HELSINKI METROPOLIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE

European Business Administration

Double Degree Year 2013-2014

THE BRAND IMAGE MANAGEMENT DEALING
WITH THE CONSUMER'S PERCEPTIONS

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Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my thesis director Mr. Emmanuel RENAUD for all the advices, his time, his patience and his help especially at the beginning of my research.

I would also like to thank Mr. Didier ROCHE for the guidance. Thank you for giving your time to help all your students.

My thanks also go out to Mrs. Géraldine GRANDIDIER, CEO of Tidy Books for supporting me and for giving me her time and her help.

I would like to sincerely thank Mrs. Géraldine GOULLEY and Mrs. Jennifer MOUKOUMA for their time and all the information they gave me.

Not forgetting my parents, Joëlle and Benoît, my grandparents, Colette and Gérard and my friends (especially Thomas) for their everyday support and their patience.

Glossary

Branding: process which involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers' mind, mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers.[1]

Brand image: the way a product or a brand is seen by a customer.

Brand loyalty: when consumers become committed to a brand and make repeat purchases over time[2].

Influence: capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone[3].

Positioning: the way that customers think about, or the way that a company wants customers to think about, a product in relation to similar products or to competitors' products. The positioning helps marketers create an image of their brand.[4] It's the act of designing the company's offer and image so that is occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customer' minds.[5]

Perceived quality: refers to the quality of a product or service as perceived by the consumer in a more or less subjective way. Perceived quality can play a really important role in the process of choosing and buying.

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[1] http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/branding.html

[2] http://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brand-loyalty.asp

[3] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/influence

[4] http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/business-english/positioning

[5] Phillip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller, Marketing Management, 14th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2012)

French abstract

L'objectif de ce mémoire est de répondre à une problématique "comment les entreprises gèrent-elles leur image de marque face à la perception des consommateurs?". Cette question regroupe plusieurs recherches et théories lié au Branding et au domaine plus général du Marketing.

Cette problématique emmènera mon mémoire vers différents domaines d'études. Ceux-ci regrouperont donc l'image de marque, la perception du consommateur et toutes les notions relatives de stratégies d'entreprise et de management.

Une marque a aujourd'hui, et depuis toujours, un même objectif, se développer. Ce développement est possible lorsque celle-ci sait manager sa stratégie Marketing et sa stratégie de marque afin de développer une conscience de marque auprès des consommateurs. Il est de nos jours incontournable d'utiliser toutes les innovations et outils technologiques pour communiquer et créer une image de marque. Il sera donc question de stratégie de communication afin d'expliquer ce phénomène.

Le contexte économique actuel a apporté des difficultés supplémentaires aux entreprises car la compétition et la quantité de choix de produits et de services n'ont jamais été aussi importantes dans notre société.

Gérer son image de marque afin d'influencer au mieux le consommateur comporte également des risques. En effet une erreur de stratégie ou une mauvaise communication peut créer la disparition d'entreprises.

J'ai donc voulu savoir comment les compagnies géraient cette image de marque en essayant de comprendre leur fonctionnement. Ainsi, il peut-être intéressant d'étudier deux différents types d'entreprises : une très grosse et une petite.

Mots clefs

Branding, stratégies, image de marque, communication, marque, comportement du consommateur

English abstract

The objective of this thesis is to answer the following problematic "how do companies manage their brand image dealing with consumer perception?" This question includes several researches and theories related to branding and in a more general field of Marketing.

This problematic will take my thesis to different fields of study. Those ones will make the link between branding, consumer perception and all the business strategies which are relative concepts and management.

Nowadays and forever, a brand has the same objective: to develop. This development is possible when it knows how to manage its marketing strategy and its brand strategy to develop brand awareness among consumers. Nowadays, it is essential and indispensable to use all the innovations and technological tools to communicate and create a brand image. It will be about communication strategy in order to explain this phenomenon.

The current economic environment brings additional difficulties for companies because the competition and the growing amount of choice of products and services have never reached this importance in our society.

Managing its image, in order to better influence the consumer, also has some risks. Indeed a strategic mistake or poor communication can create the disappearance of firms.

So, I wanted to know how companies manage this brand image by trying to understand their operation. Thus, it may be interesting to study two different types of businesses: a very large and one small.

Keywords

Branding, strategies, brand image, communication, brand, customer behavior

Contents

Introduction

The term branding comes from the word brand, built from the Germanic root brend / t, which gives the word "brûler" in French and "burn" in English. The meaning of "brand" is the "marking with fire" by a "firebrand" and by extension, the red iron. It was used during the medieval period in Europe and during the conquest of the American Wild West in US. It was first to recognized the owner of the livestock and, by extension, any "marking" of commercial type.[6]

It is now used in businesses as a strategy to develop a brand. A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of seller and to differentiate them from those of competition" thanks to the American Marketing Association[7.] A brand needs an X factors which will add some dimensions that differentiate the product from other products.[8] However, Keller makes the difference between this definition and the "industry's concept of a Brand with a big B" which take into consideration the brand awareness, the brand reputation and the brand prominence.

"A brand is more than a logo or symbol. It is a set of mental associations, held by the consumer, which adds to the perceived value of a product or service"

J.L. Keller

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[6] http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Branding#Histoire

[7] Kevin Lane Keller, *Strategic brand management building, measuring, and managing brand equity. -* Fourth Edition. P30

[8] Mrs Grace Goni course Brand Management

A brand needs to be anchored in the minds of consumers in order to influence behavior. Consumer behavior can be defined as "the study of individuals, groups or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society[9]. That is why companies absolutely need to adapt their marketing and especially their branding strategy.

In order to do that and to succeed they have to create and to keep a good consumer perception. The perception is characterized by experience and a process by which consumers select, organize and interpret the information that comes to their senses - hearing, sight, taste, smell and touch. All of these form a consumer perception of a brand. Therefore, the mechanisms of perception are switched by stimuli when they reach the customer sense. It will be one of the main points of this thesis.

This subject was logic for me to choose as I always wanted to know more about branding. Knowing how consumers perceived a brand and how companies are doing to manage a good brand strategy is really fascinating.
Furthermore this is a really trendy subject. It is completely in relation with my professional objective.

The goal of my thesis is to understand how companies can manage their strategies to reach the best purpose as possible and to develop. What do they use? How do they do?

Brands live in the minds of consumers. A brand is nothing more than the thoughts and feelings associated with it, whether intentional or not. In this part it's all about the consumer perception

For branding strategies to be successful, consumers must be convinced that there are meaningful differences among brands in the product or service category. Consumer must not think that all brands in the category are the same.

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[9] According to Hawkins, Best, and Coney, 2001, p7

Perception and value are the same here. To reach this goal it is important to understand the positioning and to define it – which is the second part of this thesis.

In the third part we will develop the consumer behavior which can be influenced by three internal factors which are the learning (the education), the motivation (needs or desire) and the perception. How do consumers react to their environment?

The conclusion of this first part revealed three hypotheses and a problematic.

The problematic is: "how do companies manage their brand image dealing with consumer perception?"
I found it interesting to study this problematic with two different types of businesses – a big one and a smaller. Knowing and understanding the differences of strategies was the goal here.

After doing my reading review, three hypotheses emerged.
- **Hypothesis 1:** A brand is a social integrator which takes in consideration the customer's perception.
- **Hypothesis 2:** The brand positioning play an important role in the choice process.
- **Hypothesis 3:** The purchase influence is principally extern. The consumer is reactive to his or her environment in the purchasing process.

The second part of my thesis concerned the interviews and the analysis of them. I tried here to follow the hypotheses logic.
I first started with the methodology which will present the environment of the interviews. Then, I will describe the interview guide and the analysis to answer each of the hypotheses.
Finally the conclusion summarizes my thesis and will try to give an answer to the problematic.

Part1: Reading review

The first part of this thesis is the theory aspect which regroups the prior readings and researches. The goal was to elaborate different hypothesis that we will develop. This can be made thanks to readings and the understanding of the principal theories related to the branding and the consumers perception.

In the first part of the reading review we will explain the consumer perception by asking two different questions: how and why? In the second part we will learn more about the brand positioning, how do the companies organize it and what it the purpose of it. Finally, in the last part we will study the purchase influence and see in which way it can be principally made by external factors.

The consumer perception

The consumer perception is something really subjective. A lot of searchers try to explain this factor. Consumer will use different senses to understand information the brand will provide. That is why the brand image is important to develop, and how the consumer will perceive the quality of a product or a service. The aim is to create brand loyalty.

The brand image

The image is a summary of what a client thinks about a brand. The consumer simplifies his perception. The company has to make its values being clear and it has to communicate using them. Depending on the culture, the social class or the country the perception of the brand will be different. That is why the branding strategy has to be adapted.

Thanks to Engel Blackwell and Miniard the representation of the brand memory as an association represent the brand image as it is stored in long term memory.[10] It is defined by Dacin and Mitchell[11] as "a memory composing that is permanent, virtually unlimited storage capacity, and well organized". The brand associations are the link between a brand and the others memories meaning that the measure and the content of a customer's memory is the measure of his perception of a brand namely the image of it.

Link between brand identity and brand image

Thanks to JN Kapferer there are three different parties that are making the link between brands identity and brand image. The sender owns the brand identity and he pass a message to a receiver who will understand a brand image.

Thanks to Jean Jacques Lambin there are three different levels of the brand image[12]:

- The perceived image, meaning how the target segment (the target audience, which is projected image) sees and perceives the brand.
- The real image or reality of the brand with its strengths and weaknesses, as it is known and felt by the company.
- The desired image; that's how the company wants to be perceived by the target segment which results from a positioning decision.

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[10] Engel Blackwell et Miniard (1995), *Consumer Behavior*. The Dryden Press, Harcourt BraceCollege Publishers.

[11] Dacin P. A et Mitchell A. A.(1986), *The Measurement of Declarative Knowledge, Advances InConsumer Research*, p 454

[12] Translation : Jean-Jacques Lambin, *Marketing stratégique et opérationnel, Du marketing à l'orientation de marché*, Dunod, 2008

Following an illustration of the link between the target audience and the brand concerning the brand image:
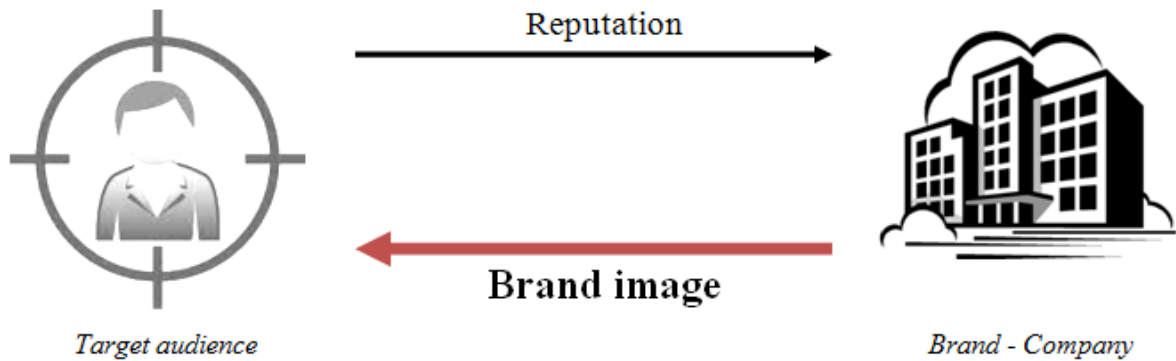
Each brand has values but the question is how do they create value for the consumer? What are the factors that will make the consumer buy a certain brand. The attractiveness of a brand is based on these different functions (see the table below).

JN Kapferer summarized the eight functions of the brand for the consumer in a table[13]:

Function	Consumer benefit
Identification	To be clearly seen, to quickly identify the sought-after products, to structure the shelf perception.
Practicality	To allow savings of time and energy through identical repurchasing and loyalty.
Guarantee	To be sure of finding the same quality no matter where or when you buy the product or service.
Optimization	To be sure of buying the best product in its category, the best performer for a particular purpose.
Badge	To have confirmation of your self-image or the social image that you present to others.

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[13] JN Kapferer, *The new strategic brand management advanced insights & strategic thinking*, P23

Continuity	Satisfaction created by a relationship of familiarity and intimacy with the brand that you have been consuming for years.
Hedonistic excitement	Enchantment linked to the attractiveness of the brand, to its logo, to its communication and its experiential rewards.
Ethical	Satisfaction linked to the responsible behavior of the brand in its relationship with society (sustainable development, CSR, employment, citizenship, advertising which doesn't shock)

In a real fast changing context, the companies have to be concentrated on the brand image and its management in order to differentiate themselves from competitors but also to be recognized.

By buying a certain brand the consumer will feel to be part of a social group in which all have the same values.

The ratio quality/price is really important here.

