

CELEBRITY COMMUNICATION IN BRAND PROMOTIONS: A RISK AND REWARD ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

In one hand, after the famous pug, Vodafone’s ‘ZooZos’ have created a bizarre in the advertising world and have become celebrities and on the other, Tiger Woods (or the companies like Accenture) is running through the toughest time. Celebrity Endorsement has been a widely used maneuver in the marketing and seems to be ‘Ram Ban’ for all marketing woes. Today’s competitive marketing environment is full of threats so a woo of “something fresh and enthralling” is everywhere, the escalating frequency of innovative ideas can easily be seen in today’s brand building exercises. Huge amount of money is being spent on star appeal hoping that they will bring their magic to the product and make it more successful. But is successful advertising creating celebrities, isn’t it? Do the marketers need to be smarter while strategizing advertising? However the Celebrity Endorsement needs to be used intelligently and must be communicated in such a level-headed way that it reaps the dream benefits to the brand. It not only serves as an aid to fetch the recall but also convert into purchase action. But several risks are also thereat if not accompanied by a clever idea, effective and impeccable positioning. It may threat a big disaster if not blended intelligently. Celebrity endorsement have been shaped up in a complex term, in the clutter of the TV channels and print advertisement, a celebrity is advertising for multiple products and brands, also several brands have endorsed more than one celebrity. Attractiveness is important than effectiveness, presence is important than association. It is resulting as confusion in the consumer’s mind to believe or take as advertainment.

The present article is eyeing at the essential factors of celebrity endorsement and the pros and cons of the approach in an uncompleted way.

Keywords: Brand Promotion, Advertisement, Marketing

INTRODUCTION:

Today's competitive marketing environment is full of threats so a woo of "Something New and Enthralling" is everywhere. Effective communication with a strategic positioning is the demand of any brand to survive in the tough market. Corporate do not let any chance of promoting their brand to slip out of their hands. They ensure all possible efforts to grab the consumer's mind share. The major thrust is on attracting the consumer attention and developing positive association not just to influence recall but also to induce trial and eventually convert it into continuous purchase action.

In order to influence consumer buying decision, companies try to communicate by using effect promotion campaigns. Advertising plays a vital role in coordinating consumer's purchases, it become pertinent to induct all possible measures to influence , motivate and inculcate desire to purchase particular brand. Celebrity Endorsement is a billion dollar industry today (Kambitsis at.el.2002) with companies signing deal with film stars, sports persons , entertainers , politician etc hoping that they can help them stand out from the clutter and give them a unique and relevant position in minds of consumers. It is estimated that in India ,Celebrity Endorsement market is increasing rapidly and is of about 1000 Crore ,Shahrukh Khan is endorsing 39 brands at a time (Business Standard May 2009). Many big celebrities are endorsed by many big brands of the consumer market.

CELEBRITIES IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION:

Anybody who enjoys a high degree of awareness and public recognition on behalf of consumer good by appearing with it in advertisements, with attributes like attractiveness, Credibility and Trustworthiness. A firm that decides to employ a celebrity to promote its products or services has a choice of using the celebrity as an endorsement, a testimonial, an actor or a spokesperson. It is true for classic forms of celebrities like Sachin or Sania as sport persons , Sharukh or Bipasa as film actors , Jagjeet Singh as singers , Shekhar Suman as entertainer, Harsha Bhogle as announcer, Kiran Bedi as social figure and Mogli or Gattu as fictional. Essential is that he is known to the public in different way. The individual is famous and utilize his or her publicity to advertise the product that does not have anything to do with the individual fame. The general belief among advertisers that advertising message delivered by celebrities provide a higher degree of appeal, attention and possibly message recall than those delivered by non-celebrities. Marketer claims that celebrity affect the credibility of the claims made, message recall and may provide a positive effect to the brand. The major question is if and how the lively interest of the consumers in "The rich and the famous" be effectively used by companies to promote their brands and consequently increase their revenues. (Schlecht, 2003). To answer the question, let us examine the perception and persuasion of celebrity endorsements. In order to draw relationship between celebrities, endorsed brand and perception of consumer , lets see the essential factors which may be the purchase intension, that describes the impact of the celebrity endorser has on consumer purchase behavior. Consumers are feeling easy and more likely to purchase a complex or expensive product which is endorsed by a celebrity rather than the by non celebrity. Consumer's association and perception with the celebrity endorser by establishing an existence of a "best fit" connection between the celebrity and the advertised brand and the consumer himself as well is important. There should be congruence between the celebrity and the product in terms of characteristics such as image, expertise (Till and Busler 1998 and 2000), or attractiveness (Baker and Curchill 1997). That should "match-up" with the image conveyed by the celebrities. Effectiveness and Attractiveness of the celebrity by using attribute of their personalities is fruitful. The attraction can easily push consumer to taste the brand. It is necessary to peruse a systematic strategy of celebrity spokesperson selection Ohanian(1991). Trustworthiness and creditability of the celebrity endorser is used to imply a communicator's positive characteristic to affect the receiver's acceptance of the message by getting high degree of confidence in the communicator's intent to communicate the assertions he considers most valid. It is most important , it is necessary that the celebrity

