

Developing a brand identity



Brand identity originates from the company, i. e. a company is responsible for creating a differentiated product with unique features. It is how a company seeks to identify itself.[1]A company will often use branding strategy as a means of communicating its identity and value to consumers and other stakeholders.[2]The marketing mix strategy plays an important role in establishing a brand identity. The four Ps – product, promotion, price and place – can play an important role in this process. The tangible attributes that comprise the product will send a message to the consumer about the various features of the brand. Through brand identity, a company seeks to convey its individuality and distinctiveness to all its relevant publics. Kapferer[3]has emphasised the brand focused view of identity. It is through the development of this identity that managers and employees make a brand unique. According to Harris and de Chernatony[4]and de Chernatony, [5]brand identity is made up of the following components:

- brand vision
- brand culture
- positioning
- personality
- relationships
- presentations.

Brand vision embodies the core purpose for a brand's existence. It represents a set of values that, along with brand culture, provide direction

and guidance. A brand's positioning seeks to emphasise the characteristics and attributes that make it unique. It seeks to convey to consumers the benefits that are being offered. Personality represents the emotional characteristics of the brand. It is influenced by positioning as well as the core values and culture of the top management. Vision and culture are also responsible for the evolution of relationships between employees, consumers and other stakeholders. Presentation styles are developed to present the brand identity. This should take into account consumers' needs and aspirations. Brand identity can also be examined in terms of brand concept. Park et al.[6] regard brand concept as 'brand unique abstract meanings . . . that typically originate from a particular configuration of product features . . . and a firm's efforts to create meanings from these arrangements' (p. 186). The brand concept is based on the consumer needs that a brand can satisfy. Park et al.[7] identify three types of consumer need: functional, symbolic and experiential. A brand with a functional concept is designed to solve externally generated consumption needs. Consumers will be motivated to buy and use functional brands in situations where the product is viewed as addressing utilitarian needs. A brand with a symbolic concept is designed to associate the individual with a desired group, role or self-image. Brands with a symbolic concept facilitate the communication of symbolic meaning to the individual and to others. Grubb and Grathwohl[8] contend that the consumption behaviour of an individual will be directed towards enhancing self-concept through the consumption of goods as symbols. A brand with an experiential concept is designed to fulfil an internally generated need for stimulation and/or variety. The primary motivation for selecting certain

products is the enjoyment that is derived by consumers from consumption of these products.

Conception of brand identity

Intense competition requires certain actions to be taken in brand management and includes the establishment of brand identity, defining its attributes, uniqueness and equity.

The concepts such as brand vision, aim and identity are the new ones. The conception of brand identity was mentioned for the first time in Europe by Kapferer, 1986. The importance of the conception and its understanding quickly disseminated in the entire world. The literature on brand management, which has been widely examined, uses the terms “ equity” (Aaker, 1996)[9], while the concept of the identity is actually not used. The conception of brand identity includes everything what makes the brand meaningful and unique. Brand includes characteristics of a good as well as a set of other elements, entailing brand identity. This is a new conception; however, when the differences of a certain category of goods start to decrease, the concept becomes the major subject of investigations (Melin, 1997)[10]. Identity includes moral image, aim and values that together constitute the essence of individuality while differentiating the brand (de Chernatony, 2002)[11]. The identity of the strongest brands covers emotional benefit, which provides the strength to the brand. However, rendering the equity to the consumer the good has to provide a functional benefit as well. The additional value is rendered if the good provides the benefit of self-expression that, in turn, reflects the image of the consumer (Aaker, 1996). The researcher D. Grundey (2002)[12]states that brand

identity is the most important stage of the identification of a good from the quality on which the further existence of the good depends. The main principled provision of brand identity is a way, which becomes a possibility to reach the consumer. Brand has to “communicate” with consumers because this is the condition for remaining in the market. D. Aaker (2000)[13]notes that brand identity is a set of brand associations which need to be developed and retained for a brand strategy. Identity should help in the development of the relationship between a brand and a consumer, providing a particular benefit.

The main principles of brand identity are:

- 1) communication becomes not only an important supply of information but a daily struggle to remain heard and visible, which constitutes the prerequisite of durability;
- 2) brand should adequately react to changes which makes up the prerequisite of understanding;
- 3) brand should reflect consumer’s benefit and expectations, remaining harmonious, which is regarded as the prerequisite of consistency (Grundey, 2002).

