that's why it breaks the hearts of our engineers to watch it drive away. The new Volkswagen Vento crafted with so much passion it's hard to let it go". Soon this ad became the talk of the town. Through this ad the company wants to connect emotionally with its customers as per the statements given by the company executives. But nobody can ignore the fact that with this idea the company was successful in creating a buzz among its customers.

4.1.1 The cart off

In the highly competitive automobile market Volkswagen definitely came in the eyes of its target customers with its one day talking newspaper campaign. It is not necessary that customers will buy the product just because of an ad but the company definitely made its brand aware to its target customers and that too very effectively. According to Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) higher level of brand awareness can influence the purchase decision of the consumers [11]. Macdonald and Sharp (2000) suggested that despite consumers are familiar and willing to buy the product, another factor that still influences the purchase decision is brand awareness [12]. Brand awareness creates a great association in memory about a particular brand (Stokes, 1985) [13]. Creating a strong brand image in the consumer's mind depends on creating an optimistic brand assessment, reachable brand approach, and a reliable brand representation (Farquhar, 1989) [14]. Taking in consideration the ideas of researchers, the significance of brand awareness is understood. Through this media innovation Volkswagen is definitely able to make consumers aware of its new automobile very well. And if only the consumers are aware of a company's brand they will keep it into their consideration set. Baker W,J, &

Nedungadi (1986) opined that there must be a consideration of brand while making a decision to purchase a product or service, if there is nothing to be considered the probability is that there is nothing to be chosen.[15]

4.2 Coca Cola

Another company which is a master of media innovation is Coca cola. Coca cola often initiates some cool ideas to refresh its image for its customers. Though the customers are very much aware of the coca cola brand, company wants to emotionally reconnect with its customers and strengthen this relationship. To associate its customers with its global campaign 'Open Happiness' which was launched in 2009 company came up with the idea of a new innovative campaign named 'Small world machines' in 2013, which was a marketing innovation of coke that tried to spread peace and harmony between citizens of two countries that are India & Pakistan. The "Small World Machines" was actually a vending machine which was placed in two famous malls of Delhi & Lahore. Coke used a 3D touchscreen technology with a webcam and a large touch screen monitor. Through this people from both the countries can engage in some simple tasks like wave, touch hands, dance and likewise and can offer each other a free coca cola. According to the company's statement the idea behind it is to spread happiness through this simple yet effective initiative. Customers were definitely moved by their favourite company's efforts to build relationships.

4.2.1 The cart off

For the new companies and products, to create brand awareness is a crucial step to initialize the buying process for the customers. But for the companies like Coca cola which has already established itself in the market need to take a step further in brand awareness programme and i.e. the maintaining of brand awareness, letting its customers feel its constant presence in the market. And this job is done very well by initializing many such campaigns like 'Small world machines'. This may be the one reason for Coca cola's success that, its customers associate themselves with the company very well. Stokes (1985) found that for a low involvement product familiarity had a greater magnitude of effect on the quality perception of a brand than either price or packaging. And further, that familiarity had a significant effect on purchase intention whereas price and package design did not [16]. Wilson (1981) & Woodside & Wilson (1985) confirmed the importance of top-of-mind awareness in a study which found that the higher the position of the brand in the consumer's mind measured by unaided recall, the higher the purchase intention and the higher the relative purchase of the brand. And Coca cola is successful in building top of mind awareness with such media innovations [17, 18]. This company is also brilliant in fulfilling its corporate social responsibilities.

4.3 Unilever

The next company which we are discussing here is Unilever's Lifebuoy brand. In 2013 company came up with a unique and cost effective idea to market its soap brand Lifebuoy. Kumbh mela is one of the largest gathering of people in the world. Unilever has decided to market its brand lifebuoy at the restaurants & food joints near the mela site in Allahabad. They had coordinated with about 100 food joints near the mela site and started a 'Roti campaign'. The company's idea is to educate and remind people about the importance of handwashing before a meal. For this campaign company had created a special heat stamp with the word "Lifebuoy se haath dhoya kya" which means did you washed your hands with lifebuoy? Every first roti of a food order is heat stamped with these words to remind people of washing their hands just before the meal. About 2.5 billion such heat stamped rotis were prepared and eaten during a month long campaign during the Kumbh mela at Allahabad. Company also appointed about 100 promoters and kept lifebuoy hand wash in the toilets of these food joints. Through this campaign Lifebuoy brand got a good exposure at cost effective rate. The idea was to promote itself as a company that encourages good hand wash habits. This campaign was able to touch more than 2.5 billion customers. As per one estimate the brand received sales of 40 dollars for every one dollar spent in the campaign.

Kumbh mela also saw brilliant brand placement by Vodafone. Vodafone used earmuffs to make their presence felt. Kumbh being organised in the month of February the very cold climate saw the temperature as low as 4 degrees and an earmuff was a real need at the mela. Vodafone supplied earmuff with speakers which played devotional music on the press of a button. The idea was to popularize its value added services one of them being music offerings, and reach to a large target audience. In sync with the devotional mood of the festival earmuffs got a fantastic response. This was a brilliant way of utilizing the essential product for brand placement and popularizing a new tool.

4.3.1 The cart off

Brand awareness is very important because if there will be no brand awareness no communication and no transaction will occur (Percy, 1987) [19]. The Unilever's initiative to promote the lifebuoy brands at such a platform where it get exposed to a billion customers is noteworthy and that too in a very cost effective manner.