The brand equity

Brand equity is "the value premium that a company realizes from a product with a recognizable name as compared to its generic equivalent. Companies can create brand equity for their products by making them memorable, easily recognizable and superior in quality and reliability. Mass marketing campaigns can also help to create brand equity. If consumers are willing to pay more for a generic product than for a branded one, however, the brand is said to have negative brand equity. This might happen if a company had a major product recall or caused a widely publicized environmental disaster."[14]

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[14] http://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brandequity.asp
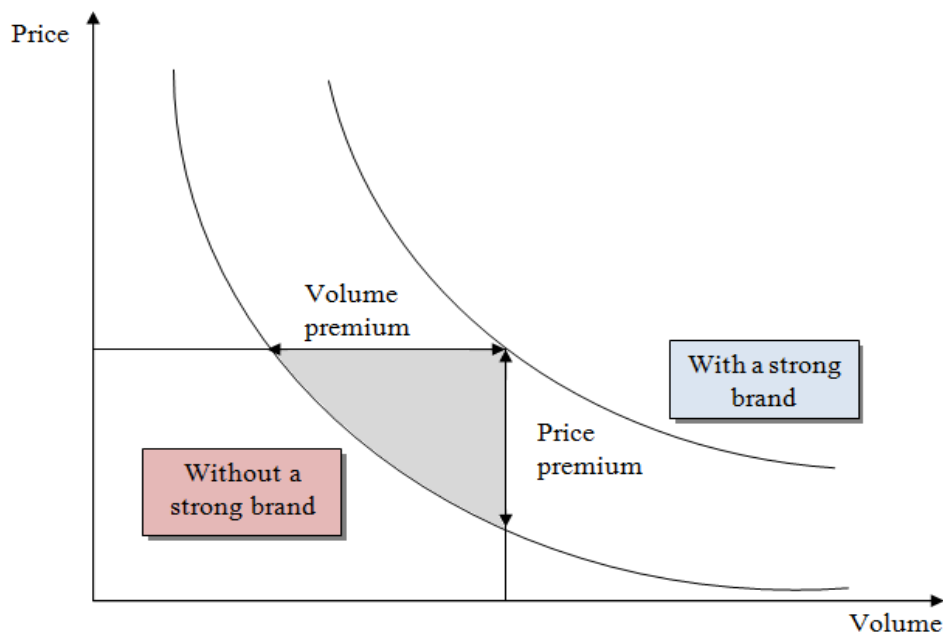
What is brand equity?[15]

So, thanks to JN Kapferer, the brand equity is situated in the right place between the value premium and the price premium those are the main two elements that is able to influence a customer's perception and to grow brand awareness.

"Brand equity and brand image are highly related terms because in building brand equity, managers attempt to influence consumer perceptions of a product"[16]. The aim is to build a strong and good brand image.

"A brand that captures your mind gains behavior. A brand that captures your heart gains commitment"

Scott Talgo brand strategist

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[15] JN Kapferer, *What is brand equity? The new strategic brand management advanced insights & strategic thinking*, P445 Figure 18.2

[16] David A Aaker, Alexander Biel, *Brand Equity and Advertising: Advertising's role in building strong brands* P143

Kevin Lane Keller speaks about the customer based brand equity[17] which represents the effect a brand could have on the consumer process of purchasing. It helps to measure the response of the customers on a brand communication strategy. This is how a person will react to a product and to "the way it is marketed"[16]. To summarize, the customer based brand equity reflect the high awareness and the well recognition of a brand which is considerate as unique.

One of the most important key of a successful brand perception is the brand knowledge. Brand knowledge creates brand equity. To have a good image and to build brand equity, the brand knowledge has to be present in the consumer's mind and it has to create memories, so the customer will know who the brand is and why[18].

In this thesis we will try to make the difference between brand equity and brand image. As Biel explained brand equity is "a financial variable" and the brand image is "a customer or marketing variable"[19]

Aaker found that some variables are willing to influence the consumers' brand perception. Those elements are the "five dimensions of brand equity: name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, customer base and other proprietary brand assets."[20]
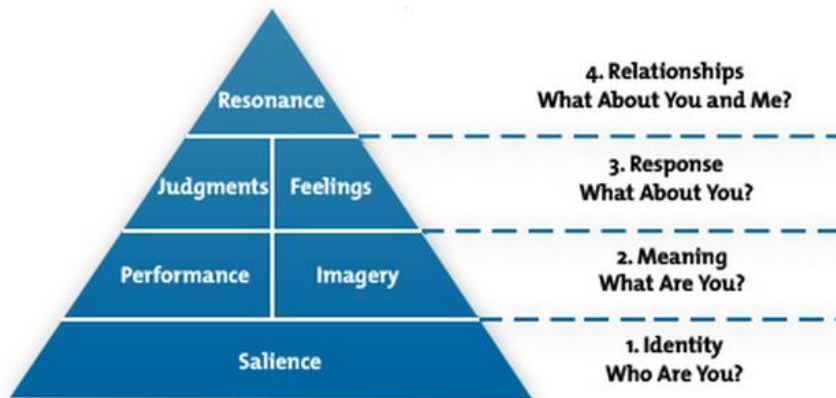
[17] Kevin Lane Keller, *Strategic Brand Management. Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity.* - Fourth Edition. P69

[18] Kevin Lane Keller, *Strategic Brand Management. Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity.* - Fourth Edition. P71

[19] David A Aaker, Alexander Biel, *Brand Equity and Advertising: Advertising's role in building strong brands* P143

[20] David A Aaker, Alexander Biel, *Brand Equity and Advertising: Advertising's role in building strong brands* P144

Keller's brand equity model:

From "Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity" by Kevin Lane Keller. © Pearson Education Limited 2013.

Innovation

"The role of modern brands is to stimulate the consumer to have new experiences"[21]
To create a new consumer need, the brands have to invest in innovation. "To grow through time while keeping its identity, the band should continue differently" [20]

The main issue is "the relationship between brand equity or image and perceived quality, which is sometimes used as a measure of these brand concepts" Amna Kirmani, Valarie Zeithaml, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University[22]

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[21] JN Kapferer, *The new strategic brand management advanced insights & strategic thinking*, P242

[22] David A Aaker, Alexander Biel, *Brand Equity and Advertising: Advertising's role in building strand brands P144*

The perceived quality

Investment and market reaction

In this part we can speak more about the perceived quality. The first thing we have to know is that the perceived quality drives the financial performance of a company. The investment in brand equity is efficient here. David A Aaker speaks about different studies[23]. The first one, the "study using the PIMS database" proved that the most important factor of a return on investment is the perceived quality. It has more impact than the Research & Development, the market share etc. The second study is the one driven by Claes Fornell and the National Quality Research Center at the University of Michigan. We discover the importance of the perceived quality in the consumer's satisfaction and by extension in the ROI. To finish with the last study we can summarize in with this graphic[24]:

Stock market reaction to changes in ROI and perceived quality

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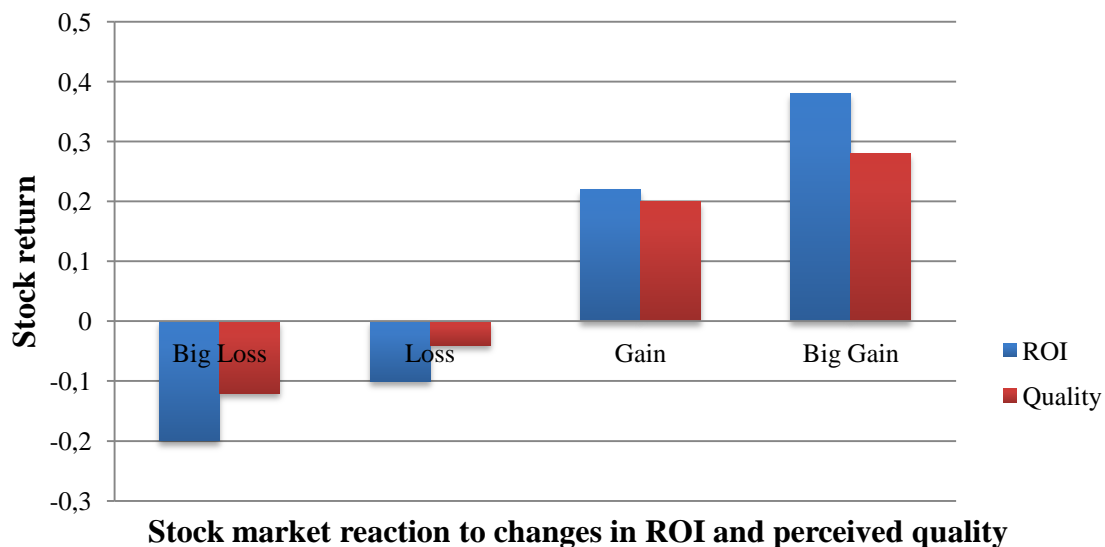
[23] David A.Aaker, *Building strong brands* P17-18
[24] David A.Aaker, *Building strong brands* P17-18 Figure 1-6

The brand loyalty

Oliver defines the brand loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy are repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-ser purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior."[25]

"The brand loyalty exists when the customer is committed to the brand, and when the customers have a high relative attitude toward the brand, which is then exhibited through repurchase behavior."[26]

Once this aspect of a brand is well understood we can learn more about how the brand has to manage their strategy to have a good place in the consumer mind. It is one of the main factors that will enhance a purchase process.

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[25] Oliver Richard L, (1999), *Whence Consumer Loyalty? Journal of Marketing*, 63 (Special Issue), P33 and 34
[26] Brand Loyalty *Boundless Marketing*. Boundless, 14 Nov. 2014

The brand positioning

" Brand positioning must be One, Two or Three words, phrases or sentences about your brand that you want to imprint in the heads of key stakeholders, so clear, so succinct and so powerful that once launched, it begins to move people toward your new evolving brand"

Kevin Clancy, Copernicus

Thanks to Phillip Kotler and Keven Lane Keller, the brand positioning is the "act of designing the company's offer and image so that is occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customer' minds"[27]. The brand positioning goal is to be well located in the consumer mind. The consumer directly knows which brand he/she "needs" and he/she will make the difference with the competitors. It is easier to recognize it.

Kevin Lane Keller explain that to reach this goal the marketer will have to analyze "who the target consumer is" so the marketer knows his target and can adapt its branding strategy – for example in the automotive industry, for a man we will communicate more on the power of the car, for a woman, on the design – "who the main competitors are, how the brand is similar to these competitors and how the brand is different from them"[28].

Adapting its strategy is one of the key to succeed. The first step will be a detailed analyze of the market to know what is the principal target and do they perceive the brand.

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[27] Phillip Kotler and Keven Lane Keller, *Marketing Management*, - 14th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2012)

[28] Kevin Lane Keller, *Strategic Brand Management. Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity.* - Fourth Edition.. P79

Distinction from competitors

The positioning is the factors which will make the distinction between a brand and its competitors and also will be how the public view it.

JN Kapferer speaks about four questions to explain how a brand positioning can be established[29]:

- "A brand for what benefit?" Here, it's the "brand promise" and the benefits a consumer can get from buying this particular brand.
- "A brand for whom?" It is all about targeting. Defining who the target of a brand is essential for its positioning.
- "Reason?" Kapferer speaks here about the proof element of the benefit a consumer will have from a product or service, it can be factual or subjective.
- "A brand against whom?" An important strength for a brand is to know who are its competitors to capture it consumers. It is particularly true on the economical context nowadays where there is a high competitive environment.

Identification of attributes

The Brand Positioning Profiles will tell the company which attributes define its brand in the market place. But if other brands are defined on the same attributes the brand doesn't necessarily "own" that territory. A good tools to analyze and understand this is the ownership analysis which will tell which attributes a brand owns, which it shares with one or multiple competitors and which it has little association with relative to competitors.

To 'own' an attribute, more people in absolute terms must associate that attribute with that brand than any other and there must be clear space between the brand in the lead and the nearest competitor. It can create differentiation; the costumer will be more willing to make the difference and to recognize this brand.

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[29] JN Kapferer, *The new strategic brand management advanced insights & strategic thinking*, P152

To identify which attributes have the most potential to strengthen a brand in the future, the company needs to:

1. Identify which attribute are already owned
2. Identify which attributes show potential to be owned by looking at what currently defined the brand

To do this they have to look at the brand's Positioning Planning Matrix[30].

Difference between brand identity and brand positioning

We must distinguish the brand identity and the brand positioning. They are two different notions, as Georges Lewi and Caroline Rogliano said, "brand positioning is a process of strategic nature designed to develop the desired image by the company in the minds of its customers and prospects." The brand positioning corresponds to the place of the brand in the market compared to its competitors. In addition, the positioning of a brand usually has two aspects that are complementary: the identification and differentiation.

- The identification is the category to which the product is linked in the minds of public.
- The differentiation consists of one or more features that distinguish the product from other products of the same category.

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[30] Appendix 5

The purchase influence is principally extern

The purchase process can be something consumers do every days but it can also be impulsive.

The analyze of the purchase process can make the brand think about each steps which are the reconnaissance of the problem, the information research, the evaluation of all the alternatives, the decision making process and the evaluation after purchase.[31]

The consumer reacts to his purchasing process environment

External factors

Russell Belk highlighted in the 1970s the influence of situational factors on the consumer's affective behaviour or states.

Belk defines these as "the set of factors specific to a place and a period of observation that is not derived from personal knowledge or reactions to a stimulus, with a systematic, demonstrable effect on the normal consumer behaviour ".

All the external factors are the situations which make a consumer buying your product or not. In other words, the environment, the timing, the nature of the act of purchase and the consumer's mindset directly impact the way he or she will consume.

In general the purchase process can be influenced by several factors. We can here develop three of them:

- The cultural factors. The culture of a costumer is important in his or her process choose a particular brand. Different cultures have different needs and behaviour.

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[31] Lendrevie-Lévy-Lindon *Mercator L'essentiel du chapitre 3* 8th Edition - translation

A person could be influenced by his family, his friends, his cultural environment or even the society which give him his values.

A brand has to adapt its product and all its branding or marketing strategy according to this factor. It will understand the inherent cultural factors of each market – Asian, European etc. This is a really important step as it plays a real role on the brand perception. All the consumers will not have the same habits and behaviour in this case.

