Cause Related Marketing – A Way to Brand Image

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Abstract:
Marketing Communication is the best way to brand’s success, if not properly done it will destroy the reputation and image of the brand. Nowadays people are not only concerned about the price and quality of the product but are more conscious about their health and surroundings. Older ways of marketing strategies do not create a positive impact in the minds of the customers. Cause Related Marketing (CRM) is a method followed by brands which create customers a positive emotional attachment with the brands. The study was conducted in Kerala to know the relationship between CRM and Brand Image, mainly focusing on customers of FMCG products. It was found that CRM communicated through marketing Medias creates a good brand Image among the customers, which will directly increase the profitability of the company.

Key Words: Cause Related Marketing, Brand Image.

I. INTRODUCTION
Marketing communication is the best way to create value for customers and build customer relationship. Brands try to establish a differentiated presence in the minds of the customers. Old methods of advertising are not creating a direct impact on the customers mind so brands are trying to input their advertisement with some emotional connections. Today companies want the brands which have social responsibility towards the community and world at large. Cause Related Marketing (CRM) is the best way adopted by brands to increase the Brand Image which increases the trust among customers. It is sure that customers will be happy when their brands are taking care of the world. CRM is a win-win strategy for both companies and the customers. CRM is a type of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity in which the company’s marketing activities will have two aspects like generating profit and bettering society. Varadarajan and Menon (1988) define cause related marketing as: “the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives.” Proper Marketing communication through CRM is the best way to Brand Image. Brand Image is how the consumers perceive the brand (Aaker 1996). A strong Brand Image directly creates an impact on the consumer behaviour which increases the profitability and reputation of the company. CRM was coined from American Express card in 1983 and developed many CSR programmes. They supported the statue of liberty project, People brought American Express card which explained that from each use of card, donation was made for the statue of liberty project fund. There was a huge support from customers on this.

Some examples of companies who followed the CRM strategy:
1. KFC: KFC’S plate of hope was an initiative which was started in the year 2016. Those who order food from KFC through online will help to feed one hungry person across the country.
2. Classmate Notebook: A brand of ITC, by the purchase of book an amount is contributed to the primary education of children in rural area.
3. Tata Tea: Jaggo Re campaign has waked up the entire nation to participate in the functioning of country’s politics by voting.
4. Procter & Gamble: SHIKSHA’08 which gave brand choices to customers by saying that you can now help to educate more Underprivileged children.

Significance of the study
This survey made an endeavour to study how the company’s CRM is leading to Brand Image. The study is beneficial to the FMCG companies because they know how well CRM is helping the brands in creating Brand Image among customers.

Statement of the Problem
This study examines how the CRM helped in creating Brand Image among the customers. From the literature it was found that no studies have been conducted regarding CRM and Brand Image with regard to customers of Kerala.

Scope of the study
The study was conducted among the customers of Kerala who uses FMCG and who have knowledge about CRM.

Objectives of the study
The objective of the study is:
1. To study how the brand’s CRM activities, affect the Brand Image of the company.
2. To study the most preferred CRM activity by the customers.

Hypothesis
The Hypothesis framed for the study is given below:
Ho: There is no significant relationship between CRM and Brand Image.

Variable List
The variables used for the study are CRM and Brand Image.
Here the brands use different CRM activities to promote their brands. The study helps to know whether the CRM when taken as a marketing tool helps to create Brand Image.

**Research Methodology**

The work is descriptive in nature and Convenience sampling method were used for the study. Both primary and secondary data were used to collect the. Secondary data were collected from annual reports, magazines, journals, books etc. Primary Data were collected through structured questionnaire. Reliability and CFA has been checked to test the validation of questionnaire. The data were collected from the customers of Kerala who uses FMCG products. Population comprises all the customers of Kerala which is infinite. A sample of 85 customers were taken through power analysis and the data were collected using online questionnaire.

**II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Varandaranjan & Menon (1988)** mentioned that CRM has gained increased profit and has involved in corporate philanthropy.

**Adkins (2003)** specified that CRM is a marketing driven activity for receiving the return on investment to achieve the objectives of the company.

