

Brand Management
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Week - 02
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Welcome to another lecture on brand management. The title of today's lecture is Mining Brand Associations. If you recollect in the previous lecture, we had spoken about four types of brand associations and they are verbal, visual, emotional and sensory. These associations as we discussed in the last lecture reside deep in our unconscious and they are to be extracted through special tools and these tools are something that we are going to know about in today's lecture. In the last lecture, we also discussed why brand managers must pay attention to these brand associations, not the primary ones but the secondary or the tertiary ones.

What do we mean when we say secondary and tertiary? It means that brand managers must go beyond the obvious brand associations, must go beyond that which is common knowledge about their brand. They must not be satisfied with superficial understanding of brand associations and go beyond them to develop an in-depth understanding of brand associations about the brands. Today, we will learn to mine those brand associations which are secondary, tertiary, held in our mind in many different forms which is slightly different from verbal descriptions, which are different from simple articulation of brand associations with the help of language. So today, we are going to learn about those tools.

But before we go to those tools, we must understand what really constitutes brand experience. While we may have spoken about verbal descriptions, visual representations, emotional impressions and sensory impressions, if we try to restate them in a different way, it will actually mean that brand experience is about actual sensations. What are actual sensations? We have referred to them in the past also in various other lectures. Actual sensation means when you are using say Dove soap. Now, while you are using Dove soap, you may feel the smoothness of the texture of the soap on your skin and that experience is captured in the communication or in the advertisement of Dove soap when you see actual milk being poured into a soap case or a soap box.

So the brand manager of Dove soap must be alive to that sensation that a consumer feels while he or she is using Dove soap. So actual sensation constitutes brand experience. Brand experiences also constitute feelings, fantasies and fun. Now, I can give obvious examples. For instance, say if you visit Disneyland.

Now Disneyland obviously is a place for fun. And what do they do? They create

experiences where giant Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, they all strut around where you can interact with them, they interact with you and your fantasies become real. You also enjoy rides and so on so forth. You enjoy different shades of feelings. So they also constitute brand experience, in this case, experience of Disney.

Cognitions, cognition or in other words, what it means is you think about the brand. Alright! You engage with it in a little contemplative manner. And this happens particularly when you are buying something which is a high involvement purchase. For example, if you are buying a flat or if you are buying a car or if you are buying a luxury product, which is substantially expensive. In such cases, you spend a little more effort in evaluating the pros and cons of that purchase, you go into the details of what you are actually getting and then you make a purchase.

So cognition that process of evaluation, consideration, weighing whether you should buy one or the other, what are the features. This process also constitutes brand experience. And then of course, behavioral responses. So it is not that we are only passive receptors, we also respond to the brand. And the way we respond to the brand is also a part of brand experience.

For example, when we look at say a beautiful Mercedes car driving down the street, how do we respond to that? We probably respond with say, aha, it is such a beautiful car or we will respond, oh, how smooth it is or we may respond, oh my god, the way the engine is reverberating and it is creating that noise, it creates an excitement whether it is Mercedes car or a Harley Davidson or a Royal Enfield, it creates that excitement in us when we engage with that experience. So that is also brand experience and brand managers must understand that all these elements contribute towards brand experience and these brand experiences then get translated into those four brand associations, which are verbal, visual, emotional and sensory. I am repeatedly emphasizing these four brand associations because we tend to ignore, we tend to forget all brand associations other than verbal brand associations. So that is why I keep emphasizing it is not just verbal description, but it is also visual, it is emotional and it is sensory. Next part, it is not just sensations, feelings, fantasies, cognitions and behavioral responses, it is also product experience.

This is restating in new words, looking at it from a different perspective. So product experience, when I touch this screen or when I use this mouse or when I look at the wall clock in this room, these are all product experiences. Suppose I use my wallet, which is a leather wallet, so I see how the sections within the wallet are designed and how smaller notes can come in one section, coins can come in another section, credit cards can go in another section and how the structuring is done and how I experience the inserting of the

card, the placing of the notes, keeping of the coins and so on. So that product experience is something that again a brand manager should be alive to. Similarly, brand experience is not just product experience, but it is also shopping and service experience.

