BRAND ENDORSEMENT THROUGH CELEBRITY

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ABSTRACT

The crescendo of celebrities endorsing brands has been steadily increasing over the past years. Marketers overtly acknowledge the power of celebrities in influencing consumer-purchasing decisions. It is a ubiquitous accepted fact that celebrity endorsement can bestow special attributes upon a product that it may have lacked otherwise. This paper elaborates some concepts of brand endorsement with Indian and global example.

Keywords: Celebrity Branding

INTRODUCTION

One of the main reasons for using celebrity endorsement is to create a better image for the product by transferring the symbolic meaning from the celebrity to the product (McCracken, 1989). Research has shown that the use of celebrities in advertisements have positive impact on message recall, memory and likeability of the advertisements and finally on purchase intentions (Menon, 2001; Pornpitakpan, 2003; Pringle and Binet, 2005; Roy, 2006).

CELEBRITY BRANDING

Celebrity branding is a type of branding, or advertising, in which a celebrity uses his or her status in society to promote a product, service or charity. Celebrity branding can take several different forms, from a celebrity simply appearing in advertisements for a product, service or charity, to a celebrity attending PR events, creating his or her own line of products or services, and/or using his or her name as a brand. The most popular forms of celebrity brand lines are for clothing and fragrances. Many singers, models and film stars now have at least one licensed product or service which bears their name.
More recently, advertisers have begun attempting to quantify and qualify the use of celebrities in their marketing campaigns by evaluating their awareness, appeal, and relevance to a brand's image and the celebrity's influence on consumer buying behavior. For example, Omnicom agency Davie Brown Entertainment has created an independent index for brand marketers and advertising agencies that determines a celebrity’s ability to influence brand affinity and consumer purchase intent. According to the Wall Street Journal, the Davie-Brown Index (DBI) will "enable advertisers and ad-agency personnel to determine if a particular public figure will motivate consumers who see them in an ad to purchase the product advertised."

SUCCESSFUL CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS FOR A BRAND

Global Examples

Globally, firms have been juxtaposing their brands and themselves with celebrity endorsers. Some successful ongoing global endorsements are as follows:

Celebrity endorsements have been the bedrock of Pepsi's advertising. Over the years, Pepsi has used and continues to use a number of celebrities for general market and targeted advertising, including Shaquille O'Neal, Mary J. Blige, Wyclef Jean, and Busta Rhymes, who did a targeted campaign for their Mountain Dew product.

George Foreman for Meineke. He has also sold more than 10 million Lean Mean Fat-- Reducing Grilling Machines since signing with the manufacturing company.

James Earl Jones for Verizon and CNN.

Nike golf balls, since the company signed Tiger Woods in 1996, have seen a $50 million revenue growth. Nike's golf line grossed more than $250 million in annual sales. In 2000 he renegotiated a five-year contract estimated at $125 million.

Other successful endorsements like Nike—Michael Jordan, Dunlop—John McEnroe, Adidas—Prince Naseem Hamed, and so on.

Venus Williams, tennis player and Wimbledon champion has signed a five-year $40 million contract with sportswear manufacturer Reebok International Inc.

AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

The latter part of the '80s saw the burgeoning of a new trend in India— brands started being endorsed by celebrities. Hindi film and TV stars as well as sportspersons
were roped in to endorse prominent brands. Advertisements, featuring stars like Tabassum (Prestige pressure cookers), Jalal Agha (Pan Parag), Kapil Dev (Palmolive Shaving Cream) and Sunil Gavaskar (Dinesh Suitings) became common. Probably, the first ad to cash in on star power in a strategic, long-term, mission statement kind of way was Lux soap. This brand has, perhaps as a result of this, been among the top three in the country for much of its lifetime.

In recent times, we had the Shah Rukh-Santro campaign with the objective of mitigating the impediment that an unknown Korean brand faced in the Indian market. The objective was to garner faster brand recognition, association and emotional unity with the target group. Star power in India can be gauged by the successful endorsement done by Sharukh for three honchos- Pepsi, Clinic All Clear and Santro. Similarly, when S Kumars used Hrithik Roshan, then the hottest advertising icon for their launch advertising for Tamarind, they reckoned they spent 40 - 50 per cent less on media due to the sheer impact of using Hrithik. Ad recall was as high as 70 per cent, and even the normally conservative trade got interested.

In the Indian context, it would not be presumptuous to state that celebrity endorsements can aggrandize the overall brand. We have numerous examples exemplifying this claim. A standard example here is Coke, which, till recently, didn't use stars at all internationally. In fact, India was a first for them. The result was a ubiquitously appealing Aamir cheekily stating Thanda matlab Coca Cola. The recall value for Nakshatra advertising is only due to the sensuous Aishwarya. The Parker pen brand, which by itself commands equity, used Amitabh Bachchan to revitalize the brand in India. According to Pooja Jain, Director, Luxor Writing Instruments Ltd (LWIL), post Bachchan, Parker's sales have increased by about 30 per cent.

India is one country, which has always idolized the stars of the celluloid world. Therefore it makes tremendous sense for a brand to procure a celebrity for its endorsement. In India there is an exponential potential for a celebrity endorsement to be perceived as genuinely relevant, thereby motivating consumers to go in for the product. This would especially prove true if the endorser and the category are a natural lifestyle fit like sportspersons and footwear, Kapil-Sachin and Boost or film stars and beauty products.
DISCUSSION

No doubt that the celebrity (film stars and cricketer) have greater influence on the people. We are having an ample example of brands that are succeed whether he/she is film star of cricketer. Success stories of different brands can itself set an example of the same, like… The brands like parker, Cadbury, Red & Tailor, Dabur (Amitabh Batchan), Coca-Cola, TATA Sky, Titan (Amir Khan), Nakshtara, Lux (Aishwariya Ray), Lux, Hunday I-10, Sunfeast, Dish TV (Sahrukh Khan), Lux, Airtel, (Kareena Kapoor), TVS – Victor, Boost, VISA master card, Pepsi (Sachin Tendulker), Sonata Watches, Max mobile, Pepsi, Aircel (Mahendsring Dhoni) achieve great success through the same.

REFERENCES