

Positioning and Building Brand Personality with Luxury Car Manufacturer-Audi

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ABSTRACT

The paper briefly explains the role of brands in modern society, by focusing on how they are recognised and given meaning by the consumers. Furthermore, study represents the key concept of the Marketing, brand identity, and provides the information with its topic statement. Audi have created and communicated a brand identity in world market. Having introduced the key concepts, the study continues with the relevant communication theory of Audi Brand. Through explanation, analysis and discussion of the concepts of branding, bring clarity to the subjects and show how these ideas are conceptualised by Audi in market. The chapter starts with a short brand analysis based on various market and consumer reports. Luxury car manufacturers brand positioning strategies are identified that target audience and provides insight to the consumer needs and trends. The salient elements of the brand identity are chosen and eventually communicated via a various brand position statements. Final stage is the conclusion based on the findings and evaluation of the study.

Keywords: Audi, Brand, Positioning, Personality, Car, Automotive.

INTRODUCTION:

To brand is to name or mark indelibly as proof of ownership primarily to create difference. It means a sign or symbol of quality. A brand is the sum of its equity, identity, positioning, personality, culture, soul, essence, character and finally the brand image (Upshaw, 1995). The automotive market and workplace has evolved from an image of “dark, dirty and dangerous” to the domain of high skills, advanced technology and dynamic change (Deloitte, 2009). Audi is one of the best-selling luxury automobile manufacturers in the world providing highly powerful cars. The company has the expertise of all the type of luxury cars: sedan, hatchback or coupe. Audi has further created its own body styles, such as the Sportback and Fastback. The trims are available in all three fuelling forms; the gas, liquid and electricity. Audi has the finest of the steering capability as Germans are masters of steering. It’s agile performance and smooth steering makes it an immense luxury. The luxurious and comfortable interior (finest leather seating, wooden trims, carbon fiber) of the Audi cars is one of the several reasons behind the popularity of this company. The seats are quite comfortable which makes driving a fun. Comfort and performance are supreme in the Audi. The four rings represent the union of four independent car companies -- Audi, DKW, Wanderer and Horch - in 1932 (Audi, 2017).



OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding on an organisation's brand identity. In order to reach this purpose we understand concept of brand positioning and brand personality.

METHODOLOGY:

The strategy that we found best suited for our study is to conduct case study. As the approach is qualitative, a case study is most appropriate. According to Eriksson & Wiedersheim –Paul (2001) a case study involves the investigation of few entities but in many aspects. Secondary data has been used for the study. Various research articles from reputed journals, books, websites and magazines has been downloaded and retrieved.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The development of branding over the past 30 years is characterised by layers of added value built around the core functionality of the product or service to create and maintain distinction in a particular market. Successful brand building strategies create a distinctive market position for a company, protecting it against the five basic competitive forces: rivalry among existing firms, the bargaining power of suppliers, the bargaining power of buyers, the threat of substitutes, and threat of new entrants (Porter (1980) as referred to in Hankinson & Cowking, 1993). In a world where the consumer is confronted with a variety of alternatives to choose from, a strong brand can have a dramatic impact. Following it in the 1990s, Audi progressed as a brand from being admired to being desired (Campaign, 2004). Sportiness and performance progressively became a stronger element in perceptions of the brand.

The brand proposition according to Hankinson and Cowking (1993) contains two elements, Positioning and Personality. Kapferer (1997) claims that we have entered a new age of brand identity, which can be viewed as comprising six variables: physic, personality, culture relationship, reflection and self image. In 1999 the Audi TT was launched to appeal emotional side of consumer because company recognised that consumers don't buy cars for purely rational reasons. After that It has become the paragon of "cool" and a design classic. Not only emotional side but with other features and other models Audi appeals the consumer, as for example the Audi A8, which was launched in May 2003, focuses on innovation. With advanced technology and the spirit of a sports car, described by the company as a luxury saloon. The new Audi A3 was launched in three-door form in June 2003. Year 2004 sees Audi opening up a new segment with its A3 Sportback, a five door car with the sporty looks of a Coupe (Campaign, 2004).

According to J. Aaker (1997) the brand personality tends to serve a symbolic or self expressive function or the set of human characteristics associated with the typical user of a brand. A brand personality can be defined as the "face" of the brand, the human characteristics associated with the brand (D. A. Aaker, 1996; Upshaw, 1995). A brand with the personality tends to be more memorable and interesting than a brand which is nothing more than a set of attributes (D.A. Aaker 1998). However Aaker (1997) compared the brand personality to the human personality and identified five personality dimensions called the "Big Five".

