

On the brand elements of vodafone

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Vodafone India has an integrated marketing strategy to ensure that they reach the maximum customer base and provide a number of touch points for the user. The sales and distribution of Vodafone products is done through their dedicated outlets as well as other outlets, small shops and stores. Vodafone has set up similar format Vodafone stores all over India to give their consumers a seamless and coherent experience wherever they maybe.

At the same time a number of mini stores ensure that the customers have more number of places to resolve their minor problems and enquiries. These also provide a venue for the customers to settle their bill dues immediately. Vodafone India also pushes its sim cards through general retailers and pays them a small margin on the sale of each sim card. Post paid consumers are given offers and upgrade schemes to ensure that the company maintains a relationship with them. Thus the sales and distribution aspects of Vodafone in India are taken care by Dedicated outlets:

Mini outlets

Retail shops

Mobile shops

The marketing communications of Vodafone are typically very up market and generally the positioning is such that amongst the masses Vodafone is perceived as an aspirational brand. With a focus on the “ Power To You” positioning all the current advertisements of Vodafone are focusing on picturization of the benefit that the consumer will get once he becomes a Vodafone customer. The marketing communications always depict Vodafone as a young and up market brand. The TV advertisements of Vodafone are

always targeted at ensuring that the customer can understand the benefit that they want to offer.

Vodafone typically does not emphasize strongly on print ads and radio ads. Although at the times of important tie ups and events one can see single page ads in the newspapers, magazines etc as well as small audio clips on the radio network. Vodafone uses the events platform as a promotion tool. Events like IPL which are sure to grab eye balls are sponsored by Vodafone and large scale TV advertising is done to ensure that the customer may avail IPL related services on his handset. Currently Vodafone has combined with the highest TRP grossing Big Boss and is providing a chance to the customers to visit the Big Boss house.

Advertising

Vodafone lays special emphasis on creative advertising. They came up with the highly successful zoo zoo campaign which became a hit with all the consumers. All their ads clearly portray the benefit for the user and are done in such a way such as to induce good brand recall. Television advertising is a major tool used by Vodafone to push its brand as well as the promotions that they are coming up with. From time to time they use other media like print and radio also to push their product or offering to the masses.

Events

Vodafone ties up with a number of events which are designed to create daily or special brand related interactions. They generally combine with high popularity TV shows and events which provides them good eye balls and ensures that a particular number of people always view what they have to offer. Vodafone emphasizes more on above the line activity. Their

strong financial background ensures that they can pump in their money in such events and ensure a strong brand recall.

Interactive Marketing

Vodafone is making extensive use of the online segment to involve more and more consumers with the brand. They have a presence on all the social networking sites and are providing special offers on those pages as well. A number of users can connect with the brand and talk, discuss about the various aspects of the brand online itself. They periodically keep revising the promotional offer advertisement that they put up on such pages. They are providing their entire range of products, service and promotion related information on these sites.

Vodafone Communication Strategies:

Brand Elements

Brand elements are those trademarked devices that serve to identify and differentiate the brand. These are also sometimes known as brand identities. Items like brand name, logo, mnemonics, characters, spokespersons, slogans and jingles are some items that can be characterized as brand elements. All or most of them are trademarked and registered by the parent company of the brand and these are what appear in front of the consumer in the brand's communication and help increase recall of the brand as these are things that the consumers remember a brand by it.

According to theory, there are some specific criteria which need to be kept in mind while deciding on the brand elements. These are points which when satisfied help in serving the full purpose of having brand elements. Some of these criteria are:

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1. Memorable – These elements should be easily recognized and can be easily recalled.
 2. Meaningful – If not all then most of the brand elements should have a meaning and should associated in some or the other way with the culture and values of the brand.
 3. Likeable – In simple terms brand elements should be fun, interesting or may be aesthetically pleasing so that the consumers like it and attach positive connotations with these elements.
 4. Transferable – Brand elements need to be the same for different markets and geographies, for different product or service categories. So transferability across these boundaries is critical.
 5. Adaptable – They must be flexible and the company should be able to update them as and when required.
 6. Protectable – They should be legally protected from counterfeiting and copyrights violation.
- Brand Name – Vodafone

Vodafone is one of the biggest telcom operators in the world along with other big names like Bharti Airtel, Idea and AT&T. It carries with itself a reputation of being one of the finest telecom service providers across the world and the name carries an element of desire with it. In India, the brand was earlier known as Vodafone Essar, due to the parent company's holding pattern. However, Essar has been a business name since long in the country and is associated with other businesses as well.

So the “ Essar” part was done away with and the brand name is now “ Vodafone”. It being a foreign brand attracts consumers and the consumers already on the subscriber list feel proud to be associated with a big international brand. It is easy in terms of memorability and meaning and having a long history attached to it along with the geographies Vodafone is now operating in, it has proved its adaptability and transferability. Brand Logo

Vodafone calls it the “ Speechmark Logo”. It is a quotation mark in a circle. The quotation marks before and end of a conversation is depicted in the logo and Red color has been its corporate color for long.

