

Celebrity Endorsement is the Key of Attraction in this Competitive Era

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ABSTRACT

Now days a brand should be cautious when employing celebrities to ensure it promise believability and delivery of the anticipated effect. As the celebrities pass through from a mere commercial presence to public welfare message endorsements, a whole new dimension is added to this process and helps us in accomplish a holistic view of the collision which celebrities generate in every sphere and segment through their well-versed endorsements.

1.1 Introduction

Everyday consumers are exposed to thousands of voices and images in magazines, newspapers, and on billboards, websites, radio and television. Every brand attempts to steal at least a fraction of a person's time to inform him or her of the amazing and different attributes of the product at hand. The challenge of the marketer is to find a hook that will hold the subject's attention. In helping to achieve this, use of celebrity endorsers is a widely used marketing strategy.

In this modern age, people tend to ignore all commercials and advertisements while flipping through the magazines and newspapers or viewing TV. But even then, the glamour of a celebrity seldom goes unnoticed. Thus, celebrity endorsement in advertisement and its impact on the overall brand is of great significance. In this process, the companies hire celebrities from a particular field to feature in its advertisement campaigns. The promotional features and images of the product are matched with the celebrity image, which tends to convince a consumer to fix up his choice from a multiplicity of brands. Although this sounds pretty simple, but the design of such campaigns and the successive success in achieving the desired result calls for an in-depth understanding of the product, the brand objective, choice of a celebrity, associating the celebrity with the brand, and a framework for measuring the effectiveness.

Companies invest large sums of money to align their brands and themselves with endorsers. Such endorsers are seen as dynamic with both attractive and likeable qualities and companies plan that these qualities are transferred to products via marketing communication activities. Furthermore, because of their fame, celebrities serve not only to create and maintain attention but also to achieve high recall rates for marketing communication messages in today's highly cluttered environments.

Similarly every product has an image. The consumer tries to consume a brand which has the maximum fit with his/her own personality/image. The celebrity endorser fits in between these two interactions, where he tries to bring the image of the product closer to the expectation of the consumer, by transferring some of the cultural meanings residing in his image to the product.

The impact of celebrity endorsement on the overall process of brand building and it make celebrity endorsement a win-win situation for both the brand and the brand-endorser. “**Brand**” is the most valuable asset of any firm.

The general belief among advertisers is that brand communication messages delivered by celebrities and famous personalities generate a higher appeal, attention and recall than those executed by non-celebrities. The quick message-reach and impact are all too essential in today’s highly competitive environment.

Celebrities have also been in demand having succeeded in being effective by rising above the clutter & grabbing the attention and focus of the consumer. They also succeed in creating an aspiration in the minds of the consumer to acquire what their favorite celebrity endorses.

Before explaining the branding and the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer buying behavior, one must have gone through the significance of marketing. Marketing as looking today is different from its older version.

1.2 Marketing with Celebrity

Marketing, more than any other business function, deals with customers. Marketing is an ancient art and has, since the days of Adam & Eve, been practiced in one form or the other. Marketing is everywhere; most of the tasks we do and most of the things we handle are linked to marketing. It is a known fact that for succeeding in business an entrepreneur, first and foremost, needs good marketing skills.

The modern world of marketing communication has become colorful and inundated with advertisements, and it is hard to get noticed. It is an uphill task for the designer of an advertising campaign to differentiate itself from others and attract viewers' attention. In this jet age, people tend to ignore all commercials and advertisements while flipping through the magazines and newspapers or viewing TV. But even then, the glamour of a celebrity seldom goes unnoticed. Thus, celebrity endorsement in advertisement and its impact on the overall brand is of great significance. In this process, the companies hire celebrities from a particular field to feature in its advertisement campaigns. The promotional features and images of the product are matched with the celebrity image, which tends to persuade a consumer to fix up his choice from a plethora of brands. Although this sounds pretty simple, but the design of such campaigns and the subsequent success in achieving the desired result calls for an in-depth understanding of the product, the brand objective, choice of a celebrity, associating the celebrity with the brand, and a framework for measuring the effectiveness.