1. Sincerity: Down to earth, Honest, Wholesome, Cheerful.
2. Competence: Daring, Spirited, Imaginative, Up-to-date.
3. Excitement: Reliable, Intelligent, Successful.
4. Sophistication: Upper class, Charming.
5. Ruggedness: Outdoorsy, Tough.

These different dimensions can be used to gain theoretical and practical insight into the antecedents and consequences of brand personality.

.According to Kotler (2005), "Positioning is the act of designing the company's offering and image so that they occupy a meaningful and distinctive competitive position in the target customer's minds". If a company should be successful in today over communicated society, they must create a good positioning in the mind of the customer. This positioning should not only consider the company's own strength and weakness it should also consider the competitors (Ries & Trout, 2000).

With these principles Audi in 2004 launched the new A6 in June in the extremely competitive executive segment. This car had innovations such as MMI, air suspension, "bendy" headlights, and is launched with the new face of Audi, a bold, single frame grille echoing the race cars of the 1930s.

History of an Idea:

After working for Carl Benz in Mannheim for three years as head of automobile production, Horch set up his own business in 1899. He has a reputation for being able to solve complex problems and a frontier man with extra-ordinary engineering skills. By 1901 he had created his first automobile and convince the world to use lightweight alloys to reduce mass -- this same principal was used in the Audi A8, where the body is around 50% lighter than if it were made of steel. He lost and had little idea what to do next when he left the company that bore his name in 1909 and sued by Horch company not to set up a rival firm bearing the same name. For his new company an idea was suggested to him to use "audi", the Latin word for Horch, which means "hark!" or "listen" in German. For promotion and position he began taking part in motor sport events and won a string of prizes. It's a tradition that continues to this day. The modern era of Audi essentially began in the 1960s when Auto Union was acquired by Volkswagen from Daimler-Benz.

Promotions:

Audi has made a point of applying creative thinking in the development, not only of its cars but also to its marketing. With fine leather interiors, alloy wheels, engineering and sharp bodywork breaks the trend of the traditional car commercial.

Promotions play vital role in brand formation and Audi has used them in a very unique and effective way. For Audi TT model in 2002, in a Television Advertisement, Audi used Hendrix's music and sold more than 160,000 copies of an Audi-branded Jimi Hendrix compilation CD, in collaboration with Universal Music (Campaign 2004). For new Audi A3 (Sporty Hatchback), Audi linked itself to music in form of Compact Disk and mailed to 100,000 people featuring ten tracks from a variety of artists to appeal to the young professionals. To support the launch of the new Audi A8 in May 2003 in United Kingdom, Audi practiced the biggest-ever outdoor activity. The five-week campaign saw 80 landmark buildings, including Fort Dunlop near Birmingham, wrapped in advertisements of up to 132m long. Television ads, which began on the same day, showcased Audi's technological firsts -- such as being the first car maker to break the 250mph road record -- with the end line "First after First after First" (Campaign 2004).

Audi describes that all models are with advanced technology. They are designed for people with passion, for creative individuals with a desire for the extraordinary (Audi, 2017). Although creatively minded or not, it's difficult not to appreciate its low, sleek, sexy and sporty silhouette licking the road.

Brand values:

The Audi brand is built upon the parameters such as: design, technology, genuine customer benefits for intelligent and sophisticated man. Today, the brand stands for head-turning elegance, tempered by pure emotion and leader in relevant progressive innovative technology.

The Audi includes an all-weather and all-terrain. Like the performance, Audi has even enhanced the handling ability of this car. And nevertheless, the Audi is better than a lot of hatchbacks that are rated at the same level. Well, the spacing is quite admirable.

The Audi includes a number of passive safety features. It is an elegant family car with a complete package of safety to protect the occupants. The front seats get various airbags slotted in for the thorax and knee as well. Further, the rear seats come equipped with the Latches.

Well, the active safety column includes electronic stability control, electronic brake force distribution, anti-lock braking system and tire pressure monitoring system. Further, the Audi features the electromechanical parking brake with the rear view camera and the parking assistants. This helps a lot while parking the car. Audi continuously worked for mechanical and cosmetic improvement with sporty performance.

CONCLUSION:

Good looking features, trend setting, excellent acceleration, speed, technically advanced, safety, excellent workmanship, sporty look, good mileage are main attributes which pull the customer. Audi continuously worked in these aspects and survived in the market from inception. Audi's most recent innovations include new generation piezo injection TDI engines for state of the art refinement, heightened performance, improved fuel consumption and low emissions.

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