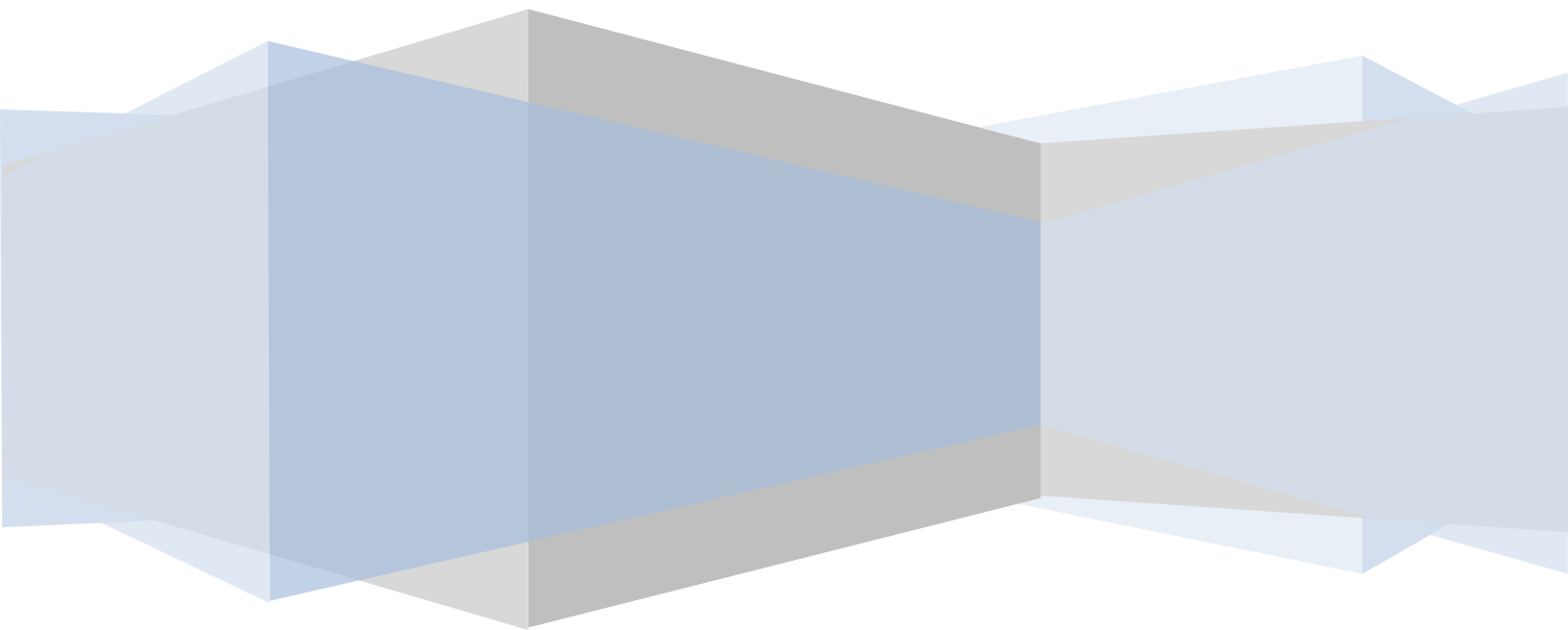


The Key to successful Branding

Agnes Mikulenaite



Chapter 1

Introduction

When you think of a brand the first thing that probably comes to mind is a brand on livestock. Branding of a product should be viewed as the same thing. When you have a successful brand, it sets your product apart from your competition. You want your brand to be able to expand your customer base and increase your market share. The larger your customer base and market share the more powerful your brand will become.

There are many factors that go into making a brand successful and there are even more that go into keeping your brand successful. By learning the basic steps, you will be able to put your brand on the best possible path to success. You will find that marketing and branding go hand in hand. A good brand will help your marketing and strong marketing will help build a strong brand. It is up to you to do your homework to ensure that you make the right decisions to help your company build a strong brand.

Your goal is to build a brand that is the recognized leader in a given category. This makes the consumer want to be aligned with your brand and will seek it out at the store. It will give them the satisfaction that they have made the correct decision for themselves and their family when they purchase your brand.

With the explosion of the Internet, now more than ever, companies have the chance to go global and increase their sales and profits. By following the steps that are outlined here, you will have the information that you need to make your brand successful and have the ability to go global both on the Internet and with a brick and mortar store.

Chapter 2

Expand the brand

When you have a company that has products on the market, you have to decide if you want to expand the brand or keep it at an even level. Expanding your brand can be a delicate decision because you do not want to do any harm to your brand by expanding too quickly.

