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BRAND AS A TOOL TO CREATE A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FOR THE COMPANY

Nowadays branding is an effective method of managing the competitiveness of an enterprise. It has gained particular relevance in the situation of the transfer of the ways of relations with the consumer to the digital environment due to the quarantined work of business, with the increased role of digital service integrators, uniting a huge number of brands on the online platforms.

Brands are intangible assets that affect businesses, allowing them to develop relationships with customers, resulting in more sales, less customer price sensitivity and lower marketing costs [1]. In the structural content of the brand there are real and hidden components. The real component is the name, packaging, and image of the goods. The hidden component is the competence of the company's personnel in organizing the distribution and delivery of goods.

The success of promotion on the market depends on the brand effectiveness, as it increases the level of consumer loyalty to the company, to make a decision on purchase, to form a group of regular customers.

The brand brings the business in social environment, the company's products are recognized and demanded, thereby the demand for the products increases, adds additional value to the goods, which brings more profit to the brand holder. Brand recognition creates a positive image of the country, increasing its investment attractiveness.

A brand is a tool for enhancing strategic competitiveness by maximizing its competitive advantages. It creates natural barriers in the market for new competitors; makes it easier to bring new products to the market; in case of a threat, brand gives

additional time to implement the strategy and allows to survive difficult times more successfully and maintain positions without additional costly advertising campaigns or price reductions for goods. In addition, a brand allows you to clearly differentiate your products from your competitors; if a brand is already established and functioning, it requires significant cost to attack it.

The most important strategic attitude to a brand becomes the management of perception is a change of attitude towards the goods without changing their real essence. Perception is more than reality, and the brand is more important than the product.

A strong brand adds value to products. Consumers, guided by the popularity of the brand, are willing to overpay, and also with a positive consumer perception of the brand there is always a halo effect – a respectful attitude to the brand and new products. The consumer, not knowing what the new product is like in action, will buy it anyway.

With a strong brand, a company can attract highly qualified employees. People consider working in a branded company as prestigious and highly paid [2].

As for Belarus, companies invest in the brand at the level of the corporation. The main value is a high corporate image, not the image of individual brands. For example, “Atlant”. Producers also use related brands. These are names of goods that have the name of the manufacturing company in them: “Шахматный Сладыч”, “Золотой Сладыч”. The company's products are advertised with its logo. This is what “Комунарка” and “Савушкин продукт” do.

According to the survey “BelBrand 2020” by MPP Consulting, the most expensive brands in Belarus are “Санта-Бремор” (\$77 million), “Спартак” (\$44.2 million). The most recognizable brands among the population are “БелАЗ”, “Conte” and “Белита-Витэк”. The most recognizable brands in the global market are “Prestigio”, “Fancy” and “Milavitsa”.

There is a stereotype that Belarusian products should be of high quality, but they should also be offered at a low price. But what do domestic producers do wrong? Belarusian producers under the brand most often mean the name of the goods. For example, according to the research, only 10% know about the existence of the brand “Aveline” of the company “Milavitsa”.

The creation of a new brand and its promotion requires a lot of resources, so in Belarus the process of creating new brands has suspended, mainly Belarusian manufacturers prefer to promote existing brands.

Belarusian companies do not create brands of goods aimed at other markets. If a brand has proven itself in the domestic market, they try to promote it for export as well, without taking into account the peculiarities of international marketing and branding. Poor brand awareness does not allow Belarusian manufacturers to compete with imports. Thus, according to Belstat, the share of domestic goods sales in the retail turnover fell from 73.4% to 59.2% from 2013 to 2020 [3].

Summarizing all of the above, we can conclude that enterprises need to pay more attention to brand-oriented marketing. Creation of the strong brand is a pledge of higher value of the goods that provides steady demand and becomes a basis for obtaining additional competitive advantages of the enterprise. When carrying out work on improvement of the brand, the company will have an opportunity to make a holistic vision

of its activity, to pay attention to positive and negative moments in its development, to take a leading place in the market structure.

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CHOCOLATE CONSUMERS' PREFERENCES: THE ROLE OF PALATABILITY TRAITS AND TASTINGS IN PRODUCT SELECTION

The purpose of the study: to develop a marketing strategy to find out the opinion of consumers about the role of product taste and tasting when choosing chocolate products.

The result of the study: a questionnaire was developed on the topic of the study; a survey of consumers was conducted; the results of the study are analyzed and visualized on graphs.

The market for chocolate products has its own specifics, but, as with any product, it is important to take into account the opinion of the consumer, which he is guided by when choosing this type of product. Knowing the preferences of the target audience is the key to a successful marketing strategy. Taking into account this factor, it seems relevant to study the opinion of the consumer of chocolate products.

In marketing, one of the effective methods for identifying the attitude of the target audience to the problem under study is a questionnaire survey of consumers [1; 2].

The author conducted an anonymous Internet survey of 140 consumers. To obtain objective data, a quota sample was made (7 age groups were taken with an equal number of respondents), gender parity was observed. Age categories of surveyed consumers: 14–18, 19–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–64, over 65 years old. Respondents have different social status and income levels, live in the Republic of Belarus, Lithuania, Germany, Bulgaria, Russia.

Respondents were asked to answer two questions, choosing one of the four proposed answers:

1. What plays a decisive role for you when choosing chocolate products?