has a credible and complete clear image in the consumer's eyes. People should perceive him or her as a trustworthy source of information. Consumer's attitude towards the endorser in the present market scenario, celebrities are endorsing more than one brand and brands are using multiple celebrities, consumer's attitude towards the brands is important. The general goal of advertising is the persuasion of consumer i.e. the active attempt to change a modify consumer attitude towards the brands, hence the creditability of the advertisement is immense to convince the target audience of the positive part of the brand. Profitability of Celebrity Endorsement is measured by today's smart consumer, though the basic purpose of endorsing a celebrity is to making the brand image and ultimately the sale of the product. Spending huge money is not going to work if it does contribute to hike the sales volumes. Mostly there is a positively impact of celebrity endorsement on expected future profits, which recommends the market to use Celebrity Endorsement in their advertising.

Celebrity Endorsement is today more and more seen as an integral part of integrated marketing communication strategy (IMCS), so any promotional campaign has to be looked by different angles, keeping several issues in mind. Different controlled and independent variables of the communication process influence the stage of the response hierarchy in persuading the receiver.

It is generally assumed that a celebrity provides support and ease action of sale for a brand. Models discussed above suggest that value and traits associated with the celebrity is transferred to the brand and ultimately crate an image that can recalled and referred by the consumers but it does not work all the time. Many of the examples can be quoted when a famous celebrity fails to meet out the desired objectives. Since many factors involves in building a comfortable sales passage for any brand, there are many risks associated with such endorsers. The brand image could fad more quickly than it took in building. Here we discuss pros (rewards) and cons (risks) of celebrity endorsement.

REWARDS:

Brand Building and Awareness: Celebrity Endorsement helps in attracting the consumers especially for new launched brand to make them aware of the positive sides of it. When a celebrity gets associated with a brand, it pulls the consumer attention and inquisitiveness to know about the product.

An Emotional Appeal: It is said that in India three C's never fail; Cinema, Cricket and Curry. Marketer takes the first two as an important tool for market there brands. When Kapil Dev, Sachin and Virendra Sehwag open there secrete of their energy as Boost, lacs of parents have to go for purchasing this brand for their sporting child. Celebrities can easily influence their fan following.

Quick Relate: The recall process gets an easy path as the presence of a celebrity relates the brand with his picture. A brand can be recalled and recognized quickly and easily it is associated with a celebrity, even old and illiterate consumer can also correlate the brand and celebrity. Villagers take their children for Polio vaccination as Amitabh Bacchan asks them.

Brand Differentiation in the Clutter: In the crowded TV channels and newspapers full of advertisements , celebrity endorsement provides an easy opportunity to differentiate the brand among all. It also helps in impulse purchasing when consumer is not prepared for a specific brand, a celebrity endorsed brand might be pick up.

Source of Imitation: In general people have a tendency to copy their loved celebrities. When they see their role model or super hero using a specific brand , they try to imitate and it increase product usage. They record a sense of satisfaction in using the same products what their favorite stars do.