The consumer needs to identify himself to a subculture which is composed by individuals having the same values, the same experiences or the same way of living – it could be the religion, the age, the gender etc. In the same way of the culture, the brand has to take this factor into consideration to create its segmentation. It is easier to adapt the product to the target population and the communicate knowing their values and needs. Brands often communicate differently and create several specific products for the same type of product to target a specific age group, gender group or a particular subculture.

Consumers are generally more sensitive to products and marketing strategies specifically relating to.

- The second factor we can develop is the social class. Cultural trends are defined as trends largely followed by individuals. These trends are amplified by their popularity or compliance effect. More individuals want to follow a trend and more others will follow. The brands could take this factor to increase their Research and Development and to create more innovations as the trend moves fast. This affect the consumer's behaviour but also his "reason why" he will buy a specific product.

  Customers will be influenced by these trends – consciously or unconsciously. It is a result of social pressure, the need of conformity, the belonging to a group or the desire to stand out.

According to Russell Belk, we can define 5 different factors:
- The physical environment: it is the apparent characteristics of the situation.
- The social environment refers to the presence or absence of other people with the consumer.

- The time perspective: this is the time of purchase and / or consumption of the good and the time available to complete the purchase of a product
- Defining roles: it is the objective of the purchase
- The previous states specific to the individual: his mood, his health

Communication

Brands are stored as 'representations' across disparate parts of the brain. There are three main networks: knowledge, emotion and experience. A brand must be strong in knowledge thanks to clear symbols and cues to identify the brand, and an understanding of what it is; in experience which means its product quality, its benefits and how it is used or found; and in emotion, if it enhances positive feelings, good social value or desirability.

That is why communication strategy has to be made to engage the consumer and to create personal relevance to influence them in their purchasing process. The role of emotional content is very important and it is also important to point that distinctiveness also generates strong potential to engage. It can explain that the engagement is about potential and not about effect. We can explain it like this: mainly it says the ad has a chance to influence what comes to mind when people consider the brand. Whether this has power depends on the nature of how brand representations were changed: Does what comes to mind make the brand more appealing? Does it enhance brand experiences? This determines the ad's motivational power.

So, to understand how a brand influence consumers we have to distinguish three elements: the engagement – will people get involved with the brand? – the brand associations – does it have the potential to affect brand associations in the right way? – the motivation – do the brand make it more desirable at key decision moments?

Brand communication is a strong external factor tool to deliver the above and enable the consumer to form their opinion.

Celebrity endorsement

A good tool to improve the brand awareness is the celebrity endorsement.

Celebrity endorsement advertising happens when a well-known person uses his or her fame to help promote a product or service. There are a lot of benefits to the organization for using a celebrity in its marketing campaign.[32]

A celebrity endorsement is a form of brand or advertising campaign that involves a well known person using their fame to help promote a product or service. Manufacturers of perfumes and clothing are some of the most common business users of classic celebrity endorsement techniques, such as television ads and launch event appearances, in the marketing of their products.[33]

The goal of celebrity endorsement is[34]:
- To draw attention to the brand
- To shape the perceptions of the brand
- Celebrity should have a high level of visibility and a rich set of useful associations, judgments and feelings

Advertising

"Advertising is any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion if ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor. Although it is a powerful means of creating strong, favourable and unique brand associations and eliciting positive judgments and feelings."[35]

The advertising can have a strong effect on the customer's perception. They will be influenced and will take in consideration the message delivered. So, by consequence it will increase the amount of sales.

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[32] http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/celebrity-endorsements-in-advertising-definition-benefits-examples.html
[33] http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/celebrity-endorsement.html
[34] Mrs Grace Goni Brand Management course
[35] Kevin Lane Keller, *Strategic Brand Management. Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*. - Fourth Edition. P221

A good ad "should contribute to brand equity"[36]. In other words an ad ha to create awareness. The consumers have to recognize easily the brand and to trust it to purchase this particular brand. We know what is an efficient ad that creates awareness when it responds to these criteria:

Identify creative strategy		
Informational (benefit elaboration)	**Transformational (imagery portrayal)**	**Motivational ("borrowed interest" techniques)**
✛ Problem-solution	✛ Typical or aspirational usage situation	✛ Humour
✛ Demonstration		✛ Warmth
✛ Product comparison	✛ Typical or aspirational user or product	✛ Sex appeal
✛ Testimonial (celebrity or unknown consumer)		✛ Music
	✛ Brand personality and values	✛ Fear
		✛ Special effects

Factors in designing effective advertising campaigns[37]

Enjoyable, emotionally charged communications can make brands seem much more appealing to consumers.

Brands don't always have new products to offer to the consumer. Entertaining the consumer in an emotionally relevant way can lead to bigger longer term rewards than a rational product story, which is more about short term growth.

Enjoyable communications memories → Strong emotional response → Brand appeal

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[36] Kevin Lane Keller, *Strategic Brand Management. Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*. - Fourth Edition. P224

[37] Kevin Lane Keller, *Strategic Brand Management. Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*. - Fourth Edition. P223 Figure 6-3

Communicating a message to consumers that is unique, in a clear and motivating way will convince consumers with rational information and lead them to want to try the brand and generate repeat purchase.

Expressing an emotional take on the world which the consumer finds relevant and interesting will allow them to connect emotionally.

To reach the customer, the brand strategy has to take into consideration the effective communication. It's an important tool.

Communicate a message	Convince rationally	Connect emotionally
• The message has to be clear from the main visuals or the main stories.	• The message has to be new for the consumer, something different from other brands in the market placec. It has to be relevant and credible.	• The brand has to seem more appealing thanks to an emotional insight or scenario that should be engaging.

« Every day and in all situations of life, we forget the huge power of situations – of the context – in our life. Most of people under estimate the influence of situations in the manners they think and take decisions. »

Sam Sommers (TUFT University)

Conclusion Part 1

The different readings allowed us to understand that the brand perception is a real challenge for the brands.

Indeed they have to deal with:

- The brand image which is something important and difficult to manage as it is a changing subject in a changing environment. The brand identity can determined the brand image as it is a message sent from the brand to the consumer. If this is well realized in can bring strong brand equity, the value premium, of a memorable product. It's is here the aim because consumer will be willing to pay more for a product – right place between value premium and price premium. The perceived quality and the brand loyalty are the consequences that can bring out.

- The brand positioning strategy. They have to manage it as it is the element that will stay in the consumer mind. It is the way the customer will recognize the brand. We can finally say it's the goal of a good branding strategy.

- The external factors. Indeed, here the companies have to deal with incontrollable factors but it can be strength as they can use it. It can be a powerful tool thanks to a good communication strategy.

At the end of the reading and research review we can define three hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1:** A brand is a social integrator which takes in consideration the customer's perception

- **Hypothesis 2:** The brand positioning play an important role in the choice process.

- **Hypothesis 3:** The purchase influence is principally extern. The consumer is reactive to his or her environment in the purchasing process

The goal of the second part will be to verify these hypotheses thanks to a field study.

Part 2: Study methodology and analysis of results

Methodology presentation and implementation

After explaining the theories we need and knowing the context, we could identify three hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1:** A brand is a social integrator which takes in consideration the customer's perception
- **Hypothesis 2:** The brand positioning play an important role in the choice process.
- **Hypothesis 3:** The purchase influence is principally extern. The consumer is reactive to his or her environment in the purchasing process

In this part of the thesis we will explain the methodology chosen and why we chose this methodology. We will also see the reason why I made the choice of a qualitative research and interviewed professionals. Results of the interviews will be identified and analyzed and finally we will be able to affirm or reject these hypotheses which are the aim of this study.

The choice of the methodology

The field study will have as objective to illustrate and verified the theories mentioned earlier.

The quantitative research is "the use of sampling techniques (such as consumer surveys) whose findings may be expressed numerically, and are amenable to mathematical

manipulation enabling the researcher to estimate future events or quantities."[38] This kind of research is efficient when there is certain number of respondents, at least 100.

A qualitative research is a type of market research that aims to find out people's opinions and feelings rather than information that can easily be shown in numbers. If we want to understand the perspective of somebody else, we will first need to employ qualitative research methods.

Furthermore my thesis subject is "the brand image management dealing with the customer's perception" that is why I found it more relevant to have professional point of views to see how they manage their brand in respond to consumer's demand.

I chose to conduct individual interviews and not group interview or observation because I wanted to make the difference between different kinds of companies. Also it was more relevant to have sincere point of views and I didn't want any biais.

The implementation

My goal here was not to have an important interview panel in terms of quantity but I prefer to have from two different types of company to focus more on the diversity. I wanted to gather the views of people from completely different companies. In fact, I wanted to make the comparison between the brand management in a large multinational company managing many brands and implanting in the retail and mass production ; and brand image management in a small company with very different objectives and where values hold a predominant place.

Currently doing an internship in a small company where the CEO is the creator of the brand it seemed natural to ask an interview with her. However, with only very little contact in the middle of setting up a business or marketing, it was difficult to find people with this profile. So, I first sent emails and join people who can give me contacts.

So this is how I could arrange interviews with Mrs. Geraldine GRANDIDIER, Mrs. Geraldine GOULLEY and Mrs. Jennifer MOUKOUMA.

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[38] http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/quantitative-research.html

- **Géraldine GOULLEY** is the consumer, market & shopper insight manager at Unilever Paris for more than 8 years. She is in charge of the consumer's studies for the "Home Care" category of Unilever – this is the washing powder, the cleaners the category dish wash etc. Different brands are regrouped in this category.
- **Géraldine GRANDIDIER** is the founder and owner of Tidy Books, a children's bookcase and storage company. Tidy Books products are award winning and finished in a eco-friendly. She created her company in 2004.
- **Jennifer MOUKOUMA** is a Digital Marketing Apprentice at Unilever for one year. She takes part in the digital strategy and do the operational follow up of 25 brands. She works in the media service.

I had the chance to talk to someone – Géraldine GRANDIDIER – who has created her own brand. It was interesting to see what she can do to expand her company while maintaining strong values. I also could know more from a person – Géraldine GOULLEY – who is in constant connection with consumers of current consumer goods and someone – Jennifer MOUKOUMA – that may affect the image of the brands offered via digital marketing tools and strategies.

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews[39]. This therefore allowed the interviewees to give forthright advice without being able to influence and enhance dialogue.
The semi -structured interview is a more comprehensive method: it gives free rein to the response choices of the respondents, with their own words and details making sense for them. This method allows the astonishment, opened the questioning of the complexity of the studied subject.[40]

The interview with Geraldine GRANDIDIER took place in the local of Tidy Books. I could lead the talks with Geraldine GOULLEY and Jennifer MOUKOUMA on Skype. This was very important for me to be able to communicate orally in order to have real

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[39] See questionnaire Appendix 1
[40] http://gers-sociologie.fr/methodes/l-entretien-semi-directif/

interaction and make the interview as a discussion. Interviewees are therefore delivered and confide more easily. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1:15.

The theme of my thesis was given at the first contact. Jennifer MOUKOUMA was the only one wishing to know the specific topics I wanted to speak about during the interview. Other interviewees wanted to give spontaneous answers so that they are as representative as possible.

The interview guide used during the interviews is:

- Part 1 – Presentations
  - Presentation of myself, the thesis subject and the context.
  - Presentation of the company
  - Presentation of the interviewee, who is she, what is her role in the company

In this part it is all about creating a link between us. They feel confident to share their experiences and their point of view.

- Part 2 – The costumer's perception
- Part 3 – Social integrator
- Part 4 – Positioning
- Part 5 – Communication
- Part 6 – The end of the interview
  - I tried to summarize what was the main point of the interview
  - Here, they can develop some points they want to show
  - Thanks

It was important for me to summarize so I wan have the all message the interviewee wanted to share. It is also a good opportunity to have some complementary information.

The limits of the study:

Following this survey we can observe several limits. First it was difficult to find people who have created their own brand, without any contact. In addition, three interviews may not be representative.

Analysis and discussions

Interviews results

All the transcriptions of the interviews are on the appendix.[41]

The customer's perception

For Géraldine GRANDIDIER, the perception that customers may have of her brand is important. She created her own company in the aim to communicate her strong values. Her brand has a family history. At the beginning this was really personal and it could be something the consumers will understand. She thinks it could make the difference. As said before the values are the most important things for her. She thinks that when they do something without the aim of sharing it, the customers will see it and their perception will be different. The client can easily recognize him/herself in Géraldine GRANDIDIER story.

The values is the driver of her business, this is how the consumer will see her company so her goal is to communicate well this value to be understood and to create relevance for her brand. It creates the desire to buy as her products are not the primary necessity products as Unilever ones.

For Jennifer MOUKOUMA, the story a brand will tell to a consumer has to be meaningful to what the brand wants to communicate, it means that the brand has to be

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[41] Appendix 1, appendix 2 and appendix 3

adapted to the target – we will explain it in the following parts. That is to say the perception is different depending on the target.

Mrs. MOUKOUMA explained two different strategies. The first one is to tell a story that the customer identify with the brand. The second strategy is to tell a story to make the consumer realize he/she really need the product.

Géraldine GRANDIDIER thinks if the customers share the brand values they will have a better perception of it. They will be attracted and they will have the conscience of buying something that fit to them and from a company that has the same way of thinking.

Géraldine GOULLEY spoke about a very interesting theory which is the "brand love". This is the fact that Consumers do have love relationships with brands, and this is not a rare or isolated phenomenon. The "brand love key" is the message you want to transmit, what the brand wants to say and to who, what are the values etc. This is a powerful factor to use to have a good customer's perception.

The brand perception can have an emotional aspect. Géraldine GOULLEY took the example of Skipe – or Persil for the UK – which tries to convey a specific message "dirt is good". This based on the emotions of the consumer and also on the sensory aspect.

