

Mr bean the brand
with a big heart



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Branding is defined as a basic decision in marketing products, in which an organization uses a name, phrase, design, symbols, or combination of these to identify its products and distinguish them from those of competitors.

Brand benefits significantly for both buyers and sellers in every business. In this question, we will look at considerable benefits that consumers and companies in food and beverage industry recognize from branding.

1) Buyers

From buyers' point of view, branding has 2 main meanings: identification and assurance,

Identification.

In modern day, when more and more companies arise, along with the rapid increase in number of products, it becomes a challenge for consumers to look for appropriate products. In such a scenario, the necessity of branding is confirmed as a searching mechanism which helps shopping to be more efficient and time-saving. Customers can identify and avoid products that they consider disqualified, while developing their preference for other, more satisfying brands.

In such a commodity industry like food and beverage one where numerous brands produce similar product, branding is even more important. For instance, when a person tries soya bean from Mr Bean and feels like it, he can come back again and easily find out the same old soya bean that attracts him having the Mr Bean brand, without mistake any other unsatisfied soya bean product.

Assurance.

When consumers come to a branch, if they are loyal ones, they have branding to assure the uniformity and consistency of quality. However, for a first-time customer, it is a hard decision to choose among different product. In such a case, the buyer tends to pick well-known brand-named suppliers over an alien no-named one. The reason for this kind of action is that branding also means a promise from the seller to buyers. A strong branding stands for more assurance of quality level (taste, services...) and less risk for customers.

2) Sellers

If buyers benefit a lot from branding, then sellers receive even more. There are 7 significant benefits listed below.

Recognition

The first benefit of branding is that customers are more likely to remember your business. An impressive brand identity keeps your business image in the mind of potential customers. Naturally, customers are more likely to remember the name of a restaurant or brand than the street where it locates.

Loyalty

When people have a positive experience with a memorable brand, they are more likely to become loyal to it, which means more frequent purchases and more sales. Even if the customer was not aware that you sell a particular product, if they trust your brand, they are likely to trust you with unfamiliar

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products. In a diversified industry like food and beverage, the link between various types of product is important. More products help to maintain the attraction and satisfaction to customers, prevent them from brand substitution.

Familiarity

Even when an attracted customer do not have time himself to come back to visit the company, he is likely to recommend the brand to others. That means better reputation.

Differentiation

The reason a company gets their recognition, loyalty and familiarity is their remarks compared to others. Brand identity makes a company distinguish from others.

For an industry in which many products are quite similar to others, the necessity of differentiating by brand identity is even higher.

Extension

With a well-established brand, a company may spread to other food and beverage lines, or open new outlets more easily. This link of business is because the brand helps to maintain its image of experience, quality and reliability.

Greater company equity

When fame is built up, the brand will achieve its own asset value. In this case, the company appears to have a much bigger image than it really is. If the owner wants to sell it, he can get more money.

g) Trademark protection

A trademark which is registered helps to prevent the business's special products from copycat.

Despite enormous benefits of branding, a misconception has lead many small and medium enterprises away from it. It is a prominent thought that branding is costly and requires huge investments which are restricted only for big companies with giant budgets. However, the truth is that branding does not rely solely on advertising. This can be influenced by all forms of interaction that the brand has it the consumers: from packaging, labeling to warranty, services, public relations... More importantly, for small companies whose product is not much remarkable compared to larger firms, branding is the most suitable way to differentiate themselves and catch up to the big guys.

Question 2

What constitutes the brand identity of Mr Bean? What is your evaluation of the Mr Bean brand identity? What will you add and what will you subtract from this identity?

Brand identity is the most basic form of branding that comprises of the usage of the combination of brand name, phrase, design, and symbols to uniquely define its products and differentiate them from competing brands.

Mr Bean's brand identity lies in its name, logo, tagline, quality of products and the intimate services it offers to its consumers.