Analyzing the concept of identity, the problem of consistency and continuity arises as well. The conception of brand identity deals with the influence of time on the uniqueness and consistency of brand. Brand identity is a new concept; however, the majority of researchers have already analyzed the identity of enterprises (Schwebig, 1988; Moingoen, 2003). The identity of the

enterprise is constituted by a feeling that helps the company to understand that it really exists and its existence is unique, with its history and place, distinguishing the company from others (Kapferer, 2003). These different definitions of identity emphasize the idea that identity signifies the understanding of being oneself, seeking one's aim, being distinguished from others and being able to resist and withstand time alterations. According to J. Kapferer, brand identity could be defined by answering the following questions:

- What is the aim and individual vision of a brand?
- What makes a brand distinguished?
- How satisfaction could be achieved?
- What is brand's equity?
- What are brand competence, validity and legitimacy?
- What are the features of its recognition?

This conception has appeared in brand management and is well known while positioning brands and building their image. According to de Chernatony (2001)[14], the conception of brand identity offers a possibility to position a brand better and encourages strategic approach while managing it. A well managed system of identity provides a competitive advantage when seeking to protect oneself from competitors. Currently the society is closely connected with communication. Everybody wishes for communication or is included into the communication process unwillingly. It is extremely difficult

to remain thriving and establish one's identity under the circumstance of severe competition. Communication ensures two things: sending of a message and the guarantee that it has been received. Communication implies not only the means of technique but inventiveness as well. It represents the necessity to conceive brand identity.

Sources of brand identity

Defining brand identity and the limits of its strength and weakness it is necessary to be aware of identity sources. With the lapse of time every brand can lose its independence and meaning, as well as lose a certain level of freedom as with the increase of brand reliability, its elements acquire a particular form and define the possible territory. The revelation of identity starts from typical goods or services, confirming brand, symbol, logo, country of origin, advertising and package. J. Kapferer (2003) singles out the following sources of identity: Good is the primary source of identity. Brand reveals its plan and the uniqueness of its goods and services. A genuine brand never remains just as a printed record on a good. Brand transfers its equities into the process of production and distribution, which constitutes the essence of service sales as well. Brand values need to be embodied in a brand symbol. Every brand forces to think spontaneously about particular goods more in comparison with another, as well as about particular actions as a means of communication. Prototype goods contain various elements of brand identity. Some prototype goods are able or rendering brand identity, regardless of the fact that brands, in essence, develop identity; Values of brand identity transfer the essence of brand only then if they exist within the essence of brand. Tangible and intangible realities go one after another as

values manage certainty and certainty manages these values. Colours mean much more than the subject of advertising. Colours not only determine appearance but make up an external brand with its ideology, value set and brand culture. Colours do not play the role only to distinguish the producer. Fraternity and cultural tolerance are the values of the brand; Name is another source of brand identity as it is one of the most powerful sources. Investigating brand name, the features if its advantage such as the limit of justice and “ know-how” as well as the sphere of competence are revealed. The majority of brand names seek to reflect features that can not be reflected or these attributes that are singled out. Other brands exist ignoring their brand names; which is connected with the autonomy of brands. A strong brand is capable of giving a new meaning to words, changing the meaning in dictionaries. Personage is another source. If brand is the capital of enterprises, so the emblem is the righteousness of brand capital. The emblem symbolizes brand identity through visual image. J. Kapferer (2003) singles out the following functions of emblem:

1. It helps to identity and recognizes a brand. Emblems are extremely useful when being designed for children since various pleasant Figures were used above the text, or for example a widely used whiskey emblem.
2. It provides a guarantee. Brand could be regarded as a contract between its owner and consumer (Lambin, 2000). Brand emblem seems to be a signature, indicating a long-term commitment of a producer to retain a specific and steady level of quality.
3. It provides brand with durability when the emblem is a long-term sign.

4. It helps to identify and adjust goods to personal needs. The emblem transfers its personality to the brand and increases its equity in such a way as well as facilitates the process of identification.