Géraldine GRANDIDIER creates eco friendly products and this strength for the perception of her brand. The consumer will see immediately the practical aspect of Tidy Books approach but also the practical aspect of the production – how they make it.

For Géraldine GRANDIDIER "we buy the why", meaning that companies have to explain why they are doing certain thing so the customer will feel confident, he/her will trust the brand and will have an opportunity to understand what the company is doing.

Géaldine GOULLEY also mentioned the importance of defining what the brand wants to say to the customer, how she wants to say it to create the influence.

Géraldine GRANDIDIER thinks in big companies the customer is not surprised. So, she wants her clients to be surprised by having a real personalized and good service.

To conclude this section, what is important are the consumer insights in order to improve the consumer understanding. Rather than identify consumers a company has to identify with them their needs or demands. A brand needs a plan to put into action. It has to know what numbers is in its consumer's hearts and minds as well as the market research. Finally being curious about the world around, the human behavior and what values are important for them is the key.

Social integrator

Nowadays costumers will take more in consideration the sustainable development - the consumer will think about the environmental and social consequences of his act of purchase. This behavior requires high values of companies so they can fit the consumer's demand. Consumers think that through an ethical consummation they can have an influence on the market. Today's consumers are becoming more aware of the values and behaviors defended by the companies and the manufacturing methods of the products they buy.

The brand can be a social integrator for example if, by purchasing a certain product, customers become a part of a community. Consumers can comment about it, speak about it and have common interest on the same products as others.
For Unilever, to create a fan community is really difficult. They don't have products that are easily engaging as Tidy Books products.

Some products can mean consumers belong to a certain social statue. Géraldine GOULLEY gave the example of the mustard brand Maille which is a brand people can be proud to consume. They are thinking that it is a proof of high revenue and a good quality of life. This kind of product can bring out some of their personality trait. For example, by consuming Maille, it means they are sophisticated, refined…
The brands try to develop this aspect by creating products with high quality components so the client will feel proud to buy this product and to show it. He/her will feel part of a social status. But, for other brands this is not the case.

She also spoke about the difficulty to become a social integrator. For her, this is not an end and this is only for brands that have strong values and that mean something – for example consuming bio products, it means something to the consumers and they can show this way of living to their pairs. A brand can mean something about you. It can describe who you are but she made some reserve on the fact that people consume thinking about what others will see and think about them.

For Jennifer MOUKOUMA it also depends on the kind of product. Thank to her, for personal care product it is possible to be social integrator but not for home care product or food because they are not associated with special values and consumers can easily buy competitors products. They don't have interesting values to convey to their social circle.

Positioning

The positioning of Tidy Books is making "products that are unique, innovative, and useful for children and parents, practical, educational but still cool, they still have to look good in a home for trendy parents". For her, the positioning has to be clearly for children but also for parents. Finally, the product has to be mode for the children but also for the parents who will make the purchase process.

Thanks to Géraldine GOULLEY the brand image is the result of the positioning. The positioning are items that the company can track down. So, they can adapt their branding strategy depending on the results of this positioning. She gave some examples of items, such as: "is a quality brand", "is a trendy brand" or "is a brand for young people" etc. It will help the customer to recognize the brand.

For her, the brand positioning are the brand attributes. There are two kind of attributes, the "owned" and the 'shared". The positioning is what the brand wants consumers understand it.

She raised a problem within her company on the positioning strategy. It's a global strategy meaning that all the countries have the same strategy, whereas the consumers don't have the same behavior or the same desires – or needs – depending on the country.

Mrs MOUKOUMA also spoke about the problem of one of their brand, Skip, which has too different positioning – ecologic washing powder and low price – and it could be a serious weakness for the brand because, thanks to her, it is sometimes better to focus on one aspect rather than being too scattered. The positioning has to be clear to be efficient and to not create confusion in the consumer mind. For her it's impossible to give the same importance to all the messages the brand wants to spread.

Thanks to Jennifer MOUKOUMA, the positioning is really important because of the saturation of the market especially for Unilever products. Indeed, he said that consumers don't buy the formulas of the product but much more the message or the values it delivers. She thinks this is a real key to influence the purchase process.

The brand positioning is something really important to defining well the target. This definition is essential to adapt the communication and to increase the brand awareness.

Communication

Concerning the communication the two companies use the digital tools.
Géraldine GRANDIDIER spoke about the social medias, the newsletters etc but, for her, the other thing which is really important is the communication between consumers. The clients will share their experiences.

A powerful tool is the word of mouth. Indeed, all the interviewees spoke about this aspect. Thanks to Geraldine GRANDIDIER, it's a combination between the basic communication, the new technologies tools and the communication within the consumers. This is also an element of the perceived quality. A consumer will be more willing to share its experience with the products if he is fully satisfied. The influence of the family, the friends or the pair is an important aspect.
But, thanks to Mrs GOULLEY, as Unilever touch a "basic" market – with functional products – the buzz in the good sense of it is rare, it has to be something exceptional to create good buzz and to make consumer recommending the Uniliver products.
They have tools to measure the word of mouth and she explained this is not really powerful.

Jennifer MOUKOUMA also raised this aspect. She can see the "bad buzz" a bad comment can make on a brand. It can destroy the reputation of it. The perceived quality is really important as today with all the tools we have; the consumers can express their dissatisfaction and let it known to everyone. So, the brand has to keep promise about the quality of the products.

Géraldine GOULLEY also spoke about it. For her, it's complicated to control the consumer perception because the "consumer have taken the power" thank to the web. It is more difficult to maintain a good brand image because if they do one mistake, customers will over react on the social medias. Nowadays, people are more exigent, they want premium quality with low prices. This is not a descendant marketing anymore – the companies communicate to the consumers – but now the customers have the power to express themselves. That is why the customer's perception is very fragile. Thanks to her, the brands do not have the power to manipulate so the influence is more complex than before – within the last ten years.

The advantage is that the brand can also use this as strength. They use it to involve consumers to their production process – for example they can give ideas on the scents or tastes or products. It creates interactivity and this is essential.

For Géraldine GOULLEY and Jennifer MOUKOUMA, the principal ways of communication that will influence a purchase process are the medias which are mostly the tv ads – representing more than 80% of their investments. Mrs. GOULLEY mentioned the fact that it depends in the target, for them, the target is the families. That is why they use a lot of tv ads. They also use the Google Search keywords, the social medias – Youtube, Facebook, Twitter. It depends on what the brand wants to say about itself.

It is important to make the link between all the medias and means of communication, this is the 360° communication, the consumer can see the same idea everywhere and make the link to remember it easily during the moment of truth.

The difference between Tidy Books and Unilever is, for the first it's a small production company, and the second is a mass production. They will have different manners to communicate according to the size of the company and the market.

They will have to adapt their communication to the size of the market. Unilever uses mass consummation marketing because they are not targeting a niche. The need already exists.

The brands have to adapt their communication to their target. For example if they are targeting teenagers they will use more the social medias. For the Fruidor Proactive – a "healthy butter with less cholesterol – they target the elderly so they will try to influence them with the tv ads; but as this target goes more on the internet, they also put some articles on medical websites which elderly usually visit – such as Doctissimo in France. They also speak with doctors so they will recommend the product to their patients.
When the target is the "mum" they will use more traditional communication within the tv ads only or in the feminism press. In this case this is not relevant to use the social medias or internet – at least not enough relevant to reach a large public.

Unilever also uses a lot the promotion on the stores. This is a way to be known. As the products can sometimes be premium prices products, consumers will choose medium or low cost products. The promotions will help the brand to reach new customers. Promotions are also important because the competitors are doing this event very often. In term of price strategy the brands have sometimes to align their range of price to competitors to not lose their consumers – adapt their price to the same kind of product with the same quality and price. This is the period of economic downturn.

It is harder for big companies, like Unilever, to communicate. Because, surprisingly, Mrs. GOULLEY evoked the difficulties to manage lots of brands. The more the portfolio is bigger, the more it's difficult to be focusing and to do an efficient communication. As they are really dispersing they emerge less.

In Géraldine GRANDIDIER opinion, the communication is also a tool for the customer and not only for the company. Of course the company uses it to be well-known and to be more visible but, for her, it is also a means for customers to see that they have the choice and to consume products from brand sharing the same values. The goal is to making them come back again.

For Géraldine GOULLEY the communication is based on the values sharing to put forward the products.

For Mrs. GOULLEY, Mrs. MOUKOUMA and Mrs. GRANDIDIER this is important to tell a story about the brand.

About sharing experience Géraldine GRANDIDIER does partnership with the mums' bloggers. This is an opportunity to be well known with a low price. It just costs the shipping and a product to send. The bloggers are today more and more popular, they became experts in a domain – for Tidy Books they are targeting mums and young children so it will be mums blogs. They have a community and they share their experience. This can be link with the social integrator part.

Jennifer MOUKOUMA evoked another tool used by Unilever: the magazines sending to the consumers quarterly. The website – which has one million unique users per month - is not only a showcase or a window of products, they also use it to write editorial articles with subtle evocation to the Unilever brands. Thanks to this website Unilever wants to create a link with the customers, they want to generate brand preference, brand attachment and to be a part of the consumer's habits – especially for the women aged from 30 to 60.

Mrs. MOUKOUMA also explained the importance of the Google Search adword presence. This is relevant for Unilever to appear in one of the first position on Google. The main objective is to have more visibility and to generate brand preference. Even if the consumers will not click on the link founding, they will remember the name of the brand as they see it very often. They can find a correspondence and make the link between a product and the brand – for example washing powder and Skip. It will create attention to the specific brand.

She also thinks this is important to do digital communication thanks to the e-commerce. She gave the example of Facebook which recently add a "buy now" button on their ads in order to create impulsive purchases.

Géraldine GRANDIDIER also thinks that this is essential to move on at the same time as the new technologies. She doesn't have the budget for a large advertising plan so she

thinks using different tools that are easy and not too expansive are also a good way to have an efficient communication. That is why she will create a new way to sell – and to communicate – Tidy Books products. She will let the mums sell her product. This is a new way of communication but with this target it could be something interesting.

Géraldine GOULLEY makes the difference between the "shoppers" and the "consumers". It could be the same person. The shopper is the person in charge of the purchase; he/she will physically buy the product for the consumer. The communication will be different depending on which one of them is the target and it could be difficult to reach both of them. In the stores they will try to influence the shopper by knowing how they behave, it is called the "in store behavior". The finality is the "moment of truth" which is the moment when the purchase is made. At home, thanks to the tv ads, for example, they will try to reach the consumer. The aim is to make the difference from competitors.

For Géraldine GRANDIDIER, Géraldine GOULLEY and Jennifer MOUKOUMA the internal factor is the need itself. When the consumer looks for their products, they first have the desire – or the need – the buy this particular king of product. The external factors arrived right after with the communication and the environmental influence.

The purchase process can be influenced by external and internal factors. That is the way of thinking of all the interviewees.

Géraldine GRANDIDIER evoked the importance of a good communication that matches the consumer's expectation. The competition is also an external factor, it will make the brand communicate more and better because the customer has the choice and as brands are a lot in the same market, they will have to try to differentiate to make a difference for the client. Influencing people can be made thanks to the environment of the product.
The quality of the product is, for her, an internal factor. In her opinion, the internal factors will meet the external factors, so, they are related and they have to be both taken seriously into consideration. How the brand projects itself will have an effect on touching a customer's internal motivation.

Brands can also use celebrity endorsement, Géraldine GOULLEY explained that they use a lot this tools.

But they mostly use the website infiltration. For example, in the culinary website they use the recipes to but the name of their products. They can also put a link where the product is mentioned to a shop online. It can be a powerful influence as it indicates different ways to use the products and it will create a need.

To conclude this communication part, the aim is to create a brand attachment that fit the consumers' expectations. The goal is to create engagement thanks to the communication so it enhances consumer's loyalty.

Analysis of the hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: A brand is a social integrator which takes into consideration the consumer perception.

This hypothesis is to moderate.

The integration is when people become part of a group or society and are accepted by them.[42]

We saw on the theories part and during the interviews that the brand image is the most important part that influence the consumer perception of a brand.

But, the brand cannot always be a social integrator. Nowadays, the consumption can be more than just a need to fill. The consumption of certain goods can define who is the consumer. The example of green products or products from eco friendly and environmentally companies is the most convincing.

These consumers are proud to consume this specific type of products and will therefore show it. They are also taking part of a circle of certain community. They will be able to

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talk about their experiences with this type of product and share commonalities with others.

The goal of all brands is to create a real community around its product where customers have a common interest and can speak about it. This is something easier for engaging products like Tidy Books ones.
To feel integrate in a social circle the consumers has to share strong values.

The social integrator is the only thing we can moderate on this hypothesis. Concerning the fact that companies take this factor into consideration the consumer perception, this is totally true.

Indeed, the brands have to know who the target is, to influence well their perception. It is important to have values and well defined brand attributes in order to share a good brand image and to create loyalty.

« Our connection needs to others is even more fundamental, even more basic than our primary need to feed and our need to shelter.»

Matthew Lieberman

To conclude, the brands can be a social integrator, but, they definitely take into consideration the consumer perception for their branding, communication and marketing strategy.

Hypothesis 2: The brand positioning play a really important role in the purchase choice process in the customers mind.

This hypothesis is confirmed.

The positioning is a powerful tool for companies as it defined who is the target. It is also helpful to adapt the branding strategy.
The positioning is what the customers understand of the brand. It will help to have a clear view of the product. We saw on the theories part that a good positioning will attract consumers to the product. What we can say is a great positioning will make them buy this product! It has to be clear and simple.

