

Market research argumentative



Every company that is in the process of launching or developing a new product in the market should be armed with a plethora of marketing information that will ensure success of the product once it hits the market.

The most important of this information should be the insight about the target consumer. The success of the product launch depends a lot on what matters to this target consumer. At Beiersdorf during the development of Pearl & Beauty it was no different. A lot of resources were put in place and a thorough market research was undertaken to ensure that Pearl & Beauty was off to a flyer. Beiersdorf has had a wide history in the US in market research for product development, with over 600 employees working at its headquarter's research and development department.

Beiersdorf's appreciation of the importance of market research is further evidenced by the presence of a specialized market research team based at the company's headquarters and dedicated market research managers in its subsidiaries in other foreign markets, namely France, the United Kingdom, China and Italy (Beiersdorf, 2008). The complexity of the research department as a result of the multinational nature is best captured in the year 2005 by EastNorthWestSouth's article when it is indicated that for effective multinational marketing one must derive his professionals from a diverse range of cultures. This team was charged with the responsibility of carrying out the market research before Pearl and Beauty was launched. The methodology used by the team is congruent with the findings of the American Productivity & Quality Center (2005), in their book, 'Marketing Research for New Product Development' which outlined the issues to be taken into account when carrying out market research for the purpose of

new product development. The team started with gathering information from the consumers on their desires as far as deodorants were concerned, so as to understand the market better, and also to identify if there exists any gap between the products available in the market and the consumer's desires, that is, it sought to gain consumer insight.

Information on usage and views on the use of deodorants was obtained from previous market research studies. However markets are always dynamic and there arose a need to obtain more recent and therefore relevant information to eliminate the risk of operating on outdated data. This was done by conducting interviews of small groups of women, and thereby understanding their motivations, expectations and desires. From this study, Beiersdorf discovered a trend in women's desire to have beautiful underarms throughout the year, to which end they were turning to shaving. According to Jack Gordon et al, the insights should be turned into concepts that can be executed in multiple ways, leaving manoeuvring space for the company. These concepts should not only enable the consumers to understand the idea of the product better but also to allow the consumers to express their desires.

Therefore the company embarked on a brainstorming session to come up with several product concepts to meet this new desire by the consumer. Once several concepts had been developed and examined, the company once again turned to its market research team for an assessment of which of the concept had the most popularity among the consumers. This was done in the form of a homogenous structured questionnaire that sought to ascertain the elements of the product that most of the prospective clients would like in

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a product like the one under development, in this case a deodorant. Data was collected on deodorant issues like wetness, dryness and fragrance, which were core to any deodorant concept, the value that was added by the inclusion of the neat underarms concept that made the new Nivea product stand out, and its relevance to the target market. This questionnaire was issued to the target market and the concept combination with the most popularity was adopted and taken to the next stage of the development process, the naming and package design.

What the design portrays about the product is very important as it is central to the process of selling which is actually the rationale of the product development in the first place, (Reinertsen, 2006). Owing to the market, (young to middle aged women) the product design had to communicate femininity and sophistication. Femininity was further enhanced by using the colour pink for the packaging. Various designs were tested using market research strategies to give insight on the expected sales volume, optimal selling price and level of switching that would be expected from the launch. According to Jack Gordon (2005), the concepts that have been identified must be developed into products that deliver the promises made to the consumer during the gathering of their views or else the entire project will fail. Product was therefore tested on actual customer to evaluate its chances of success, to ensure that the product lives up to the promises made to consumers.

The research team provided a sample of the target market with the product after it had been de-branded. De-branding means that the product was put in a black container, so that the person using it would have not be able to tell

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company that had manufactured the product. This prevented the sample from being biased and therefore giving the wrong information. The test involved the sample members using the product for a week and then giving feedback in relation to how the product performed, whether or not they may be willing to purchase it, or whether they would change from the deodorant they are currently using to the new product once it's launched.