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Marketing 3100

22 August 2015

Article 1 Review: Experiential Marketing On Brand

Advocacy

# Article Information

Title: “Experiential Marketing On Brand Advocacy: A Mixed-Method Approach On Global Apple Product Users”

Authors: Ricardo Machado, Michael C. Cant, & Helen Seaborne.

Publication: *International Business & Economics Research Journal 13.5*

Publication Date: September/October 2014

Link: <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.kennesaw.edu/business/docview/1562441835/1BDBDD6761084C1DPQ/1?accountid=11824>

# Article Summary

This article explores Experiential Marketing - a modern marketing philosophy - and its effects on a brand’s image through consumer-led brand advocacy. It does so by drawing on Apple Inc. as a prime example of a company that has implemented the philosophy, as well as by providing primary research conducted on advocates of the Apple brand.

Experiential Marketing refers to the process whereby consumers actively participate in the company’s efforts to satisfy them, and the company attempts to brand an ‘experience’ as opposed to a product. Today, consumers feel that the promised features, benefits and quality of products are guaranteed. This, effectively, makes these points moot from a marketer’s standpoint. Hence, to elevate consumer satisfaction and exceed customer’s expectations, marketers must consider the overall ‘experience’ with the company's brand. This means that a holistic approach must be taken where everything from advertising, retail-based interaction, packaging, product design, product use, the social image portrayed through the use of the product, after-sales interactions, and emotional connections are considered as part of the brand experience. Ultimately, the goal of this is to ensure that customer’s have an ideal impression of the brand and move on to become brand advocates — essentially creating an invisible and integrated sales force within customer’s social circles. Additionally, customers should become more intellectually stimulated, emotionally attached, and willing to pay premium prices.

Apple Inc. is employed as an example of a company that is using this technique. Apple has established themselves in the mind of the general consumer as the sole provider of high-quality, integrated, innovative and ideal technology products. This has led many users of Apple products to become “brand evangelists” (Machado, Cant & Seaborne) that advocate Apple’s products and services to their friends, their family, and anyone who will listen. This is an important contributing factor when one considers that Apple is the most profitable company in the world.

# Relation to Marketing

Experiential Marketing represents another, modern marketing philosophy much like production, sales, market, and societal orientations that have come before (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel). It appears to be an extension of the market and societal orientations as it still focuses outwardly on the consumer and their needs, and makes coordinated use of all marketing activities. However, it goes beyond these orientations by focusing on every interaction that a customer has with the company’s brand both directly and indirectly. (An example of indirect interaction would be the interaction of brand advocates in a community like the MacRumors website which focuses on rumors and news about Apple.) The ensuing emotional connection and sense of ownership over the brand transforms customers into brand-loyal advocates that push others to buy the company’s products (Machado, Cant & Seaborne).

# Interpretation

Experiential Marketing will undoubtably transform the marketing landscape as companies try to associate themselves with certain value propositions. This will most likely make the consumer’s choice of brand even more important in terms of their satisfaction, social standing, and self-image. Owning an Apple iPhone will no longer simply indicate that one likes the product, and that the product satisfies one’s functional and aesthetic desires. Instead, owning an iPhone will indicate to oneself, and to others, that one values quality, craftsmanship, design, innovation, ease of use, integration, and culture. Customers will become intertwined with the brands that they use, as they use a company’s brand identity to define their very own identity, interests and persona. Apple has demonstrated that this approach works, and thereby shown how powerful an organization’s marketing efforts can be over the minds of consumers.

# Recommendations

Organizations looking to improve the brand loyalty of their users should focus on implementing Experiential Marketing by considering the entire customer experience as they interact with the organization and its products. By focusing on this, companies will strategically make improvements to their company, and in so doing to their brand identity as well.

# Relevancy

The article is very relevant as it evaluates the marketing approach primarily used by Apple Inc. — the world’s biggest (by market capitalization) and most profitable company. It is also expected that other companies will begin implementing the same marketing principles as they look to compete, grow their business, and solidify their importance in customer’s minds.

Works Cited

Lamb, Charles W., Joseph F. Hair, and Carl McDaniel. "An Overview of Marketing." Marketing. 12th ed. Cincinnati: South-Western, 2002. 4-6. Print.

Machado, Ricardo, Michael C. Cant, and Helen Seaborne. "Experiential Marketing on Brand Advocacy: A Mixed-Method Approach on Global Apple Product Users." The International Business & Economics Research Journal (Online) 13.5 (2014): 955. ProQuest. Web. 22 Aug. 2015.