The name is written below the design. It is the same logo as is used globally although in some areas like Portugal Vodafone has used a different logo. This is vital as it shows to the consumer that the company will offer the same level of quality in service as is being provided globally. Overall the logo has been there for a long period of time. So from the consumer’s point of view, it is memorable and the red color is liked by one and all. It is protected from any violation like copying or faking. It is a likeable logo which helps in increasing the recall of the brand as soon as the logo appears in front of the consumer.

URL (Uniform Resource Locator)

The website link or URL for the global website is <http://www.vodafone.com> and the link to the Indian website is <http://www.vodafone.in>. These are registered domain names so protection is taken care of. As there are provisions of checking and making bill payments online, going through various tariff rates and value added services details on the website, the

online interface is a very vital component among the brand elements. The URL simply has the name of the brand and 'in' for India as the extension. It is easy to remember and use, hence making it an effective brand element.

Characters

Characters represent a special type of brand symbol, one that takes on human or real-life characteristics. Since Vodafone entered into the Indian market, there have been two primary characters associated with the brand. The first is the famous pug which was used in the earlier advertisements and portrayed the consistency of service in the tagline "Wherever you go, our network follows". The second and extremely popular character which Vodafone created was the Zoozoo.

Real people wore grey suits to portray comical characters in a major communication campaign aimed at increasing awareness about the value added services provided by Vodafone. The campaign includes every channel from television and print advertising to billboards and hoardings at the point of sale. Zoozoos as a character have been loved by one and all and have helped tremendously in increasing the brand awareness among consumers.

However sometimes characters take on such a presence in the mind of the consumer that the characters dominate the brand name itself. Zoozoos have become such a phenomena today that people generally would watch the advertisement and switch the channel before any message is communicated. So in the long run, continuing this campaign indefinitely could hurt Vodafone's brand equity in India. Slogans

Slogans can contribute to brand equity in multiple ways. They can play off the brand name to build brand awareness and image and can also contain product related information and other meanings. Vodafone's current slogans in the 2010 advertising campaign is "Isn't it nice when someone makes you feel special" and "Power to you". The ads focus on the close friendship of two school girls and the care each one shows for the other.

The company wishes to communicate to the consumer the various value added services it offers, which it terms as "Vodafone Delights", to indicate their services intend to delight the consumer in every possible way and the slogan powerfully conveys that Vodafone is a brand that cares about its consumers and believe in doing the small little things to delight them and make them feel special always.

Their previous slogans like "Happy to Help", "Power to you" and "Wherever you go our network follows" have been equally successful in associating different meanings with the brand; meanings like consistency of service, the consumers' power to choose what service to avail and what to pay for and the brand being ever present in case of any need for the consumer. Jingles

Most consumers remember the "You and I in this beautiful world" jingle, which ran as background in the communication campaign consisting of the pug following the kid, helping him and doing chores for him. The current campaign has the jingle "The little things you do", a sweet and melodious song which portrays the intended message quite well. Vodafone's jingles' strongest point is their likeability and consumers tend to remember them very conveniently. Jingles, have hence always been a critical brand element for Vodafone. Communication Campaigns

Vodafone keeps coming out with new communication campaigns at regular time intervals. It ran the “ Pug” campaign for some time initially. Then it launched the “ Zoozoo” campaign and now it has recently launched the “ Vodafone delights” campaign. Another small campaign that had been running until recently was the “ Rs. 4 me sab kuch” which had a speaking parrot trying to convince people that four rupees are of no value today but Vodafone offers a lot of things in just that amount.

These changes in communication campaign strategies and focus on different things every time shows that Vodafone stresses on being innovative in its advertising, trying to come up with something new and refreshing, which will be liked and remembered by the consumer for a long time. They have never used media or sports celebrities for their communication, unlike competitors like Airtel, Idea and Reliance who use sports celebrities and bollywood stars like Abhishek Bachchan and Hrithik Roshan for their endorsements and advertising.

Their campaigns generally have had a 360 degree approach, reaching the audience through multiple channels. Some of the channels which Vodafone always covers are:

1. Television advertising is done on most popular channels and in major sports events that generally have a long run and are repeated all over the year.
2. Newspapers/Magazine advertisements in all major dailies, but mostly in English newspapers, business newspapers and general and economics magazines.

3. Hoardings/Billboards on the highways and on the bus stops all over major cities across the country are helping increase awareness and hence, recall of the brand.

4. Small prints at point of sale, varying from major retail outlets to small panwari shops.

5. Event sponsorships for major sporting events like Indian Premier League and the UEFA Champions League in football, an event widely followed in India now. Infact according to a research, Vodafone along with Pepsi were found to be the most visible brands after IPL ended earlier this year.

6. Radio – On radio they have only run the “ Parrot” campaign as this does not require any major display to go with the voice.

Overall their communication campaigns have been innovative and appealing enough to not only attract the consumer’s attention but also make and maintain the brand’s position in the mind ladders. The Zoozoo campaign according to people was a little over run and at one point of time was contributing to creating a perceptual block in the consumers’ mind.

So the new Parrot and Delights campaigns have freshened things up. There have been other small campaigns as well, one prominent one which had Formula 1 racer Lewis Hamilton featured in it. However the recall for that ad is very low and it can be categorized as an unsuccessful campaign.