

Branding By Celebrities

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Abstract

The modern electronics media has given a big boost to advertisement of products and services. The corers of rupees are being spent world over in advertisement. Advertisement has grown as an independent sector. Everyday this sector is coming out with innovative ideas to capture the minds of customers for different products. The most popular approach is branding by celebrities. The most popular film stars and players are becoming the spokesperson for different brands. The advertisement sector tries to tag the popularity of these celebrities the various products. Thus the advertisement cost is increasing exponentially. This has direct impact on the product cost that a customer has to pay. Some stars become the spokesperson of many products such as Sachin Tendulkar. Endorsing Pepsi in soft drinks, Boost in malted beverages, MRF in tyres, TVS Victor in two-wheelers, Colgate Total in toothpastes, Britannia in biscuits, Visa in credit cards, Airtel in mobile services, Band-aid and many more. Undoubtedly, an overload of brands and categories associated with one star.

It has become an accepted fact that celebrity endorsement can impart special attributes upon a product that it may have lacked otherwise. Celebrity endorsement is highly effective for creating a lasting impression on the brand, its acceptability and finally the image of the company.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, Customer Satisfaction.

Introduction

Definition of 'Celebrity'

Celebrities are people who have public recognition of a very high order. Their appearance excites public and motivates their mind for any choice. They may be in forms of actors (e.g. Amitabh Bachan, Shahrukh Khan), models (e.g. Deepika Padukone, Katrina Kaif), cricketers (e.g. Sachin tendulkar, M. S. Dhoni), and Entertainers (e.g. Raju Srivastava, Eshaan Querashi) Celebrities thus act as spokesperson in advertising any products and services.

Friedman and Friedman Defines

"Celebrity endorser is an individual who is known by the public (...) for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed". Compared to other endorser types, famous people always attach a greater degree of attention, recall and loyalty.

Motives behind Celebrity Endorsement

1. To refresh the brand image and define values.
2. To have instant Brand awareness and recall.
3. To get convincing customers.
4. To create instant trustworthiness.
5. To explore the brand image in new dimensions.

Assumptions for Celebrity's Persona on Overall brand image

Celebrities are undoubtedly good to engender attention, recall and positive attitudes towards advertising if endow with good idea and compatibility with the brand. On contrary, they are rendered futile when it comes to the actual efficiency of the core product, generating positive attitude to brands, buying intentions and actual sales. Therefore to have the compatibility among celebrity and brand image following postulates are to be considered:

1. Association with the brand image, target audience, values, product and profession.
2. Costs of hiring the celebrity.
3. Controversial risk.
4. Celebrity recognition.
5. Celebrity availability.

6. Celebrity personality.
7. Whether celebrity is a brand ambassador
8. Celebrity positioning.
9. Celebrity prior endorsements.

Successful Endorsements — National Perspective

Branding in India saw a new trend in late eighties by endorsing brands by celebrities. Bollywood and silver screen stars as well as sportspersons were lashed in to endorse major brands. Few prominent advertisements were Tabassum in Prestige pressure cookers, Jalal Agha (Pan Parag), Kapil Dev (Palmolive Shaving Cream) and Sunil Gavaskar (Dinesh Suitings). But the first ad to encash the celebrity endorsement power in a long-term mission way was Lux soap. This brand has now positioned itself as beauty bar of star and among the top.

Recently, we had Shah Rukh-Santro campaign with the objective of acquiring faster brand awareness, association and emotional unity with the target audience. Influence of celebrity endorsement in India can be judged by the successful endorsement done by Sharukh for three brands- Pepsi, Clinic All Clear and Santro. Similarly Levis Strauss India Pvt Ltd used Deepika Padukone, then the hottest advertising icon for their launch advertising for Levis Struss Signature jeans; and the ad recall was as high as 80 per cent, and even the normally conservative customers got interested.

As far as India is considered the celebrity endorsements have tremendous impact on the enhancement of the overall brand image, which could be exemplified by several products. A prominent illustration is brand - Coke, which, previously, at global level never used stars. But in India they first try it! The response was universally appealing Aamir audaciously stating Thanda matlab! Coca Cola. Same with Nakshatra advertising recall value enhanced due to the glamorous Aishwarya. Amitabh Bachchan for the Parker pen brand, have revitalize the brand and increased the sale by about 30 per cent.

India is thus one country, where exponential potential for a celebrity endorsement Therefore it makes tremendous sense for a brand to procure a celebrity for its endorsement. In India the endorsers are perceived as genuinely relevant, thereby motivating consumers to go in for the product. This would especially prove true if the endorser and the category are a natural lifestyle fit like sportspersons and footwear, Kapil-Sachin and Boost or film stars and beauty products.

International Perspective

At global level, organizations are contrasting their brands and themselves with celebrity endorsers. Some successful ongoing international endorsements illustrations are as below:

1. The manufacturing company Lean Mean Fat-- Reducing Grilling Machines enhances it sales to more than ten million after signing with George Foreman for Meineke as endorser.
2. Verizon and CNN endorsed by James Earl Jones.
3. Pepsi's advertising the product through celebrity endorsers. Since long time, it has used and continues to use a number of celebrities for

general market and targeted advertising, including Shaquille O'Neal, Mary J. Blige, Wyclef Jean, and Busta Rhymes, who did a targeted campaign for their Mountain Dew product.

