

Free relevance of the emotional appeal concept report sample

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Impact of Emotional Appeal on the Subway Brand

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Introduction

Subway has become an important brand in the fast food segment, in the US as well as globally. The brand was founded primarily to serve submarine sandwiches in 1968 by Fred DeLuca and Peter Buck. From a single restaurant in 1965, the group managed to expand to 40, 000 restaurants worldwide, and far exceeding McDonalds in restaurant penetration in the US.

This report seeks to explain the importance of Emotional Appeal on consumer behavior, and the benefits obtained by Subway using this concept in its ads. Emotional appeal is defined as the consumer's affection for a powerful, precise and apt emotion to the brand, as a response to the brands marketing or advertising campaign. This emotion could be friendship, love or a connection of some sort. (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012, p. 293)

Impact of Emotional Appeal on Consumer Behaviors and ‘the Subway Brand’

The relationship between emotional appeal, impact on the Subway brand and consumer behavior are very closely related, as we witness in advertising on a day to day basis. We start by examining the relevance and impact of consumer theories on consumer behavior. Hwang and Kandampully (2012) investigated the role of emotional factors on consumer behaviors, and found that of all the factors evaluated, emotional appeal had the maximum impact as compared to brand love and self concept. They also further found that emotional appeal had a more lasting impact on the consumer, and thus

biased the consumer toward that particular brand, creating a positive impact of that brand in the market. (p. 102-103).

We can see this strategy outlined very clearly in the Subway advertisements. Beginning with the Jared Fogle campaign to the Micheal Phelps and Pele campaigns, the basic idea of the Subway brand is the focus on an individual who makes an emotional appeal. Of the above, clearly the Jared Fogle campaign has had a maximum impact on consumers, especially since Jared was a common man, and most people could relate to his problem of obesity, and appreciate the solution involving a diet of Subway sandwiches combined with regular exercises. Clearly, Subway was making an emotional appeal through Jared to all consumers. (Morrison, 2013) These developments had a very sizeable impact on U. S consumers, given the fact that most of the consumers were either in the overweight or obese bracket. The fact that a person like Jared weighing 245 lbs could lose weight and become normal again resonated with a large part of the population. A Technomic study found that the long duration of Jared's stable brand approval as a common man who, despite his struggles with obesity, maintained a wholesome lifestyle by eating Subway sandwiches strongly appealed on an emotional front with the consumer. (Brandau, 2013) This impacted the brand image by creating a highly positive and clean image of Subway in the US, as a restaurant serving healthy food.

On the contrary, in 2005, the then-CMO Chris Carroll had declared that store sales fell 10% after ads starring Jared were stopped being shown on air, after his contract expired. (Morrison, 2013) This shows the reverse impact of consumer behavior when the subject of the emotional appeals (Jared) is

withdrawn from the advertising campaign. Thus, the impact of emotional appeals on Subway as a brand becomes clear to us.

We now proceed to examine the relevance of the emotional appeal concept. We would start by examining the strengths of the emotional appeal concept. Bulbul and Menon (2010) discuss in statistical terms about the applicability of the emotional appeal concept. Their findings tell us that abstract marketing strategies, such as emotional appeals, have a much more powerful effect on the human mind as compared to consumer decision theory or other theories, especially when it comes to long term associations with a particular brand. (p. 177) In the case of Subway, this study becomes very important since the main aim of the restaurant chain is to ensure that people not only maintain a long term association with the brand, but also dedicatedly refer the same to others.

Further, from a psychological aspect, the emotional appeal concept is one of the strongest tools available to advertisers such as Subway. A study by Russo and Chaxel (2010) shows that any marketing campaign that shows the primary target (the consumer) as the initial focus, places a bias in the minds of consumers for that product. This bias cannot be dispelled even by displaying rational information about another competing product. (p. 341) As discussed above, Subway implemented this by making Jared Fogle as the focal point of its ad campaign. Since the consumer felt a strong connection to Jared, the focus indeed became 'the consumer itself.' This connection created a bias for the brand in the minds of consumers, when it came to eating healthy sandwiches.

These points show how relevant and necessary the concept of emotional appeal is in consumer behavior theory, and especially with reference to brands like Subway.

Benefits obtained by Subway using Emotional Appeals in its Strategy

The benefits obtained by Subway due its unique ad strategy propelled the fast food chain to the top of the fast food restaurant chain business. In a “Perceptions of Restaurant Advertising Survey,” Subway was voted as the most effective in its advertisement & marketing campaigns within the restaurant space. (Morrison, 2013) The Technomic Survey of Advertising Strategy Campaigns also voted Subway to the top of almost 115 fast food restaurants surveyed. (Lazare, 2013)

The positive results of ‘emotional appeal’ in its strategy have enabled Subway to build a large base of consumers that are loyal to the brand, and have propelled the brand ahead of McDonalds and other fast food chains to the top of the restaurant business. While the US still remains its biggest market with the company adopting its most active marketing strategies in the US market, certain markets like Australia, India, Germany and Russia are also seeing a similar type of marketing campaigns by the brand to enable a similar expansion.

The current store numbers speak for themselves, since as of September 2013, Subway had more than 40, 400 stores globally, far ahead of other major competitors, including McDonalds standing small at around 34, 000 stores. (Wong and Davidson, 2013) Clearly, the advertising strategy using

emotional appeals has contributed to a large extent to their financial and market position.

Conclusion

We can conclude that the use of emotional appeal as a concept in advertising and marketing strategy has become a very relevant and necessary tool in our times, as illustrated by the astounding success of Subway. The use of this concept has led to a biased consumer behavior translating to a higher preference for Subway as a brand, since most consumers relate easily to the brand given the 'emotional appeal by an individual' strategy. This has benefited the company by propelling it to the top of the business, and enabling it to expand globally.

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