**Gobe, (2001)** believes that the emotional aspect of brands is what makes a key difference for consumers. Author argues that people calls the brands that are able to create an emotional bond with their clients, because emotional bond share a set of common values.

**Pringle and Thompson (1999)** declared that CRM is a marketing tool that collaborate company with a cause for the benefit of both. This is done through a charity or by directly addressing the cause.

**Till and Nowak (2000)** perceived that CRM is both strategic and tactical. In a tactical approach a brand holds a cause for a restricted period of time but in the strategic approach CRM is the core of brand positioning.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The data analysis has been conducted in two phases. First phase examined reliability and second phase tested the hypothesis and model.

**Reliability**

An alpha value of 0.70 or above is considered to be having strong internal consistency. The following Table gives the Cronbach’s alpha for the variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>0.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Image</td>
<td>0.802</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 1 shows that the variables listed have reliability greater than 0.7 so the study can be proceeded with analysis.

**CRM and Brand Image with regard to CRM**

The objective of the study is to find out the relationship between CRM and Brand Image. To know whether CRM has a positive influence on the Brand Image of the company the following hypothesis were formulated.

Ho: There is no significant positive relationship between CRM and Brand Image.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Lower bound</th>
<th>Upper bound</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRM and Brand Image</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>0.937</td>
<td>0.953</td>
<td>26.067</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the correlation between CRM and Brand Image has value (0.945) more than 0.5; it indicates that there exists a significant positive relationship between CRM and Brand Image.

Thus, the study rejects the hypothesizes Ho. It explains that when CRM is included in a brands marketing strategy customer have a positive relationship with the brand which increases its brand Image.

**Most Preferred CRM activity by Customers.**

Most preferred brands coming under CSR purview are found out by using Standard deviation and mean which are converted into ranks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education for poor</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Welfare</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Empowerment</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results show that majority of the customers prefer disaster welfare (32.3) as CRM, it mainly includes helping the victims of flood or any other disaster. Then secondly customers expect the companies to educate poor (18.0) with the CRM activities. Third preference is given to the environmental protection activities (16.0), fourth one is given to the community development activities (11.6), fifth rank is given to the Women Empowerment (10.8), Sixth rank to sports (7.3) and finally seventh leads to other activities (4.0).

III. FINDINGS

1. The result revealed that correlation between CRM and Brand Image has a value of 0.945 which is more than 0.5 resulting that there is a significant positive relationship between CRM and Brand Image. It indicates that when a brand is involved in CRM activities it creates a positive brand Image in the minds of customers
2. It is observed that customers are interested in the CRM activities conducted by the brands. While looking at their preference level of CRM activities it indicates that customers first prefer disaster welfare, secondly, they prefer education of poor. Third one is given to the environmental protection activities, fourth one to the community development activities, fifth rank is given to the Women Empowerment, Sixth rank to sports and finally seventh to other activities.

IV. SUGGESTIONS

From the result it was found that CRM activities are creating a good Brand Image among the customers, the following are some suggestions to improve this.

1. Marketers should stop the older methods of marketing and should focus on Cause Related Marketing because it creates an emotional connection with customers which is a win-win strategy for both brands and customers.
2. The brands can use tagline for CRM which will attract the customers.
3. Brands should be aware of their competitors CRM activities and make a difference in the marketing strategy.
4. Even though the preference level in the women empowerment is less, Brands should focus on women empowerment in an innovative way. Brands can motivate the women entrepreneurship and also the support the education of women the rural areas.
5. Sports activities are coming in the forefront of the world but still customers are not preferring this. The brands can encourage the sports by sponsoring someone in an international event or can also encourage any Indian team to play in an international level which will create a brand Image among the customers.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Marketing communication with some emotional connection is an effective tool to attract customers. CRM is a strategy used by the brands as a marketing tool which will create a win-win situation to both the companies and customers. From the study it is revealed that the customers of Kerala have a positive attitude towards CRM activities. CRM when communicated through different medias creates a positive influence in the brand Image of the brands. In recent years there were issues due to climate change like flood, earthquake, virus attack etc. So, the customers are now preferring Disaster welfare to be well equipped with the CRM activities.

V. REFERENCES