As the positioning will be the difference between a brand and its competitors it will enhance a choice.
We also have to keep in mind that the positioning can be the identification and the differentiation.

Thanks to a clear message, the positioning will help a brand to be recognizable by the consumers. It will define the product and what kind of person will be more willing to buy this good or service. Once the target is well defined and the values – or the message – are clear, it will be the most important part of the consumer moment of truth. This is the thing that will make him/her chose brand A product and not brand B.

Finally, we can conclude by saying that the positioning play an important role in the consumer purchasing choice thanks to a differentiation from other brands and also to a link made in the consumer mind between a product and values.

Hypothesis 3: The purchase influence is principally extern; the customer is more reactive to his/her environment in his/her purchase process.

This hypothesis is confirmed.

The communication is the principal external factor that influences the purchase. The interviewees made the difference between the first need – which is the internal factor – and all the external factors.

They are using powerful tools such as the social medias or all the communication strategies possible to influence a purchase.

Of course the impulsive purchase exists but even in that context the brands try to convince consumer by influencing them thanks to the communication.

The cultural environment can influence. We know, from the theories, that the family, the culture and the sub culture can play a major role in the process.

The experience whereas it is their own experience or the others will take an important place in the environment of the consumer. This includes the word of mouth. This is the combination of good experiences – or bad ones – and the communication tools the consumers can use in their everyday life. This is more and more easier to speak about their own experience of a product and, nowadays, it can create buzz.

Conclusion Part 2

The entire hypotheses have been confirmed thanks to the analysis but there is still one to moderate. Indeed The brand image is the most important factors that will influence the consumer perception. Therefore, the brand can be a social integrator depending on the values and the story it wants to tell to customers. Tidy Books is one of them thanks to an ecofriendly belief and a strong ethic management. Consumer will be influenced in their purchase and the product could be a social integrator thanks to its attributes. Contrary to Unilever products which are mostly "second" need products and don't necessarily wants to pass a strong message even if they try to develop a story around their products.

The second hypothesis was easily affirmed as the positioning determined, in general the attributes and the target. It is a strong tool to make the difference from competitors as it will define the values of the brand. The positioning is the identification of a brand, it define it, and the differentiation, as said before from competitors. That is way it play such an important role in the purchase choice process in the consumers mind.

We also confirmed the third hypothesis thanks to a study of the external communication of the two companies. It was mostly around this topic as it is the most important instrument companies have to influence customers. We also remarked the power of social environment. Indeed, the word of mouth is the perfect example of an external factor that can summarize another consumer experience.

Conclusion

After analyzing precisely the subject of branding and all the theories about this topic, we developed a qualitative field survey at the end of which I could be able to respond to my problematic, which is:

"How do companies manage their brand image dealing with consumer perception?"

We found that this problematic meeting the needs of brands to adapt themselves to their consumers. Indeed, brand image has always been the focus and the central point of a branding strategy, but it is even more important that it is now essential to know how to manage it. This management must be made in agreements with consumers, who are the final decision makers. Influence is actually a key to attract consumers and we studied the dimensions and how it can be done.

We raised some theories, including the brand image one, according to Kapferer, and the link that can be created between brand identity and brand image or his explanation of brand equity. Kevin Lane Keller also spoke about this point with the Keller's brand equity model. These theories have allowed us to understand, explain and analyze the importance of branding for both brands, that need to know how to manage, and consumers, who are attracted by what emerges a brand with the quality that they will be able to perceive.

As a reminder, the hypothesis we studied throughout this thesis are:

Hypothesis 1: A brand is a social integrator which takes into consideration the consumer perception.
Hypothesis 2: The brand positioning play a really important role in the purchase choice process in the customers mind.
Hypothesis 3: The purchase influence is principally extern; the customer is more reactive to his/her environment in his/her purchase process.

It was fascinating to be able to study throughout this paper the multiple facets of brand management. This is an extremely rich area in which we have to use technological innovations, with new means of communication. Indeed make a connection with the Digital Marketing has been a key point of this study.

We also observed differences in management according to the type of business we had to deal with. Indeed, a very large multinational company like Unilever has a way to manage their branding strategy in quite a different way as a small company like Tidy Books even if they all use the same tools. No matter the type of business or even its size the most important is the story it will tell to its consumers in order to enhance its brand image. The goal is always to create desire. We do not really talk about creating need but creating desire.

This research topic is vast and can lead us to many conclusions. The most important we can come out of this thesis is, in my opinion, the willingness to improve. The ability of brands and their financial, personnel and professional investments to follow the evolution of the trend is really interesting. This is an area that continues and will continue to evolve as it brings many opportunities, in addition it takes into account human factors such as consumer behavior, which, even if it may influence will never fully understood and will never be controlled. It would therefore be interesting to complete this research by a more sociological study of the consumer to better understand him/her afterwards.

Appendixes

Appendix1 :Questionnaire

Could you present yourself, the company and the role you have within it?

How do you do your brand positioning? (Target customers, the value you want to share? To who?)

What is your brand positioning? OR Do you think have a good positioning strategy is important? And why?

Do you think it can be a social integrator to consume you products or a certain kind of products (ecofriendly products)?

Ho do you communicate your brand image? (Quality, communication strategy, competitive pricing, good value added service, discounts etc.)

What are the factors that influence a purchase? (external, internal factors? Social media? Communication?)

A.H. Hi Géraldine, thank you for taking time for the interview!

G.G. Hi Audrey! No problem I think it is also relevant for the company!

A.H. Do you agree if I record the interview?

G.G. No problem Audrey!

A.H. Thank you. Can you present yourself and the company?

G.G. So I am Géraldine I founded the company about 10 years ago I was looking for a bookcase for my daughter. She had a lot of books I thought "how can I tidy up these books" and normal bookcases made no sense to me because normal bookcases, children might not see the front of the books as well children books come in difference sizes you can't put them all on the same book shelf so I looked for the bookcase I had in mind and I couldn't find it anywhere so I though it needs to be front facing, it needs to be when a the children pick a book it doesn't collapse. So I went to look for a bookcase and it didn't exist. What I found in libraries was not suitable it was too bulky, it was just a display, it wasn't storage, it didn't look good, it wasn't practical for children so I designed the bookcase I had in mind and I made it and then when my friends came to see us they said "where did you find this bookcase, I really like it, I want the same one". So I knew other parents were looking for this. I put a small ad in a parenting magazine and I couldn't make them fast enough, people kept calling me to order these bookcases. So I was making them so I knew I could start a business. And then I changed the design to a flat pack because even thou I was a violin maker and I had no experience in business, I knew I wanted to build a global business. And so, my first change was thinking of the logistics

behind "how can I send bookcases everywhere" and I change it for a flat pack design and something that comes in a box and this is how the business started.

A.H. So it's a family story!

G.G. It's really the story of a mum who can't find a product for her children so she makes it herself and usually a mum knows what children need so that why the parents can relay to our products.

A.H. What is your brand positioning?

G.G. We make products that are unique, innovative, and useful for children and parents, practical, educational but still cool they still have to look good in a home for trendy parents etc. So they need to be fits to purpose, create out of a need but still desirable. Our products encourage children to read, our products put children's books in their everyday life, they can see their books everyday so they look good in their room, it attracts them to their books so it really is attracting children to read. Books are very important so if children can be introduce to books in a natural way, for them to go and pick their books independently that a good thing.
Our products are eco friendly as well. We care about the environment. We use water lacquer because it's better for the producer, it doesn't have any toxic fumes. We are practicable as well in our approach. Our products are practical we also are practical in our approach. If we can make products that are better for the environment then that what we do in a practical way.

A.H. So it's your principal value?

G.G. Yes, our principal values drive what we do and our job is to communicate those principal values so customers can recognize themselves in these values which then create the desire to buy.

A.H. This communication, how do you do that? Do you use social medias, do you…

G.G. Yes, we use social medias, newsletter, we encourage other customers to share their experience of Tidy Books. We make sure the materials inside the box talk about us so when a customer has opened their package and their products and etc they have every opportunity, there will be a brochure telling them the story about us. We think this will helps us to communicate to other customer because they will tell their friends about us. We know from customers that people tell us, friends come around and they say "this is a really lovely bookcase". We believe that the combination of their friends or family liking the product plus our original customer knowing about us and maybe being able to say to their friends "yes this is a small company in the UK they use eco materials, it's really nice bookcase and the mum used to be a violin maker etc." We think every opportunity we have to communicate. Leave a brochure in the box is very important because it gives the opportunity to the customer to read about us and maybe they will share our story. We communicate through bloggers. Bloggers do reviews on our products. We are going to do more on the digital side which is putting automatic review system. We are now going to be looking for a new program where other mums have the opportunity to sell Tidy Books. Because we are a small company, we don't have budget for large marketing television etc. But we have to use our story and our values that match our customers and other parents that they want to share it with their friends and family.

A.H. Ok. So finally it's not just only your communication, it's the external communication. So it will make the others future consumers buying your products.

G.G. Yes, that is right

A.H. For you, how much and in what way the perception that has your costumers of your products is important? It takes a large place in your communication, the perception a customer can have of your product?

G.G. Yes, very important.

A.H. Of course they are not obliged to share the same values you have …

G.G. No, but we notice that sometimes you can have values and you don't realize that you are not sharing them. Because inside the company you live and breathe it every day. You think you are sharing it but you are not always sharing it. I think it's very important, if we explain why we do certain things then the customer has an opportunity to understand what we do and if it's something to like he has an opportunity to really see what we do. So we really have to explain why, why do we use water lacquer? If we just say it, that is not enough, we need to explain. There is a story behind that so if we explain the story as well it comes to life it has impact on the customers as well. And I think if customers share your values they will attractive by these and its hope de us to give them more opportunity to read about it through blog post, newsletter or to see the story maybe through videos. We basically have to give the materials to customers for them to be able to see our values and to be able to perceive them. So yes, it's important. But if we do everything we believe is right and is good and we explain it well they will perceive us for who we are. So, of course customer service is really important to us but it's not so much that we want customers to perceive that we have good customer service. We actually deliver good customer service and their experience will mean they want to share the experience or they will feel good about the experience so they will maybe want to come back again or tell their friends or…

Buying products that last with an eco friendly aspect is a way of being, it's a way of thinking and I think we maybe need to communication more on this philosophy.

A.H. For you is that important the clients have the same value as you or not really?

G. G. We are not here to impose things on anybody, we have our values we think they are important and we think when you give your values in a general way sometimes it can change a bit the world, it can change sometimes, but we can't really control that. We think if we explain something well someone might think "oh ok I can see that". If somebody already has the same values as you, they probably are going to be a customers, obviously we are a company we need to grow we need to have sales, of course this is really important. But we think as well as a company, all the other values that go out there We think sometimes we can change somebody perception and they can meet you so we meet each other

A.H. So, they will be more willing to share their experience to others…

G.G. If people have an experience they usually share it. So if they have got a bad experience they'll share it, if they have a good experience, hopefully they will share this good experience. It's better! It means even if we make a mistake or things are not perfect, if we respond quickly and in the interest of the customer that customer is most likely to have a good experience so they will hopefully want to share this experience. I think as well we notice that in lots of big companies maybe sometimes the customers don't have a good experience so if we give them a good experience that is a surprise to them and the element of surprise means they want to share it more.

A.H. So it's strength for you?

G.G. Yes, sure!

A.H. In your opinion, what are the factors that influence the purchase? Especially for your products? Do you believe they are more internal, external? The communication you do? Maybe the consumer has the idea before going to the social media, your website etc. They already have the idea to buy this kind of product so they go to search it or …

G.G. I think it is both, I think they could be searching and they find us, and it matches them. So that is why it's so important that we communicate well on who we are because we could match a customer's expectation exactly, but if we don't communicate well they can't know that we match them, that we match their desires. So that is why it's so important that we communicate well. As we have more competition of course we have to communicate even better. We have to express more that our product will last. If we don't say it, the customer can't guess it! They will just try to satisfy their first needs. There is a place for explaining well what we are already doing which will influence. And of course when they see our product in a nice environment with people that they respect; it will influence people for sure.
 The product has to be good! This is internal
It could be they just looking around, they come across and they say "yes that make sense, I like this". It could be both.

So finally all of that are external factors that will meet their internal factors they are both related.

A.H. So, for you it's more complementary? They have to be both internal and external? It's not just about one OR the other, it's an AND?

G.G. Yes!

Sometimes I think as well, it is reminding people of their own desires. Maybe people are very busy and you can just pick up tablet … I do want my job to have more this kind of environment. Of course they would already have some books and etc but maybe it's reminding them. It's ok, to have tablets and this is the modern world and etc but I do want as a reminder, to reminding them of maybe their deeper desires of how it was for them when they were children, they could just seat with a book… They could forget this so if you are reminding them of that … then, that is a good think

I think how we project ourselves will have an effect on touching a customer's internal motivation. But of course someone can as well be influence by what they appear of doing. You know, they have these it looks good in their environment, what friends or pairs say about it. Quality is important you know, maybe it's better to pay a bit more money and keep a product for ten years and to pass it to someone else than   . Buy something that will last few years and then throw it in the bin. You know if you buy poor quality you'll throw it. I think if you pay more for something, you won't throw it, you won't want to throw it, it has more value to you. You will want to passing on to someone else when your child is bigger or to the brother or sister.

So yes of course, how we present and how other customers talk about Tidy Books will have an effect on the consumers purchasing decisions. If you have lots of reviews from clients that have a similar lifestyle and they are explaining what are the products doing for them it will have an effect on the customers.

A.H. They will more willing to buy your products…

G.G. Yes, they will be convinced.

A.H. Ok so that is the end, thank you very much!

