

Whom Your Brand Is More Like?

Analysis of Brand Image and Brand Personality

Yufei Dong

Shandong College of Arts
Jinan, China

Abstract—In the process of brand building, in addition to advance complete, objective, targeted market research, and on this basis to make accurate and effective product brand positioning, the most important thing is build brand image and brand personality based on brand positioning. Brand image is external and personality is internal. If these two is non-unity or conflict, for the brand is a very serious problem, it will make consumers can not clearly distinguish the difference and characteristics between you and other brands, it is even impossible to make a clear definition to your brand. And excellent brand image, not only can help the brand stand out, deepen the impression of brand image in consumers' minds, but also it even can make more clear about the market and consumer positioning, thereby shoot the arrow at the target, promote product sales.

Keywords—brand image; brand personality; self-examination of "Li Ning"

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Definitions

Brand image refers to the personality traits of the company or one of its brands exhibit in the market or in the public mind, it reflects the public, especially consumers' brand evaluation and cognition. Brand image is indivisible with brand, brand image is the manifested feature of brand which reflect the strength and essence of the brand.

Brand personality (also known as brand character) as a relatively new terminology, both rooted in the classical theory of personality psychology, also reflects the brand's unique personality traits (Milas & Mlacic, 2007). Although a long time ago there are some scholars use the definition of personality to define the brand personality, but there still are some divergences about the definition of the concept of brand personality in academia. The most important divergence is the relationship between brand personality and brand image.

As far as I understand, brand personality is from inherence, it is the anthropomorphic manifestation which customized by brand people. The brand image is similar to the external reflection that is the impression of consumers left by this brand, for example the man's tough image of Marlboro brand expressed through western cowboy. Both two things are for each other, mutually each other, only if they can be consistent then it is successful. For example, do you think the Marlboro brand reflects the "tough, vicissitudes, bold, rough"

temperament? Whether it is the customer who with the above qualities uses this product? If the answer is yes, then the brand is on the right path.

B. Function

Make the brand "personification" so that to successfully attract the target consumer group. Make the consumers obtain a sense of belonging, enhance their brand loyalty and become a part of the camp. How to successfully attract the target consumer group? It has become the most urgent desire of the brand business.

Whether does Benz attract successful people? Whether the BMW catch the driving pleasure in your mind? Does Volvo's safety move the baby's parents? Their images in the minds of consumers will naturally defined as "regal enjoyment", "driving pleasure" and "safe, solid". This coincides with the business's vision and the brand was born.

Jay Chou, SHE, Pan Weibo endorsed the mobile communication brand "M-Zone", put forward "M-zone people" concept, sought after by many young people, it seems that everyone found their own team, they will be out if they do not join.

II. THE CASE STUDY

A. Marlboro's "Transgender Road"; Cosmetics Become "Men and Women-Take-All"

Next, let us look at two very interesting cases.

Marlboro is called pure man cigarette. Bold and fiery cowboy image, tough sturdy living habits, and all the details which reflect the vicissitudes (such as tattoos, wrinkles, scars, etc.), so that all consumers want to return to "attractive real men". But unexpected, the original Marlboro is truly "Little Women."

In the early stage of entrepreneurship of Marlboro, product positioning is lady cigarette, the vast majority of consumers are women. The classic advertising slogan "mild as May" was once swept the streets. But it get the opposite of what they wants, even though the number of smokers in the United States increased every year, but sales of Marlboro cigarettes has always been mediocre. Ladies complain the white cigarette mouthpiece will catch their bright red lipstick, very unsightly. Thus, the owner of Marlboro—Philip Morris changes the mouthpiece into red color "Fig. 1". But all this cannot save the

fate of Marlboro lady cigarette, Morris Company finally stop the production of Marlboro cigarette in the early 40s (20th century).



Fig. 1. The female image of Marlboro was once very popular.

After World War II, the number of smokers the United States continues to grow, Marlboro moved back the latest innovated filter cigarette to Lady cigarette market and released three series: one is paperback, one with white and red filter, and one with the advertising slogan of "match with your lip and fingertip ". At that time the US cigarette consumption amounted to 382 billion pieces a year, the average amount for each consumer is as much as 2262 pieces, but still Marlboro's sale is poor, smokers rarely smoke Marlboro, and even there are few people who know the brand.

Time flow slowly, Marlboro as a Tobacco brand with a long history and high quality, it did not have a strong appeal in the majority of smokers as it expected. Is there something wrong with the Brand positioning? Or something else? If the strategic direction is wrong, then no matter how much effort was all wasted. Morris was thinking hard, finally, he found that a brand image which only focus on practical needs and "mild" is not enough to move people, in order to make the Marlboro become the darling of the smokers, a wild, uninhibited, powerful image is indispensable. Modern people who living in reinforced concrete buildings always yearning for the wide and boundless blue sky, endless grassland, free running horses, supple riders ... then let Marlboro also has wings and start to run freely! Over the hills, over the mountains, traveled to every corner of the world, ran into the heard of every free-spirited person.

