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Abstract

Apple Inc. is a world-renowned name of innovation and breakthrough in the consumer electronics and computer industry. Apple is known to be one of the greatest marketers of all time because they understand that marketing is one of the most crucial aspects of a business venture which greatly determines its success in the consumer's realm. The use of narratives in marketing has become widely used over the past years as other forms of marketing became redundant and ineffective. Narratives evoke a feeling in the audience and are a more effective method than previous ads and marketing tools. Apple uses its narrative in all the advertisements that it does. It researches its consumers' needs and past purchasing behavior and uses that information to develop strategies that influence the purchasing behavior of targeted consumers. Apple's marketing is so effective, that it has become a benchmark for other companies who want to achieve the same global popularity, revenue growth and staying power. This paper presents Apple Inc. brand development and marketing strategies.

Keywords: *Brand Development, Marketing Strategies & Apple Inc.*

1.1 Introduction

Companies now use narratives to explain the stories behind their products or services, which helps get more consumers who share the same values as they do or who connect with the story they tell. Narratives are compelling because they are more personal; they include more than just the basic facts about a company (Zheng, Phelps & Pimentel, 2019). They take into consideration the audience they are speaking to and then write a story that will speak to that audience. The first thing to consider when creating an effective narrative is what consumer's need. Understanding consumer

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needs creates an empathic feel in the narrative and expresses to the audience that a company understands their needs and wants. It creates an emotional connection between the consumers and the product that a company is marketing making it easier to influence their purchasing decisions as the product will be more memorable to them (Bozkurt, 2019).

Another consideration is the plot that the narrative will have. The plot can either focus on the reasons a company has for selling a particular product or service, or it may detail the results that the product or service has for a consumer (Zhang, Liang & Wang, 2016). The plot can even be personalized to how a company developed a product to solve a personal problem that the inventor of the product had faced. It can alternatively tell the story of previous customer(s) and how the products of a company helped the customer(s) and how that the customer(s) feel. Narratives have become so popular in advertising that creating a unique story has become a concern for marketing teams (Choi, Bang, Wojdyski, Lee & Keib, 2018). Companies always need to stand out in the face of competition, and that is especially true in marketing. Companies should always avoid using the same narrative strategies as competitors who use the same type of product. After deciding on the plot and the needs of consumers being targeted, the next step is constructing the narrative. All marketing narratives need to have a beginning, middle and end just like any other story. Narratives need to have a cohesive flow that is easy to understand and follow. Narratives must be well constructed so that they tell one flowing story and that they pass the message that companies want to tell about a product. They need to evoke feelings within consumers and ensure that the product being promoted is memorable.

2.1 Critical Review

Apple is renowned for its revolutionary marketing strategies, but before Steve Jobs take over in 1997, the company was in a lousy state (Dave, 2018). Apple is one of the most successful brands in the world today, but this was not always the case. The company could not compete as it was marketing its products, which were always high-quality products, in the same generic way as every other company. Steve Jobs had a talent for reorganization the essential and non-essential things, and he dared to pursue what he thought was important even under pressure not to do so. Steve Jobs made the Apple brand different, made it stand out. He found that advertising Apple products should not be about the product and its uses but rather about the core values of the Apple Company. According to Jobs, Apple's advertising should represent their main value that "people with passion can change the world for the better. Jobs's first marketing campaign Think Different was a reflection of the philosophy that he used while creating his best products. It was an emotional narrative about why Jobs created the innovative products that he did and was the beginning of Apple's revolutionary marketing ads (Di Benedetto & Kim, 2016). Think Different was a story about why Apple creates the products that it does, and the strategy was a great success in appealing to the emotions of potential customers. Jobs understand that customers wanted to know why Apple created the products that it did rather than focus on what those products were. The question that consumers wanted to be answered was not about the products as Apple has always produced innovative, high-quality products; it was the story behind the products. The success that followed Apple after Jobs's take over was in his ability to successfully and honestly answer this question (Tsvetkova, Tukkel & Ablyazov, 2017).

Apple's success has dumbfounded many; after all, the company was not the first to invent personal computers, the smartphone, the tablet, portable music devices, or any of the products it sells. Despite having fierce competition, Apple has amassed brand followers more loyal than those of any other brand. The key to Apple's success is its use of consumer information to influence the purchasing behavior of consumers in its marketing campaigns. Consumer behavior is not used in the production of Apple products, but when it comes to marketing. Apple realized that they had based their advertising and marketing to the needs of the consumers, and to do so. They had to get access to the decision-making process of consumers and the target audience. Apple gets its information from people who purchase their products. Once a consumer buys any Apple product or downloads iTunes, Apple gains access to their information, and the company uses that information to discover the consumer's tastes and the drivers of that consumer's behavior. The company uses this insight to gain a competitive advantage over its competitors (Zheng, Phelps & Pimentel, 2019).

