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RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN OVERVIEW OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Marketing communications strategy is used by companies or individuals to effectively reach to their targeted market through various types of methods of communication. It certainly includes multi dimensions to transmit information. It affirms what, where, how and who is to be communicated a purposeful message. How you take an initiative and particularly on what strategy largely depends on your experience, information and exposure. Again, what strategy you adopt to, fairly depends on the type of industry and budget. The present paper is an attempt to provide a descriptive overview of marketing communication strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

The overall objective of all marketing efforts is sales and raising awareness of companies brand or its product to target market is where the core function of marketing communication begins. Towards the prime objective of marketing communication efforts Kotler (2006) comments that marketing could be understood as managing and implementing profitable customer relationships to satisfy their needs Kotler (2006). With the advent of latest technologies of communication including multifaceted channels helps business to make an access of potential customers and as a result of this ability marketing communications has become increasingly important. There should always be a definite strategic plan to implement and accomplish marketing communication objectives. The effective frameworks most of the time focus on mission, vision, values, and organizational goals and strategy (Baines et al., 2008).

Use of Multiple Tools: The function of marketing communication includes multiple communications tools. The specific combination of various tools differs from company to company based on products, its market, and its marketing

communication strategy for example some companies might harbor to paid advertising in print and online media where another company of the same product range might adopt to enormously different media mix.

The Competitive Strategy: A competitive marketing communication strategy is highly essential to take a company towards desired success. In any case, most of the companies remain unsure of their most efficient media mix until and unless companies overall marketing objectives are not communicated through apt marketing communication strategy. In one word marketing communication can be summarized as a messaging strategy aimed at determining theme of fundamental selling message chosen to communicate to the concerned market. Further, the another significant facet of marketing communication is a deliberate process of creating the positioning statement of the company or its product focusing the statements what is the product company sells and adhering logic why a customer should purchase it.

Combination of Marketing Communications: On having decided the well planned marketing communication program any of the following strategy or the mix can be selected to propagate a strong positioning statement:

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) Public relations

-) Advertising
-) Web site
-) Seminars
-) Conferences and trade shows
-) Downloadable materials
-) Direct marketing (offline & online)
-) Packaging
-) Event sponsorships
-) Merchandising promotions

The overall process of marketing communication strategy is getting different gradually as we proceed towards the new age business and integrated work environment. In such situation of emerging new standards of business under global effects creating an effective marketing communication strategy has become more complex and witty job. The potential intervention of internet across all communication processes has made this job even more challenging. It has always been very important to precisely understand customer segments and developing the scientific approach in communicating with those potential customers.

Components of Marketing Communication: Marketing communication plays an important and vital role in company's marketing efforts. In broader sense, it can be described as all the pieces of information into the form of messages and media a company's deploy to communicate with the market. The components include advertising, direct marketing, branding, packaging, internet, printed materials, PR activities, sales presentations, sponsorships, trade show appearances and the like. The major objectives of marketing communication include creating and sustaining demand and preference for the product and finally contributing to mitigating the sales cycle.

Creating Brand Preference: It takes long term and consistent efforts to create preference. One of the core objectives of marketing communication adheres to using communication components to position product or company's name in the minds of the target customer by creating the top preference order. Once the process of creating preference is executed successfully it contributes to a great deal in providing positive reflection towards market share and profitability and finally establishes a high value for the company. The another important objective of marketing communication minimizing the sales cycle by helping the accelerating the sales of the products and supporting associated channels of sales by identifying, capturing attention and delivering a customer. Lahtinen&Isoviita (1999), observed that the consumers have multiple basic instincts where the marketing communication can target. These instinctual needs may be hunger, honor, appreciation, sexual interaction, straightness, revenge, citizenship, avoiding emergency, social interaction, independency, curiosity, family and social appreciation. The use of marketing communication tools becomes highly effective if the buying behavior and pattern of the customer is properly understood and analyzed. Such understanding obviously brings mitigation into sales cycle. This all is possible subject to the involvement of market research and conversations with salespersons and its effective translation into marketing communication efforts which results into speeding up the process. Iacobucci D. & Churchill A. (2009) affirmed that for any sort of product marketing communication can considerably shorten the sales cycle through customizing supply of information about the product to the targeted group

of customers. Marketing communication is significant in producing value through the steps from packaging to the delivery of the product that too with the constant supply of essential information to the buyer.

The Nature of Strategy: The marketing communication needs to have a strategic approach to produce its best results. The concept of modern marketing practices is highly intricate and multidimensional where the purpose of marketing communication is to inform and educate to the prospects and target groups of customers. Salant&Dillman (1994) commented that market research is mostly done to address the major ingredients of marketing namely product, price, place, and promotion. They added that, for effective conduction of marketing research the clarity of purpose is a highly required element. This means the problem and the necessary information to work out the solution should be outlined before initiating any research. Marketing communication is not sheer advertising rather it stands responsible for the important factors like telling with required number of revisions and repetitions. Effective research in marketing communication is more required because it can alter the consumer behavior as Kotler et al (2008), remarks that price was a few decades ago the major and most significant factor affecting the consumer behavior on the product choice but now, other factors have overtaken more important roles to alter buyer's behavior.

The Latest format of Marketing Communication: The modern format of marketing communication includes advertising through media, promotions and loyalty program, sponsoring, public relations, direct marketing and organization of product expository (shop exhibitions, fairs). Effective communication management incorporates innumerable issues to create an effective, adequate and coherent planning and strategy. To reap the best effect of marketing communication, understanding market cult and strategizing accordingly is not only important rather essential in more professional terms and this all is not possible without potential market research.

Marketing Communication Strategy and Research: The concept of market research can be understood as an organized effort to collect information about markets or customers. It has always been an essential and integral part of business strategy. The widely accepted difference between marketing research and marketing strategy is that marketing research is concerned with various marketing processes, while market research deals with markets. Research supports planning organizing and managing marketing activities effectively and most of the times successfully. Market research encompasses both types of researches like social researches and opinion researches which generally remains a systematic collection and interpretation of information about individuals or organizations. Such data is further analytically studied to reach to the statistical results by harboring the certain methods and techniques. Research helps gaining insight or helps the process of decision making.

The Process of Marketing Research: The process of marketing research involves collecting and analyzing information, collected in the form of data, about the customers. Such information is very useful in terms of developing business intelligence to make and implement business decisions. Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2006) observed that the effective business plans are most of the time are an outcome of potential market researches, the business plans can well target the owning of customers through the launch a new

product or service, aligning existing products and services, planning and execution of new markets, develop an effective advertising campaigns, resetting of prices, or re-location business place or existing outlets to serve the customer better to reap the best business from them. The activity of market research can be divided into two parts, primary and secondary. The information that forms primary research is collection of data about the customer or consumer preferences, their buying habits, opinions, and attitudes. Rabianski, J. S. (2006) believed that on the other facet of it, secondary research is an outcome of information collected through existing data from govt. reports, reference books, magazines and newspapers, industry publications, government agencies, trade associations or chambers of commerce. Market research is very important tool to make organizations function successfully.

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