A.H. Bonjour Géraldine! Ca ne vous dérange pas si j'enregistre, ça me permet de pouvoir retranscrire plus facilement notre discussion ?

G.G. Bien sur pas de soucis !

A.H. On a en a déjà parlé par email mais juste pour rappel mon sujet est « la gestion d'image de marque face à la perception des consommateurs ».

G.G. L'image de la marque découle en général d'un positionnement de base. Vous prenez par exemple Axe, c'est la marque la plus fun et cool, c'est ça leurs items principaux. C'est « Axe, la marque la plus fun et la plus cool ». Ce sont des items que l'on traque, on va traquer telle marque, alors on a tout un set de marque et l'on va traquer, alors on a des items : est une marque de qualité, est une marque trendy, est une marque pour les jeunes etc… Et les consommateurs se disent « ah oui ça c'est Axe » ou « Ca c'est Addidas »etc … Et donc en fonction des résultats, on va réajuster les choses, il y a des compagnes qui ne vont pas fonctionner on les fait plus, on les réitère pas parce qu'on se dit que cette campagne n'a rien apporté ou des innovations qui n'ont pas permis à la marque d'enrichir sa perception de marque de qualité. C'est pour réajuster finalement les actions marketing ces enquêtes que l'on fait pour suivre l'image et la notoriété c'est vraiment, la perception de consommateurs, ce qui compte c'est de la suivre pour faire évoluer les actions pour influencer le consommateur.

A.H. C'est autour de ça que mon mémoire saxe.

G.G. Pour moi le branding c'est vraiment l'attribution à une marque, pour nous c'est un des critères, il y en a plusieurs comme une pub par exemple.

Le branding pour moi c'est juste un critère qui dit que ce que tu fais est bien attribué à ta marque. La théorie que l'on a à Unilever c'est le « brand love » c'est une théorie marketing autour de ça, l'amour d'une marque. Brand positioning c'est ton positionnement de marque, ce que toi tu veux faire, ce que tu décide en tant que marketeu, tu dis « moi je veux que ma marque elle ait tel type de positionnement, son cœur c'est ça, ce qu'elle veut dire c'est ça, ses valeurs c'est ça, son territoire » etc etc. Il y a une théorie « la brand love key » c'est une clef, c'est « ce que veut dire la marque, quel est son message, à qui elle s'adresse, quelles sont ses valeurs » etc , tout un tas de paramètres comme ça. Ca s'appelle le Brand Love Key. Tout ça doit définir la marque et tout ce que l'on fait doit le nourrir.

A.H. Pourriez vous vous présenter, expliquer la place que vous occupez dans l'entreprise.

G.G. Mon poste s'appelle CMI « Consumer and market insight », donc on parlera d'Unilever après mais moi je m'occupe de la catégorie qui s'appelle « Home Care » : les lessives, cleaners, la catégorie machine dishwash, plusieurs marques regroupées sous la catégorie home care, je m'occupe des études consommateurs. Mon poste c'est un poste de responsable d'études consommateurs pour la catégorie home care d'Unilever puisque Unilever fait plein de marques, produits et vend plein de marques. Ce sont des marques qui sont séparées en plusieurs catégories : les catégories home care, dont je m'occupe, la catégorie personal care donc là ce sont les marques de déodorants, gels douches, le dentaire avec la marque Signal etc et il y a aussi un pôle food et ice cream ce sont les marques d'alimentaire comme Knorr, Amora, Maille, les margarines et les glaces. Donc voilà, ça ce sont les autres catégories et moi je m'occupe de la catégorie Home Care. Et dans cette partie là je gère les études consommateurs donc toutes les études que l'on fait auprès de nos consommateurs ou de nos shoppers. Parce qu'on distingue les shoppers et les consommateurs.

A.H. C'est quoi la différence entre shopper et consommateur ?

G.G. A la base ça peut être la même personne, ça peut être par exemple la femme responsable des achats de son foyer qui à la fois achète en magasin, elle est shoppeuse et

quand elle est chez elle et qu'elle consomme le produit elle est consommatrice. Ca peut être la même personne, appréhendée sous deux angles différents, d'un côté en magasin on essaie de comprendre comment elle fonctionne face aux rayons, ce sont les « instores behavior » où l'on comprend comment sont achetés nos produits, là aussi pour mieux influencer le shopper. Les études consommateurs sont plus tournées vers la maison ou qu'est ce qu'a le consommateur en tête lorsque qu'il consomme le produit et lorsqu'il n'est pas en condition d'acte d'achat. On distingue l'acte d'achat, le shopper et le consommateur, sachant qu'on s'adresse à la même … oui ça peut être la même personne !

A.H. Et du coup quand vous faites votre stratégie en général marketing, ça va être pour influencer plus le shopper ou le consommateur ou les deux ?

G.G. Les deux, les deux vraiment. Très en amont c'est le consommateur qu'on veut influencer mais après sur le point de vente, le moment de vérité, le fameux Aproctère qui a défini « the moment of truth », le moment où l'acte d'achat est réalisé c'est quand même la finalité ! Là on fait les études shopper. Donc on fait vraiment les deux pour influencer à la fois le consommateur dans sa perception de marque pour que une fois en magasin lorsqu'il est shopper, il nous achète nous plutôt que la marque concurrente.

A.H. Comment faites-vous pour justement créer cette influence ? Les réseaux sociaux ?

G.G. Il y a effectivement une grosse influence des médias. Alors dans les médias, chez Unilever comme c'est une cible assez classique familiale, la grosse partie de la communication se fait sur la tv, les investissements médias se font en grosse partie, à plus de 80% sur la tv.

A.H. Donc les publicités télévisuelles …

G.G. Oui, les publicités via la tv avec des spots que l'on achète, des spots de 30sc, de 20sc que l'on achète via une régie d'achat publicitaire. Donc c'est vraiment la tv le média principal d'influence des consommateurs et ensuite à 20% il y a tous les autres médias dont le digital qui fait un peu moins de 10% des investissements. Alors là ça peut être des

mots clefs achetés via le search, ca peut être les activités digitales comme la vidéo Youtube, la vidéo online ou toutes sortes de publicités sur le net. Après ça se fait en fonction de la stratégie de la marque en fonctionne de ce qu'elle souhaite communiquer.

En réseaux sociaux on fait surtout du Facebook et plutôt pour faire du reach que pour faire de l'engagement sur les communautés, parce que l'engagement sur les communautés ça coute une fortune et ca ramène pas grand-chose. Donc on se sert de Facebook comme d'un endroit où il y a beaucoup de monde donc ils achètent des médias pour toucher le maximum de gens et pas spécialement « j'essaie d'avoir plein fans » car ça ne marche plus trop. C'est du post sponsorisé qui est pas forcément lié à « je suis fan d'une marque ». Avec ça on atteint des millions de gens pour pas très cher alors que si on essaie d'en faire des fans ca coute une fortune.

A.H. Donc en fait la finalité c'est plus de créer une pulsion d'achat chez le consommateur que de vraiment l'engager dans la marque et qu'il se dise « la prochaine fois je vais revenir vers cette marque là », de le fidéliser ?

G.G. Il y a les deux quand même, c'est juste que de créer une communauté de fans pour nos marques qui sont quand même hyper désengageantes, la marque de lessive Skipe ou même Axe c'est un peu plus compliqué que d'autres marques comme celles où vous travaillez en ce moment ou les marques engageantes qui font du bio…

A.H. Comment vous communiquez pour garder une certaine image de marque que vous avez essayé de créer depuis le début ? Sur la qualité ? La stratégie de communication ? competitive pricing ? Réductions assez souvent ? Toutes ces choses là …

G.G. Comme c'est très large et qu'il y a un peu de tout, il faudrait presque plus s'attacher à une marque …

A.H. On peut prendre un exemple de marque dont vous vous occupez…

G.G. Oui, on peut parler de la marque Skipe. C'est une marque qui existe en Angleterre sous le nom de Persil. Cette marque a une image d'expertise « expertise du soin du linge » et qualité à prix plutôt premium. Le marché de la lessive est découpé en différents

types de marques, il y a les low price brands qui sont les marques de distributeurs ou les marques les moins chères qui sont moins dans la qualité produit, les marques medium prices et les premiums prices où là il y a essentiellement Skipe et Ariel en France.

Le positionnement de Skipe a toujours été l'expertise, la qualité et puis depuis quelques années en positionnement autour des enfants et un crédo qui est que les enfants doivent être libres de se salir. C'est un peu l'attribut de marque, le positionnement que l'on voudrait « owner ». Les brand attributs soit on les own soit on les share. Et là ce qu'on veut c'est que vraiment Skipe soit définie et compris pour les consommateurs comme une marque qui aide les enfants à grandir, les aide à s'épanouir dans la vie parce que leur mères comprennent que c'est bien quand ils sont libres de se salir, de découvrir le monde, de se rouler dans la terre etc. Et grâce à Skipe ils sont heureux car ils ont la liberté de se salir et après leur fringues sont lavés et voila. Et donc ça c'est le positionnement de la marque depuis quelques années. C'est le positionnement « Dirt is good ». C'est ce qu'on veut que les consommateurs comprennent et ça c'est un positionnement global pour la marque c'est-à dire que c'est valable en France mais aussi en Angleterre etc … sauf que Skipe s'appelle Persil. Si on regarde une pub dans différents pays on va retrouver le même territoire de communication autour des enfants qui vont se salir et leurs mères qui vont nettoyer leurs vêtements avec Skipe et les enfants sont heureux. Donc c'est ce que veut communiquer sur la marque, du coup tous les spots de pub sont autour de cette idée. Donc il y a la communication qui relai cette valeur ou cette idée et idem en magasins les arches qui sont développés pour mettre en avant les produits on va retrouver des enfants dessus avec écrit « dirt is good » ou « libre de se salir » donc toutes les actions qu'on réalise doivent relayer ce message qui est le positionnement de la marque.

A.H. Donc en fait la stratégie de communication peut se résumer au slogan « dirt is good ». Tout s'articule autour de ce slogan….

G.G. Oui c'est ça, tout à fait. Alors après il ya des débats internes parce que nous on pense que derrière ça on a pas assez assis notre positionnement d'expertise et de qualité produit pour aller dans un truc qui est aussi sensoriel et qui s'adresse plus à l'émotion, parce que le « dirt is good » est un territoire plus émotionnel. On a peur que ça nous éloigne du territoire plus « produit » qui est autour de « une lessive ça lave et ca doit bien

laver ». Donc nous, on est pas, en France en tout cas, très convaincu de ce positionnement mais de toutes façon on a pas le choix parce que comme le positionnement de Skipe est global c'est le marketing globale qui décide de ce positionnement depuis quelques années et du coup toutes les pub qu'ils développent sont autour de cet axe.

Une lessive plutôt basique qui doit avoir des caractéristiques produits, une lessive ca doit laver et remplir des besoins fonctionnels, au delà de ca on a envie de faire passer un message très émotionnel autour de Dirt Is Good pour que la marque soit plus aspirationnelle, pour créer un attachement pour le ou la consommateur ou la shoppeuse. La femme qui est devant le rayon va avoir envie d'acheter Skipe car on lui aura montré que c'est la marque qui prend le plus soin de la famille et que les mômes vont pouvoir se rouler dans la terre ou herbes et retrouver des habits tout propres. Donc on est sur un territoire plus émotionnel et c'est comme ca que l'on créer de l'attachement avec les consommateurs, c'est pas en leur disant « on a la meilleure lessive, elle lave super bien » Faut toujours essayer d'avoir une idée aspirationnelle.

A.H. Donc c'est créer le besoin d'achat mais aussi l'envie et cet attachement au produit.

G.G. Oui c'est ça, c'est que nous on appelle l'engagement. Plus t'arrive à créer cet engagement en amont avec les pubs etc et plus en magasin on peut imaginer que même si la marque concurrente fait une promotion et pas toi et bien tes consommateurs vont rester fidèles. Ce qui n'est plus vrai du tout. Le but ultime de toutes les marques est de créer un max d'attachement entre la marque et le consommateur pour créer de la loyalty, de la fidélité. On veut que le conso nous soit le plus fidele possible, qu'il achète une fois, puis une deuxième et une troisième et qu'une fois devant le rayon lessive ce qu'il achète c'est la marque Skipe et pas pareil ou des marques distribution et donc évidemment plus tu créais cet attachement et plus t'as de chance d'être acheté. Mais on sait aussi que c'est devenu très dérisoire, d'où le fait de devoir aussi faire une communication en magasin, et les promotions. Le marché de la lessive est un marché très promotionné donc on est souvent en promotion, on fait des têtes de gondole, on fait des prospectus, on est obligé c'est un pré requis. Nos marques de grande consommation elles doivent être en promo en magasin quasiment tout le temps. Si le concurrent fait une promotion et que toi t'y es pas t'as beau avoir fait toutes les pubs de la terre les gens sont pas bêtes avec cette période de

crise. Cette période économique downturn qui dure depuis des années elle brouille un peu les piste du marketing pur, on peut plus faire du marketing pur au sens « j'ai une marque toute belle avec un positionnement, je fais de la pub et hop c'est bon les consommateurs vont m'acheter ». Ce n'était pas très vrai avant mais alors maintenant avec le problème de la crise et donc des consommateurs qui sont devenus super exigeants en terme de prix, il leur faut le prix le plus bas. On est obligé de faire des promos en magasin, pour nous c'est mandatory. Et quand on fait des promotions en magasin on essaie quand même, dès qu'on peut, sur des meubles de magasin de mettre la communication, de relayer la communication avec le visuel du garçon de la pub. On essaie quand même qu'en magasin il y ait un certain rappel de la pub.

