A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR BRAND AWARENESS

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ABSTRACT

The study tries to understand Brand awareness through the works of different authors. Brand awareness was studied using the associative memory model and the different sources of brand awareness as presented by authors, a model of brand awareness measurement was formed further to form the model for Brand association and perceived quality was created and then finally integrated.
INTRODUCTION

Brand awareness is a marketing concept that enables marketers to quantify levels and trends in consumer knowledge and awareness of a brand's existence. At the aggregate (brand) level, it refers to the proportion of consumers who know of the brand. (AMA)

The major sources of awareness are television advertisements, friends and relatives and sign boards. Magazines are important information source for high income group people. Senthil Kumar (2011)

Specifically, awareness is "the percentage of potential customers or consumers who recognize—or name—a given brand. Marketers may research brand recognition on an 'aided' or 'prompted' level, posing such questions as, 'Have you heard of Maggi?' Alternatively, they may measure 'unaided' or 'unprompted' awareness, posing such questions as, 'Which types of noodles come to mind?" This is referred to as top of mind awareness - when only the first brand recalled is recorded (also known as spontaneous brand recall).

As per the associative network memory model brand awareness is related to the strength of the brand node or trace in memory.
Clark Draganska (2009) found that advertising has consistently a significant positive effect on brand awareness.

Brand Awareness has depth and breath, its depth describe the likelihood that consumer can recognize or recall the brand whereas breath describe the variety of purchase and consumption situation in which brand comes to mind (Keller).

**Brand awareness involves a continuum ranging from an uncertain feeling that the brand is recognised to a belief that it is the only one in the product category.** (Aaker 1991)

**BRAND AWARENESS IMPORTANCE**

A brand that has some level of brand awareness is far more likely to be considered, and therefore chosen, than brands which the consumer is unaware of. Wilson (1981) confirmed the importance of top-of-mind awareness in a study which found that the higher the position of the brand in the consumer's mind measured by unaided recall, the higher the purchase intention and the higher the relative purchase of the brand. Brand awareness can add value by

1. Placing the brand in the consumer's mind,
2. Acting as a barrier to entry to new un-established brands (Stokes 1985),
3. Reassuring the customer of the organisation's commitment and product quality, and
4. Providing leverage in the distribution channels (intermediaries are customers too, and are just as suspicious as consumers are of unknown products) (Aaker 1992).
5. Learning Advantage (Keller)

6. Consideration Advantage Brand awareness can also affect decisions about brands within the consideration set (Hoyer & Brown 1990; Keller 1993).

7. Consumers may employ a heuristic (decision rule) to buy only familiar, well-established brands (Roselius 1971).

Consumers do not always spend a great deal of time making purchase decisions. In a study of pre-purchase search for laundry powder, Hoyer (1984) found that the median number of packages examined in-store was 1.2 before a selection was made. Dickson and Sawyer (1986) found that for purchases such as coffee, toothpaste and margarine, the consumer took an average 12 seconds from the time of first looking at the shelf to the time they placed the item in their trolley. In many cases consumers try to minimise the costs of decision making in terms of time spent, and cognitive effort, by employing simple rules of thumb, such as 'buy the brand I've heard of'. This is particularly likely to occur in low involvement situations where a minimum level of brand awareness may be sufficient for choice (Hoyer & Brown 1990).

**Brand awareness enhances perceived quality.** A further way brand awareness may affect choice within the consideration set is by influencing perceived quality.

A consumer may rationalise that if they have heard of a brand, the company must be spending a fair sum on advertising. If it is spending a lot on advertising, then the company must be reasonably profitable which means that other consumers must be buying the product and they must be satisfied enough with its performance; therefore the product must be of reasonable quality. *Stokes (1985) found that for a low involvement product (rice) familiarity had a greater magnitude of effect on the quality perception of a brand than either price or packaging.* And further, that familiarity had a significant effect on purchase intention whereas price and package design did not.
Rossiter and Percy (1987) describe brand awareness as being essential for the communications process to occur as it precedes all other steps in the process. Without brand awareness occurring, no other communication effects can occur. For a consumer to buy a brand they must first be made aware of it.

