

DUREX'S MARKETING STRATEGY IN VIETNAM

Abstract

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Abstract <p>The main objective of this thesis is to analyse the marketing strategy of Durex in Vietnam. Durex is one of the most renowned condom brands in the world, with roughly 30% global market share. Today, Durex is a global brand of Reckitt Benckiser, which has a presence in roughly 150 nations in the world besides its origin country-the United Kingdom. However, with a long history of feudatory culture, Viet Nam still considers a sex-related topic a delicate matter to talk about or mention publicly. Thus, Durex must develop a different strategy to adapt to Vietnam's culture and values.</p> <p>The theoretical dimensions of this thesis focus on Vietnamese market analysis and marketing strategy in Vietnam and the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Qualitative and literature reviews are the primary method to conduct the information and data from public sources. SWOT and PESTEL analysis methods are used to examine the market background.</p> <p>The outcome of this thesis is to present Durex's company profile, business environment and analyse Durex's marketing strategies in Vietnam. The study's findings reveal the challenges that need considering while entering the potential Vietnamese market and how Durex successfully implements this intelligent, flexible, and adaptive strategy in this strict market.</p>		
Keywords Marketing strategy, Covid-19, Vietnamese culture, SWOT, PESTEL.		

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1 Introduction

1.1 Thesis topic

In developed countries such as the US, Western European countries, East Asia... the condom market has been developed for a long time, and this product has obviously become an indispensable part of sex life. Condoms are also encouraged by governments and many international organizations to be introduced into developing and underdeveloped countries, where the epidemic of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is raging. If ten years ago, people were still quite afraid to talk about this sensitive issue in Vietnam. Nevertheless, now, society is developing more, and awareness of sex has changed, leading to condoms and condoms' use, sexual aids to be considered with a more open and sympathetic perspective. These factors make domestic condom manufacturers develop and make the businesses in this fragile product industry pay more attention to the market with nearly 90 million people, mostly young.

On the Vietnamese market, there are many competitive condom products, most of which are imported. These are condom product lines such as OK of Malaysia, Strait of Russia, Okamoto (Japan), Trojan (USA), Durex (UK). There was much information in the press, and the internet, which is known by many people and shared by Vietnamese the most, is none other than the Durex condom product by Reckitt Benckiser, which has a presence in roughly 150 nations in the world. The brand is so prevalent that in the United Kingdom, its origins, "people do not say condom, they say Durex." It can be said that the importance of condom products to human life is not minor. The price may not be as low as some competing products, but in return, the quality always makes consumers feel satisfied, comfortable, and as safe as possible. Durex is one of the most renowned condom brands in the world, with roughly 30% global market share.

Besides, in globalization, it is evident that the competition between companies is becoming increasingly tense. Many companies now have paid more attention to marketing activities, realizing the importance of well-constructed marketing strategies. They have allocated more and more budget to marketing activities, intending to attract customers, and boosting sales. It is undeniable that a carefully designed marketing strategy can help firms gain a competitive advantage and outperform their rivals, increasing the company's profit. Therefore, it's challenging for Durex team in Vietnam that not only they compete with other brands in the market but also marketing their products in a skilful and delicate way to fit the Vietnamese culture.

1.2 Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this thesis is to provide an overview of Durex's company profile and its business environment and analyse Durex marketing strategies in Vietnam: emphasizing the difficulties and challenges of Durex when promotes, advertises its sex related products in Vietnam since sexual activity is subtle and sensitive topic in Vietnamese cultures. On the other hand, this thesis work also proves that marketing with on-going trends on social medias can engage easier in current Covid-19 pandemic.

1.3 Methodology

This thesis will focus intensely on literature review and qualitative research because the case study for this thesis has been developed and analysed based on public data/information sources of Vietnam and online advertising posts of Durex. While literature review focuses strongly on collecting data, information of Durex and Vietnamese market such as company analysis, situation analysis to understand background market, qualitative research will focus on strategy marketing in general, audiences and customers experience.

2 Theory and Analysis

2.1 Company analysis

2.1.1 Current status

Durex is a global condom brand, which was originally developed and produced in London, England, in 1915 by L.A Jackson. In 1929, the company changed its name to Durex, which represents "Durability, Reliability, and Excellence." (Durex, n.d)

During the late 1970s, sex condoms began to be sold publicly in places such as supermarkets, convenience stores, followed by increasing fear of AIDS and related diseases. In the early 2000s, Durex has expanded its presence to more than 50 countries (Durex n.d). Durex is now one of the world's top condom producers, with a global market share of around thirty percent since its founding in 1915 (Durex, n.d). Durex leads the condom sector in Vietnam, followed closely by the OK brand.

Durex has constant developed its products as well as catching up with new trends in sexual behaviour in order to meet the customer needs while still making great efforts to maintain and improve its product quality. Durex believes that sex plays a crucial role in both psychological, physical, and mental health beings of people. The company also believes that people should enjoy healthy and safe sex life.

In each country, Durex set up a local website that features localized pages, in particular the use of local language. The websites provide information about sex education, allow visitors to seek advice from specialists, find more information about the Durex product and some sponsor events.

