CONSUMER BEHAVIOR – A NEW WAYS OF ENSURING BRAND RESONANCE

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ABSTRACT

The changing dynamics of consumer behavior and market demands have made marketers provide innovative customer solutions, which have led to the emergence of different trends in product branding and positioning in the marketplace. As, marketing implies the developing relationship between consumers and their preferred brand, thus presence of strong brand and creation strong brand is top priority for many organizations. A strong brand always satisfies customers. It is the most powerful block of brand resonance. Therefore, the strongest brands will be those to which customers become so attached that they, in effect, become evangelistic and actively seek means to interact with the brand and eagerly share their experiences with others. On the basis of above views we can say that the brand resonance refers to the relationship between brand and its users including consumers’ willingness to purchase and to recommend to others. The power of a brand lies in the minds of consumers, in the effect of what they have experienced and learned about the brand on their responses to the brand over time. It could help predict repurchase intention, future earnings and firm value in various markets. This conceptual paper highlights impact of consumer buying behaviour on brand resonance and also narrates meaning of brand resonance with extent customer–brand relationship. And lastly concluded with a discussion of the issues involved in deciding whether consumer behavior needs to be assessed exhaustively to find new ways of ensuring brand resonance with some examples.

Keywords: Brand; Brand Resonance; Brand Relationship; Brand Attachment; Brand Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

In the present economic and social success of a brand depends on trust between brand and customers. Brand communications that do not resonate integrity will, in the long-run, lose market share. So resonance is not about placement or medium, it’s about trust and about sounded of relationships. It’s not enough to simply be where the people who buy the brand hang out. It’s about participation in the lives and issues that are important in the lives of the people with whom you would like your brand to have sustains relationship. Brand resonance is the relationship and level of identification of the customer with a brand. It is characterized by the depth of the psychological bond customers have with the brand as well as how much activity this loyalty engenders. Thus, it represents a willingness to engage with the destination. A well informed marketer always allows consumers to quickly refer to their memory and make the purchase decision. This behavior comes almost naturally in our everyday purchases due to certain set of rules predetermined in the consumer mindset. This occurs when a brand has created strong brand resonance amongst its target niche. It illustrates and stresses the important of being the preferred brand in the mindset of the consumer since branding has played the key role in an environment which is saturated with hundreds of choices from a product or service stand point. Consumers actively want to associate themselves with certain brands and this makes a large influence on their buying behavior. The impulse customers may not care about brands as much unless influenced by other variable however, generally a planned purchase decision can be significantly influenced by
different brands. Marketers create a lifestyle with these brands which triggers the consumer buying behavior. In a similar manner, brand resonance suggests a profound consumer brand relationship that is based on loyalty, attachment, and an enduring sense of communal kinship or affiliation. This relationship is so strong that members of that brand community are willing to make investments of their personal resources to remain connected to the brand (Keller 2001).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Basically the present study intends to following objectives:

1. To understand how the brand resonance is deeply attached with consumers behavioural and psychological feelings with some available research and literature.
2. To examine the extent of customer brand relationship for the variance in Brand Resonance.
3. To describe impact of consumer behavior on brand resonance.
4. To make focus on some exemplar in brand resonance from perspective of customers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Boukill, 2008, stated that brand Resonance refers to the nature of the relationship that the consumer has with the brand.

Gronroos, 2001, described that “What the customer receives” always depends on “How the customer receives it”. Customer service is an important part in consumer markets because it enriches a service in different ways and influences brand resonance. In the service industry customer service is a part of the perceived quality, thus it stands for the function quality. Thus, in order for the financial service provider to achieve brand resonance and brand equity, they need to integrate the perspective of the customer – what is the customer trying to accomplish, for the employee - what are employees doing to provide the service and how is the service produced. It should include a detailed study of internal operations; map out how the company responds to customers’ needs and describe how the company uses that information to improve their brand resonance.

Keller, 2001, stated brand resonance is characterized in terms of intensity or the depth of the psychological bond that customers have with the brand as well as the level of activity engendered by this loyalty.

Keller, 2003, developed brand resonance to provide a higher understanding of consumer based brand equity, a tool for marketers and brand managers alike to further comprehend the meaning of a brand.