Apple uses the information from consumers to gain access to the affective system of consumers, the cognition of consumers, and the environment of that consumer. The company then uses this information to produce ads and marketing designs that appeal to the target audience and that guide the consumer's decisions and knowledge structure. The affective system is how people respond to certain outside stimuli (Zhang, Liang & Wang, 2016).

The affective system includes any emotions, moods, or any special feelings that individuals attach to something. The affective system is entirely reactive, but it does influence the physical decisions made by individuals (Choi, Bang, Wojdyski, Lee & Keib, 2018). Apple uses this affective system to change consumer behavior. The 1998 logo that Apple released is a monochromatic and sleek color that repositioned the brand in the mind of consumers. The logo retained the apple shape that Apple has always had and modified the rainbow color it had to chrome, thus creating an effective response in the minds of consumers. This was proven in a study by Duke University in 2008 that reported that exposure to Apple's monochromatic logo stimulated the brain and made users more creative. Apple leverages all of its assets, including its logo and brand messages in all of its products and communications (Di Benedetto & Kim, 2016).

The cognitive system is the system that performs all the mental processes of the brain. This system affects an individual's understanding, evaluation, planning, thinking, and decision making (Tsvetkova, Tükkel & Ablyazov, 2017). Cognition is what consumers know, understand, and belief about Apple and its products based on any past experiences they may have had and the memories they retained from them. The affective system affects a person's cognition and influences the beliefs they hold. The decision-making process of consumers is highly influenced by the cognitive system. Cognition influences how people interpret the information they are given, how they integrate that information, and it also controls the retrieval of any prior knowledge an individual holds. Apple uses the information it has about its consumers to formulate effective cognitive marketing strategies that the target audience will respond to. Apple's consumer research provides the company with an understanding of how its target consumers acquire and store their memory as well as how its target audience other memory factors, including product schemas and shopping scripts. Apple has used the information about consumers' cognition systems to create eye-catching products with a simple design, and that is easy to use, which has been highly

beneficial to its customers. Apple also communicates the different benefits that consumers get from their products and advertises the innovation of each product effectively (Dolata, 2017).

The environment of a consumer includes all of the physical and social characteristics of the world that the consumer is surrounded by. The social behavior of a consumer and of those around them, the spatial relationships the consumer has and the physical objects the consumer has are all part of a consumer's environment (Chanda, 2017). The physical location of Apple online and offline retailers also influence how consumers respond to the brand. The location, experiences of consumers with the product, word of mouth, Apple's mission, and values significantly influence whether or not consumers purchase the company's products when they hit the market. Apple is the number one competitor of companies that are much larger than it is. This is a result of the loyalty of the Apple consumer base. The physical location of Apple retailers is dominated by loyal Apple consumers, which ensures that the brand always has a stream of customers.

Consumer behavior refers to the physical actions of a consumer that can be observed directly and measured by others. Apple's hardware devices provide tight vertically integrated ecosystem for the company, the hardware devices can either be purchased from online or offline retailers or from a limited number of retailers. This integrated system as well as the iTunes software that supports Apple hardware, provides Apple with all the consumer information it needs to study consumer behavior. This information is then analyzed providing the company with a detailed understanding of its consumers. Apple uses this understanding to develop products and marketing strategies that are tailored to its target consumer base. Additionally, Apple produces high quality, useful and easy to use products focused on its consumers need making its consumer base even larger and more loyal (Qiu, Vakratsas & Dall'Olio, 2019).

Apple's marketing tools has led to it competing with much bigger firms that have not been able to rival its techniques. This has led to companies trying to imitate Apple's techniques to acquire the same success. Companies like China's Xiao have been accused of copying Apple in marketing and products. Apple products are always developed to give consumers a uniform experience and other companies are trying to have the same goal in the development of their products. It is easy to market a good product that guarantees all its consumers with positive experiences and that is the case for Apple products. Companies are now trying to copy the innovative brand which firmly enforces the needs of its consumers in every level of its production and marketing. Apple always puts the consumer's above all, above the selling of its products. Competing companies are always trying to copy these strategies and change their marketing and advertising (Singh, 2019).

Apple's advertising is based on simplicity. Apple learned early that the way to reach consumers is not through flashy advertisement but through simplifying their decision making process. Apple competitors and other companies are just now catching up and learning from Apple. Apple products essentially speak for themselves making and Apple's marketing teams know this. For this reason, the company keeps it's messaging and advertisement visuals simple. Other companies are now copying this strategy moving from detailing the features, prices or special effects of their products and instead telling the simple stories behind why they produce the products (Zhang, Liang & Wang, 2016).

Apple uses a powerful narrative in all of its marketing campaign. Steve Jobs rebranded Apple into a value based company that is consumer focused. Apple's primary focus is on enriching the lives of its customers, and this is marketed in everything they do. Apple advertisements always tell the story of a consumer-based product that will positively influence users, and many other companies have adopted this strategy. Companies including Nike and Beard Brand copied Apple's strategy and now use strong consumer-based narratives for advertising their products (Tsvetkova, Tukkel & Ablyazov, 2017).

