



**BRANDING AND MEDIA MARKETING: A STRATEGIC TOOL INFLUENCING
MODERN CONSUMER CONSCIOUSNESS**

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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the processes of branding and media marketing, which constitute the most crucial components of modern marketing strategies. Through the experiences of major companies such as Starbucks, Sunkist, Coca-Cola, Apple, Harley Davidson, Virgin, and others, the article demonstrates that a brand holds not only economic value but also significant psychological, social, and emotional positions in the consumer's mind. The formation of a brand, the role of advertising and public relations tools, brand loyalty, the consumer's gains in terms of time and trust, as well as the brand's impact on social responsibility, are all discussed. Furthermore, the article emphasizes that to create a strong brand, all processes—from the internal environment of the company to external communications—must be carried out in harmony. A brand is not merely a product; it is a trust contract established with the consumer.

KEYWORDS: Brand, media marketing, consumer behavior, brand identification, advertising strategy, emotional marketing, loyalty, marketing communications, brand extension, corporate reputation.

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly competitive global market, the success of companies depends not only on product quality and pricing policies but also directly on their ability to create a valuable, trustworthy, and sustainable brand image in the minds of consumers. Today, customers do not simply purchase products; they buy values, experiences, emotions, and reputations. From this perspective, media marketing emerges as one of the most powerful tools for brand creation and for delivering it effectively to the audience.

The rapid development of information technologies, the expansion of digital platforms, and the role of social networks and mass media in our lives have fundamentally influenced the form and content of marketing communications. In particular, shaping a brand in the audience's mind as a "preferred" and "unique choice" through media has become a central element of modern marketing strategies. Therefore, media marketing — a system of creating a positive image of products or services through mass media, advertising, public relations, and digital platforms — has become an indispensable necessity for contemporary companies.

Research shows that strong brands not only generate higher sales but also offer emotional closeness to customers. For example, brands like Harley Davidson or Apple have become a part of their customers' lifestyles, harmonizing with their personal identities. Achieving such a high level of loyalty and emotional connection is accomplished not only through product quality but also through distinctive brand communication and media marketing approaches.

The relevance of this article lies in the fact that in today's digital media environment, companies

strive not only for advertising but also to establish multi-channel and emotionally rich communication with consumers. Therefore, the strategy of building brand value and securing a positive position in consumer consciousness through media marketing signifies not only commercial profit but also social responsibility, trust, and ongoing relationships.

This article deeply analyzes the role of media marketing in brand strategy, its mechanisms of influence on the audience, and the results demonstrated by real companies. In particular, the success factors of major brands such as Sunkist, Starbucks, Coca-Cola, Virgin, and Unilever reveal the extensive and complex nature of media marketing processes.

The aim of the article is to uncover the role and strategic importance of media marketing in enhancing brand value, gaining audience trust, and fostering long-term loyalty. The study addresses the following scientific questions:

- How is a brand formed through media marketing tools?
- How do media communications influence consumer decisions?
- How is emotional brand loyalty developed, and what tools are used in this process?

Thus, the article not only explores theoretical approaches but also analyzes practical examples, advanced company strategies, and the interaction mechanisms between brands and mass consciousness. This provides a foundation for drawing scientifically and practically valuable conclusions.

MAIN

PART

The Impact of Media Marketing on the Audience

Russell Xenlin, head of Sunkist Growers, once said: “An orange is just an orange. Unless it instantly becomes a Sunkist orange — a brand recognized and trusted by 80% of consumers — it remains simply an ordinary orange.” The same can be said about Starbucks. There is ordinary coffee, and then there is Starbucks coffee. Is the brand important? Roberto Goizueta, the late CEO of Coca-Cola, famously stated: “All our factories and plants could burn to ashes tomorrow, but that would not diminish the value of our company by a single bit. That value is defined by our brand reputation and our collective knowledge.” Similarly, Johnson mentioned in the company’s advertising brochure: “Our company name and trademark are more valuable than all our assets and constitute the core of what we own.”

Creating a brand demands great effort from the company. David Ogilvy once remarked: “Any fool can make a deal, but building a brand requires talent, trust, and persistence.”

The hallmark of a truly good brand is that consumers prefer it. Harley Davidson is a remarkable brand because its motorcyclists remain loyal and never switch to other brands. Likewise, Apple Macintosh users rarely replace their favorite brand with Microsoft, no matter what happens.

Brand fame brings additional revenue. A certain author emphasized, “The goal of branding is to earn more than the intrinsic value of the product.” However, this view is rather narrow. In reality, a brand provides its owner with many other important benefits. Based on a trademark, consumers determine the expected quality of the product and its other characteristics, including the services they can expect — and accordingly, they are willing to pay a bit more for them.

