# Apple branding strategy essay sample

Business, Branding

The Apple brand strategy is all about the experience. According to Wired. com, " Apple's emotional branding, a brand that is felt in the heart and mind of the consumer" [2], is the key to its survival. Apple's brand is reflected through their core beliefs about innovation, imagination and design. It is promoted through their products, advertisement and customer experience. This paper will give an introduction on understanding what a brand is and then will examine how the company's branding strategy is implemented in the marketplace. In 1983, Apple created Lisa, the first computer with a graphic user interface (GUI) [6], an interface that is based on graphics instead of text [7]. Since then, the company has created its brand based around its core beliefs. What exactly is a brand? Seth Godin, bestselling author, entrepreneur and agent of change [3] says it the best, " I think it is the product of two things: [Prediction of what to expect] times [emotional power of that expectation]."

Meaning, if a consumer does not know what the brand means, it has no power [4]. Basically, there are three types of brands: unique, corporate and range. A unique branding strategy is built around an established brand that stands for one thing. The Pepsico Corporation is a good example of a unique brand. The company's umbrella of its products include: Pepsi, Frito Lay, Tropicana and Gatorade. A corporate branding strategy is a company that has one brand for all its products. Apple falls under this category. Range is a strategy that a combines the two [14]. An example is Toyota Company creating the Lexus brand to have a new market identity competing in the luxury car market.

Apple's strategy is a corporate branding strategy that revolves around its emotional experience with its products. To be an emotional brand, it must have three things in common. The company must project a strong humanistic corporate culture; have a unique visual and verbal vocabulary; and establish a connection with its consumers. [1]. How does the company project its core values and apply it through its products, advertising and services it offers? To start, the values are reflected through the mission statement. Apple ignited the personal computer revolution in the 1970s with the Apple II and reinvented the personal computer in the 1980s with the Macintosh. Apple is committed to bringing the best personal computing experience to students, educators, creative professionals

and consumers around the world through its innovative hardware, software and Internet offerings. [5]. Meaning, the core of Apple is invention and reinvention, worldwide consumer commitment by allowing them experience the brand by providing innovative products.

Apple's Products

The company competes across the personal computer, electronics and smart phone industries [8] and reflects its brand through these mediums. True to its corporate branding strategy, the brand consistently repeats the idea of innovation, imagination and design. Apple's core values are successfully implemented by their use of consistency and repetition [2] through their product and retail

design, advertisement and customer experience. For example, take the ergonomic product design of the computer, iPod and iPhone. (show

pictures/find pictures). The design is simple, modern and with a clean user interface. The basic geometrics and organic forms all have similar materials. The products are aluminum, chrome, glossy black or white plastic. When a consumer purchase an iPod or even a computer, they know inherently it is an Apple product. The retail space continues the brand perception by creating an open, simple and modern space. The space utilizes organic materials such as aluminum, glass and wood. Furthermore, online technological advancement with podcasting, iTunes, and providing affordable songs advances the creativity and imagination.

Consumer Experience

The consumer experience is another avenue that reinforces the brand. According to an article by Michael Matthews for Haaretz. com, Apples focus is, " on providing an integrated, innovative and intentional customer experience at all points of service. It is embedded into everything the company does" [10]. It is a compelling experience from the knowledge and friendliness of its employees to providing the genius bar, offering apple care and letting consumers experience the Apple brand. In the retail space, the sales associates are accessible, knowledgeable and friendly. (show images of the retail space), further repeating the values. The retail space also exhibits their core " think different" operating principle [11]. The wording " genius bar" evokes thoughts of Albert Einstein, the transcendental creative innovative icon.

Advertisement
Advertisement reflects the creative, individualistic nature of its consumer.

The ads, regardless of the product, are " shot on a monochrome background, and feature little if any text until the conclusion. And all end with a shot of the Apple logo, unifying the products in the minds of consumers and reinforcing both the brand and its image [10].

Summary and Analysis

Apple's branding strategies is a proven success. According to a recent article on Appleinsider. com, Apple's 254 retail locations sell 492, 000 Macs to 38. 6 million store visitors during the June quarter, with half of those sales going to customers who had never before owned a Mac [13]. Furthermore, Apple's brand is getting stronger. The 2009 Best Global brand list, an evaluation of the world's top 100 brands, moved the company up from number 24 to number 20. [14]. Apple was one of the first companies to enter the mp3 market and enter it successfully. In observation, the appeal of the company is the emotional perception it provides. As an individual in the communications and marketing profession, I'd like to think that I am not susceptible to the marketing of brands.

But, I've noticed that I tend to gravitate towards brands that evoke the creative side of my personality and in turn, create a brand loyal consumer. I think that those who embrace Apple's brand craves a product that represents this and/or their technological or their entrepreneurial aspect or of their personality. Of course, spending $501 million in the 2009 fiscal year does help with this representation. Then again, Microsoft, which spends more on advertising across all of its combined businesses than Apple does, is not

as effective or as integrated as Apple. The key to Apples strategy is homogeneity and repeat, repeat, repeat. The consumer is exposed to

the same consistent message on all mediums and all fronts. Enter a retail store and see an open, organic space with knowledgeable, friendly staff. Purchase an iPhone or an iPod and experience the visceral similarities of a simple and clean user interface. Overall the core beliefs and a corporate branding strategy positioning allows Apple to reflect their core beliefs about innovation, imagination and design.

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