

The Evolution of Brand Management

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ABSTRACT: *This paper aims to examine the changes in the way branding has been addressed in research by outlining the history of brand management research over the past 25 years, as stated in the Journal of Product and Brand Management (JPBM), highlighting the current challenges facing the discipline and proposing potential research avenues that will hopefully enrich brand management awareness further. This paper requires an internal study and commentary of historical literature. The last 25 years have been illustrated. There are eight big developments in research and thinking on brand management, and three overarching difficulties and challenges. By concentrating solely on the contributions published in the journal, this review is by no means comprehensive and encompasses all the contributions to the discipline. Its contribution is limited to the study of the work reported in the JPBM, and the evolution of brand management thought. The paper highlights the evolution of thinking in brand management and poses imperatives and opportunities for guiding future brand management study.*

KEYWORDS: *Brand engagement, Brand experience, Brand communities, Brand management, Brand love, Brand relationships, Consumer brand equity, Financial brand equity, Brand hate, Brand as a person.*

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, the Journal of Product and Brand Management (JPBM) has featured papers that advance the theoretical and managerial knowledge in the areas of product management and brand management. During the past 25 years, branding has drastically evolved – becoming global, strategic and interdisciplinary – in response to the ever-changing market, environmental and technological challenges organizations face when managing their brands and brand reputations. As a result, the JPBM has developed into an international and interdisciplinary journal[1].

In its early years, the papers published in the journal focused primarily on design choices, new product creation in various types of enterprises, general product guidance, support for particular product problems, including concept development, product testing and interface management, and product development team management. Another common topic was the role of product managers and the product management system[2]. A lot of the early work published in the journal that centred on product-related decisions remains important, and there will still be a place in the journal for papers on product management related issues.

While goods and brands were approached in a similar way in some of the early work, the proportion of papers published in the journal from the field of brand management increased as time passed. In addition, brand management has increasingly become seen as a separate sector. A lot of new innovations in the world of brand management have been implemented over the past 25 years, significantly changing the field. Factors such as shifts in the way customers think, approach and consume goods, technological changes and an increased need for brand responsibility have driven these changes.

This article outlines the evolution of brand management research over the past 25 years by documenting the journal's contribution to the advancement of thought about brand management. In particular, it documents developments in the way branding is approached and the current challenges posed by the profession, both in terms of research and brand management[3]. It ends by proposing potential research avenues that will ideally further enrich the awareness of brand management and result in practice-relevant strategies.

THE EVOLUTION OF BRAND MANAGEMENT OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS

Much early research on brand management explores the role of the management team in the creation of brand sense and brand management, the performance of the brand through the performance of its management team and the brand support team, although limited research focuses on the development of brand meaning and brand management, the performance of the brand through the performance of its management team and the brand support team.

Currently, however, as a reflection of brands being strategic assets that create value for multiple actors, it is generally known that among many other stakeholders who may see the brand differently from each other, other stakeholders such as consumers, employees employed in various roles and not direct brand management representatives and other brands affiliated with the focal brand. What these stakeholders say, believe and communicate affects the understanding and appraisal of a brand by the market; even terms that some may feel have little meaning, such as managers' political views[4].

Although some research indicates that brand management teams still have much of the influence and a strong effect on brand meaning creation and management, other research suggests that the branding process has changed and brand meaning control has largely been abandoned, as brands are co-created with agents that do not work in the business. This refers to various sectors and, in some cases, to the creation by brand groups of brand extensions or new goods. Other research argues that even the stories that construct brand significance have changed from being generated by the storytelling of the business to being created by storey giving to customers.

It has been well studied and recorded the complexities of getting highly engaged customers. Although different relational models have been proposed that can produce different styles of customer engagement with brands, consumers engage with brands in different dimensions: cognition in particular, attention and absorption; enjoyment and excitement in particular; and actions, understanding, endorsing and sharing in particular[5]. There is also evidence that customers develop clear mental ties and positive brand relationships from a very young age with brands, often initiated within a family through experiences with other members of the family.

In view of their investment in developing a brand relationship, customers establish relationships with brands in different product categories in similar ways and behave proactively in ways to help and protect a brand's reputation. Research has also established the variables influencing the length of a brand relationship, the degree of interaction and the variables that will contribute to successful engagement. Given the role of various internal and external stakeholders in the creation of brand definitions, it is of vital importance for any company to ensure that there is continuity between the opinions of all of them. Thus, the need to establish consistency across all brand touch points has now established consistency across all brand touch points and to recognize that the flow of brand sense is multidirectional for all stakeholders[6].

Consumers decide to belong to brand-related groups in order to fulfil different personal and social needs or to communicate their feelings about a brand. Consumers build relationships, a sense of identity and a social structure with other individuals who buy the same brand. While there have been brand-related user groups or brand communities for a long time[7], the widespread use of the internet and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest makes it easier for consumers to find like-minded people who value their brands. In sum, research indicates that consumers are using products individually or collectively to describe their individual and social self.

As evidence of the presence of brand communities has been extensively researched in different contexts and industries: automotive, clothes, cosmetics, apparel, food higher education, retail and spirits and beverages, the trend of entering brand-related groups seems to be growing. Research also highlights the existence and importance of internal brand groups, including workers, in promoting and improving the delivery of a brand identity. Therefore, in their brand group environments, the imperative of providing value to an individual customer has now been to provide value that is right for individuals, brand groups and individuals, recognising that value development is multidirectional.

FROM CONSUMING BRANDS TO EXPERIENCING BRANDS

As consumers shifted from using brands as identifiers to expecting brand experiences, research followed path. A brand experience originates from the multiple interactions a consumer has with a brand, including the perception of the brand name, the billing, order and application forms, mass media impressions, point of sales material and assistance, recommendations from acquaintances and salespeople, the emotional reaction to events and the connectedness of the brand stories[8]. The expectation of brands becoming experience providers highlights the importance of creating consistency throughout all touch points and for all stakeholders.

Consumers now yearn for both hedonic and practical brand interactions. In order to approach the phenomenon, analysis uses two paradigms: consumption experience and brand experience. Brand experience in terms of usability (functional meaning), social value and satisfaction in use is predominantly categorized as visual, affective, behavioral and intellectual and has perceptual epistemic and embodied dimensions (hedonic value). Research has also found that customers, especially during brand co-creation, are exposed to certain interactive interactions, but that the production of the process and the quality of the experience itself differs depending on the type of product or service purchased and the context of consumption[7][9].

Ultimately, the ways in which customers perceive brands affect the way they relate to and react to them, as well as the way they process any knowledge relevant to the brand. As research in the sense of the internet and social media has shown, technology has played an important role in how customers view products[10]. Therefore, at all brand touch points for all stakeholders, the imperative of creating an individualized brand experience has now been to create an engaging, individualized yet still communal brand experience, recognizing that not all stakeholders are actively involved.

CONCLUSION

Brands are spread across boundaries and communities as markets have become more competitive. Therefore, businesses use less-differentiated approaches to approach countries that have been seen as somewhat dissimilar in the past, whereas global consumer segments are defined and targeted when consumers in different parts of the world act in a similar way. Companies must respond to this challenge by determining the appropriateness of their practices and decisions, such as selecting brand names or using effective marketing mechanisms to build brand equity. Recent research has centered on the effects of the use of international brand names by Chinese companies in the USA and foreign brands in the USA and China, considering the increasingly global nature of the markets. A current branding issue is the appropriateness of selecting local over global brands, as exposure to global mainstream media has been found to affect the way global brands are viewed. Similarly, a major concern for multinational players and brands has also been the country of origin.

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