A.H. Pour que les clients fassent le rapprochement…

G.G. Exactement, qu'ils fassent le rapprochement avec ce qu'ils ont vu en pub tv ou en presse ou affichage. On essaie de créer la communication 360, que chaque point de communication avec un consommateur rappelle la même idée par le biais de visuels communs.

A.H. Donc si je résume un peu, dites-moi si oui ou non. L'influence d'achat va être externe et interne. C'est-à-dire qu'ils ont quand même le besoin, il n'y a pas besoin de le créer. Mais il y a-t-il aussi, selon vous, ce facteurs externe. Le buzz par exemple, quand les gens recommandent vos produits etc.…

G.G. Un peu moins parce que tout ca, ça marche pas très bien pour des marchés assez basiques comme la lessive qui est fonctionnelle. C'est rare, il faut vraiment que le marque ait fait quelque chose d'exceptionnelle pour qu'elle fasse du buzz et que les gens recommandent. On mesure le « word of mouth » donc le bouche à oreille et il est très faible pour ce genre de marque. Ca ne marche pas sur recommandation

A.H. Oui mais pas forcement recommandation mais plus influence. Par exemple on voit une amie qui a tel produit alors on le consomme aussi…

G.G. Oui alors ça peut être bien pour des produits qui ont une valeur un peu de statut social. Par exemple Maille, il y a des consommateurs qui sont fiers de consommer ce produit … Ils vont mettre en évidence sur la table le pot de Maille à la truffe, pour montrer qu'ils sont raffinés, sophistiqués… Mais si on prend Skipe c'est pas le cas, cet aspect « statut social » ne s'applique pas. On va pas jouer la dessus. Il y a des marques où on va faire intervenir des blogueurs par exemple ou des chefs. Par exemple il y a des chefs qui vont influencer les consommateurs. La marque Knorr utilise les chefs qui sont connus du grand public qui passe dans les émissions tv culinaires du style Master Chef etc …

A.H. C'est considéré comme du celebrity endorsment ?

G.G. Oui oui c'est un peu ça. Et Unilever le fait beaucoup.
On fait de l'infiltration dans les sites culinaires comme Marmiton ou 750g où on va pouvoir trouver à un moment une recette avec la marque dans les ingrédients, par exemple avec la moutarde Amora et tu peux même parfois l'acheter. Si tu clique tu vas directement sur le site d'Auchan par ex, sur le drive… et donc ca c'est pour influencer à la fois l'usage du produit mais évident l'acte d'achat d'abord !
Chez Unilever c'est des marchés basiques, donc il y a déjà un besoin après c'est des marchés qui sont quasiment tout saturés donc après nous à l'intérieur de ça on va avoir du mal à développer des nouveaux besoins. On n'est pas sur la création d'un besoin.

A.H. Dans externe je pense aussi aux réseaux sociaux …

G.G. Oui c'est ca c'est la communication sous toutes ses formes où tu vas être ciblé en temps que consommateur par plein de moyens, plein de médias possible et dont effectivement internet…

A.H. Donc c'est un peu les deux. D'après ce que vous me dites ça dépend du produit mais…

G.G. Ah oui oui les deux en effet. Mais voila comme je disais, le besoin interne pour moi il existe déjà. On est face à des consommateurs qui quand ils vont acheter un produit

c'est déjà un besoin. On est vraiment sur du marketing de grande consommation, de masse. On s'adresse pas à une niche en créant quelque chose de rupturiste donc déjà le besoin il est là. Après comment on se fait connaitre… par tous les moyens médias traditionnels et les nouveaux médias qui sont plus pertinents sur des cibles qui vont plus sur internet. Mais même pour Fruidor Proactive qui cible les personnes plus âgées on commence à faire aussi de l'influence sur internet comme les sites Doctissimo où les gens vont lire des articles, s'inspirer, et hop à ce moment là on va peut-être leur dire « pensez si vous avec du cholestérol à acheter Fruidor Proactiv pour faire baisser votre cholestérol ». Ou on va faire de l'influence auprès des médecins pour que les médecins recommandent la consommation de Fruidore Proactive. En fonction du conditionnement… Si on prend Skipe, ca s'adresse à la femme qui a des enfants donc on utilise la communication traditionnelle même si on utilise un peu Facebook et un peu internet… Mais ca reste mineur. Par contre les marques comme axe vont plus aller cibler les jeunes et donc plutôt sur Facebook etc… Ca dépend des marques évidemment et de qui elles doivent influencer.

Et donc en tant que marketeu il faut bien définir sa cible et donc tout revient à ce que je disais au départ, la « brand key », puis définir ce qu'on veut dire à qui on veut le dire. Et cette cible il faut se demander ce qu'elle fait : qu'est ce qu'elle lit, qu'est ce qu'elle regarde comme émission de TV, sur quelle chaîne, est ce qu'elle va sur les réseaux sociaux, si elle y va plutôt sur Facebook plutôt sur Twitter. Puis à partir du moment où on a défini les comportements médias de notre cible on va aller les toucher là où ils sont…

A.H. Oui donc c'est aussi une question d'adaptation par rapport à la cible.

G.G. Oui tout à fait. Il faut que ca soit cohérent avec le message.
Comme vous disiez « la perception du consommateur » elle ne vient pas de rien, elle vient de ce qu'on lui raconte, comment on lui raconte et du coup ça créait une perception et après à nous de l'entretenir en continuant à communiquer le bon message, à le faire évoluer. Il y a plein de marques qui étaient vieilles et poussiéreuses qui se sont relancées et que le gens aiment à nouveaux ou des marques comme Nutella qui ont jamais perdu de leur superbe alors que ce sont de très vieilles marques ! Ils ont toujours suent continuer à

communiquer le même message mais avec des pubs sympas, des produits très bons, des nouveaux formats que l'on peut trouver à des prix pas chers.

A.H. Oui. Mais du coup je me demandais est-ce que c'est plus facile dans une grosse boîte qui a un budget plus important ?

G.G. Pas tant que ça, vous seriez surprise… Comme il y a beaucoup de marques, c'est un portefeuille très étendu, chaque marque a peu. C'est parfois mieux d'être sur des portefeuilles de produits plus restreints mais en focalisant mieux les moyens. Nous on se disperse beaucoup du coup on émerge moins !

A.H. Et cet état de fait, qu'il y ait beaucoup de marques etc, ça en devient plus difficile d'en gérer la perception ?

G.G. Oui, et ce qui la rend compliquée aussi c'est le consommateur qui a pris le pouvoir via le web et qui est capable de déclencher une vraie polémique si on fait une erreur ou si le produit n'est pas bon… Donc la perception de consommateur aujourd'hui est devenue plus difficile … Enfin c'est plus difficile de maintenir son image auprès des consommateurs parce que si on fait une erreur, ils vont suréagir sur les réseaux sociaux etc. Donc oui c'est compliqué cette perception parce qu'il y a le contexte de crise qui fait que le gens sont hyper exigeants et veulent de la qualité à un prix hyper raisonnable. Et deuxièmement ils ont le pouvoir aussi sur les marques, ce n'est pas qu'une impression, c'est une réalité, si demain Skipe fait une erreur il va y avoir un ramdam sur les réseaux sociaux, les ménagères qui vont boycotter etc… Ce n'est plus un marketing descendant avec des industriels qui communiquent de façon descendante vers les consommateurs mais maintenant le consommateur va s'exprimer via des blogs, les réseaux sociaux et surtout négativement ! C'est rare qu'ils s'expriment en disant « Skipe c'est la marque la plus géniale de la terre, achetez la tous ! ». Donc la perception du consommateur est devenue fragile, parce qu'il a pris le pouvoir ! Le consommateur a le pouvoir maintenant et on ne peut pas manipuler, ou en tout cas l'influence est bien plus complexe qu'avant. Sur ces 10 dernières années ça c'est complexifié.

A.H. Et oui maintenant il faut prendre aussi en compte qu'il n'y a plus que l'entreprise qui influence mais aussi les consommateurs…

G.G. Oui qui donnent leurs avis … mais le bon côté c'est qu'on peut utiliser ça.

A.H. Ca peut aussi être une force.

G.G. Ca peut être une force et on l'utilise pour certaines activités. Par exemple même dans les lessives où on leur dit « qu'est ce que vous aimeriez que l'on créait comme parfum de lessive » et ils nous soumettent des idées et on fait gagner des produits gratuits … On fait intervenir aussi le consommateur pour qu'il nous aide pour créer des nouvelles idées, des innovations. On fait des jeux concours pour qu'ils nous donnent leurs avis … On utilise cette possibilité qu'ils ont aujourd'hui pour les impliquer. C'est une nouvelle façon de créer une interactivité avec eux qui est devenue essentielle.

A.H. C'est un lien, ils se sentent importants et écoutés.

G.G. Exactement. Donc la perception de consommateurs est fragile mais en même temps la force c'est que maintenant si on fait ça bien, on peut créer un lien avec les consommateurs qui n'existait pas avant et les faire participer à des choses dingues comme la création de nouveaux produits ou même leur demander des idées de publicités. Faire des jeux pour les intéresser. Donc c'est à la fois quelque chose qui fragilise les marques le fait qu'il y ait cette réactivité du consommateur et d'un côté ça peut être super intéressant de les faire s'invertir.

A.H. Dernière question… A votre avis, l'achat d'une marque peut-elle être un intégrateur social ? Par exemple consommer eco-responsable ou consommer que de produits de qualité et prix premium et le consommateur va se retrouver dans un groupe…

G.G. A la Nespresso ?

A.H. Oui voila par exemple

G.G. Certainement que certaines marques peuvent faire ça et peuvent y arriver mais pour moi ce n'est pas un fin en soi. C'est vrai pour des marques qui vont vouloir dire quelque chose, l'idée du bio ca peut être ça, je montre aux autres que je consomme bio … Peut-être qu'en temps que marque on peut s'appuyer sur ce levier là …

Une marque peut vouloir dire quelque chose de toi ! Mais toutes les marques ne le font pas. Ca voudrait dire que tous les achats sont faits en fonction de ce qu'on veut dire de soi. Donc c'est un peu lourd ! Le moindre des achats sont réfléchis en fonction de ses valeurs, de ce qu'on veut que les autres pensent de nous …

A.H. Merci beaucoup ! Tout ce que vous m'avez dit va beaucoup m'aider pour mon étude !

G.G. Il n'y a pas de quoi bon courage !

A.H. Merci bien ! Au revoir

G.G. A bientôt, au revoir !

A.H. Bonjour Jennifer !

J.M. Bonjour !

A.H. Est-ce que ça vous dérange si j'enregistre notre conversation ?

J.M. Non non pas du tout.

A.H. Donc je vous rappelle mon sujet qui est : la gestion d'image de marque face à la perception des consommateurs. Donc c'est comment une marque va essayer d'influencer les consommateurs, toute la stratégie de communication etc… Du coup, si vous voulez bien vous présenter, parler un peu du rôle que vous occupez au sein de l'entreprise…

J.M. Alors je m'appelle Jennifer, je suis apprenti chez Unilever depuis 1an et demi et je travaille au sein du service media et plus spécifiquement sur toutes les problématiques du digital. Donc juste pour vous donner une idée de comment est structuré le service média, il est constitué de personnes qui s'occupent uniquement de l'achat media, plus précisément on s'occupe de coordonner les achats médias avec l'agence qui s'occupe de faire, à proprement parler, les contacts avec les régis. Le rôle de ces medias managers est de coordonner les plans medias à la fois avec les marques et avec l'agence médias qui est celle d'Unilever. Et donc moi je suis en charge plus spécifiquement du digital et plus précisément tout ce qui est le « own » et le « earn » media donc ça va être tous les assets digitaux qui sont détenus par la marque et qu'elle peut contrôler. Par exemple la TV n'est pas un own media parce que les marques sont obligées d'acheter de l'espace pour faire diffuser leurs pubs en tv alors que leur site web elles le contrôlent entièrement et elles peuvent diffuser l'information qu'elles souhaitent et c'est pour ça qu'on appelle cela du

own media car ça appartient entièrement à la marque. C'est gratuit, facile et contrôlé par la marque. Il n'y a pas d'intermédiaire entre les deux.

Dans mon scope j'ai tout ce qui est site web, réseaux sociaux, stratégie mobile et gestion de la partie digitale de notre programme CRM qui s'appelle « ma vie en couleur ». Unilever a la plus gros programme CRM PGC de France et ce programme CRM est constitué d'un écosystème qui est très complet où il y a un magazine qui est envoyé de façon trimestrielle aux consommateurs, il y a un site internet qui fait plus d'un million de visiteurs uniques par mois et qui regroupe des articles éditoriaux plus ou moins brandés. On essaie de faire apparaitre les marques mais de façon très subtile. Ce n'est pas des messages publicitaires, au contraire. Ce site a donc pour vocation de créer un lien avec le consommateur autre que commerciale, c'est vraiment essayer de générer de la préférence de marque, de l'attachement à la marque et de s'ancrer dans les habitudes des ménagères qui est la principale cible de nos marques.

A.H. Donc vous vous occupez de plusieurs marques ou juste d'une en particulier ?

