

Irving oil repositioning



Observation The abysmal image of the global oil industry has made it difficult for the Irving Oil brand to thrive. Brand differentiation is imperative, but hard to execute because of the simplicity of the product. The oil industry is receiving backlash for several reasons that include; price, power, and lack of consumer empathy. Consumers feel as though they are being taken advantage of by the government and by gas retailers. The Irving Oil brand has received accolades from its consumers, but there has been no significant growth in the profit margin after implementing a new positioning strategy.

The ZMET data depicts that price is consumers' largest issue with any gas retailer. The price of a basic necessity has been increased so high that their quality of life is being negatively affected. A theme throughout the data is sacrifice; customers are forced to give up something of importance to them so they can afford fuel prices. Some sacrifice vacations and one even considers finding a job closer to home. Irving is surpassing IPSOS standards, but their profit margin is not increasing; this reveals that customer service and environment may not be as important to the consumer as researchers may have believed.

Customers are not saying what they actually want out of an oil company other than lower prices. Customers do not feel as if they are being taken care of by the government or by the oil companies. Until consumers feel safe and secure they are not going to be happy with the brand. Meaning Map Critique Exhibit 1 does not show enough data to get a full consumer insight. Research about the consumers' opinions is depicted, but the only problems shown are price and power. There is another factor missing because if

consumers only cared about price they would just go to the cheapest gas station, but brand loyalist do not.

Why do some people choose to be loyal to the Irving Oil brand and why do others choose not to be? The loyalists are among few that have built a relationship with the brand and connect with the Irving Company at a level of trust. If more customers could trust the brand, then more customers would become loyal to the brand. The map could also be used to compare and contrast the actual brand image with the ideal brand image by using both consumer opinions more thoroughly. The data is one dimensional and biased because of the opinions of the oil industry as a whole. Consumers are struggling with separating the Irving brand from the entire segment.

The map doesn't show any positive views from consumers. There were a few positive opinions depicted in the ZMET data. **Repositioning the Brand**
According to the ZMET data the customers are family oriented and find financial matters very important. The Irving Oil Company can differentiate itself by nurturing its customers. The “ What If” campaign was a nice gesture, but consumers continued to cluster the brand with its competitors. The campaign seemed more like a public service announcement than an advertisement of the brand. The research showed that without any aid, consumers could not link the brand to the advertisements.

To improve this make Irving the face of family travel by building a campaign around the concept of everyday life. Build Irving Oil into the premier haven for everyday travel. This can be executed by campaigning around a central theme like making travel fun all the time. Focusing in on families on the go

and commuters could build the brand's equity. At each point of purchase within the Blue Canoe location and at the gasoline pumps the company could have a " checklist" of what the average consumer forgets to purchase or popular items when they arrive at a convenience store and gas station.

Personal touches can help build profit margins. An ad campaign similar to the " What IF" campaign that depicts a family getting prepared for a long trip, but in actuality are preparing for their daily routine could build a personal and cultural bridge between the Irving brand and the consumer. A slogan such as; " For all of your journeys...near and far" along with this campaign would help the consumer instantly remember the brand.

Positioning Defense Consumers in the ZMET data have directly stated that they feel as though they are being taken advantage of by the oil industry and government.

They feel as if they have no voice, option, or empathy to fix the problem. If Irving Oil fixed this by giving the consumers a voice and helping them feel secure with the oil crisis, then they will gain better trust and loyalty to the company. Exhibit 2 depicts the brands philosophy after the reposition. The company took emotions into consideration, but they did not take relevance as a serious factor. In a sense consumers seemed to feel as if they were being cheated with gas prices and the fact that the company used some of the money to help families in need did not make them feel better. This took even more control away from the consumer.

Power is a huge factor in consumer loyalty and all oil companies have been treating consumers unfairly with the cost. Lower costs would make the

consumer feel more at ease, but making them feel important is just as important. If the customer feels taken advantage of, then they will not appreciate the brand or what it stands for. Blue Canoe Pitch Irving Oil should build a relationship with the consumer as the destination for vacation needs. By associating the Blue Canoe brand with a sacrifice that families have had to consider or execute a sense of security and hope will be built. The most relevant complaint besides price is security.

Consumers feel unappreciated by the oil industry. The Blue Canoe should exhibit the same repositioning as the Irving Oil brand. The brand should raise awareness and show empathy as a whole. Exhibit 1: Meaning Map Exhibit 2: Repositioning Evaluation Current Position| Recommended Position| Making consumer's lives easier and simpler. | Helping consumers feel comfortable and secure with their financial needs and moral values. | Low on Cultural and Personal Resonance. | High personal and cultural relationship with the consumers by showing empathy. | Customer Relationship is Mediocre| A premier destination for travel needs. | | |