Marketing is not about just “telling and selling”- but it is more than about satisfying the customer needs; develop products and services that provide superior customer value; and prices, distributes, and promotes them effectively, these products will sell easily. In fact, according to management guru Peter Drucker, “The aim of marketing is to make selling unnecessary”. Selling and advertising are only part of a larger “marketing mix”- a set of marketing tools that work together to satisfy customer needs and build customer relationships. Marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return. Marketing is a social and management process by which individuals and organizations obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others. In a narrower business context, marketing involves building profitable, value-laden exchange relationships with customers.

It is more about anticipating and satisfying the customer needs in a way to which creates committed and loyal customer base for any organization. Thus it becomes imperative to know in detail about the emergence of marketing concept in order to understand the basics of consumer behavior and impact of celebrity endorsement on it.

1.3 Review of Literature:-

Attractiveness encompasses similarity, familiarity and likeability (Triandis, 1971). Similarity is the supposed resemblance between the source and the receiver; familiarity arises through knowledge of the source via repeated exposure. Likeability occurs from affection for the source due to their physical appearance, behaviour or other personal characteristics. Source attractiveness leads to persuasion through a process of identification – the receiver is motivated to seek a relationship with the source and adopts a similar position in terms of beliefs, attitudes,

preferences or behaviour (Belch and Belch, 1995).



Source:-ibnlive.in.com

Advertisers have chosen celebrity endorsers on the basis of their physical attractiveness to gain from the dual effects of celebrity status and physical appeal (Singer, 1983), e.g. Carol Vorderman's dual role as expert and attractive presenter of the benefits of Benecol. There is no doubt that attractive celebrity endorsers enhance attitudes towards advertising and brands, but whether they are able to create repeat purchase intentions is less clear.

The marketing concept starts with a well-defined market, focuses on customer needs, and integrates all the marketing activities that affect the customers. In turn, it yields profits by creating lasting relationship with the right customers based on customer value satisfaction". 'Integration of all marketing activities', this should include internal marketing, performance marketing, integrated marketing and relationship marketing. Better still; the holistic marketing concept can be described as a clever combination of all the concepts that have been developed prior to it.



Source:- www.itinfopoint.com

1.4 Factors influencing Consumer Behavior

In addition, consumer behavior is a complex interplay of several factors. According to Philip Kotler, consumer behavior is influenced by both internal and external factors. In the figure given below, external factors include cultural and social factor, while internal factors include personal and psychological factors. Cultural factors exert the broadest influence on consumer behavior.