4. Tiger Woods for Nike golf balls earned more than \$250 million in annual sales. In 2000 he renewed a five-year agreement estimated at \$125 million. • Reebok International Inc., sportswear manufacturer had endorsed Venus Williams, tennis player and Wimbledon champion.
5. Other successful endorsements like Nike— Michael Jordan, Adidas—Prince Naseem Hamed, Dunlop—John McEnroe, and so on.

Celebrity Endorsements — A Vardaan**Ascertain Integrity**

Endorsement of a brand by a celebrity cultivates a sense of belief for that brand among the target audience- specifically in case of new products.

Eye-Catching

Celebrities catches the attention of the target group by breaking the litter of advertisements and making the ad and the brand more perceptible.

Tortuous Profit

A celebrity's inclination for a brand gives out a influential message -as the celebrity is profited from the brand, the consumer will too be in profit.

Psychographics Hook Up

Celebrities are loved and adored by their fans and advertisers use celebrities to capitalize on these feelings to hook up the fans towards their brand.

Demographic Hook Up

The different demographic segments such as age, gender, class, geography etc. appeal differently to various celebrities.

Mass Appeal

Celebrities with a universal appeal therefore prove to be a good to generate interest among the masses.

Justifying a Flecked Image

Year back when Cadbury India, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo tucked up in more controversial pesticide issue wanted to re-win the consumer's confidence in their brands. So the Cadbury Company appointed Amitabh Bachchan for the job. Coke had Aamir Khan as an ingenious and fastidious Bengali who finally gets convinced of the product's 'purity'. PepsiCo endorsed Shah Rukh Khan and Sachin Tendulkar together as references to the 'safety' of the product indirectly.

Celebrity Endorsements — A Shraap**Inappropriate Positioning**

Endorsing with a celebrity, no matter how famous he or she may be, in it does not assured sales. Rather it could just engender interest in the product. For example, Maruti Versa, in its launching phase about three years ago though had Amitabh Bachchan and his son Abhishek Bachchan as brand ambassadors for Versa; the brand's sales didn't improved. The reason being inappropriate positioning as target audience was expecting a larger than life car, just like the brand's ambassador. But later on, when Maruti Versa was re-positioned as a family car, with the punch line being, "the joy of traveling

together." it has started doing well and has got an upswing since the appropriate positioning.

Incompatible Brand-Celebrity

If the celebrity for the brand represents values that discord with the brand values and positioning, the advertising will create a variance in the minds of the people who may discard the proposition. For Example Toyota, one of world's leading auto companies used pop singer Britney Spears for its brand Soluna Vios, a family sedan, which is preferred by married men and women with children.

Litter-Flicker

Recently, there has been such an overflow of celebrity endorsements that it has led to the mess that it aimed to break. Just as, Big B Amitabh Bachchan endorses or has endorsed Parker pens, ICICI, BPL, Pepsi, Nerolac, Cadbury, Dabur, Reid & Taylor, Maruti Versa, and a small number of social messages too. Same with ShahRukh Khan endorses Omega, Tag Heuer, Pepsi, Hyundai, Clinic All Clear and Airtel among other brands. This sort of excess can have negative effect on brand as celebrity is signed up to push maybe several brands or so. Which is great for the celebrity but it is insensible for the brand as the impact of the celebrity declines as the number of brands endorses increases. In India, as against many brands tracking we have very few celebrities. The consequences that recall value drops by a huge margin when one moves from most popular celebrity to a new entrant.

Discontent with Product Functioning

Just endorsing a celebrity cannot sell an ordinary product. For example Sachin Tendulkar's endorsement of Fiat Palio was a grand success initially. But as bad word of mouth for the poor fuel efficiency of Palio spread, its sales took a thrashing. In this case, Sachin's presence could've worked wonders but for the poor functioning of the product in a market that is highly functioning conscious.

Endanger with Celebrity Endorsements Defame

Being human Celebrities too can make mistakes. However their mistakes get as much awareness as their celebrity status and this can badly affect the brands that they are endorsing. There are several illustrations, both Indian and International,

where scandals and scams linking celebrity endorsers have caused humiliation to the brands they endorse. Organization has to make immediate decisions when one of their endorsers comes under such scandals else their own image could be damaged.

If a brand continues with the celebrity, it may adversely affect the image of the brand and consequently, brand sales. If the brand chooses to distance itself with the tainted celebrity, the huge costs spent on roping in the celebrity and making of the ads may go down the drain and even then the association of the brand with the celebrity might by then be so ingrained that the damage is already done.

Conclusion

It would be insolent to consider celebrity endorsement as a universal remedy for all blockades. However, if used effectively, celebrity endorsement, makes the brand stand out, stimulates brand recall and facilitates immediate awareness. But to get this, the marketer needs to be really restricted in choice of a celebrity. Then only the right use of celebrity can shoot up the Unique Selling Proposition of a brand to new zenith; but a superficial orientation of a celebrity with a brand may prove to be claustrophobic for the brand. The acceptance of any product can't be only because of the endorsement of a celebrity but largely it is because of the self image of the product.

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