So now, nowadays all of us buy mobile phones. Now of course, there is an experience of buying that mobile phone, we can buy either online or we can go to a showroom and buy the mobile phone. What has been our shopping experience? If we buy online, then the packaging, the packet that we receive and then the way we unfold that packet and then the way we transfer data, how easy or difficult it is, how the charger is placed, how the data card is placed and so on so forth. So product experience, in addition to product experience, shopping experience is equally important and brand managers must pay attention to shopping experience, the way the person, the consumer buys your product, what experience he or she had while he purchased your brand. And then it does not stop with shopping, it goes on to service experience as well.

So if it is a product, if it is a machine, if it is something which is reasonably long lasting and which may require service, service experience also becomes very important. Because people if they find some problem with the product, they would like to get it serviced, they would like the problem to be addressed and how that addressing happens on behalf of the brand, on behalf of the company goes on to create new brand associations which will in the end determine whether the person will come back to your brand or move away to some other brand. So that is why brand managers must look at service experience also and they are looking at unearthing those four brand associations. And finally and which probably is the most important is the consumption experience. Now when we are actually consuming, now consuming does not mean something related to food alone, it may also mean something which is a technology product, which is an FMCG product, which is an NCD product, consumer durable product or non-consumer durable product and so on.

So consumption experience for example, if you buy say a washing machine. Now how do you consume a washing machine? You look at it, it is white in color, it is some other color, the way you open the lid, the way you place clothes, the way it moves if it is a front load, you can look at it how the clothes are moving inside, how you place the washing powder or the washing liquid, how you place the perfume inside, how you place the other aspects which enhance the cleanliness of the clothes that it is washing. So that consumption experience is also something that brand managers must pay sufficient attention and in fact, no matter how much attention brand managers pay to consumption experience is not enough. So it is important that brand managers visit consumers and see them in real life as to how their brands are actually being used by consumers at the place of consumption. So this lends a great dimension to a brand management exercise where

the brand managers become aware of the actual consumption of consumers.

So these are the elements that brand managers must be aware of elements that constitute brand experience because these brand experiences will then result in the brand associations that we are trying to mine. Before we go to mining of those brand associations, we must also look at the stimuli. We have just now seen some stimuli like product experience, shopping service experience, consumption experience these are the stimuli, actual sensations, feelings, fantasies, thoughts, behavioral responses these are also stimuli. There are some more stimuli and those stimuli often we do not think of them as stimuli they are colors and shapes. So for example, you are buying a television.

Now suppose television is circular in character, circular in shape, would you really like it? Would you find it irritating? So what I am trying to say is that the color the shape of the product becomes very important. If you remember Samsung launched one curved television or do you think it is successful? Do you find it exciting? Please think about it. Similarly, the color. If a washing machine is white in color or if a crockery is white in color or if it is not white in color, how would you react to it? Suppose a crockery plate, the plate the dining plate in which you eat your dinner if it is red in color or yellow in color, how would you respond to that? So as brand managers you must think about these things and understand how what kind of stimuli these colors, shapes are giving to the consumer and how they are responding to your brand through this stimuli. Another element or some other elements that work as stimuli are typefaces, designs, slogans, mascots and brand characters.

So for example, recently you may have seen an advertisement of Samsonite where Amitabh Bachchan is the brand ambassador and he is saying that it is a tried and tested brand just like I am tried and tested in the film industry and that is why since you like me you can also like Samsonite. So what I am trying to say is that these mascots, these brand ambassadors contribute to the brand stimuli and consumers respond to these stimuli in a certain way and all these responses ultimately boil down to verbal description, verbal, visual, emotional and sensory associations. So this is what we were talking about brand association, this is how brand associations get created. I come back to it sensory experiences, emotions, intellectual experiences, imaginative thoughts and stimulate actions. Here most of it we have covered already but intellectual experiences which means that a brand encourages you to think for example, an investment in life insurance policy or a health insurance policy or advertisement of a hospital or advertisement of say something complex for example, operating system.

