The creation of brand personality

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Brand personality traits are formed and influenced by any direct or indirect contact that the consumer has with a brand. A brand, unlike a person, cannot think, feel or act. A brand has no objective existence at all; it is simply a collection of perception on the mind of the consumer. Consumers accept the marketing actions to humanize brands. One explanation fort this can be found in the theories of animism, which suggest that there exists need by people to anthropomorphize objects in order to facilitate interaction with the nonmaterial world.

Anthropomorphize occurs when human qualities are attributed to non human objects, e. g. brands. Consumers easily assign personality quality to inanimate objects like brands in thinking about the brands as if they are human characters. In a direct way, personality traits are associated with a brand by the people associated to that brand. One direct way to form and influence brand personality is user imaginary. User imaginary is defined as the set of human characteristics associated with the typical or stereotype user of the brand.

Associations with the company employees or CEO and the brand's product endorsers are also direct ways by which brand personality traits are formed and influenced. The personality traits that of the people associated with a brand are transferred directly to the brand. The theories of animism describe another process mechanism that directly explains the specific ways in which the vitality of the brand can be realized (Fournier, 2004). Spokespersons that are used in advertising can have personalities that fit those of the brand they advertise.

Over time, the personalities of the spokesperson are transmitted to the brand. The brand-person associations can also have a more personal nature. Brands can be associated with person who use or used that particular brand, for example a close friend or a family member. Also, brands received as gifts can also be associated with the person from whom the gift was received. These person associations serve to animate the brand as a vital in the minds of the consumers. Obviously, this aspect is much less under the control of the marketers.

Indirectly, the brand personality is created by all the elements of the marketing mix. Betra, Lehman and Singh suggest that the personality of a brand is created over time, by the entire marketing mix of the brand - " its price (high or low, odd or even), retail store location (imaginary associations), product formulation (ingredients, benefits), and product form (solid/liquid. Etc.), packaging details (color, size, material, shape), symbol; used an all phases of the brand communication, sales promotion, and media advertising".

Another form of animism explains how brand personality is created in a more indirect way. This form of animism involves complete anthropomorphization of the brand object itself. Human qualities of emotionality and thought are transferred to the brand. This is achieved with the help of the marketing actions, especially advertising. For example, the brand character of M&M in the M&M commercials has the capacity to laugh and joke.

One of the advantage of the brand personality is that based on their distinctive personalities, consumers are able to differentiate between brands.

Another advantage is that the consumer can interpret the brand's image in such a way that it is personally more meaningful. Brand personality encourages more active processing on the part of the consumer. Thus, the consumer put more efforts in creating and using the brand personality. A further advantage of brand personality is that life is given to a brand.

By vitalizing a brand, another perspective of brand personality can be examined, namely the role of a brand as relationship partner in a consumer-brand relationship. Next we will concentrate on these consumer-brand relationships. Whether the brand is a product or a company, the company has to decide what personality traits the brand is to have. There are various ways of creating brand personality. One way is to match the brand personality as closely as possible to that of consumers or to the personality that they like.