Since then, the wild and gentle Marlboro was gone, replaced with a bold and rough Marlboro. In 1955, Marlboro won the country's top ten cigarette brand. In 1968, Marlboro single-brand market share rose to the second place in the country's tobacco industry. In 1975, Marlboro on the first place of the cigarettes sales in the United States. The mid-1980s, Marlboro became the leading brand in the world tobacco industry. In 1989, Marlboro sold worldwide 318 billion cigarettes, it is larger than the bottled Coca-Cola or canned Campbell Soup. "Fig. 2"



Fig. 2. Wild Western cowboy become Marlboro's new image.

In the field of skin care products also have an interesting change: Those brands which at beginning emphasized men expert or women dedicated cosmetics brand all chose "men and women-take-all." Olay no longer soft extravagance, but also learn to be drop-dead gorgeous! "Fig. 3". NIVEA is no longer "simple and tough", but plays a soft love. "Fig. 4". L'Oreal is unwilling to yield to others, it hired a lot of handsome guys and pretty girls. "Fig. 5". Why this change happened? Still it is the market working. According to statistics, current career men spent about 8-10 minutes a day on skin care and wash up, which is almost the same with women. "Beauty" is no longer unique to women. Changes in the target market make the original "eccentric" cosmetics brand start to "longing for change", they have put their hands into the camps which they ignored before.



Fig. 3. Olay released Male brand.



Fig. 4. NIVEA released Female brand.



Fig. 5. LOREAL already male and female-take-all.

In the course of "Consumer behavior and psychology", I had worked out such a title for the students: "Economic rise of 'color man' ", focused on market changes caused by the "male beauty" phenomenon. A group of students even found an earlier and more mature market for "color man" economy: Wei-jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties - handsome man wantonly heyday. The literati and celebrities at that time simply "smug" to the extreme, many skin care methods are admired and surprised by today's girls! From this we can see, is not only the heart of beauty in everyone, but the "color man" even worse.

Now that consumers are no longer shy, businesses naturally do not have to follow the old rules. Market differentiation makes the positioning should make change or improvement. In the near future, the cosmetics targeted at "natural, healthy, harmless" quality, suitable for children or the elderly, might also emerge as required in the times. Brand is alive, growing and changing. After establish a good image in the hearts of audiences, where does it go still depends on the market and the consumers.

Brand image is not a scarecrow or a mask, it needs to act according to circumstances. This involves relative knowledge of consumer behavior and psychology. But market decides everything can] answer this question. One performance of a successful brand is through the accurate brand image successfully "pull" in their target consumer group, which is different with the traditional, forced "push" out way. The mystery of "Push and pull" and the market change of "buyer and seller" warns a lot of old ideas in traditional industries, "use change against the thousand changes " is requirements and ideas for a brand in new period.

Do you know how does Kodak film empire collapse? This company is the first to study of digital photography technology in the world, actually in order to ensure its film sales and decisively choose to give up the new technology, thus losing the opportunity to snatch the first place in digital filed, and ironically dead of it; Japanese Nintendo game Kingdom was once triumph in the pack, long for competitors, but eventually because the management's confused market estimate and the inexplicable fear about competitor's advanced technology, they gave up to cooperate with them which caused two powerful enemies PlayStation and X-box 360 two (behind is SONY and Microsoft Corporations), now it can only linger and watching others face, too late to regret. Kodak and Nintendo seems to keep his own "image", but lost their market painfully.

The market is ruthless. Today the rapid development of marketization process makes humanity and human weakness gradually exposed. A battlefield without smoke still will be death! If a brand wants long-term stability, it should always pay attention to market trend, consumer psychology and behavior change, constantly make self-change while catering the market, so that to remain invincible.

B. The Big Change of Li Ning

Do you still remember Li Ning in 2003? "Anything is possible" has become a very popular slogan, even later the "impossible is nothing" of Adidas has copy suspicion. At that time, Li Ning considered its sales remain stagnant, so it invited the famous market research / consulting firm Gallup for consulting. Ultimately it came up with the conclusion: brand personality and brand image are seriously discrepancy, the actual consumer group has huge differences with the target consumer group. It changed from 18-25 year-old "young man" which Li Ning expected unfortunate incarnation of 28-45 year-old "uncle", it is the result which definitely not what Li Ning want to see. "Fig. 6".



Fig. 6. Li Ning's actual consumer group has huge differences with the target consumer group.

So Li Ning carried on the first reform, the excited slogan "Anything is possible" came emerged, highlight the vitality of youth and show themselves, within such youthful atmosphere, Li Ning re-established its young and progressive brand image. Eventually, with the help of 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Mr. Li Ning who was the chairman and founder of the company lit the Olympic flame in person and pushed the brand onto the top! "Fig. 7", "Fig. 8".