The researcher D. Grundey (2002) states that a brand personage defines the person and culture of a brand in the best way. Other personages deliver a lot about brand identity. They are chosen as brand portraits and as brand features from the etymological perspectives. Such personages do not build brands but emphasize the way which is used to reveal personal features and characteristics of brands. Visual symbols and logotypes become the third source of brand identity. Visual symbols and logotypes help to conceive the culture and personality of a brand and are frequently chosen seeking to apply graphic identity with the elements and values of a brand. However, it is extremely important to note that such symbols and logotypes help not only to identify brands but brands are identified together with them. Identity has originated from earlier actions of a brand. A good, distribution communication and location include those actions. Communication together with its content and form also reveal identity. Brand usually has a gift of speech and it exists only then when it communicates. Since the moment brands start " talking" they have constantly to inform about their good and services. Communication reveals much more than it is being thought. Any way of communication discloses the information about a sender, source, the recipient-addressee and relationships that are attempted to be created in between. In modern times audio and visual technologies of public information deliver much about brand style, the recipient and the benefit

provided. All brands have their history, culture, personality, reflection and reveal that through communication

Prism of brand identity

When goods are not characterized by huge abundance and a big quantity of substitutes, the statement of unique sales is the principal conception.

Leaving brand image, positioning and personality behind, the attention is currently drawn to the importance of brand identity (Kapferer, 2003). The understanding of brand identity signifies that superficial attitude towards brand is being changed and the importance of comprehensive brand analysis is being stressed. The concept of identity is significant due to the reasons, indicated below:

- 1) a brand needs to be strong;
- 2) it should present brands and goods connected with it;
- 3) a brand has to be real.

Thus, brands have to be secured from the image of idealism, changeability and opportunism. The composition of brand identity is characterized by the prism of identity (Figure 1) (Kapferer, 2003). First of all brand contains an external specificity that is physical appearance, which is the core of brand and its value added. This determines a traditional brand management due to orientation to “know how”, classical positioning, selecting a principal good or brand features and the benefit. The first step building up a brand is the definition of physical factors, identifying what it is, what it does and how does it look like. Physical appearance is closely connected with a brand

prototype, revealing the quality of a brand (for example Coca-Cola bottles on tins of Coca-Cola). The second element of identity prism is brand personality. With a help of communication brand character is being developed and this is a way by which any brand “ talks” about its goods and services and indicates a particular human person. The trait of personality within the prism of identity is inner source. It should not be mixes up with the image of consumer’s reflection which is an ideal portrait of every recipient. Brand personality is described and measured using those features of consumer personality that are directly related to brands. Since 1996 the research was directed towards studies of brand personality (Kapferer, 2003). D. Grundey (2002) claims that the success of brand expression percentage in the market depends on the choice of every element of personality and its reconciliation. Brand personality is closely connected with self image and image of a consumer because the identification of consumers with a particular segment reflects brand features. Brand is culture. Brands possess that culture in which they originated. Brand is a representative of its culture, including communication. From this perspective culture entails a lot of values that provide brand with inspiration. Cultural features a correlated with external principles of brand management (a good and communication) Culture is in the core of brand. Global brands usually reveal their culture (Benetton, Coca-cola, IBM). The aspect of culture enables to discover differences between other competing brands. The attention is focused on brand personality; however, eventually only those brands become leaders that possess not only personality but culture. Brand culture is based on the culture, values and aims of an enterprise. This is one of good lineaments while comparing brands of different companies as it is not likely that tow different companies

will have identical cultural features (Grundey, 2002). Countries producers are the sources of brand culture as well. However, this is not the only factor, providing value added. The degree of brand freedom is frequently restricted by the culture of a company as this is the most visible and external brand feature. Culture plays the essential role in brand differentiation as it indicated what moral values are embodied in goods and services. This feature helps identifying the strongest brands because sources, basic ideals and a set of values are revealed. Brand includes relationship as brands frequently take the most important place in the process of human transactions and exchange. This is extremely reflected in the sphere of services and retail companies. This feature emphasizes the way of behavior which is identified with brand most of all. A lot of actions such as the fact how brands influence and provide services in connection to their consumers determine this feature. According to Kapferer (2003), brand is a voice that consumers should hear because brands survive in the market because of communication. D. Grundey (2002) singles out the following ways of communication:

- Advertising and other support elements;
- Direct consumer's communication while purchasing a good.

