

Brand Positioning of Instant Noodle Companies

Problems and Solutions

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1. Brand positioning

Brand positioning is to specify the niche in which the brand defines itself as occupying in the competitive environment. The positioning is focused on target consumers and changes their awareness about the brand. Brand positioning should be proper to the brand reality, encouraging consumers and staff, different from competitors and surviving in 3 to 5 years.

When a new brand appears in the market, the consumer gets acquainted with it and starts collecting information about it. On the basis of this information the consumer creates an opinion of the brand and establishes a brand image. For a stable market position of a brand, consumer awareness of the new brand on the market is not sufficient. The consumer must prefer a brand and have a positive assessment of it as well as considering it in its purchasing decisions. The target position means deciding on the target image of a brand and how the consumers should compare it to other competitive brands.

If a brand is familiar to the consumer it does not mean that it is also

a possible alternative for the consumer's choices. To some (recognized) brands the consumer may have a negative reaction and therefore have no intention of using them. The consumer is also familiar with neutral brands, which are unimportant to him, or about which he does not have the sufficient information to consider purchasing them.

What do the results of brand positioning research show?

The market position of a brand shows where a specific brand is located. It also shows the relationship to competitive brands. We can determine the market position of a brand on the basis of the answer to the following four questions:

Why (which benefits and advantages does the new brand bring to the consumer)?

When (determining the opportunities for which the brand is most suitable)?

For whom (it is about the determination of the consumer of a brand or target group)?

Against whom (determining the main competitive brands)?

There are many brand positioning strategies and each one has

different weak and strong points:

Strategy based on feature and property: This strategy focuses on using the brand property to increase the consumer's awareness about the brand.

Strategy of product benefit: This positioning strategy is based on benefits to describe and answer benefits which consumers are concerned about.

Strategy of problem solution: This strategy defines solutions for problems which consumers do not and do want.

Strategy of competition: This strategy depends on the competitor's strategy to position the brand; it is also called the strategy of creativity.

Strategy based on target consumers: The company identifies target consumers to position the brand for them.

2. Brand positioning of instant noodles

Some companies position their brands by increasing consumers' feeling-based awareness with famous persons' commitments and supports, for example, the home feeling, friendliness, high class of Knorr brand (the family of singers Thu

Phuong and Huy MC) or the experience of excellent flavor, high trustworthiness of Unif brand (with presence of famous cook, Yan) or Thai Tom Yum noodle flavor of Vina-Ace cook brand through features of Thai culture and people.

Companies also position the brand with their pack designs to make difference in brand and high quality, for example, high-class silver pack (A-one), yellow pack (Knorr), glossy pack (Vua Bếp brand of Unif) or special large and luxurious pack (Roma brand, Hoàng Gia of Vifon Company).

Some companies have different properties in their brand positioning, for example, A-one means high quality, Vifon and Vina-acecook renovation and diverse flavor or Unif trustworthiness.... On the contrary, most of leading companies in the instant noodle industry including Miliket, Vo Hương, Colusa, and other businesses have not paid full attention to their brand building and said OK to their low and medium brand positioning. Their products and packs are not special. These trademarks have

created awareness to ordinary consumers, found it hard to be sold for high prices and produced low profits.

- The low brand positioning will cause troubles to businesses as follows:

+ Prices of all goods tend to rise due to recent hike in petroleum price so the selection of low prices is not stable and the pressure of increasing prices is very large.

+ The price of cheap goods will be hardly enhanced and these goods hardly enter the distribution system, this causes wastes in the long-term building of trademarks.

+ When the business wants to raise prices, it must adjust its brand strategy and spend more money.

3. Measures to position the brand

Domestic businesses are required to reposition their brand. This task is implemented on the basis of analyzing

the situation of consumers, competitors, and current trademarks. The brand positioning is carried out regularly by understanding consumers thoroughly. The company could apply the following strategies of brand positioning:

Improving product features and properties: Businesses should diversify the product ingredients, increase benefits such as vegetable, ground meat, spices...or use various materials including cereals, spiced rice flour, instant soup.

