

The Making of a Superbrand

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When reading about the brands that are featured in this book, some of you may wonder how you can turn your current brand into a Superbrand.

A Superbrand cannot be made overnight. It can only be built over a long period of time. This requires a disciplined approach to the entire process so important.

Because it takes time to build, there has to be consistency. In order to be consistent, you have to be sure of what you are doing, and in order to be sure of that, you have to get to know the facts.

And you must have a solid process. Ideas are the core strength of an idea, but ideas alone will never come and go, but because they have well-defined processes, they are able to ensure consistency in execution – not just in one market, but in many markets throughout the world.

Brand Attributes

The starting point of building a Superbrand is to understand the brand's attributes or the brand's core strength. These consist of the brand benefit, relevance, positioning and architecture, which should all be developed on the basis of facts, strategic thinking and creative insights. This forms the core of the long-term strategy and is, therefore, fundamental to success. This then becomes the base upon which Superbrands

endor themselves to consumers. Ultimately success is defined as the ability of a brand to add value to the business. This requires an understanding of value creation through brands.

Adding Value to the Enterprise

Superbrands are able to add value to the business by creating a loyal and growing customer base. All of which would increase earnings, provide greater security of those earnings, going forward and create new revenue streams, thereby increasing the value of the enterprise.

If you believe that this intangible asset can generate greater value to the enterprise, then whether you are a bank or a biscuit brand, you would value your tangible assets from time to time. This ensures that they are working to create greater value over time. The responsibility for brand performance should also move from the marketing division to the boards of companies. The brand then becomes the central driver of business.

The success of companies such as Unilever and Procter&Gamble, which have many Superbrands, is a testament to the importance they have placed on their brands right through the organisation.

Value-based Marketing

By occupying this central place in an organisation, the brands are then used as the primary means of creating value for the

enterprise. This is done by fully understanding where value currently resides and where value is being destroyed. This can vary depending on the products or services, geographic region, and the target market.

Through this macro understanding, the CEO of the company would determine where business growth opportunities lie, which part of the business requires investment, where training needs to focus and how the business needs to be structured to satisfy customer demands.

The company would then move into the next level of detail, which is to understand the individual brands. This enables the brand manager to pull the relevant levers to influence the chain of events which would lead to increasing the value of the brand – and, therefore, of the enterprise.

This requires an understanding of the key perceptual attributes that drive purchasing intent, like the simple task of obtaining a middle phone call. This is a task that is completed number of factors that go into this decision-making process. However, the customer does not ponder on it for long as his or her perceptions – which are already in his or her mind – help make the purchasing decision in an instant.

If one were to dissect the decision-making process, it could read something like this: "The Google AdWords in terms of a network are better than the other networks. I know Dialog has good coverage and that Mobil has good pricing options. I am not sure what Celltel can offer. As I need to travel around, coverage is important to me. Therefore, I am going to trade-off price for coverage – and so Dialog it is. Now, what Dialog offers is a KIT card, so

that is what I am going to purchase."

Therefore, the marketing task for each of these brands would be quite different. In the case of Celltel, for example, the brand needs to consider what it needs to work out what it can do to be relevant when the purchasing decision is being made.

Various business and brand-related strategies would therefore emerge, based on this very basic analysis.

It is necessary, therefore, to understand the key drivers in this sector, what the competitors offers are and how they could influence the purchasing decision. What options your brand has in influencing those perceptions so as to create relevant behaviour – in making the purchasing decision in favour of your brand – requires to be fully understood if any headway is to be made.

Market research can track consumer perceptions and relate them to buying behaviour, thereby providing an indication as to what is driving the purchase decision. This enables a change in direction to be made promptly if required.

This process ensures that marketing actions are linked to brand equity – which, in turn, results in creating value for the enterprise. The process thus leads to quantifying value drivers, which results in identifying where investments should be made.

In this way, value-based marketing directs the business towards key areas of the business where maximum value can be created.

Setting up a Conductive Environment

The best brands in the world succeed because they have a highly rigorous standard operating

system within their respective companies. So employees may come and go, but because there is a system in place, a new-comer can quickly adopt by following the processes that are in place.

Processes that are developed are based on the nature of the industry that the brand is operating in, and it is fine-tuned on the basis of the company's experience. It is hard to duplicate such systems from one company to another.

In addition, the culture of the operating environment must be conducive to building brands. This requires long-term investment, consistency, focus and patience. It also requires room for creativity and innovation.

The influence of the CEO is therefore, key – in order to set the platform on which brands can be turned into Superbrands.

Creating a Holistic System

In developing your own Superbrand, a number of factors need to be taken into account. The brand must be developed in the central environment with the brand as the central focus of the business.

The challenge is for companies to adopt relevant operating procedures and to recruit people who excel in intellectually rigorous analyses, thereby creating strategies which are unconventional and bold.

The reconfigured model of Superbrand management requires an understanding of the business, the setting up of a value-based marketing system that leads to performance-based remuneration and, eventually, for individuals to progress through the company based on results.

This provides a holistic system for creating your own Superbrand.