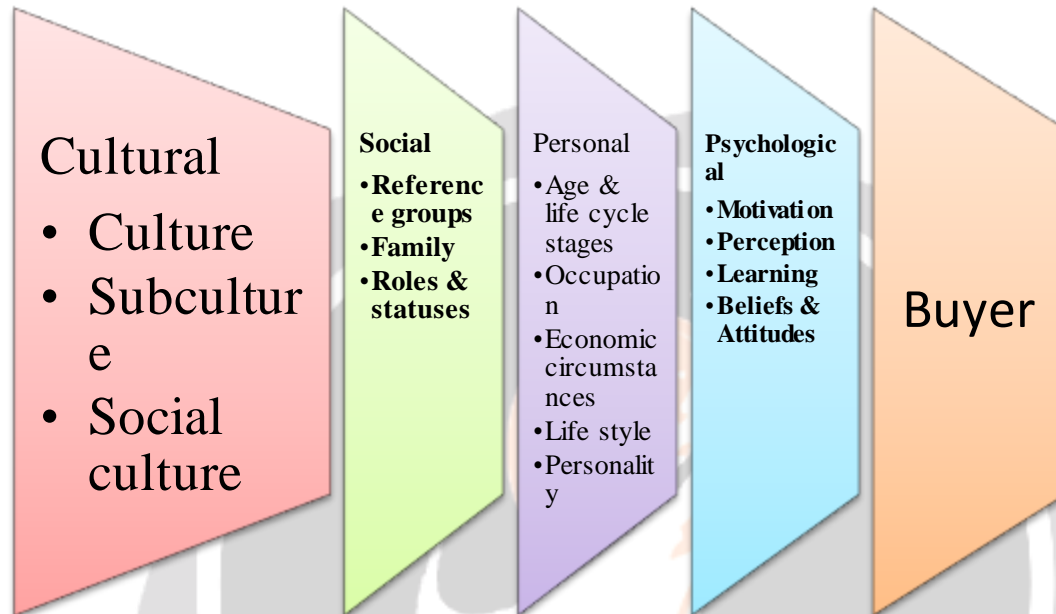


Figure – Kotler's model for influencing Consumer Behavior

One has to study both the internal and the external environment to have a better knowledge of consumer behavior. Only when we are able to decipher this process, can such knowledge be used in taking decisions that would be most effective in achieving the marketing objectives.

The motive behind total branding may be defined as an attempt to amalgamate all the diverse activities related to the product which helps to win customer preference and recalling of brand. The crescendo of celebrities endorsing brands has been steadily increasing over the past years. Endorsement by celebrity has been used by some of the top brands in the world like *Nike* and *Pepsi*, in India too, Hindustan Unilever (HUL) has used film stars to endorse their beauty soap *Lux* since the fifties. *Vimal*, *Thums Up*, *Gwalior* and *Dinesh* suitings are some of the other brands that used star appeal in the early days of mass advertising. Marketers overtly acknowledge the power of celebrities in influencing consumer-purchasing decisions. It is a universally accepted fact that celebrity endorsement can bestow special attributes upon a product that it may have lacked otherwise. But everything is not like fairy tales; celebrities are after all mere mortals made of flesh and blood like us. If a celebrity can aggrandize the merits of a brand, he or she can also exacerbate the image of a brand. The image, the brand, slogan and the value which celebrity delivers is used in the process of winning customer preferences and brand recall. A celebrity is used to impart credibility and aspirational values to a brand, but the celebrity needs to match the product.



Source:- www.afaqs.com

In the growing age of technology, various other means are evolving in marketing of a product. Internet, cable TV, satellite are wiping out cultural boundaries and making this world as a global village. There are many concepts emerged in the market for selling and recalling of product. Now days a new concept *Person Marketing* arises which describes persons' aid in advertising. Organization/ companies are using value, norms and culture for selling and recalling of a product. Global entertainment companies have given form to the perceptions and the ideals of ordinary citizens, wherever they live and celebrity endorsement is one of the main.

Due to the immense availability of media, the emergence of a new stage of commercial communication has taken place. Companies are constantly finding new ways in which they can communicate with their consumers, in both a conscious level and subconscious level, by surrounding customers with constant brand messages. At a conscious level the consumer chooses which communications to be interested in. If they are looking for a specific product or service of interest they will selectively perceive relevant brand messages. The battle for a piece of the consumers "mind space" has lead companies to want to associate their brands with desirable and trustworthy celebrities in order to attract consumers' attention and interest.

The use of celebrities as means of communication has been commonly utilized in advertising and branding. This is done because it is assumed that celebrities have a powerful effect on the affluence of the brands they endorse. Celebrity endorsement has been defined as: "any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good..."

Using a celebrity for endorsing a brand has become a trend in India. "A celebrity is a person who will recognize by the people and has a good reputation in the people's mind and in society." But in the end they are also human beings and they can fail in their field. Celebrity endorsement has been established as one of the most preferred tools of advertising. it has become a trend and perceived as a winning formula for product marketing and brand building. It is very easy to have a celebrity for a product or brand but it is very tough to establish a very strong association between product and the endorser: because the objective is to build a brand not the celebrity: if properly matched it can do wonders for the company, but it also has a number of potential problems like failure of celebrity in his profession, controversy etc.