Durex is now a subsidiary of SSL International, a multinational corporation that manufactures branded products for the medical and consumer healthcare industries. Durex is the market leader in Vietnam, with sales of about 20 million USD in 2012 and a steady upward trend of approximately 10% to 15% per year. (Vinaresearch, 2017) Durex marketing campaigns in Vietnam have become rivals since its presence in the country.

2.1.2 Future Orientation

In recent years, there are more and more condom brands in the market, which means that the competition in this industry is becoming more intense. In addition, the sale of condoms is becoming stagnant because of the availability of other contraceptive measures. As a globally famous condom brand, Durex aims to increase its market share in the world and outperform its rivals. From a social perspective, it is Durex's objective to raise consumer's

awareness of safe sex messages by developing sexual health initiatives and collaborating with governments and organizations in developing countries to solve issues. (Durex Network, n.d.)

To do this, Durex aims to modify its product quality so that the customer experience can be improved. Rather than just a condom brand, Durex wants to focus on the feelings of customers. The company constantly seeks new scents and materials to satisfy the newly identified needs of customers. In terms of marketing orientation, Durex aims to stay “top of mind” recognition, so when customers think about a condom brand, Durex is the first name they consider. Durex also seeks to help customers associate the company’s product with positive feelings by launching impressive and humorous marketing campaigns. (Roderick, 2016)

2.2 Situation Analysis

2.2.1 Market Overview

In this section, the report will provide key market features, in terms of macro and micro-environment, as a result, provide Durex value insights to make appropriate business decisions.

MACRO ENVIRONMENT

As opposed to a specific industry or area, the macro-environment refers to the state of the economy as a whole. The macro-environment refers to changes in the gross domestic product (GDP), inflation, employment, spending, and monetary and fiscal policy in general. Unlike the success of a single business sector, the macro-environment is closely linked to the whole business cycle. The macro-environment refers to how the macroeconomic conditions in which a firm or industry operates influence its success. Macroeconomics deals with mass production, spending, and the price level in an economy instead of individual industries and markets. Analysing the macro environment is a crucial aspect of strategic management. PEST (political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological) analyses are commonly used by business analysts to identify macroeconomic aspects currently affecting or may affect business in the future. (Khartit, 2020)

The macro environment's influence is proportional to how much of a company's business relies on the general economy's health. The macro environment has a big impact on cyclical businesses, but not so much on fundamental staple businesses. Interest rate and worldwide financial market fluctuations have a big impact on industries that rely on credit to finance purchases and corporate spends. The macro environment's influence is proportional to how

much of a company's business relies on the general economy's health. The macro-environment has a significant impact on cyclical businesses, but not so much on fundamental staple businesses. Changes in interest rates and global financial markets significantly impact industries that rely heavily on credit to finance purchases and corporate expenditures. The macro environment can also influence consumers' capacity and inclination to spend. Consumer spending changes can have a significant impact on the luxury goods and big-ticket consumer goods businesses. Businesses and economists regularly monitor consumer response to the broader macro environment as a barometer of an economy's health. (Khartit, 2020)

a. Demographic environment:

Vietnam population exceed 90 million people in 2019, ranked at thirteen in the world and made up 1,26% of the world population (Worldometer, n.d). Furthermore, Vietnam is one of the countries with the young generation between 25 age and 45 (so-called millennials or generation Y) accounting for almost 29 percent. Because condoms are mostly used by people in early adulthood and married people, the young population structure represents an opportunity for Durex to boost their sales.

The awareness of Vietnamese nowadays about the utilization of contraception in sexual behaviour dramatically increases due to better-educated. Besides, the generation Y was the first generation to grow up in with explosive technology and globe international that lead to a growth in income of Vietnamese and comprehensive education.

Furthermore, due to a rising trend in male population, the excess in male population could hit 2.3 to 4.3 million by 2050 (MarketLine Country Profiles, 2017). Since men are the primary buyers of durex products, this opens opportunities for the company to raise sales.

b. Economic environment

After the great recession of 2008-2009, Vietnam's GDP and CPI grow significantly, from 99.13 billion USD in 2008 to 245.2 billion USD in 2018, which opens up many opportunities for foreign multinational companies (Trading Economics, n.d). In recent years, the living condition of Vietnamese people has increased considerably, following an increase in national output. The outstanding economic performance is the main contributor to increase in

Vietnamese spending for commodities. Consumer confidence is on record growth, according to Nielsen, with a reading of 130 in the third quarter of 2018 (Nielsen, 2018). This shows that corporations like Durex have a lot of purchasing power.

Consumers still put a top priority for their health and lifestyle, according to Nielsen (Nielsen, 2018), with about 40 to 45 percent for two trends. Durex products should satisfy both of a consumer's basic requirements. As a result, this economic growth would provide Durex with an ability to boost revenue and income.

However, right after Covid19 pandemic occur in Vietnam, the government, in collaboration with local health - care centres throughout the world, immediately implements strategies to stop the pandemic from spreading, such as closing the border, placing outsiders on quarantine, and locking down Da Nang, where the second waves of COVID were triggered. Those attempts are being made to make sure that all economic operations will recover as quickly as possible. In 2021, real GDP growth will return to 7.0 percent, and Vietnam's economy will rise by 1.8 percent in 2020, despite the coronavirus pandemic.