All of them will demand some intellectual action from you and that intellectual action is also an experience. So they would perhaps come under verbal description but they

must not be forgotten because intellectual experiences are also very powerful experiences and they also have to be extracted. Similarly, imaginative thoughts. Now imagination is a very powerful tool with which human beings try to understand the situations around them. Now when you see advertisement of say Liril soap and you see a young girl dancing under or taking a bath and dancing under a waterfall, what imagination do you exercise? What images does your mind conjure when you look at that advertisement? So that imaginative act is also an important element when you come to brand association and you must as brand manager try and understand what images your brand is helping the consumers conjure in their mind which you can leverage to create further communication and further campaigns about your brand.

And of course, all these stimuli must lead to some action. So they stimulate action on part of the consumer. What are these actions? These actions can primarily be categorized as to either they buy your product or they do not buy your product and that is what is important to you as the brand manager. And you must see if people are buying, why are they buying and if people are not buying, why are they not buying? And to understand this action, you will ultimately have to go back to those four brand associations.

Let us move further. So what we are trying is, we are trying to mine brand associations. Now the very act of mining is digging deep. When we think of mining, what comes to our mind? Mining coal, mining iron ore, mining minerals. And how do we mine? We first identify where they are located and then we dig deeper and deeper and deeper and hope that we find what we are looking for. So brand associations or mining brand associations is also a similar act.

We have to dig deeper and deeper and deeper and extract that which is of value. In this case, what is of value? The value is verbal, visual, emotional and sensory brand associations. And if you are able to polish what you have found, if you have managed to analyze well and come up with insights, you may realize or you will realize that what you have found is gold. So that is what we will see today. What do we have to mine? Like in mining of iron ore, we are mining earth.

In this case, we are going to mine consumer memory. Now consumer memory or human memory is a very tricky thing because one, it does not operate only at the conscious level, it operates at the subconscious and at the unconscious level. One second, memory is not always accessible to human beings. So while we may think that we have forgotten, but we may actually remember if we are nudged a little, so we may have to perform some activity by which we nudge or we jog the consumer memory so that we can extract something which is of value. But we will see that just nudging and

jogging may not be enough.

We may actually have to dig, we may actually have to excavate and find value, find associations that are of value. So we have to mine consumer memory. How do we reach consumer memory? We can reach consumer memory through mining situations. So what does it mean when we say mine situations? We have to ask consumer about situations where the consumer has used my brand. So for example, if you are using say a car called Jeep.

Now if you want to unearth associations related to Jeep brand, you can ask the consumer what do you feel when you are driving my car or driving the Jeep brand of car. Now consumer may say that I find exhilaration, I find it exciting to drive the Jeep brand of car. Now this is a primary association. Everybody will know that driving an SUV which is as powerful as Jeep will be exciting. Then you can probe further and you can say what really do you find as exciting when you are driving a Jeep brand of car.

Then perhaps the consumer will have to think about it. He will have to reflect upon his experience of driving the Jeep car and he may come up with something like say it is power, it is a very powerful car or it is a very stable car even if you take it off road in a bumpy road it is quite stable. He may say that the way it reverberates, the way its engine works when you press the accelerator button the kind of sound it makes or the smoothness with which it overtakes other car these are the things that I find exciting. So when you start probing for situations you will suddenly realize that consumers are coming up with answers that are very real, that are very concrete and that which are not very obvious in general. So brand managers when you are trying to mine brand associations, when you are trying to reach consumer memory you can reach via situations.

You explore the situations through which situations where the consumer experiences your brand and by understanding those situations better you will be able to come up with associations that are held deeper inside. Similarly mining memory network. Now what is a memory network? You see memory is not an isolated thing one is connected with other. If you look at this picture in this slide you will see that this slide talks about health of old people and it is titled Senior Health. Thank you very much. .