Promoting a product or service. An endorsement is also known as a testimonial but the word is more commonly associated with celebrities. A celebrity endorsement is almost always a paid endorsement of the company or a certain product.

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.



Source:- www.weeksupdate.com

1.5 Relationship between Celebrities and Public

Celebrities are people who enjoy specific public recognition by a large number of certain groups of people. They have some characteristic attributes like attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle or special skills that are not commonly observed. Thus, it can be said that within a society, celebrities generally differ from the common people and enjoy a high degree of public awareness. Among the classic forms of celebrities, actors (e.g., Shahrukh Khan, Amitabh Bachhan, etc.), models (e.g., Malaika Arora, Bipasha Basu, etc.), sports-persons (e.g., Sachin Tendulkar, Sania Mirza, etc.) are significant.

According to Friedman and Friedman, a "celebrity endorser is an individual who is known by the public (...) for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed". Compared to other endorser types, famous people always attach a greater degree of attention, recall and loyalty.

According to Melissa St. James, a doctoral fellow and marketing instructor at The George Washington University, "Studies show that using celebrities can increase consumers' awareness of the ad, capture [their] attention and make ads more memorable."

In this age of intense competition, where capturing a position in the consumers' mind space is extremely tough, celebrity endorsements give an extra edge to the companies for holding the viewers' attention. Celebrities can catalyze brand acceptance and provide the enormous momentum that brands require by endorsing the intrinsic value to the brand.

Celebrities are people who enjoy public recognition by a large share of a certain group of people. Whereas attributes like attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle or special skills are just examples and specific common characteristics cannot be observed, it can be said that within a corresponding social group celebrities generally differ from the

social norm and enjoy a high degree of public awareness. This is true for classic forms of celebrities, like actors (e.g. Meg Ryan, Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, Salman Khan), models (e.g. Naomi Campbell, John Abraham, Indrani Das Gupta), sports athletes (e.g. Anna Kournikova, Michael Schumacher, Sachin Tendulkar, M S Dhoni), entertainers (e.g. Oprah Winfrey, Jakir Hussain) and pop stars (e.g. Madonna, Daler Mehandi) – but also for less obvious groups like businessmen (e.g. Bill Gates, Mahashay Chunni Lal (MDH Spices)) or politicians (e.g. Rudy Giuliani, Mayawati, Shatrughan Sinha).

Celebrities appear in public in different ways. First, they appear in public when fulfilling their profession, e.g. Sania Mirza, who plays tennis in front of an audience in Wimbledon. Furthermore, celebrities appear in public by attending special celebrity events, e.g. the Academy Awards, or world premieres of movies. In addition, they are present in news, fashion magazines, and tabloids, which provide second source information on events and the ‘private life’ of celebrities through mass-media channels (e.g. Preity Zinta’s Show, Simmi Grewal’s Show etc.). Last but not least, celebrities act as spokespeople in advertising to promote products and services (Kambitsis et al. 2002, Tom et al. 1992).

While selecting a celebrity as endorser, the company has to decide the promotional objective of the brand and how far the celebrity image matches with it. The selection is in fact a collaboration, from which both the company and the celebrity gains.

The most important attribute for a celebrity endorser is the trustworthiness. The target audience must trust that a celebrity carries a particular image and it must match with the product.

The second attribute in order of importance is likeability. The celebrity also must be accepted as a popular icon by a large cross section of the audience.

Companies use celebrity endorser because they are considered to have stopping power, i.e., a celebrity can be a very useful tool to draw attention to advertising messages in a cluttered media environment. The overall popular image coupled with exact product-image match enhances the consumer attention resulting in greater brand recall.



Source:- www.pixel-studios.com

1.6 Winning Celebrity endorsements for a brand - An Indian outlook

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.

➤ Some 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.

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