A product brand saves people’s time, and time is money. Nil Fitzgerald, head of Unilever, said: “A brand is a repository of trust that grows in importance as choices expand. People want to simplify their lives.” A brand is essentially a contract between the consumer and the brand’s obligations. Such a contract must be honest. For example, Motel 6’s brand promises clean rooms,

low prices, and good service — but not fancy furniture or large bathrooms.

How is a brand created? It is mistaken to think it is only the work of advertising. Advertising draws attention to the brand, increases interest, and sparks conversations about it. The building of a brand is a complex process involving advertising, public relations (PR), sponsorships, marketing events, charity activities, clubs, media appearances, and many other tools.

Effective yet complex — it is not just about running advertisements, but about attracting the attention of mass media to your brand. Journalists never ignore interesting products and services like Palm, Viagra, or Starbucks. With a new brand, it is necessary to link it to a new category, attractive words, and a bright, interesting origin story. If this story is supported by the press and television, people who learn about it will share it with their acquaintances, and they will start trusting the brand more than if they only heard about it through advertising. Research shows that advertising generates interest but cannot influence consumers as strongly as a neutral source's opinion.

In such cases, assigning a new name to a product is often far more strategic than leveraging the name of an established company, regardless of the brand equity that company may possess. This is because a company's name is generally associated with existing, familiar products rather than with innovation or novelty. Some corporations clearly understand this principle. For instance, Toyota did not name its luxury vehicle the "Toyota Upscale" but instead launched it under the brand name Lexus. Likewise, Apple's next-generation computer was not introduced as the Apple-IV, but rather as the Macintosh. Levi's released its new line of trousers under the Dockers brand, not as Levi's Cotton. Sony named its gaming console "PlayStation," avoiding a generic label like "Sony VideoGame." Similarly, Black & Decker marketed its advanced power tools under the DeWalt brand, rather than using a name such as Black & Decker Plus.

The emergence of a new brand often becomes a subject of media interest and public conversation. A new brand requires trust, and in the process of building that trust, information and promotional campaigns—rather than conventional advertising—play a critical role.

Of course, every rule has its exceptions. For instance, Richard Branson extended the "Virgin" brand across numerous industries, including Virgin Atlantic Airways (airline), Virgin Holidays (tour operator), Virgin Limited Edition (luxury hotel group), Virgin Trains (rail service), Virgin Limousines (chauffeur-driven car rentals), Virgin Radio (broadcasting), Virgin Books (publishing and book retail), and Virgin Drinks (covering Virgin Cola and Virgin Vodka). Ralph Lauren's name can be found not only on a wide array of apparel, but also on home furnishings and household items. In such cases, companies must seriously consider the risk of brand dilution and ask whether the brand's core meaning is at risk of erosion.

According to marketing strategists Al Ries and Jack Trout, expanding product lines and brands often has detrimental consequences, as it dilutes the brand identity and diminishes its visibility. In their view, the name "Coca-Cola" should apply exclusively to the iconic soft drink packaged in its original 8-ounce bottle. Today, if someone orders a Coke, they are prompted to clarify—do they mean Classic, Vanilla, Cherry, bottled or canned? In other words, a once-specific brand name now encompasses a significantly broad range of products.

Price positioning must also be handled with strategic care. When Lexus entered the American market as a competitor to Mercedes-Benz, the latter did not even consider lowering its prices. On the contrary, some executives suggested raising the prices further to reinforce the premium image that Lexus, at the time, could not match.

However, brand premiums have shown a tendency to decline over time. Whereas in the past it was common to confidently set prices 15–40% higher for a leading or premium brand compared

to average products, today this difference has narrowed significantly to around 5–15%. Previously, when product quality was more variable, consumers were willing to pay more for a well-established brand. Nowadays, however, most brands—including private labels owned by retailers—are generally perceived as acceptable in quality, likely due to strict national standards that manufacturers are required to meet.

This shift raises the question: is it still necessary to pay a premium simply to impress others? (Luxury brands with strong status signals, such as Mercedes, may be an exception to this trend.)

During periods of economic downturn, consumer loyalty to favored brands often gives way to cost-saving behavior. When customer loyalty is observed, it is often driven by inertia or by the absence of more attractive alternatives. As one expert succinctly put it, “A twenty percent discount cures all ills.”

The fate of corporate brands lies largely in the hands of brand managers. However, branding specialist Larry Light argues that many of them are failing in their responsibilities. According to Light, “There is no necessity for brands to die. But they can be killed. Marketing vampires have drained their lifeblood. Brands are traded, discounted, compromised, and ultimately destroyed. Instead of managing a brand as a valuable asset, we focus excessively on price and deal-making, inflicting wounds that often result in brand self-destruction.”

In some cases, the systems designed to manage brands may even conflict with the practices required for effective customer engagement. Brand managers may become so focused on the brand itself—neglecting the consumer entirely—that they fail to implement communication strategies that deliver positive experiences. Instead, they should develop comprehensive brand-building plans that ensure consistent and engaging interactions with customers across various touchpoints, including email, digital platforms, and personal communication.