Name, logo, tagline

The name Mr Bean evokes a sense of familiarity and proximity to customers. With regard to the "simple" in its tagline, the non-fancy name directly indicates their main product: soya beans. Familiarity can also be credited to the famous friendly comedy character Mr. Bean. The comedy character Mr. Bean displays well the tagline of the company: "Bringing you life's simple pleasures". Similar to the brand name, the tagline express close connection to customers and stems from the philosophy that everyone is entitled to lead a fulfilling and enriching life. The simple logo of smiling bean also expresses the happiness and satisfaction. The adorable character is easily recognizable and unique.

Quality

In the tagline, the products and services are already described as pleasure ones. Mr Bean adopts the strategy of variety and freshness, hence being able to bring life's simple pleasures. The products vary from trendy ice-blended flavored soya drinks and tasty soya ice creams to Asian-influenced soya pastries and all are manufactured at retail outlets. Significant efforts are also put on constant research to invent healthy and creative products.

Services

The founder of Mr Bean hopes the brand to inspire and touch lives through the development of relationships with customers, staff, and the community.

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They also aim to enhance the connection by putting extra effort on small details such as packaging and display.

*** Evaluation:**

With the liking Mr Bean has gained from customers, it proves the success of the brand identity. To its customers, the brand is popular and intimate. To the founder and service crews, it is clear and strong.

However, for a fast food company like Mr Bean, the identity may turn out a little too idealistic. Customers are unlikely to be able to appreciate the identity of the brand in such a short period of time.

*** Improvement:**

To improve the brand identity, Mr Bean should consider taking full advantages of their constant research. The company may try to differentiate its brand by innovating special recipe for the bean, or use the nutritional information that they find out through research as a tool to exemplify their concern for health, therefore build up their social image. They can also open up classes educating their customers on the benefits of soy, which will be a huge source of profit.

Question 3

How can brand loyalty be built? What is your evaluation of the steps undertaken by the company to build customer loyalty to the Mr Bean brand? What other recommendations would you propose to strengthen brand loyalty?

Brand loyalty can be built starting from the first step of developing brand equity. This is to develop positive brand awareness and an association of the brand in consumer's minds with a product class as well as the need to give the brand a distinct identity, allowing the brand to stand out from its competitors. Mr Bean has done truly well in this step, having constructed the brand into convenient outlets supplying a daily dosage of nutritious soybean milk and other innovative products.

The second step requires brand excellent performance to form the brand's values in the mind of the consumers. These values arises from what a brand stands for and encompasses 2 dimensions - a functional, performance related dimension and an abstract, imagery related dimension. When it comes to functional part Thanks to Mr Bean's pride on constant research into producing healthy and creative products, the company's products is ensured great quality and freshness. In the imagery dimension, Mr Bean has also emphasized a distinct personal brand that is able to connect to its consumers and remain involvement with society such as the rally for the Singapore Youth Olympic Games and as sponsors for the National Day Parade.

The following step lies in transformation consumer judgment and feelings towards the brand. By creating positive and accessible feelings like producing freshly made products and constant innovation, Mr Bean has stressed on the brand's perceived quality and credibility. At this period, first loyal consumers begin to appear. Then, Mr Bean tries to establish emotional linkages with them to maintain the good relationship.

The fourth and last step asks for the creation of a consumer-brand resonance that is evident in an intense, active and loyal relationship between consumers and a brand. This part is completed by providing convenient outlets and locations all over Singapore that are easily accessible. Therefore, they have maintained well the customer loyalty in reducing the chances of product substitution. Moreover, they have successfully forge a bond between them and customers beyond those that other fast food outlets have achieved.

*** Recommendations:**

Recommendations to further build on their brand loyalty include some simple methods like consumer rewards, vouchers, discounts. In addition, Mr Bean may think of establishing a members network to inform loyal customers of the upcoming promotions or events that the brand is involved to rope in more supporters.