Keller, 2003, concluded brand with a good resonance allows consumers to feel that they are part of the brand itself, and they can identify with the brand.

Keller, 2008, discussed that brand resonance refers to the “ultimate relationship and level of identification that the customer has with the brand” and thus “the extent to which customers feel that they are ‘in sync’ with the brand”.

Moore & Wurster, 2007, describe, brand resonance plays a crucial role in customer relationship management and the development of sustainable brand equity between customers and the brand.

Rindfleisch, A., Wong, N., & Burroughs, E. J., 2013, inscribed that brand resonance is the extent to which a consumer develops strong behavioral, psychological, and social bonds with the brands s/he consumes.

Stratfold, 2012, described brand resonance refers as, how well you connect with your customer both formally and casually. Creating resonance with your brand means your message has to permeate consumers’ minds and lives”.

The above literature of branding results reaffirms the importance of brand knowledge and shows brands play significant roles in the behavior outcomes of consumers. It implies that consumer
awareness contributes in building the meaning of the brand which will influence consumer responses towards the brand, which in turn, will contribute in the establishment of consumer-brand relationship. Finally, the literature notes that, a brand with a good resonance allows consumers to feel that they are part of the brand itself, and they can identify with the brand.

**Brand Resonance: Customer Brand Relationship**

As many management researchers define brand resonance as nature of the relationship that customers have with the brand (Keller, 2001) (Keller, 2008), association between consumers and their brand (Stratfold, 2012), strong behavioral, psychological, and social bonds between consumers and their brands (Rindfleisch, 2005), the relationship and level of identification of the customer with a brand and nature of the relationship that the consumer has with the brand. Customers perceive and interpret brands differently, depending on the level of the relationship with these brands (Davis, 2010). For example, customers with a positive perception of a brand, most likely experience a higher performance of the product. This indicates that marketing investments are direct investments in the customers’ perception of a brand and, as an indirect function of that, in the customers’ perception regarding the performance of a product (Keller, 2008). Therefore, understanding the customer perception process and behavior is not only vital for effective brand management, but also a very effective tool in the context of a brand alliance by making optimal use of the favorable spillover effects.

With the consideration of the various literature views regarding brand resonance, it reveals that the brand resonance is nothing but the relationship between consumer and their preferred brand (Keller, 2001). Brand resonance plays a crucial role in customer relationship management and the development of sustainable brand equity between customers and the brand (Moore & Wurster, 2007). In true brand resonance customer possesses a high degree of loyalty build due to close relationship with brand in which customer actively seek to interact with the brand and ready to share their experience to other. This relationship is so strong that members of that brand community are willing to make investments of their personal resources to remain connected to the brand (Keller 2001).

![Figure 1. Brand Resonance Pyramid](image)

In the above Brand Resonance pyramid, customers with true brand resonance, have a high degree of loyalty and actively seek means to interact with the brand and share their experiences with others (Attilgan, Aksoy & Akinci, 2005). It focuses on the various stages of consumer brand relationship through which consumer connected with brand. Keller proposed four main stages namely brand identity, brand meaning, brand responses and brand relationships. These four constructs consists of six “brand building blocks” which he assembled as above brand resonance pyramid. The basic premise of the pyramid is that the power of a brand lies in what customers learn, felt, seen and heard about the brand over time (Keller, 2001). According to Keller (2001), the six building blocks are: (1) Brand
salience, which relates to how often the brand is evoked in purchasing and consumption situations, (2) Brand performance, the extent to which the product meets customers’ functional needs, (3) Brand imagery, which relates to the extrinsic properties of the product, (4) Brand judgments which focus on customers’ personal opinions and evaluations, (5) Brand feelings are customers’ emotional responses and reactions towards the brand, and (6) Brand resonance which refers to the nature of customer brand relationship and the extent to which customers feel that they are “in sync” with the brand (Keller, 2001).

With the interpretation of above pyramid the final step of brand resonance shows the attachment and personal identification of the customer has with the brand. Brand resonance refers to the nature of the relationship customers have with the brand and whether they feel in synch with the brand. Brand resonance stage signalizes the strength of psychological bond customers have with the brand and the degree of customer brand loyalty. In short, brand resonance stresses the importance of understanding the cognitive and affective consequences of brand relationships — how consumers think, feel, and act — to guide research and planning for marketers. It also emphasizes a hierarchy in brand development and the importance of sequential steps in brand building (Keller, 2012).