Some companies decide to expand their brand quickly in order to benefit in the short term, while others look for long-term success. To look at how brand expansion can weaken your brand you only have to look at car manufacturers. At one time the big three automakers were untouchable, consumers would be proud to state they drove a Ford, Chevrolet, or Chrysler. However, as the automakers introduced more and more models, their brands were weakened. Consumers no longer stated that they drove a Ford, Chevrolet, or Chrysler; they said they drove an Escort, Cavalier, or a New Yorker. This ultimately saturated the market, weakened their brand, and lessened their market share allowing competition the opportunity to move in to their territory.

That is not to say that weakening your brand is a bad thing or will not allow your company to increase profits. If you are in an industry that has weak or no competition, weakening your brand through expansion will open it up to a larger market share allowing you to increase sales and make a larger profit.

On the other hand, you have to keep in mind the consumers that want to buy your product or want to be aligned with your brand. Having a brand that is everywhere and open to everyone might not be what the consumers are looking for. Think about the exclusivity of some brands like Rolex, not everyone can afford a watch of that caliber, and that is why the brand is strong with those consumers who can afford to buy the watch. Being exclusive does have its benefits as well as being available to the population at large.

Chapter 3

Contract the Brand

Having a brand that is associated with doing one or just a few things well will help you to build a strong brand. If you want to open a business, it is okay to sell just a few items or if you want to open a restaurant focus on being great with just a few dishes. Think of all the specialty stores that are out there that specialize in selling one thing or focus on a genre. Toy stores, for example, fit into this niche. Although they sell a variety of products, they are all geared to toys. Girls toys, boys toys it does not matter, when you are going into a toy store you know exactly what you are going to see and you know why you are there. This increases their brand, whether it is a well known toy store such as Toys “R” Us, or a neighborhood toy store.

The same goes for restaurants. If you want to open an Italian restaurant, do not include dishes that do not fit within the scope of your business. Focus on doing Italian dishes right and you will build a well respected brand for doing it well. There are certain rules you should follow to ensure that your brand benefits if you want to specialize or contract. First, make sure that whatever business that you want to be involved in you keep it simple and narrow. Second, you will want to keep the supply of your product full at all times. Third, when dealing with wholesalers, you want to strike the best possible price so you will be able to sell your product at inexpensive prices. Finally, you have to make sure that you are the best in whatever you choose to do so that you will be the leader in the industry giving you a good brand identity.

Think of the large companies in the world that dominate in their category by focusing on one product. Coca Cola, for example, is the worldwide leader by far when it comes to selling cola drinks. Recent studies have shown that their share of the worldwide market in the neighborhood

of seventy percent. Pundits should not even refer to Coca Cola and Pepsi as cola wars because there is a clear winner in the category. McDonald's and Burger King are the same way; they are successful because they focus on making hamburgers. While they have expanded their menus to include chicken, they remained focused on being good at just a few items.

Chapter 4

Publicity is a Good Thing

If you are looking to get a new brand off the ground, perhaps the best way to go about it is to generate as much publicity as you can. While advertising is another option, publicity is much better at getting a new product or brand going and unlike advertising, garnering publicity is a lot cheaper. Think about what you want your brand to stand for, if it is something that is going to be used by people that spend time outdoors or is relatable to being outdoors you can go around the country spreading the message of your new product at outdoor festivals, and country fairs. Show up at outdoor sporting events, such as the X-Games and action sports events, pass out fliers, and give free samples of your product to start creating a buzz among the consumers that you want to purchase your brand.

One great way to generate publicity for your brand is to be the first at something. News people love to break news and be the first on the scene of a new story. With media now being connected across the world, it will cost next to nothing and the news media will do the job for you. With the advent of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, you can create your own buzz about your brand free of charge.

You should not worry about trying to come up with a catchy slogan for your brand when you are trying to launch it. Stay focused on building as much publicity for your brand as possible. This will cut down the initial costs of launching your new brand so you can use your budgeted funds in other areas that will help make the brand a success. When thinking of strategies to increase your brand awareness try to approach it as how you can get the most publicity for the lowest cost.

Chapter 5

Advertising

the Brand

Once you have launched your brand through publicity, the next step is to keep the brand name in the minds of consumers, which is done through advertising. Advertising can be an expensive proposition, so it has to be approached carefully and with a well thought out plan. The message that you put forth through advertising is important. You will have to figure out the image you want to portray for your company and brand. However, if you have successfully positioned your brand through publicity and have become a leader in your industry the best way to advertise is to advertise why your brand is the best.