Such campaigns gives the much needed exposure to the brand and helps in enhancing the brand awareness. Along with it company enables to build its image by highlighting the product benefit successfully. According to Keller (1993), positive brand image could be established by connecting the unique and strong brand association with consumers' memories about the brand through marketing campaigns [20]. Unilever through this marketing campaign made an effort to connect with its customers with a unique message. On the other hand Vodafone made its presence felt by tapping the need of the customers and made its brand aware to its target customers.

4.4 Fevicol

One of the most iconic brands of all time Fevicol used the Fevicol "Free store" campaign to communicate the product advantage in a very strong way. For more than last 2 decades Fevicol has become a generic name in adhesive segment. Company always used Print and TV media to communicate the product benefits to its customers. Challenged with this scenario brand and the team behind it, decided to break the clutter by making people experience the Fevicol's claim that its bonds are really unbreakable. Fevicol had set a "free store" where everything is free. But all the items in this free store were pasted by Fevicol. The dilemma was multi fold here as task was to made breaking the bond look achievable, but at the same time to take care of the public shame when people are not able to break the bond. The plan was implemented at mall in Mumbai and the campaign met with a resounding success. Attracted by the fancy items like artistic wooden bowls, decorative clocks and other items hordes of enthusiast shoppers tried to pick up the 'free' items - but every effort was useless as everything was glued down by Fevicol.

This campaign helped the customers to experience themselves the benefits of Fevicol in a real life situation and that too in a humorous way. The customers loved this innovation by Fevicol and enjoyed the campaign to its fullest. The video of this campaign was put up on YouTube and it attracted a large number of viewers. The strength of the campaign can be gauged by the fact that in twenty four hours the video of this campaign has become one of YouTube India's top trending videos. It had created the much expected media hype and with a very low investment of INR 1 lakh Fevicol got a tremendous publicity.

4.4.1 The cart off

Fevicol involved its customers through a fun activity and also communicated the product benefit in a very simplistic yet effective manner. Although Fevicol always come up with interesting advertising messages for its customers but the idea of involving the customers and giving them a chance to experience the product benefit themselves is an admirable concept. This campaign helped customers to be more familiar with the brand. According to Kamins & Marks (1991) consumers will have a higher purchase intention with a familiar brand [21]. Alba and Hutchinson defined brand familiarity as the number of brand-related experiences that a consumer has built up [22]. Researches had already proved that customers are more likely to choose the brand they are familiar with. Rather than just listening or watching about a brand, to experience it, will definitely made a greater impact on consumers. Fransen and Lodder (2010) have empirically examined the effects of experience marketing communication tools on consumer responses, and identified a positive influence on brand attitude and brand relation [23].

V. Conclusion

In today's world, consumers have lots of choices to take their buying decision. Whether we talk about FMCG (Fast moving consumer goods) durables or automobile industry. Every day the market is flooded with new products in every category. Companies are using latest features, technology and new marketing ways to make their product stand out of the brand herd. Though companies are giving due importance to the product features and technology sometimes they are unable to communicate these features and benefits of their product and brand to their target customers. Many times the product quality and features are at par with the customer's demand but the inefficient marketing of the product fails to make a place in the customer's consideration set. This research highlighted the significance of media innovations and the importance of effective communication of the brand message to the target customers. The study of different marketing campaigns helped to understand that always the traditional ways of marketing do not work. It also focuses on the significance of developing the brand awareness among consumers as well as the maintenance of brand awareness through innovative ways. To differentiate its brand, companies need to come up with effective methods to reach their target customers. Highlighting the product features is not always enough but sometimes the emotional connect is necessary. Sometimes the customers are not aware of the product benefits and its usage. Marketing campaigns helps in enhancing this awareness. And to a step further, like Lifebuoy along with promoting the usage of soap & its benefits in different marketing campaigns also stresses on its usage frequency with the message of washing hands with lifebuoy five times a day.

Through the study of famous media innovations it can be concluded that one of the reasons of success of a marketing campaign is its ability to involve its customers. The coca cola company which already enjoys customer loyalty always do innovative campaigns to engage its customers with the company's brand image. Whereas Lifebuoy is working hard on its campaigns to bring a behavioural change in the customers by promoting hygienic habits and has also associated these campaigns with social welfare. Thus adding value to its brand image. But the other factors should also be taken in consideration like in case of a high involvement product or low involvement product, strategy could differ because of the difference in time and efforts taken by the consumer to take the buying decision. The life cycle stage of the product should also be taken in consideration to make the campaign effective. Other aspects like who are the target customers, where the campaign should be done, for effective reach, as well as the cost involved with it should be considered. Choice of media is equally important. Innovative strategies can sometimes fail to produce desired results but they are necessary, therefore to avoid losses marketers should manage the risk effectively. To create a strong brand image it is very necessary that customers should be very much aware and familiar with the brand and its values. Aaker and Keller (1990) mentioned that a brand with high awareness and good image can promote brand loyalty to consumers, and the higher the brand awareness is, the higher brand trust and purchase intention are to consumers [24]. These findings suggests that brand awareness is an asset to the brand image of a company. As consumers become very adaptive to the traditional marketing ways, innovative media campaigns can be the revitalizing tool for the brands.

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