

# A study of toothpaste category in india

Business



Toothpaste is the category chosen for this exercise. The oral care market in India is huge, about Rs 4400 crores of which toothpaste is about Rs 3200 crores (as of April 2010). The toothpaste market is flooded with brands (Colgate total, colgate active salt, colgate gel, peposodent, close up, meswak, babool to name a few) with very little value proposition for the brands to talk about and hence very little, if any, distinctive personalities for them.

Colgate is the market leader with about 50% of the share, followed by Hindustan Unilever (HUL) at 28% (of which close up is 17% and pepsodent 11%). Dabur has about 10% of the market share with its brand like red toothpaste, promise, meswak and babool. Reasons for choosing the "Toothpaste" Category In the toothpaste category, comparison based on the functional attributes by consumers among different brands is very difficult. Therefore, if the marketers are able to create a symbolic appeal by creating a positive brand personality, they could rise above the competition. Positive brand personality would lead to a more favorable attitude towards the brand, brand preference and consequently brand loyalty in a category where switching brands to explore new alternatives (exploratory purchase behavior) is common.

To study if brand personality could help the toothpaste brands in differentiating themselves. Some of the prominent brands in the toothpaste category are Colgate, Colgate active salt, Colgate gel, Close up, Pepsodent, Meswak and Babool. Colgate has carved for itself a personality of being strong and effective in preventing tooth decay. Colgate active salt has used the concept of information influence effectively by using dentists in the

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commercials and also suggesting that Colgate is the number one brand suggested by the dentists. It is believed the consumers tend to select brands that preserve or enhance the “ self image” of the consumer.

Colgate gel has used this concept by portraying how a youngster can enhance his self image upon using the product to the extent of even thinking about dating a celebrity. Close up, through its television commercials seems to be targeting the consumers who are not high in Need for Cognition (NFC), as they propagate the end benefit (fresh breath) without much product related information. Pepsodent has used the concept of inner directedness associated with the personality trait social character. The commercial projects that the consumers need not lie when they consume food items that can harm the teeth. Meswak is a brand that has used the concept of ethnocentrism.

The region of origin (middle east) is used in the commercial, but due to lack of sufficient information it is unclear about the kind of image(positive or negative) the consumers have about the region of origin with respect to the toothpaste category. Babool has used the concept of extended self where consumers' possessions can be seen to either confirm or as in this case extend their self image by portraying that the individual could be more successful by using Babool. In this section let us try and understand if, and how Anchor white toothpaste can use some consumer behavior concepts to enhance its brand. Currently Anchor white toothpaste seems to portray itself as the all rounder toothpaste - strong teeth, prevents decay and protection against germs. But from the initial commercials of anchor white toothpaste it

is quite unclear as to how they perceive their consumers on the personality trait of dogmatism.

Since they use both celebrity advertising usually used for the highly dogmatic consumers to be more receptive to the brand and also used factual differences and product benefits for the consumers who are low in dogmatism. While most other toothpaste brands propagate the end benefits more than the product related information conveying the message that they are also targeting the consumers who may not have high degree of cognition, Anchor white stresses on the product related information and also involves comparison across brands - a strategy that is effective for consumers with high degree of cognition. The switching of the brands in the toothpaste category and the presence of a plethora of brands with very little functional differences does seem to indicate that the consumer innovativeness in the toothpaste category is quite significant. Anchor white toothpaste can use this consumer innovativeness to extend its brand into the related Mouth wash category (since it already has the toothbrush and the gel variants of the toothpaste) since such consumers can form a good base for word of mouth communication as well. Anchor could also stress on the end benefits more than the product related information, thereby not alienating the consumers who are not high on need for cognition.

Another interesting concept that can be tried by Anchor is the variety or novelty seeking behavior of the consumers. Since toothpaste helps in quicker healing of the minor burns, the use innovativeness type of variety seeking can be used to enhance the brand. Also another approach to make use of the variety seeking behavior of the consumers would be to introduce toothpaste

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specifically for brushing in the night. The above mentioned methods are some ways, by no means exhaustive, by which Anchor white toothpaste can enhance its brand by using some of the concepts of personality in consumer behavior. References