Increasing product benefits: In addition to delicious flavor, nutrition, more vegetable...the business should pump more benefits into the product, for example, inserting more vitamin A, D, E...calcium, or necessary minerals. These benefits must be advertised to consumers through marketing or highlight signs on packs.

Positioning based on competition: The busi-

ness chooses some products which are sold like hot cakes for low, medium, and high prices to learn their segments.

Through comparison, it will understand its limitations in ingredients concerning the product quality. It will therefore focus on seeking the formula to churn out better products. Its tests are implemented inside and outside the company to assess new products and competitor's ones in physical features and price acceptability. Based on consumers' evaluation, acceptable and competitive prices, the company will rectify and building its brand positioning effectively.

Combining with other methods: the change in brand positioning also depends on combination of concurrent methods such as trademark designing, trademark building, marketing...

If brand positioning is implemented only by improving product fea-

ture without supportive tools, it will hardly change consumers' awareness of brand positioning.

The business should choose the kind of packs, ordinary or luxury, independent name or support name from the mother company's brand in accordance with item category and product quality (attached with the mother company's brand and small or big logo).

A wise marketing strategy will help promote consumers' awareness of product benefits and thus enhance brand positioning. When designing and launching marketing campaigns, if getting famous persons support the brand, they must be suitable for product quality and target consumers. In the long run, product characteristics are still surviving factors to maintain brand positioning at high level. ■

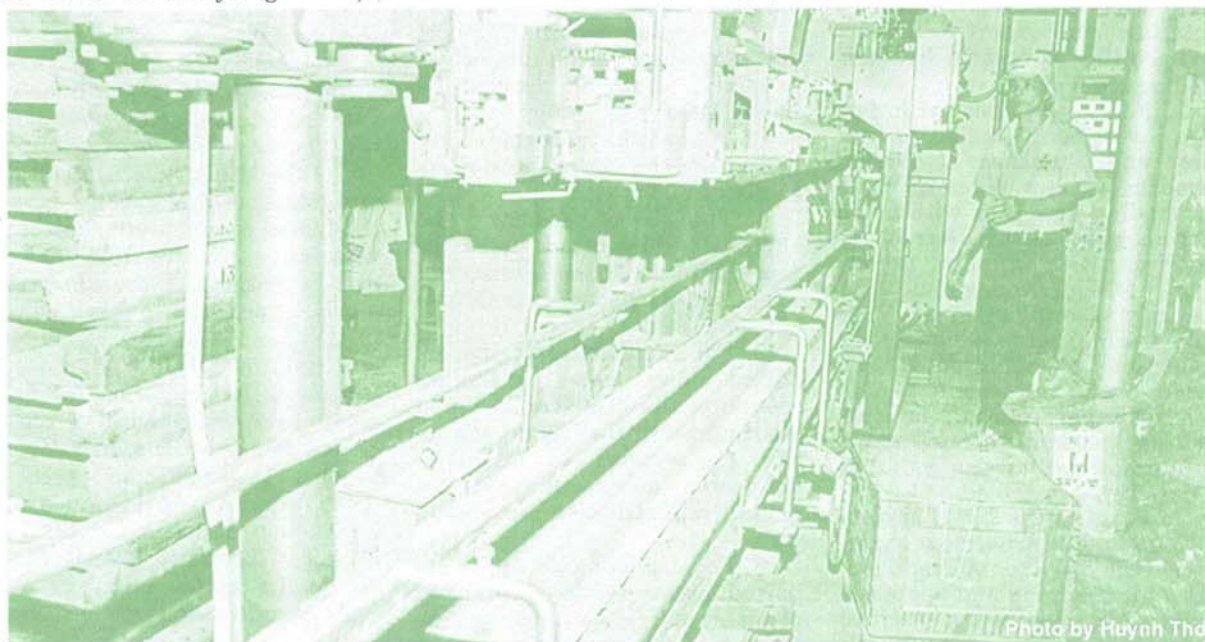


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