**Impact of Consumer-behavior on brand Resonance**

Resonance is the emotional, psychological and sensational connection to the customer. It is Harder to measure, admittedly but more important for the success of a brand. If your brand resonates, then you have a greater chance of truly connecting with your customers - and thereby building a relationship between them and your brand. Thus, the survival and growth of any organisation largely depends on the extent to which its brands dominate others in the industry and are accepted in the exercise of customers’ purchasing power. What it means is that branding is one of the most effective ways of standing tall by way of differentiating and identifying your products in a cluttered industry or market. In spite of the important role branding plays in differentiating and identifying organisations’ products, nothing has yet being established as how branding influences the buying behaviour of consumers. It was found that perceived quality of products greatly sways consumers buying decision than any brand equity dimension.

Brand resonance is the psychological bond and engagement that a customer shares with a brand and the challenge of branding is to develop and augment this interface between brands and customers profitably through deployment of state of the art marketing programmes that can render delighted customers and infuse community-feeling centring the brand. Consumers not only wilfully engage with their favourite brands and indulge in lasting resonance based on trust and transparency but also shape brands through advocacy. This synergy between consumers and social networking sites is the essence of brand visibility and resonance. Brand resonance was not evident. In discussing their experiences, respondents again referred to product functionality and tangible product performance as reasons for purchasing. Some respondents already using a waste tracking brand spoke about the terms of their contracts, and the possibility of switching to the competitive product following the contract completion. Behavioural loyalty appeared to be a consequence of the contract period, with respondents stating after this time they would review all products to determine which would best meet their needs at the right price. Also, although the experience of other users plays a critical role during the decision making process, the respondents did not feel any type of kinship or affiliation with other users of the same brand post-purchase.

In today's competitive marketplace, establishment of a creative brand identity is crucial to achieving brand resonance, and this book is an all-inclusive guide to generating ideas and creating brand applications that are sure to resonate with an audience. When a company analyses its brand, just test its resonance within market. This is not, what the company thinks about the brand: it is an analysis of how their target market responds to it. It isn't focused on the internal congruency and consistency of their brand but more importantly how consumers behave after using it. As resonance is characterized by the intensity of the psychological bond that customers have with the brand and their level of engagement.
with the brand. The challenge for the brand manager and strategist is to develop the bond and increase the number of interactions (repeat purchases of a product or service) through the development of marketing programmes that fully satisfy all the customers’ needs, provides them with a sense of community built around the brand and even empowers them to act as brand champions. Understanding consumer trends has never been so critical or important for marketers. But consumers today are more demanding more sophisticated, individualistic and knowledgeable about the choices they make and the brands they buy. But while understanding consumer behaviour, or more simply knowing what people want, may seem relatively simple, it is actually a mind game that few are truly capable of playing. Taping into consumer’s emotional landscape is not easy and market research plays an important role in the way marketers decipher the needs of the increasingly elusive and hard-to-reach consumer. During the immature stage of consumer behaviour, consumers’ limited experience with modern marketing makes them depend on reputable brands and track records. Sometimes consumers rely on price as a mark of quality. Maturing of consumer behaviour does not mean the failing of the brand effect. In fact, consumers’ emphasis on style, quality, and workmanship and so on brings an opportunity to expand the brand effect, because a successful brand should be the synonym of a popular product with good style, high quality, and good workmanship and so on. The practice of marketing is so obsessed with brands; it’s really quite amazing how few brands actually have any real sense of resonance with consumers. Marketers are forever working on, talking about and selling their brands, but when the last time is you saw any consumer demonstrate a real fiery passion for a brand.

Focus on Exemplars of Brand Resonance

Brand Resonance – How Brand Apple has it

Apple customers relate to the brand very intimately. Repeat purchases are very common. They feel a very strong attachment towards the brand because it portrays a very different image. Apple encourages owners of its computer to from local Apple user groups. The user groups provide Apple owners with opportunities to learn more about their computers, share ideas, and get product discounts, as well as sponsor special activities and events and perform community service. It helps make them feel that they are flowing with the changing trends because they own an Apple product. Many Apple consumers sometimes consider their Apple product their favourite possession or say that they love the brand because they get very attached to it.

