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Application of consumer concept in the Apple Company

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Abstract

For any firm today in the constantly changing and extremely complex market conditions one of the sure strategies is to find (much more important to create) a concept that will be clearly different from anything else already existing and compelling so competition is no longer relevant. It might give a company a chance to attract the always-busy customers' attention and take a place in his mind with a continuous flow of information going through. The adoption by a business of various forms of customer concept related marketing objectives and philosophies helps them better serve their clients and typically increases their overall reputation and success. Consumer concept focuses on satisfying client needs over those of the business that produces the goods and services they consume.

Keywords: Consumer concept, customization, post-modern values, Apple brand

1. Introduction

What are the values and goals of Apple products? How is the concept of consumer represented in the Apple brand? How are the post-modern values represented in the designs of the Apple products? This paper reveals information about these important aspects.

2. The values and goals

If someone develops a strategy he still has not less challenging task to implement it correctly. What does correctly mean? Probably nowadays it is all about effective marketing/branding and creating a unique product which competitors find hard to copy or react. [8] Consumers have always been an Apple's marketing cornerstone. It all started as creating a Macintosh as a personal computer for ordinary people. Turning to people's emotions they found out an unmet users need of avoiding frustration from using a computer, showed that it can be used not only for doing business and work but also for fun. Apple basic concept initially was bringing technologies into personal life and empowering their customers with them. Technology is supposed to serve people, make their life easier and bring something fresh into everyday routine. Seems like Apple is the most successful representative and probably a pioneer of customized products market and

consumer concept application with reflecting its customers and same time shaping them with Apple vision.

After Macintosh more successful products followed. iPod was presented as colorful, nice-looking, young, joyful and “digital music revolution” gadget. All the Apple software is unique, innovative, designed to make customers’ interaction with technology easier. The key advantage of the Apple software is high customization. Ecosystem (IOS) is what makes customization work. It gives freedom to their customers. There is IOS which provides some basic functions for users with applications having been installed as a camera or calculator. But you are not limited within it; there are iServices such as iTunes with the use of which users are able to make their devices “special”. One more advantage of the Apple software is high interconnection between all the devices. You can easily share files and all the information within all the Apple devices in your network.

3. The concept of consumer

They went far beyond with customizing in Apple Mac advertising with Justin Long: in series of commercials Mac is becoming personified. “Mac guy” is an Apple product which IS its core customer at the same time. So this was an answer to two questions simultaneously: what will an Apple product be like if it becomes a person and what is a typical Apple user like (or wants to be like)? Let’s describe this guy. He is obviously masculine, good and simple looking, very friendly and easy going, neat, creative, technology lover, into last trends, urban citizen, probably freelancer, typical Y generation representative. There is no better way to customize a product than making it alike its potential user, because people are egocentric and we do not know anyone better than ourselves. Each Apple product’s name starts with “I”.

An essential part of Apple vision and use of a consumer concept is Apple Experience Centers where people can come and “feel” the product (all about emotions again). Now customers have an opportunity to see its design, look how it works in practice, test the functions, and ask for help. Today there are also Apple shops where people can use free WiFi computers, listen to music, meet friends, have a cup of coffee. Apple is a part of their customers’ iLife. This incredible innovation in customer service is part of the brand and Apple culture in general.

Apple is the company which managed to turn high customer value products into a mass production. But what adds a value to Apple products? Extraordinary strong culture and brand values are standing behind Apple’s success. Design and innovation, ease and simplicity, excellent quality were the basic values proclaimed by Apple’s outstanding “father” and leader Steve Jobs.

“When you start with amazing products, you can create amazing things.” [1] – this is first thing you see when you go to an official Apple page today. Excellence and innovation are one of the core basic values which Apple sticks to for almost 30 years of company’s existence.

"We are really pleased with our revenues but our goal isn't to make money. It sounds a little flippant, but it is the truth. Our goal and what makes us excited is to make great products. If we are successful, people will like them and if we are operationally competent, we will make money", [2] said Jonathan Ive, senior vice president of industrial design at Apple, speaking at the British Embassy's Creative Summit.

It is this incredibly powerful culture that makes Apple strategy so unique and effective; it is following this strategy that makes the company unreachable in competitive race.

Marketing theory says that if you are able to find/shape a core customers segment it will provide a company with permanent sales base in the first place, but what’s more important it will

let you create a strong link for sharing your concepts and information with them and what makes you be able to experiment staying relatively on the safe ground.

4. The post-modern values

Substantially we can say that all the post-modern society values are presented in Apples product design process. The most obvious of them probably are:

- Customer is in the center of the brand and corporate culture.
- Addressing to people's emotions, feelings, dreams, desires.
- Creating customized products. It's all about subjectivism, pluralism, freedom of choice and staying individualistic.
- Continuous innovation, creativity, adding value process, life quality improvement as company's basic value.
- Special importance of the appearance. Design is in the first place. "Technology" colors, logo, smooth nice shapes, materials, the way it feels when you interact with the product.
- Creating a society (tribe) around Apple products and making them as connected and linked as possible.
- "Apple life style" conception.

Apple also often uses "that much already sold" marketing technique. This is addressing potential customers and could be considered as part of creating their tribe as well. Many psychological experiments prove that people tend to be conformists. [7] Everyone wants to be part of Apple brand society.

The writer Naomi Klein is a leading critic of branding, especially Apple's. "People are drawn to these brands because they are selling their own ideas back to them, they are selling the most powerful ideas that we have in our culture such as transcendence and community - even democracy itself, these are all brand meanings now," [5] she told to the Guardian newspaper.

5. Conclusion

To sum up we would say that Apple basically uses marketing and retail techniques which are well known for a long time, the difference is that they are using them in the right way. In order to make a clear conclusion we can detach the main features of Apple brand:

- The company has a unique product;
- They use the technology is supposed to make life easier and better;
- Apple software is innovative, created to make customers' interaction with technology easier;
- Apple software is high interconnection between all the devices and high customization.

These advantages make the company successful. Apple has always projected a human touch - from the charisma of Steve Jobs to the notion that its products are sold for a love of technology. Products have limited life cycles, but brands - if managed well - last forever.

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