J.M. Alors moi je m'occupe de toutes les marques, il y en a 35 dans le portfolio d'Unilever. Après toutes ne font pas du digital donc grosso modo je vais accompagner une vingtaine de marques. Les marques ont des activités digitales plus ou moins importantes. Par exemple une marque comme Axe où la cible est assez jeune c'est les adolescents et les jeunes adultes est très portée sur le digital et du coup il faut qu'on en fasse beaucoup. Axe a une page Facebook, un compte Twitter etc… On fait pas mal de choses sur Axe. Et puis il y a d'autres marques comme Persil la marque de lessive qui n'est pas du tout digital à la fois parce que sur internet il n'y a pas particulièrement de demande au sujet des lessives sur Google Search il n'y a pas beaucoup de requêtes qui concernent les lessives. Donc voila Persil, ils ont un site mais c'est un site qui est purement vitrine. Après sur tout ce qui est réseaux sociaux Persil n'a pas d'histoire à raconter qui justifierait sa présence sur les réseaux sociaux. Et puis la cible n'est pas en ligne avec les réseaux sociaux comme Facebook, Twitter etc…

A.H. Dans la façon de communiquer avec les marques, est-ce que vous essayer de créer une influence pour que le consommateur aille acheter cette marque ou pas vraiment ?

J.M. Sur le programme CRM oui après sur la plupart de nos marques on va faire de la communication payante classique en tv, en presse, en affichage un eu moins. L'idée c'est d'être présent et visible pour le consommateur. C'est vrai que sur la partie digitale on essaie de plus en plus d'être présent là où les consommateurs sont et de proposer quelque chose d'intéressant au consommateur, de la valeur ajoutée. Pour le premier objectif qui est de se rendre visible auprès des consommateurs et aussi de générer de la préférence de marque, de se rendre plus visible que le concurrent on va par exemple faire de search : donc acheter des mots clef sur Google pour apparaitre dans les premières positions dans les résultats de recherches plutôt qu'un concurrent. Par allitération et par le fait d'apparaitre à chaque fois quand le consommateur va taper une requête relative au produit particulier d'une marque à force de voire le nom de la marque même s'il ne clique pas sur le lien, ça va créer un lien et une correspondance entre le produit et la marque, par exemple les lessives et Persil, et créer une préférence de marque ou alors de l'attention envers la marque.

Après pour générer de la préférence de marque et apporter de la valeur aux consommateurs on utilise pas mal les réseaux sociaux où la on essaie de raconter une histoire pour générer de l'attachement à la marque.

A.H. Ah oui donc vous raconter une histoire sur la marque, vous essayez de créer une histoire autour d'une marque…

J.M. Oui exactement et tout le challenge c'est que cette histoire de marque elle doit être cohérente avec ce qu'on communique par ailleurs, par exemple en tv. Pour Axe par exemple, en tv, on va communiquer à la fois pour la cible consommatrice qui va être les adolescents et les jeunes adultes mais aussi pour la cible acheteuse qui va être les mamans. Ca va être une communication qui est un peu consensuelle alors que sur la page Facebook on s'intéresse uniquement aux adolescents et là on va avoir une histoire adaptée à cette cible là.

A.H. Donc en fait vous voulez que l'acheteur s'identifie à la marque et à son histoire ?

J.M. Oui exactement. Il y a deux stratégies, il y a la partie où on raconte une histoire pour que le consommateur s'identifie et puis l'autre partie « on va raconter une histoire pour que le consommateur se rende compte qu'il a vraiment besoin de nous.

A.H. Est-ce que vous pensez qu'une marque peut-être un intégrateur social ?

J.M. Je pense que c'est vrai pour certaines marques. Pour des marques de personal care telles que Dove je pense que oui après pour la nourriture ou home care je ne pense pas, je pense que dans ce cas le consommateur va plutôt se diriger vers une marque soit qu'il a l'habitude d'acheter, soit qui a une communication qui fonctionne. Par exemple Skipe n'est pas associée à une valeur particulière qui pourrait être intéressante à véhiculer auprès de son cercle social à l'inverse d'Axe où là effectivement qui on consomme du Axe ça veut dire quelque chose parce que la marque est associée à tout ce qui est sexy, cool etc et que quand on consomme la marque on a l'impression de s'attribuer à soi même ces valeurs là et donc de les transmettre aux autres.
Donc ca peut-être un intégrateur social à partir du moment où une marque à de fortes valeurs auxquelles les gens ont envie de s'associer.

A.H. Concernant la pulsion d'achat, c'est-à-dire ce qui va faire qu'un consommateur va acheter un produit vous pensez que ce sont des facteurs internes et/ou externes qui vont rentrer en compte ?

J.M. Nous on pense que réellement c'est la communication qui va provoquer l'achat, c'est pour ça qu'on fait pas mal de communication digitale en y intégrant des aspects e-commerce. C'est-à-dire quand vous allez sur nos pages internet dans la partie produit il y a un bouton e-commerce qui permet de commander en ligne le produit en question. Ou un autre exemple sur Facebook ils ont récemment ajouté un module qui permet d'intégrer un bouton « achetez maintenant ». Le fait que Facebook est développé cet outil ça montre bien que la publicité digitale peut-être un vecteur d'achat pulsionnel. C'est profiter de l'effervescence de la communication.

A.H. Je reviens un peu sur le sujet du positioning, d'après vous le positioning peut-il appréhender un certain poids dans le processus de choix ?

J.M. Oui c'est ce que vous disiez tout à l'heure par rapport aux valeurs et aux qualités qu'on attribue à la marque qui peuvent être un facteur d'intégration social. Oui, je pense que oui. De toute façon il y a tellement de produits qui se ressemblent que les consommateurs n'achètent pas une formule ou un produit en soi, ils achètent vraiment un message et des valeurs. C'est pour ça qu'on investie autant dans la communication, c'est parce qu'on est convaincue que le positionnement de la marque et transmettre ce positionnement aux consommateurs c'est vraiment une clef pour l'achat derrière.

Il y a plein de marques qui ont un positionnement pas clair. Par exemple Persil se positionne en même temps sur lessive pas chère et lessive écologique et du coup quand on regarde la pub il y ales deux messages qui se mélangent et je ne suis pas sure que pour le consommateur ca soit très clair. Quand une marque créer son positioning il faut qu'elle soit très clair sur ce qu'elle a envie de transmettre, il faut se concentrer sur un message et pas s'éparpiller. Il ne faut pas créer la confusion dans la tête du consommateur. Il ne faut pas essayer de donner la même importance à chaque message, c'est impossible.

A.H. J'ai une dernière question que je voulais aborder. Est-ce que la qualité perçue c'est quelque chose d'important, voir même de primordial ou au final pas vraiment c'est juste le message qu'on veut faire passer ?

J.M. Oui ça reste important ! D'autant plus qu'aujourd'hui avec l'air digitale si les consommateurs ne sont pas contents d'un produit ils ont la possibilité de le faire savoir à la terre entière donc toute marque a quand même intérêt au delà de son message marketing à avoir une promesse tenue parce que le consommateur insatisfait est très déterminé pour le faire savoir sur le web et ça peut entrainer du bad buzz pour la marque. Aujourd'hui une marque peut détruire son image si elle ne tient pas sa promesse.
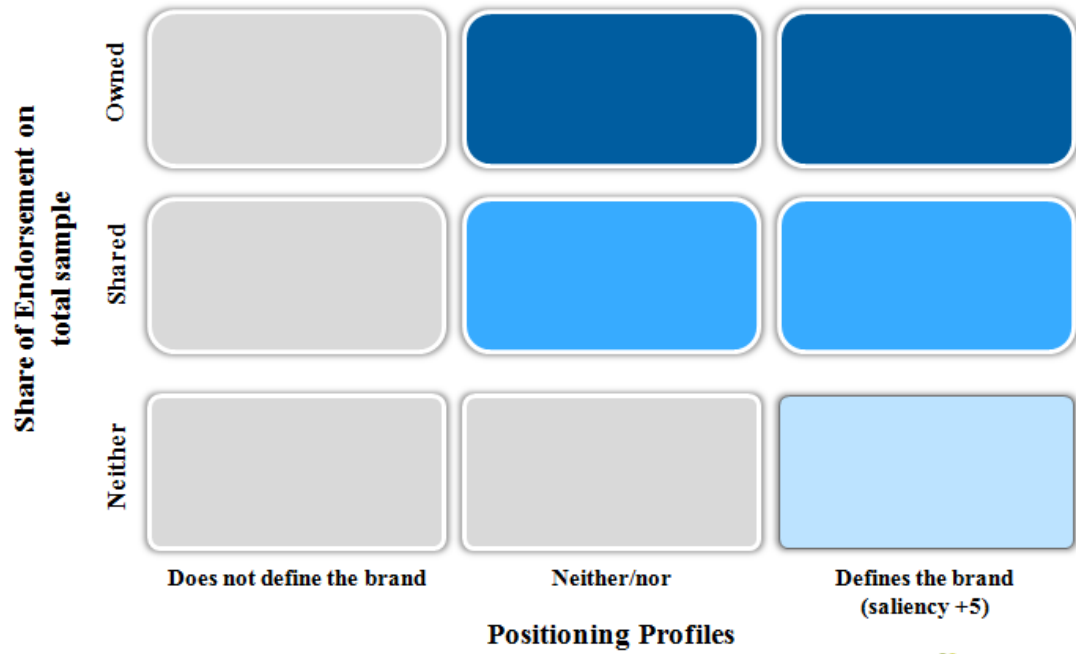
A.H. D'accord … Donc c'est tout ! Si vous voulez rajouter quelque chose …

J.M. Non à vous de me dire si c'est suffisamment complet.

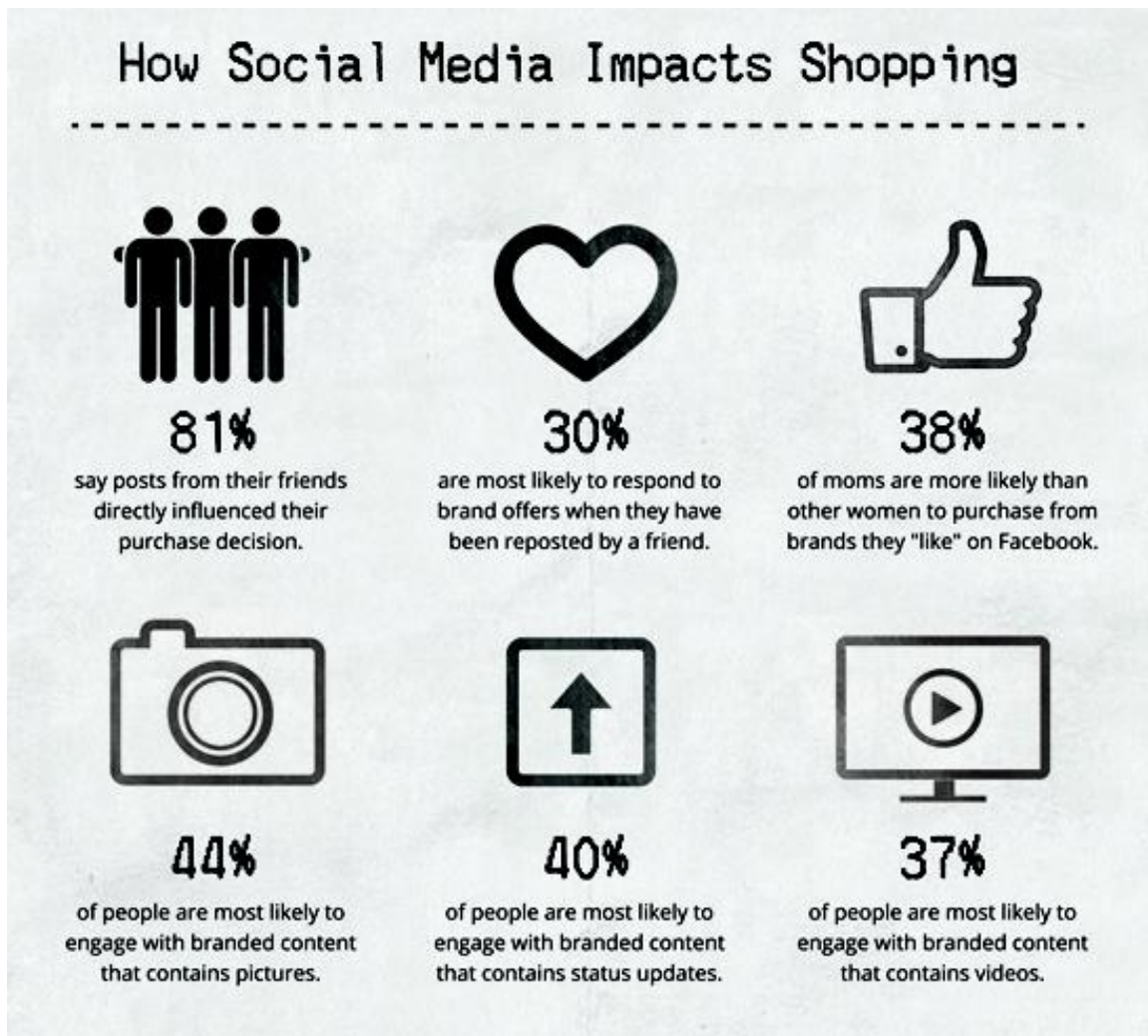**A.H.** Oui oui c'était très complet merci beaucoup pour votre temps !

J.M. Je vous en prie ! Au revoir

Appendix 5: Brand positioning planning matrix

Appendix 6: How social media impact shopping?[43]

How Social Media Impacts Shopping

81%
say posts from their friends directly influenced their purchase decision.

30%
are most likely to respond to brand offers when they have been reposted by a friend.

38%
of moms are more likely than other women to purchase from brands they "like" on Facebook.

44%
of people are most likely to engage with branded content that contains pictures.

40%
of people are most likely to engage with branded content that contains status updates.

37%
of people are most likely to engage with branded content that contains videos.

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[43] http://blog.netpub.fr/quels-facteurs-influencent-la-decision-dachat

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Appendix content

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