This can be done a number of ways. You can build an advertising campaign around your brand being the best in your market. Additionally, you could build an advertising campaign about how your brand is the leader in quality when it comes to products in your market. Consumers want to be associated with the best and when you advertise about how your brand is an industry leader, you will find that consumers will be attracted to your brand.

In order to make your advertising campaign a success it is best to do some research before you get started. Hold some surveys and focus groups to get consumer feedback on your product so you know how it is perceived before you get started. By doing this you will be better prepared to construct a message that will resonate with consumers and entice them to try your brand for the first time or keep consumers coming back as repeat customers.

When you have a successful brand one of the things that you can strive for is when consumers hear the name of your brand, it puts an image or word into their minds. For example, if you have

a brand that caters to high-end clientele, when consumers hear the name of the brand you want the first thing that comes to their minds is quality or perhaps exclusivity. Once your brand has achieved this status, the sky is the limit. Your brand will become the unmitigated leader in the marketplace and will drive out competition because it will cost them too much to break into the market. One important thing to remember is that once you have achieved becoming a word or image in the minds of consumers do not get cocky and try to expand. This will undo all the work that you have put in to become a successful brand.

Think about successful brands in the marketplace right now. When consumers go out to a restaurant and ask for a soda to drink what do they say? They say I will have a Coke. They do not say I want a Pepsi, or a RC. This shows the dominance that Coca Cola has in their market. The same can be said for copiers. When someone says they are going to the copier machine, they say they are getting some Xerox copies. Nobody says that they are going to get some Kyocera copies. No matter what the machine is that they are using, Xerox is the dominate brand because when consumers hear the word copy, Xerox comes to mind. Finally, think about when you have a cold and need to blow your nose. What do you ask for? Kleenex right. No matter the brand of tissues that you have at your home when it comes time to wipe your nose you will ask for a Kleenex. This is one more example of a brand being so dominate that its brand name becomes the generic word for all items that are in competition with it.

Chapter 6

Be Authentic

Consumers are people, and people are guarded by nature so no matter how well you try to get your message across through advertising, consumers will naturally question some of the claims that you make. This is why the claims that you make in your advertising message have to be true and be able to be backed up. This will bring your brand the credibility that is needed to reassure consumers that your brand does what it says and is of the quality that the advertisement says it is. Once you have established this with consumers, they will be more apt to tell other consumers about your brand and how it backs up its claims. This could very well lead to your brand expanding in the marketplace leading to higher revenues and profits. Remember, expanding in the marketplace is a good thing; it is not the same as expanding the brand.

Being authentic in your advertising and being able to back it up will help your brand maintain leadership in the marketplace. In addition, it can also bring you free publicity. Being an industry leader and with good brand recognition, media outlets will be more likely to come to your company to do a story about your industry. This allows your brand to become a spokesperson for the industry, which will lead to your brand becoming more recognized. Consumers, seeing your brand being featured in a news story will give it more credibility, thereby increasing the chances of your brand being able to expand in the marketplace.

Being able to gain the leadership with your brand is the most important thing that you can do as a business owner. Companies and products whose brand is the leader in the market have a hard time being replaced. In fact, a recent study of companies that were leaders in the marketplace in the 1940's showed out of the twenty brands that were researched only three were not in the leadership position today. Leadership means long-term success, so strive to be on top.

Chapter 7

It's not all about Quality

Having the best quality in a brand or product does not necessarily mean that is destined to be number one. There are many brands that you can point to make this point. Just because a consumer paid a lot more for their Tag Heuer watch does not mean that it will work better or tell the time more accurately than a Seiko. Additionally, paying thousands of dollars more for a BMW over a Toyota does not mean that the BMW will have less mechanical problems than the Toyota. Paying more for a designer t-shirt does not mean that it will have longer wear time than a t-shirt purchased at a discount store. In almost every industry, the leader in quality does not translate as the leader in sales.

Having the perception that the brand is quality is what you want in the minds of consumers. You can do this by becoming a brand that specializes in the market. If consumers see that the brand is focused on just one area of a problem, the brand will be perceived as having more knowledge about the problem and therefore a more quality brand. Another way of having a brand have the perception of quality is if it is more expensive than its competition. This gives the consumer the psychological contentment that they brought the best quality brand because of the price tag. It also speaks to a consumer's status. Consumers do not simply buy a more expensive brand for themselves; it is to show the people that they come in contact with that they can afford it.

When offering your brand for a higher price than one of your competitors it is best that when the brand first come to market it already has the higher price. This gives the consumer the impression that your brand is superior to the others based on price alone. Introducing the brand at a competitive price and then raising it makes it look as your trying to price gouge consumers.

However, when you do offer a brand at a higher price than your competitors you must ensure

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