Apple has portrayed itself to be a brand that the customer can have a happy and lifelong relation with. The Apple experience has created deeper attitudinal attachment in the minds of the customer. Those of us who use Apple products are generally very happy with them on a variety of levels, including their features, their capabilities, and their style and design. Apple has also conveyed a sense of community through the Apple experience. It has created a feeling of oneness among different customers and hence brought them close making the experience even better. Apple through some measures like these have engaged their customers and have actually made the process of investing time, energy, money or other resources enjoyable.

"Get Charged" - Hindware's new brand communication

With the tagline "Get Charged" Hindware, the unprecedented market leader in sanitary ware has oiled out its new commercial aiming to build an emotional cord between the brand and the customers. "Get Charged", the all new brand communication of Hindware talks about that exclusive space, a person needs for himself in today's busy world. The Campaign has been conceptualized keeping in mind the hectic schedule people have in today's working scenario. The new commercial aims to make people feel that a bathroom is an exclusive place in the house which is away from all worries and stress of life and where one can relax, think, unwind and rejuvenate his senses to get charged for what life brings ahead. The communication effectively motivates people to rejuvenate themselves at their own home in their own space and time. Team Hindware is confident that this powerful theme will garner consumer focus and establish brand resonance in customer minds as this new theme is universal in its brand appeal and transcends different target audiences.
In today’s fast-paced and ecologically tough environment, take the time to relax your mind, body, and soul with high quality whirlpools and bathtubs offered by Hindware. "The new brand communication of Hindware simply redefines the spaces by making them the most exclusive place for distressing and rejuvenating life”.

Parryware Roca Launches Advertising Campaign by O&M

Parryware Roca Private Limited, one of the leading bathroom solutions providers in India has recently launched the new advertising campaign designed by the reputed advertising agency Oglivy & Mather. The new communication is built on the “Wow, what a bathroom! Theme. Scoring high on the “emotional connect”, the new theme is universal in its brand appeal and transcends different target audiences. The Line summaries the brand proposition of Parryware. It builds an integrated communication strategy around the new theme and presents in almost all media vehicles consistently. This brand campaign has reinforces the emotional connect of Parryware with Indian consumers. According to company point of view, with this integrated 360 degrees communication approach by which theme will garner the consumer focus and establish brand resonance in customer minds. For this company has adopted all forms of communication so that Indian consumers identify with this simple theme.

‘Dalda is one of India’s heritage brands’

Dalda, formerly one of the key Hindustan Lever brands, was put on the backburner as part of the company's power brand strategy. The Dalda brand has huge resonance among consumers and now the focus for the company will be to further build the brand as well as expand it into other areas like oil. In terms of brand building, it has been relatively easy for the company since Dalda was at one time synonymous with vanaspati in the country. A number of such brands, which once upon a time were dominant brands in their categories have over the years disappeared for reasons ranging from competition to change in the company's focus areas. Dalda is hardly defunct. Though there has been a decline in Dalda's market share as a consequence of minimal brand support, it remains the market leader and the only brand with a pan-India presence. Consumers repeatedly tells Dalda has brand resonance that can be revived and believe Dalda has untapped potential to be extended into other categories of cooking media. Doing so successfully is important to us, not just to realise its economic potentials, but to restore Dalda to its meaningful and rightful place as one of India’s great heritage brands. That’s a “mission”, not just an “objective”. The acquisition price paid reflects this enduring Dalda brand value and broader mandate, but also the important assets and capabilities additionally acquired. Thus, it is India’s most iconic brand, associated with taste and purity in vanaspati market as well as in edible oil.