Fig. 7. "Anything is possible" series posters.



Fig. 8. Mr. Li Ning lit up the Olympic flame of 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

In 2010 which happened to be the twentieth anniversary of the Li Ning brand. As China's most successful sports brand, Li Ning made a "big move". The Group replaced with a new logo, changed the "red flag torch" into "Li Ning cross", the slogan changed to "90s Li Ning-make the change " "Fig. 9". Intention was clear: attract a new group of "young people", continue to maintain its "youth did not fail" brand image. In this case 90s happened to be the major consumer market groups.



Fig. 9. "90s Li Ning" posters.

But it did not go as what they want.

I asked a lot Post-90s Student around: Do you in favor with Li Ning because of this change? The answer is definitely not what Li Ning Comapny wants to hear. We mentioned a term called "Brand loyalty". With social progress and prosperity of the market, the brand species are more abundant, but style and quality do not have essential difference, consumer's "loyalty" to the brand has already been far worse than before. 90s as a new generation, they chose more broad and casual, "It does not matter of what brand as long as I like". For them, Li Ning is certainly not the first domestic sports brand they had heard - which is essentially different from 70s and 80s! Feeling points are not dominant, quality points are not outstanding, this tribute of Li Ning with full sincerity but was far from the expected effect, actually a lot of 90s choose to ignore it.

Even more distressing is us, the 80s who concerned about Li Ning's growth since we were a child and include the 70s have been ruthlessly abandoned! A brand which you grow with it day by day, suddenly announced that it would exclude you from its target consumers, how said it is! "Pay a double

penalty" perhaps is the most apt description now for the Li Ning brand.

Li Ning's sales greatly reduced since 2010, so far it has closed over 3000 stores! Although in 2012 in invested a huge money to sponsored the Chinese Basketball Association CBA (allegedly 240 million yuan a year, plus other expenses, a total of two billion yuan for five years. This offer is much higher than the offer for adidas to sponsor American Basketball League NBA), it tried to restore the domestic market share while attracting the eyeballs, it tried to be the leader of the industry again. But we do not know the result. It is hard to deny that this is the bitter fruit caused by wrong positioning, a lot of people have blamed the failure root to the new slogan "90s Li Ning".

As one of China's earliest sport brands and the first rank in the same industry, we sincerely wish Li Ning could go through the hard time, turned the corner, to reproduce the brilliant 2008! BTW: "Anything is possible" this slogan had quietly returned since the beginning of 2016.

Meanwhile, let's look at Nike and Adidas these two rivals' business strategies: they do not blindly expand the site, they turned to online business and specialty business. I have heard a very wonderful trick: DIY exclusive private sport shoes (clothes). You only need to add a certain amount of money, Nike will print (stitch) your personal "signs" on your products, such as the name initials, the main colors marching for the shoes , main image and so on, so as to make one pair of unique shoes in the world! The brand is called "NIKEID". "Fig. 10"; "Fig. 11"; "Fig. 12". Of course, in addition to shoes, it also include customized sports clothes. In this era of personality show off, which young people will not like it?



Fig. 10. The sport shoes which customized by student,the colors are selected by himself too.



Fig. 11. Foreign customized NIKE basketball shoes.



Fig. 12. Customized sport T-shirt.

For the loyal fans over decades, Nike, Adidas also blowing retro nostalgia: sometimes promotes the concept of life (NIKE Find your greatness), sometimes shows fighting style (Adidas is all in) “Fig. 13”; “Fig. 14”, gradually sublimated the brand core culture, "inspiration, struggle" positive energy are all there, suitable for both young and old, everyone is happy.



Fig. 13. NIKE: Find your greatness.

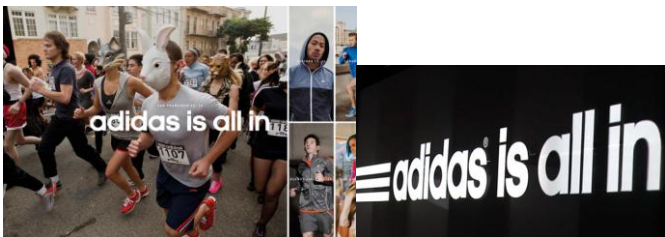


Fig. 14. Adidas is all in.

III. CONCLUSION

As an extremely important part of the brand building process, brand image and brand personality are the parts that brand people must make intensive study and exploration. A successful brand should be a personality and positive person - the former is to distinguish from others, the latter guarantees the accurate guidance. It must have flesh and blood, affection and faith, story and sincerity. Otherwise, the brand will only be short-lived or obliterate in public. China does not lack of good products, and even not lack of century boutiques, but the world known brands are too little, brand image and brand personality

not distinctive is one of the reasons. Excellent brand image and brand personality come from market research and positioning, in order to specific target brand consumers, serve and guide the overall image and brand promotion, it is a connecting link so it is essential.

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