Marketing culture of a company is extremely significant as it is a constitutive part of company's culture, manifested through the relationship of consumers and the company. Invisible communication is created with a means of associations and its can start between people (a seller, buyer or employee) seeking for the same or different goals. Communicating it is important to

reconcile different need of people and present the entire useful information allowing perceiving the essence and peculiarities of a brand. Brand is a customer reflection. Consumers can easily define what goods of a particular brand are produced for a particular type of consumers. Brand communication and goods aim at reflecting a consumer, for whom those goods are addressed. Consumer reflection is often confused with the target market (Kapferer, 2003). The target market determines potential consumers though consumer reflection does not define target market. A consumer has to be reflected in a way, which would show how he or she could image themselves consuming a particular good. The representatives of the target market should be presented differently from what they are but what they would like to be. Consumers use goods of certain brands seeking to create their own identity. Brands should control their consumer reflection. A constant repetition stating that this brand was developed for a certain target group weakens brand image. Consumer self-image. Brand is closely related to the understanding of consumer self-image that is the features with which consumers identify themselves and the very same features they would like to be reflected by the chosen good and its brand. Consumer self-image is important in the explanation of consumer behaviour as consumers purchase goods, corresponding to their self-image. The conception of consumer self-image includes an amount of individual ideas, thoughts and feelings about him in relationship with other objects within socially defined boundaries (Onkvisit ir Shaw, 1994)[15]. This is the understanding of an individual about his ability, semblance and characteristics on personality. The conception of consumer self-image is developed within timeframes and is based on that what a consumer sees around himself and how other consumers evaluate

and respond to him. The conception is a set of beliefs about oneself, retained in memory. The conception of consumer self-image can be determined and strengthened by examining purchase and consumption. Consumers acquire the reconciliation of oneself having positive attitude towards a certain goods of that brand (Graeff, 1996)[16]. All six elements emphasize brand identity. The prism of identity originated from the basic conception that brand is marked by the gift of “ speech”. Brands can exist only then when they communicate. Physical appearance and personality allow determining the sender. The recipient is defined by consumer reflection and self-image. The last two elements of brand identity: culture and relationship link the sender and the recipient. The prism of brand identity maintains a vertical subdivision: the elements on the left such as physical appearance, relationship and consumer reflection are social and provide brand with external expression (image) and are visible. The elements on the right such as personality, culture and consumer self-image are connected with the inside of a brand and its soul.

BRAND IMAGE

Brand image relates to the consumer’s perception of the brand.

Kotler[17]defines brand image as ‘ the set of beliefs held about a particular brand’ (p. 197). A number of studies have been conducted on brand image. Gardner and Levy[18], in their classic article, proposed that brands may have an overall character or personality that may be more important to the consumer than the mere technical facts about the product. According to Herzog[19], brand image is the sum total of impressions that consumers receive from many sources, all of which combine to form a brand personality.

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Later researchers like Ditcher[20] regarded brand image as describing not individual traits of the product, but the total impression in the minds of the consumers. Brand image is also described as the way in which a particular brand is positioned in the market, i. e. how the consumer perceives the product. Clearly, consumers form an image of the brand based on the associations that they have remembered with respect to that brand. According to Keller[21], ‘ brand associations are other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for the consumers’ (p. 2). This view of brand image is similar to the definitions of Aaker and Park et al. Aaker states that ‘ a brand image is a set of associations, usually organised in some meaningful way’ (p. 109), while, according to Park et al., brand image is ‘ the understanding consumers derive from the total set of brand related activities engaged by the firm’ (p. 135). Implicit in all the above definitions is that brand image is a consumer-constructed notion of the brand. Consumers ascribe a persona or an image to the brand based on subjective perceptions of a set of associations that they have about the brand. Keller outlines three dimensions of brand associations: attributes, benefits and attitudes. Attributes could be both specific and abstract. Attributes such as size, colour and weight are specific, whereas ‘ brand personality’ attributes[22] such as ‘ youthful’, ‘ durable’ and ‘ rugged’ are abstract in nature. Attributes could also be categorised as product-related and non-product related. While product related attributes would be unique to the type of product and service, non-product-related attributes would include packaging and user imagery as well as usage imagery. Benefits refer to the consumer perception of the needs that are being satisfied. As mentioned above, Park et al. have outlined three