In memory theory, brand awareness is positioned as a vital first step in building the “bundle of associations which are attached to the brand in memory (Stokes 1985). The brand is conceptualised as a node in memory which allows other information about the brand to be “anchored” to it (Aaker 1991). The conceptualisation of a network of brand associations in memory with the brand as a central core has been put forward by many others (Keller 1993; Holden 1993; Holden & Lutz 1992).

BRAND AWARENESS MODELS

Awareness formation models describe the growth and decay of a brand’s awareness over time in response to advertising efforts. Blattberg and Golanty (1978) develop a model called TRACKER, where change in brand awareness is driven by advertising effort that influences the unaware segment of the market.

Dodson and Muller (1978) extend the TRACKER specification by incorporating word-of-mouth and forgetting effects.

ASSOCIATIVE NETWORKS

Associative network models (Anderson, 1984, 1985; Anderson & Bower, 1973) postulate that memory consists of a system of nodes that are linked to other nodes via pathways at
different degrees of association. Strength of association is indexed by the probability that nodes activate one another during mental processes, such as during the retrieval of information. In retrieval, a node is activated and activation spreads randomly through the network, exciting those nodes that are most strongly associated with the activated node. Moreover, because activation spreads randomly through the network, the probability of excitation of a node also increases with the number of relations that it forms with other nodes (Anderson & Reder, 1979).

Nodes are more closely associated if the information represented in them is in some way related. As mentioned earlier, research on interactive imagery has shown that people remember brand names better if there is a relationship between the brand name and the visual information in the ad than if the brand name and the picture are unrelated (Lutz & Lutz, 1977). Edell and Staelin (1983) demonstrated that both the brand name and other information in the ad were better remembered when advertisements contained framed pictures, in which the verbal message related the picture to the brand, as opposed to unframed pictures, in which the picture, copy, and brand name were unrelated. Finally, relations among ad elements are likely to be established partly in an automatic fashion and partly in a constructive way.

The ad memory trace consists of stored ad effects, i.e., what the consumer learned, felt, heard, or saw during ad exposure. Thus, the purpose of these cues is to assist consumers' retrieval of elements of the ad memory trace that, if positive, should result in more favourable brand evaluations and an increased likelihood of purchase.
PROPOSED MODEL FOR BRAND AWARENESS

VARIABLES USED

Promotions – communicating with the public in an attempt to influence them toward buying your products and/or services.

Advertising - The activity or profession of producing advertisements for commercial products or services.

Point of sale - The place at which goods are retailed: "refunds will be provided at the point of sale".

Word of mouth - Non formal communication about the product

Forgetting rate - time delay in which the memory of a product fades away.

The existing literature emphasize on advertising and other forms of promotions as a factors to maintain and enhance brand awareness therefore we club them into promotions which is a controllable factor of the firm, other uncontrollable factor viz. word of mouth is also included. Both of them have a positive effect on brand awareness but forgetting rate has a negative relation to brand awareness.
Considering the associative memory theory we conceptualize brand awareness to have stages and at each stage has brand associations.

The states of awareness at three different times viz. t0, t1 and t2 have been explained in the model. t1 being the normal stage shows that with no promotions brand awareness goes back to t0 stage aided by the forgetting rate whereas with the application of promotional strategies the awareness reaches to t2 stage.

The size of the figure at each stage represents the level of awareness at each stage which increases with the application of promotion and decreases due to forgetting rate.

The protruding at each stage represents the brand associations at each stage which increases with awareness and vice versa. The size of the figure at each stage represents the level of awareness at each stage which increases with the application of promotion and decreases due to forgetting rate. The uncontrollable factors which have positive effect are the word of mouth, experience and information search by the customer.
INFERENGE

The awareness at any level can be explained by the following equations

BRAND Awareness = FUNC (Advertising, Wom, Forgetting Rate) ------ (1)

Equation 1 states that brand awareness at time t is the function of advertising, word of mouth and forgetting rate

BRAND AWARENESS = ALPHA (ADVERTISING) + BETA (WOM) – GAMMA (FORGETING RATE) + KAPPA

WHERE ALPHA, BETA, KAPPA AND GAMMA ARE CONSTANTS

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Understanding of promotional expenditures as a constructive and forgetting effect as a destructive force for brand awareness
2. Brand awareness sources viz advertising, tradeshows etc.
3. Management of uncontrollable factors like WOM, info search etc
4. A functional relation between brand awareness its sources and moderators

REFERENCES