Pepsi, “Oh Yes Abhi”, Slogans, Resonance and Layers of Meaning

Brand slogans assume heightened importance in present day time short and over-assaulted consumer. Perceptual filtering and defense mechanisms are pressed into action to escape from incessant barrage of messages that hit consumer’s mind. Slogans can convey brand’s essence (what brand stands for) in an instance and simultaneously contribute to brand strength by building recall and visualization. For instance a sign off/ slogan like ‘High performance delivered’ (Accenture), ‘Melts in your mouth not in your hands (M&Ms) and ‘When it Absolutely, Positively has to be there overnight’ (FedEx), ‘Think different’ (Apple), ‘Solutions for a small planet’ (IBM) convey brand promise succinctly and position it in relation to competition by highlighting relative strength.

In the quest to bond with its market, Pepsi has launched its new campaign ‘Right here right now’/ ‘Oh Yes Abhi’. It is interesting to see how brands change gears in their negotiation of psychological space in their search for relevance and resonance. A campaign that aims to alter brand symbolism without any change of its product is certainly an effort given to align brand’s meaning with evolving consumer psycho-social reality. A campaign that aims to alter brand symbolism without any change of its
product is certainly an effort given to align brand’s meaning with evolving consumer psycho-social reality.

The brand is quick to size up the psychological space and read its undercurrents. It seizes opportunity in hidden concerns, dilemmas, and aspirations of its young target group. Prima facie Pepsi’s slogans appear simple statements with a very definite literal meaning. Because brand is much more than product, in this case the drink. And the drink is likely to deliver the same kind of experience. But then why the campaign has been launched that seeks to alter brand’s meaning semiotically? This brings us to the question whether people buy brands only for the utility sake or their delivery extends beyond functional boundaries. The denotative meaning actually is superficial to all these communications. The brand actually engages with its consumers at connotative level.

“Raymond - Resonating with the Discerning Males”

It takes a lot of time, effort and money for any brand to make a place for itself in the hearts of consumers. The job is extremely tough if it is to build resonance with the discerning upper echelons of the society. Raymond has managed to find a special place for itself in the hearts and minds of the Indian Males.

Established in 1925, Raymond is today one of the India’s largest clothing and textile companies that offer a whole range of apparel brands to the Urban Indian males. The company pioneered the Woollen and Wool –blend suitmaking materials in the country and has weathered a lot of competition to emerge at the top. Brand Raymond has been able to resonate with the Indian males through the use of several levers of marketing and promotions. The brand constantly refreshed itself with an ever expanding range of suitmaking materials from the chairman’s collection at the top end to the popular polyester blend for the middle class, straddling the Indian suitmaking market like a behemoth. The brand has also used the power of advertising to connect with its audience with the use of slogans that resonate with the times, such as “Guide to the Well – dressed male”, “The Complete Man”, “Feels like Heaven”, and “Feels like Raymond”.

The company also launched a range of readymade apparel under the brand name Park Avenue (from Raymond). The brand has grown to be one of the top selling apparel brands and was awarded as the “Most Admired Menswear Brand of the year” in 2009. Park brand was launched as a “Premium Casuals Lifestyle” brand to cater to an emerging new segment.

The brand Raymond has been able to resonate with the discerning Indian male through the use of product innovations, a dedicated retain chain, advertising and promotions. As the Indian Male gets ready to travel around the world for business, it is likely that his travel kit will consist of at least a few bespoke suits bought at the leading Raymond store.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this hot issue of brand resonance and its impact on consumer behavior at industry or market, the consumer behavior needs to be assessed exhaustively to find new ways of ensuring brand resonance. That’s why consumers choose one company’s brand over another. Successful brands not only promote loyalty and even advocacy among customers, but they also generate price premiums and form the platform for long-term growth with the ability to use the brand franchise to move into new segments or even sectors. As Brand resonance is the relationship and level of identification of the customer with a brand, it makes the quality of a brand which becomes more than relevant to customers, it speaks to peoples’ deeply held beliefs and search for meaningful experiences. By creating Brand Resonance with Challenge, is to ensure customers have the right types of experiences to create the right brand knowledge. It suggests a profound consumer to maintain brand relationship that is based on loyalty, attachment, and an enduring sense of communal kinship or affiliation. This relationship is so strong that members of that brand community are willing to make investments of their personal resources to remain connected to the brand. But the brand managers should not take
shortcuts in building a brand, brands should appeal to consumers’ with consumers, and achieving brand resonance should be a key point of focus for marketers.

REFERENCES


