

Brand Management
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Let us move forward and look at the four types of brand associations that we have spoken about in the earlier sessions. Now, if you recollect the four types of associations that we have mentioned are verbal descriptions, visual representations, sensory impressions and emotional impressions. I would like all of you to pay attention to these four categories. What are verbal descriptions? Which is the first one. As brand managers, we are generally too overwhelmed by these verbal descriptions because they come to us with the familiarity of language which is concrete and which can be relatively easily processed. Verbal descriptions are when you ask a consumer, what do you think about my brand or do you like my brand or what has been your experiences with my brand. The consumer would utter some sentences, would say a few words which we would recognize, which we would analyze, process and try and get some insights into what really he or she thinks about my brands.

This is an easier thing to do. There are many marketing research tools which also use scales and scale one of the most common scale is Likert scale where you are asked to state the extent of your feeling towards a particular brand. So Likert scale is one of the most common tool that is used in marketing market surveys and verbal description is one of the major parameters through which consumer experiences are understood. But it is important for us to know that verbal descriptions are not the only associations that consumers have about our brands.

They also have something called visual representation. What is a visual representation? You will recollect earlier in the lecture, we have discussed that a large part of our experiences are visual in nature. When I look around this room, what I can see is the wall, I can see a clock, I can see lights, I can see benches on which students are seated and so on so forth. I can see the faces of the students, I can see what they are wearing, how they are sitting, what is their posture and so on. Now all of these visual representations are entering my mind without having a corresponding word or a verbal description to it and all these images are recorded in my mind and they go deep inside my mind in the unconscious or in the subconscious.

Similarly, when I look at this room, I also have sensory impressions. Sensory impressions means because there is a wood and flooring, there is a certain smell because it is a winter season. So there is again a certain smell, there is a certain feel, there is a

chill in the air. So these are all sensory impressions that are important. For example, when you enter a showroom, you encounter a certain way of lighting the store, the way the light is falling on the product, the way it is illuminating the product, the way the product, the brands are placed in a certain location, in a certain way, in a certain angle.

Sometimes you are allowed to touch, sometimes you are not allowed to touch, sometimes there is a glass wall behind which you have the product. So these are all sensory impressions. They are amenable to touch, to smell, to sound, to noise, to and so on so forth. So it is also important for brand managers to understand that consumers have a vast body of brand associations that are sensory in nature. And when you are trying to probe for secondary association, you must not forget that you also have to extract these sensory impressions.

And then finally the fourth one, which is emotional impressions. Now when I look at a class and I see students looking at me while I am delivering this lecture, I feel certain emotion. That emotion could be an edifying emotion where I feel that I am a teacher and I am able to pass on knowledge to younger generation. It could be that. It could also be maybe some kind of irritation because one of these students is not listening and he or she is talking to each other without paying attention to my lecture.

It could be irritation. It could also be a fascination with the way so many students are listening in rapt attention to what I am saying. So I can think about this situation as a thing of wonder where I marvel at myself and see that am I really speaking something which is so important that so many people will actually listen to my lecture and perhaps learn from it. So these are also some of the emotions that we experience in our day to day life and this experience I can relate to what I am facing now. Now if you enter a showroom for example and suppose you are attended to by a shop girl who is beautifully dressed, who talks very well and who explains to you the product features etc.

and she even tries to suggest that perhaps this brand would be suitable for you. You experience a certain emotion and that emotion often influences your purchase. So as brand managers you must be attentive to these emotional impressions that your brand or the consumer is experiencing through your brand and how you can leverage those impressions while you are performing brand management activity. Before we complete this slide we must understand that all these brand associations verbal, visual, sensory and emotional are like raw blueprints of psychological experiences, real psychological experiences. So brand managers must not forget that these are real experiences, they are not imaginary, they are not insignificant, they are real, they are psychological and they are all experiences.

But we must also understand they are raw and it is important that we must capture them in their rawness because if you can capture them in their rawness you would find there is enormous energy in them and that energy you can leverage and you can confer upon your brand which will stand you in good stead and it will stand the brand in good stead in the marketplace. Let us move forward. Now as you have seen that there are four types of brand associations verbal, visual, emotional and sensory, but we must also understand that these are not watertight compartments. If you cut your mind open you will not find that in one part you have verbal, in another part you have visual and then emotional and so these are not four compartments in which these associations are kept or stored. They are actually mixed with each other and it is sometimes or often very difficult to distinguish one from the other.

In fact often they are stored in the mind as metaphors. What is a metaphor? Metaphor is when you are expressing something as something else. So that is a metaphor. For example when we say Hindu religion one metaphor that we recall when we think of Hindu religion is the symbol Om or several other symbols that are associated with the Hindu religion. So that is a metaphor.