categories of basic consumer needs – functional, symbolic and experiential. Woods[23] alludes to this categorisation when he divides products into three classes, based on the problems that they solve, vis-a`-vis products that cater to functional demands, those that are primarily hedonic, and a third category of products that have important symbolic meaning, i. e. cater to the demands of ego involvement. The third dimension of brand associations is attitudes. According to Schiffman and Kanuk[24], ‘ an attitude is a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way with respect to a given object’ (p. 200). Brand attitudes are consumers’ overall evaluations of a brand[25]. Researchers have constructed several models of brand attitudes. According to the tri-component attitude model, attitudes consist of three components: cognitive, affective and conative[26]. The cognitive component refers to the consumer’s knowledge or belief about the brand; the affective component relates to the emotions and feelings; whereas the conative component describes the likelihood or tendency of the consumer to take specific action (e. g. buy) with respect to a brand.

Brand image building process

In marketing literature great attention is focused on brand image which is studied from two: company’s and consumer’s perspectives. The approach of company is directed towards the improvement of marketing activity, connected with strategies of positioning and retaining of a positive brand image. Consumer’s approach is based on consumer’s attitude towards the interpretation of brand image and brand equity. The importance of brand in the market is influenced by company’s ability to evaluate the fact how consumers interpret the image of brands and company’s ability to manage

the strategy of brand positioning, adequately revealing brand's equity to a consumer (Kotler, 2001). There are many definitions of brand image in marketing literature. Analysing of the conception, the table below, presents the conception of various scientists (table1).

Source

Main Meaning

Conception of Brand Image

Park (1986)

Functional, symbolic and experience image

Brand image is not a simple phenomenon of understanding, affected by communication activity of the company. This is consumer understanding of a complete brand set, developed by a company.

Keller (1998)

Conception

Brand conception, reflecting associations in consumer's consciousness

Aakar (2002)

Associations

How is the brand conceived by a consumer

(Table-Conception of brand image)

Defining the development of brand image, it should be marked that a strong brand should have a rich and clear identity, adequately passed to the target market. Image should reveal brand concept together with real experience, corresponding to brand understanding. A recent consumer searches and wants to experience something unique and peculiar, in connection with a brand. A mismatch of brand image with consumer expectations gives a chance to competitors. Brand identity includes the meaning of a brand that would be decoded in the target market. Seeking to perform efficiently, brand identity should differ from that of competitors and be developed in a way, comprehensible to consumers. Park (1986)[27] claims that brand success in the market depends on the choice of brand identity, the usage of identity developing image, and the guarantee that image adequately transfers brand identity, chosen by a company, differentiating it from competitors and responding to a desired consumer equity. Kapferer (2003) states that brand image is the most efficient way of communication with consumers, revealing the significance of brand identity. D. Aaker and Joachimsthaler E. (2000) mark the process of brand image development. Twelve categories of brand identity elements are enumerated for four purposes: brand - good - good limits, features, quality/equity, experience, consumers, country producer; organizing - company features, local orientations versus global; personality - brand personality, brand and consumer relationship; symbols - a set of visual associations, brand metaphors. It should be noted that the structure of brand identity consist of principal identity, extended identity and brand essence. Typically, brand identity should possess from six to twelve parameters and only in this case it could reflect that what should be achieved with a help of a brand. According to D. Aaker and Joachimsthaler E (2000), all parameters of <https://assignbuster.com/developing-a-brand-identity/>

principal brand identity should reflect a construction strategy, usefulness and at least one association that should differentiate the brand and get the attention of consumers. Principal brand identity will not change even though the brand might pass to another market or good categories. If consumers accept the brand according to its principal identity this means that the brand has achieved its aim. The principal brand identity reveals to consumers and company employees what is the most important. Extended brand identity combines all identity elements that are not included in the primary identity and are subdivided into groups based on their importance. Principal brand identity contains from two to four parameters, narrowly describing brand image. However, sometimes it is more purposeful to set a more narrow approach that determines brand essence, which is an idea, entai