RISK INVOLVED:

Credibility Interrogation: Today, consumer becomes intelligent and does not rely upon the facts before proper satisfaction. Knowledgeable consumers voice their opinion about their perception about endorsing

a brand. A celebrity is paid handsome amount to attract sometime befool the consumer, hence the question of creditability of the celebrity being chosen to protect the brand is becoming pertinent.

Celebrity becomes bigger than brand: Many a times when there is a gap between the product and celebrity values and both are not closely linked, there are chances that the celebrity is remembers more than a brand. Celebrity personality overshadows the brands. In these cases people can remember the celebrity but fail to recall the brand name.

Lack of synergy: A mismatch or ambiguity between the celebrity and the product can damage both of them. A synergy between the celebrity image and that of product category is must; otherwise endorsement strategy is not worthwhile. Famous Film stars are selling under garment, sometime cycle and tractor....?

Multiple Endorsements: As we discussed earlier also, the poly endorsement is a threat for all those endorsed brands for a clutter. It may lead to dilute the values and attribute of the celebrity and confuse the consumer by correlating them with wrong brands. The reason may be found in the lack of distinctiveness, with one famous person enduring several products instead of concentrating on and representing one specific brand Mr.Bacchan one side sells ICICI Banking and Executive Parker Pen and on the other side he sells Hajmola Churan or Navratan Hair Oil. Some products are endorsed by many of celebrities even by some of them whom you hate the most.

Necessary Addiction: Market is dynamic and sensitive in its nature, once a brand tastes a celebrity pleasure ,it is very difficult to promote it without the star image. Many brands which have had a ride on back of celebrity, met with a severe failure when presented without a celebrity. In the tough market condition , it becomes difficult to always select celebrity endorsing strategy , reasons may be financial or other.

Short span of celebrity fame: The life of the celebrity fame is short and unpredictable. A popularity of a super star may side down quickly. Especially it happens in case of sporting personalities, people remember them with their performance, also few flop films in a row may disappear the star of yesterday. Many cricketers like Mh.Kaif, Parthiv Patel, Abhinav Bindra etc can only be seen in old commercial copies. Even cricketers advertisements are specifically inserted when they come on ground, there may always a chance of their failure at that time. Imagine, his advertisement endorsing a brand and the on second ball he gets out on a duck...? Since celebrity endorsement is a matter of huge money , the risk of this always threatens the marketers.

Adverse effect of celebrity scandals: Since consumer finds celebrity values in the brand ,a negative image can demolish the brand also. During the endorsement, ill allegation and involvement in the scandals can damage the brand image. A numbers of entertainers and athletes have been indulged in defamed case such as drug and other dirty cases, it caused embarrassment for the companies. Another example was Ajay Jadeja and Azharuddin were charged with match fixing and betting, which created negative and repulsive feelings and a sense of cheating in consumers mind.

CONCLUSION:

In the present competitive market scenario when a single pie is meant, celebrity endorsement involves a high cost so it is undoubtedly necessary for any marketer to design and execute this strategy with considering all the positive and negative factors. This strategy can reap out the best results if applied correctly and also can be proved as a big disaster if not blended intelligently. Advertising needs to be taken care of complexities of celebrity endorsing process by attaining clarity on described concepts of celebrity source credibility and attractiveness, match-up hypothesis, multiple endorsement etc. Marketers have to consider the pros and cons of the approach in communication. The ultimate goals should be taken into account and risks and rewards must be carefully underlined. Clearly, all the celebrity glitter is not gold, but it may be. Celebrity advertising does not guarantee the high sales but if appropriate used, celebrity advertising has a pay off. Many brands have been successfully established by using well known celebrities

also there are instances when heavily paid celebrities faced failure and real consumer or other theme (recent white dollies of Vodafone in IPL campaign) has done better.

In fact much research needs to be done on consumer testimonials. Advertisers need to study, on case to case basis, the various aspects of the brand and celebrity in question as they develop the strategy and execution of market communication and advertising.

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