Similarly, when we think of say Tata brand we think of the letter T. So letter T acts as a metaphor all right which can also be called the logo, but logo is a watered down version of a metaphor. Metaphor is far more powerful and deep and that is why all these experiences get combined and are stored as metaphors or symbols in our minds. Another aspect that we must understand is that these associations reside in our mind in clusters all right. So you have to what happens is that similar associations will get clustered in your mind.

So for example say associations related to cleanliness. Now all the brands related to cleanliness whether it is hand wash, whether it is soap, whether it is towel, whether it is say hygiene like phenol and so on. So all the associations related to cleanliness might get restored in your mind in cluster and then you will have to explore them as a cluster so that you can understand what really are the associations that are relevant to you. Another point is that these are lodged in episodic memory. Episodic memory means what you will see the pictures and they will give you an idea these metaphors or these brand associations are residing in our mind that are related to some episodes some events in life.

So for example if you are asked which product do you relate to your marriage anniversary for example. So you may talk about diamonds which you may have given as a gift to your wife or you may talk about the restaurant where you took her out for dinner or you may talk about the rose that perhaps accompanied the gift or you may talk about

maybe a kind of performance that the restaurant created for the couple while you were enjoying your anniversary dinner. You may also talk about the wine that you had together or the scented candle that spread a lovely fragrance while you were together. So you can see that a simple event of a marriage anniversary dinner can echo or can contain brand associations related to a large number of products and brands and that is what as a brand manager you must be conscious of that when you are trying to extract or trying to understand these brand associations you must refer to various episodes in consumers life and ask him or her to refer to them to dig deeper and tell you what really are they thinking about your brand. Similarly for example you see in this picture of a car if you ask the person what which animal comes to your mind when you think of this car and if the person says a tiger or a cat or a cheetah you suddenly have another raw material another reference point to understand your brand.

So for example if this car is Porsche, Porsche is being equated to a cat or a tiger. Now all of us know what is a cat or a tiger and therefore it becomes easier for a brand manager to understand that what really my consumers are thinking about my brand. Let us move further. So what we have seen so far is that these brand associations which are of four types verbal, visual, emotional and sensory they can act as raw material and they can serve as the starting point where you can work with your brand. Now as we have also seen that these associations reside deep in the minds of the consumer and they are not easy to extract.

So therefore even longer and deeper attention must be paid on these brand associations so that so that brand managers first consider them as important and second they make some effort to extract them. So this is what we have seen so far in this lecture. Now finally we have come to the final slide where we are saying that if the brand managers do not have sufficient in-depth knowledge of brand associations what can really happen. As you can see it says consequences of superficial knowledge of brand associations lead to. What do they lead to? They lead to managers may fail to discover a negative.

Now what does it mean? It means that suppose if you remember there was an incident related to Maggie and because some material was detected in that Maggie there was a huge uproar that so many millions of people are having Maggie especially younger people are having Maggie and the company Nestle which manufactures Maggie has put the health of so many youngsters to risk. Now if the brand managers had paid sufficient attention to the ingredients that are going into the manufacturing of Maggie if they had detected that if there is any hint among the consumers about maybe the health maybe a health issue or someone talking about it that they are not feeling well when they are consuming Maggie. If they were if the brand managers were able to anticipate what is happening to the taste and to the health of the consumer while they were having Maggie

they may not have faced this issue. So what I am trying to say is that here we come back to the brand association which is sensory impression. Now how was this discovered? This was discovered because some people fell ill and they detected it through the taste buds that the taste of Maggie has become slightly different.

So if brand manager is alert to the sensory impressions they would be able to anticipate a negative fallout that may happen in the market and they may be able to take preemptive action however in this case they were not able to anticipate and therefore Maggie had to face a severe backlash. So something like that may happen if you do not attend to brand associations in deep in depth. You can see we will go further in this slide but you may see that there are two pictures on this slide of new Coke. Now most of you might be aware of this incident that happened in the history of Coke. At one point of time when Pepsi was not able to compete against Coke they did a massive survey across America and it was called a blindfold test.

What they did was they blindfolded consumers and in front of them they placed Coke and they placed Pepsi and then they were made to taste both the drinks one after another and after tasting they were supposed to say which one tastes better and in that survey since it was a blindfold test and it was done in full public view there was no chance of it getting misrepresented and therefore when the results came out across thousands of people the survey was done and when the results came out people saw that a large number of the consumers were actually saying that Pepsi tastes better. Now what will Coke do and what did Coke do? Coke responded to this and they said so if you are aware of the taste between the difference of taste between Coke and Pepsi of course we will have subjectivity involved here but generally people say that Pepsi is slightly sweeter than Coke. Now what Coke did to this development they thought that it is a serious matter a large number of people are actually preferring Pepsi over Coca Cola so therefore we must do something and what they did was they launched something called new Coke you can see the picture of new Coke on your slide. They launched something called new Coke and history says that new Coke was a dismal failure it did not survive at all nobody liked it and within a few month they had to take it off the shelves of stores. Now here again we come back to the first to the definition that we had spoken about which is given by Kapteer and Akker.