- Companies must identify the core essence embodied by their brand in every sale. Diversity is permitted only insofar as it does not contradict this fundamental essence and maintains brand recognizability.
- Understanding the value of a developed brand should form the foundation of a company’s strategy, daily operations, service provision, and new product development.
- In evaluating the effectiveness of brand building, companies should move beyond outdated metrics such as awareness, recognition, and feedback. Instead, they must adopt a broader set of indicators, including perceived value, customer satisfaction, share of income spent on the brand, customer loyalty, and endorsement.

Today, media has become an integral part of societal life. Every day, billions of people watch television, use the internet, read newspapers, and listen to the radio. These sources of information have evolved into powerful tools for influencing human psychology. The impact of media on the human psyche is multifaceted, manifesting in a wide range of domains—from information dissemination to shaping social behavior.

Through media, individuals become informed on a variety of topics. News reports, scientific articles, and diverse content contribute to broadening people’s worldview, thereby assisting them in making informed decisions in their daily lives. For example, information related to healthcare, financial management, or environmental protection encourages individuals to act consciously. Educational content provided by media enhances knowledge and skills, thereby facilitating both personal and professional development.

Moreover, media plays a critical role in shaping social relationships and behavior. Role models and narratives depicted in films, television series, and social media influence how individuals perceive themselves and others, contributing to the formation of social norms and values. For instance, positive role models portrayed in the media can guide youth toward constructive behavior. Additionally, media coverage of various societal issues motivates individuals to engage in civic and social activism.

Through advertising and marketing campaigns, media increases the visibility and recognition of brands and products. Targeted advertising campaigns help attract consumers to specific goods or services. Media marketing contributes to embedding brands in the minds of individuals, which in turn influences their purchasing decisions. In this process, emotional and cognitive persuasion tools are employed, including visual imagery, storytelling, and brand awareness campaigns.

Media also plays a significant role in highlighting social issues. Problems existing within society—such as gender inequality, racism, environmental pollution, and others—are brought to public attention through media platforms. It is essential to engage the public and attract their attention in order to address these issues. Media raises awareness and encourages individuals to participate actively in the problem-solving process.

Furthermore, media serves as an important instrument in promoting intercultural exchange. The unique characteristics, arts, customs, and values of various countries and cultures are conveyed to the masses through media. This accelerates globalization and fosters mutual understanding between different cultures. Media also provides opportunities to challenge cultural stereotypes and correct misconceptions.

Media exerts a profound influence on political processes as well. By increasing political awareness, it enhances civic responsibility among citizens. Election campaigns, political debates, and various political news items are extensively covered in the media, shaping public opinion and political engagement. Additionally, media contributes to societal transformation by covering and amplifying social movements.

Media also plays a vital role in supporting individuals' psychological well-being. By providing information about mental health and raising awareness about available support services, media can contribute to enhancing emotional resilience and mental wellness. Moreover, open discussions about mental health in media platforms help reduce stigma and correct widespread misconceptions.

The impact of media on human psychology is evident across all spheres of society. Media exerts influence through information dissemination, shaping social relationships and behaviors, increasing brand and product recognition, addressing social issues, promoting cultural exchange, enhancing political awareness, and reinforcing psychological health. As such, the ability of media to drive positive cognitive and behavioral changes significantly contributes to the overall development of society.

Media marketing holds substantial importance and influence for brands. The most renowned global brands extensively leverage media marketing to reach and engage with their audiences across various regions of the world. These brands implement comprehensive media marketing strategies to foster engagement and maintain strong relationships with their target audiences.

Conclusion

As outlined in this article, branding and media marketing have become integral components of contemporary business and marketing strategies. In the context of increasing global competition, the success of companies depends not only on the quality of their products or services, but also on the creation of a strong, trustworthy, and emotionally resonant brand in the minds of

consumers. A brand is not merely a product or service—it is a contract of trust between the company and the consumer, through which the company conveys its values, social responsibility, and respect for its customers.

The article analyzed the branding strategies of large and successful companies, revealing that a brand carries not only economic significance but also psychological and sociocultural value. Brands such as Starbucks, Coca-Cola, and Apple evoke high levels of loyalty by connecting with consumers not just as products, but as part of their lifestyle, emotional experience, and personal identity. This connection is largely achieved through media marketing and brand communication.

Brand development is a complex and long-term process that requires the coordinated use of advertising, public relations, social media, sponsorships, charitable initiatives, and many other tools. The primary goal of media marketing is to shape a positive perception of the brand, attract consumer attention, and influence their behavior. At the same time, a strong brand helps consumers save time, simplifies decision-making, and guarantees a certain level of quality and service.

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