Apple sells the emotions that are associated with Apple products, happiness, and contentment. They do not use jargon or explanations that could confuse prospective consumers. Companies realized how effective Apple marketing was because of this and now use the same simple to understand the language in their advertising as well. Apple also produces ads that show people having a happy and great time using their Apple products, which evokes the same feeling in consumers and drives up sales in Apple products (Chanda, 2017).

Apple's successful marketing strategy is not the sole source of Apple's great success. Apple controls many of the physical aspects of its environment. Apple gains some of its competitive advantage from imposing strict control of key elements. Apple controls the pricing of its products as it does not base on its prices on competitors. The company also controls how its products are displayed by retailers, especially its big-box retailers (Dave, 2018).

Apple strives to create a unique experience for its customers using branded stores. Apple strives to ensure that consumer experience is the best it can be in all its stores. Walking into an Apple store evokes feelings of warmth and loyalty as its products are well placed in the stores. Even when unboxing Apple products, consumers feel as though they are getting a present. The sum of this experiences ensures that consumers become loyal followers of the brand. The experience includes product repairs, one on one tutorials and in store workshops that provide Apple customers with an unparalleled shopping experience. This services increase the consumer satisfaction of Apple users as they are able to operate their new purchases. Apple offers this in store services in all of its stores to successfully dominate its physical environment (Zheng, Phelps & Pimentel, 2019).

A technique that Apple has perfected over the years is creating mystery and buzz around its products. Many companies have tried and failed to imitate this strategy. While most companies heavily market and give their customers knowledge of a product to get excited about the products, Apple goes in the opposite direction. Apple withholds information from its customers and only teases consumers with bits of information, thereby creating mystery. This approach leaves excited customers hungry for more details. Consumers scour the internet for all information about their new products then share the information they found on social media advertising the product for the company. Companies have tried without much success to emulate this strategy, but they have found little success with it (Tsvetkova, Tukkel & Ablyazov, 2017).

Apple also leverages its loyal consumer base by taking advantage of the reviews and testimonials that consumers use. Apple realizes that most of its consumers are elite shoppers who are devoted to the brand and use that devotion to grow the company. Apple users leave positive reviews and comments in all the online sites they buy from, and Apple uses these positive testimonials to boost its confidence with other consumers. The brand uses these reviews in its pages to foster trust in

any prospective customers it may have. Many companies leverage their consumer base, but because their consumer base is not as loyal as that of Apple, they have not been able to do so as successfully (Chanda, 2017).

The new digital and mobile environment that has led to people's consumption being through apps, videos, photography, and music has allowed Apple to rule the digital landscape. Apple uses the consumer information it collects from iTunes and other sources to update its products and software, allowing the company to lock in brand loyalty. Apple captures and holds its consumers in their physical environment through the strategic placement of their retail, mobile, and digital landscapes. The company's central focus is its obsession with consumer behavior and consumer experience (Singh, 2019). This obsession has led to consumer-based advertising that has led to the brand's success.

How Apple communicates with its consumers is also a major part of its success. Apple's communication fills its consumers with trust, confidence, and provides a shared belief for all people involved with the brand. The company inspires people to buy from the company. Its communication shows consumers how they go about making their beliefs a reality, and they also show the byproducts of those actions, the results that they achieved. The communication and transparency of the brand provides consumers with confidence that the products they buy will be of high quality. The brand established itself in the mind of consumers from the very beginning by creating a shared belief between the company and its consumers. This established loyalty and the favorable products and services it provides its consumers cemented Apple as a successful brand (Qiu, Vakratsas & Dall'Olio, 2019).

3.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, any organization wishing to be successful must be fully informed about the consumer behavior of its target consumers. The current business market demands that businesses be consumer-centered and always know their consumers and their needs. Companies need to research the behavior of their consumers and use that information as the basis of all of their marketing strategies. Apple is a company that uses consumer behavior to its advantage when marketing its products. The company is an excellent example of how to use research to develop successful marketing strategies and techniques successfully. The company successfully uses a narrative to influence the consumer behavior of its target audience. It successfully uses marketing narratives to engage and connect to the emotions of its consumers. Apple tells the story of why they produce the products that they do: to make their consumer's lives better, in their advertisements. They learn all they can learn about their consumers and how they make their decisions to develop an ad targeted to that consumer base. The company is driven by the needs of the consumers making its products even more natural to market.

Apple's advertising strategy has driven the company's revenue and growth across the world, leading to it being constantly imitated by companies seeking the same success. Though there are companies that have partly succeeded in imitating Apple and achieving some level of success using the company's marketing strategies, none has gotten to the same level as Apple. The brand's loyal following is a large part of this failure as some of Apple's strategies cannot succeed without its loyal consumer base. Other than its marketing strategy, the company's success is also as a result

of the company's massively loyal consumers, its use of simple language and explanation in its devices, the location of its stores and the in store experiences that Apple offers its consumers, the company's value based approach to all business operations and the great products that company continuously and unfailingly produces.

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