What did he say? They said that we have to build perceived value beyond the observable physical value. So perceived value of Coca Cola was obviously not the physical value of taste. So people were not consuming Coca Cola because of the taste they were simply consuming Coca Cola because it was Coca Cola it had little to do with the taste that is associated with Coca Cola. So this is something that brand managers must understand and they must work upon otherwise they will suffer the same fate as the

fate of new Coke that happened immediately after that blindfold test conducted by Pepsi where large number of people said that they prefer the taste of Pepsi to Coke. Second point is biased stroke weak positioning against competitor brand.

This also means that if the brand managers are not aware of what is really the strength of your brand if you are not aware what people are thinking about your brand in depth what you would do is you will work upon the primary associations which are known to everybody and therefore your brand position will be weak or biased against your competitor brand and you will not be able to do very well in the marketplace. What does it mean? This is particularly relevant to large brands big brands national brands and the ones which are competing against smaller brands or private labels because when the brands are large when brands are big and popular and old they have large body of associations residing in the minds of consumer and the brand managers must not be lazy they must make that effort to dig deeper into the minds of consumer and extract the stronger brand associations which are as we have said the four types they must extract and they must mix them they must interpret them and then use them in the brand management activity. That is how they will be able to create a stronger positioning of their brand in the mind of the consumer instead of a weak position. Third point opportunities for brand extensions and brand alliances are missed. This means that for example in one of the lectures I was mentioning Taj hotels.

Now Taj hotels and resorts we all know are five star hotels and we also know that Taj hotels and Taj hotels are known for old world charm. All right now old world charm is something that is very expensive and everybody is not looking for it and if you also recollect that Oberoi launched its services under the category of business travel. So it is not that business travelers do are not going to Taj hotel they are also going to Taj hotel and they are perhaps not looking for old world charm all right. So if brand managers are aware and in this case perhaps they were aware that consumers all consumers are not really looking for old world charm they are looking for simple business hotel which will serve which will provide them good quality five star service and that is it. They are not looking they are not traveling for leisure they are traveling for business.

So while they were perhaps they were aware of this and that is why they extended the brand of Taj to business hotel category and they created a chain of hotel called Vivanta by Taj. So this is what you can do if you are aware of what your consumers want and how they are expressing through their visual verbal sensory and emotional impressions. So if you are not aware then such opportunities for brand extensions and brand alliances could be mix could be missed. Another example is say Indian oil and state bank has come together to create a credit card which is which can be used in petrol pumps where people fill diesel and petrol. Now it is a beautiful coming together of two brands where

all of us everybody goes to gas stations petrol pumps and to fill their car or scooter with petrol or diesel.

Now it is a beautiful combination where two brands have come together and offer a value to consumer which is which is real and which is convenient. Now this also must have been the result of brand managers sensing what is the requirement in the market and extend a credit card which is a state bank credit card into one category which is very large significant and addresses a need of the consumer. So these are the opportunities that you would realize if you are if you pay sufficient attention to brand associations that are held deep into your unconscious. Same point may fail to discover a negative development something like Maggie the first point. So suddenly if crisis happens you will realize what really has hit me and where will my brand go will it survive.

If you remember Ratan Tata's case that Vashnavi Communications and some allegations were made against Ratan Tata towards his association with Neera Radia. These associations because Ratan Tata himself is a brand and it must not be forgotten that Ratan Tata is a single individual is a single person he is not a married person. So these associations are likely to stick and therefore one must be more careful when such a thing is happening. Similarly there are many corporate fraud cases like Cafe Coffee Day or Satyam and so on so forth. So the brand managers the corporate communication professionals they must be careful of they must be careful of what messages are going in the minds of investors in the minds of consumers and they must and in case such a crisis hits they must go back to the drawing table and they must look at what are the associations that are built over a long period of years and leverage those associations to come out of that crisis.

So awareness of such brand associations will not only help you in preventing a negative development it will also help you in doing in firefighting the crisis when and if that happens. Finally less effective communication strategies again if you are aware of deeply held brand associations you will be able to formulate campaigns and communication strategies that are rooted in the real consumer experiences rather than something which is superficial and which is obvious. So we come to the end of this lecture and in this lecture what we have seen is how brand associations function as the raw material for brand managers to work upon to create campaigns to launch new products to create brand extensions and overall to deliver value to the consumers to the company and often to society and in the process they themselves become more capable and they themselves become more real in terms of being a brand management professional. Thank you very much. .