This issue influences Durex Vietnam's sales because people would allocate more budget on groceries as a result. Sex, on the other hand, is regarded as a necessary part of life in all circumstances. For this reason, Durex continues to promote its goods on social media through amusing content in order to improve sales and the mood of Vietnamese people during this difficult time.

c. Political- Regulatory environment

Vietnam has introduced many policies that encourage foreign companies to transfer technology and create elemental conditions for Vietnam absorb advanced technologies. The aim is to create more jobs, eradicate hunger and reduce poverty, improve the living conditions of the population, and create favourable conditions for human resource development in Vietnam.

Additionally, Vietnamese authorities has associated with many organizations such as Asian UNPF and Pacific Ocean UNPF in mid-2018 and launched many campaigns on national scale, with a view to promoting family planning and raising awareness on HIV/AIDS prevention, both of which have become pressing issues in Vietnam (UNFPA Vietnam, 2018). For this reason, Durex is at a huge advantage when doing business in Vietnam, as their products are considered a basic solution to prevent unwanted pregnancy or sexual diseases.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Health in Vietnam has undirectedly strengthened campaigns that distribute condoms for free to people for HIV/AIDS or sexual prevention (The Ministry of Health, 2011), which could have an effect on Durex sales.

Political considerations can be considered as a chance for Durex to increase sales or draw more customers, but also posing a risk of the government imposing a free-condoms scheme.

On the other hand, according to the of Vietnam Ministry of Commerce, the importing tax has been reduced from 17.4 percent to 13.4 percent over a 5-year period (Cling, 2009). Durex will profit in terms of product price reductions during the pandemic because the company imports condoms from its Thai factory into Vietnam. As previously mentioned, due to the Covid-19, Vietnam has maintained national safety by closing the airline and border. However, other modes of transportation are still available for international brands to export their products to Vietnam. As a result, thanks to Vietnamese government policy, the company can ensure the supply quantity to serve demand of Vietnam market during tough time.

d. Socio-Cultural environment

The Vietnamese culture does not allow for much open debate about sex. Vietnamese people, on the other hand, are very involved. Pre-marriage pregnancy is also frowned upon in Vietnam, especially among Generations X and Y. For this reason, condoms will play a huge role for generation Z to address their sexual needs. According to Vinaresearch (Vinaresearch, 2017), wearing condoms is the most popular form of pregnancy prevention among young adults. Targeting this market segment, along with effective communication campaigns, Durex sales can rise as a result.

Currently, many Durex programs have propagated the condom usage with a view to preventing sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancy and HIV / AIDS century diseases are carried out nationwide. These programs have contributed to creating a new stream of thinking, a new sense of condom use by Vietnamese people. The rate of pocket money to buy condoms has gone up considerably, about 75 – 80 per cent, estimated at 1,029,487 billion Vietnamese Dongs (roughly \$ 46,781 million). The number of customers buying Durex is 54.7%, 15.3-25.3% of the rest use other condoms. This opens up opportunities for Durex to boost its sales in Vietnam market.

On the other hand, since Vietnam is a conservative country, many parents, especially those in rural areas, are hesitant to discuss sensitive topics with their children, such as sex, for fear of instilling sexual curiosity in their children (Dang, 2018). Sex education programs in Vietnamese schools are very limited, and teachers are hesitant to carefully teach or discuss with children about this topic, which is why many young adults in Vietnam still have limited knowledge of sex education and sexual self-protection methods. As a result, one of the reasons that might jeopardize Durex's activity in Vietnam is Asian ideas.

Furthermore, Vietnamese customers prefer purchasing foreign goods, especially those from Western countries such as German, France, the U.K, the United States, ... As a result, Durex may gain a popularity over local brands, which may result in increased profits.

When it comes to the selling of Durex based on Asian ideas, cultural factors may be considered a challenge. However, since the Vietnamese prefer international brands while shopping, cultural factors provide opportunities for Durex.

e. Technological environment

Nowadays, the internet is explosive due to the proliferation of technology. Many companies are using RFID technology to track customers at various points in the distribution channel, and they tend to use the Internet distribution channel. The QR code with wide varieties function, play a pivotal role in the retail market; thus, customers could check products quality and also help manufacturers control their product. Mainly, as a result of developing the smart-phone industry in Vietnam and an enormous number of people using smart-phone.

According to Nielsen report (Nielsen, 2018), user-rate mobile accounts accounted for 84 percent of all accounts, and this percentage is expected to rise stably over the coming year. In addition, it is estimated that around 65% of Vietnamese people use their phones solely for social media and Internet surfing (ICT News, 2018). This is a chance for Durex to use mass media to advertise the brand and quality of their products, resulting in more potential buyers and increased sales.

f. Natural environment

Vietnam is known to have a big area of badan soil, and the environment is hot and humid throughout the year, with less changeable weather and less wind. Because of these favourable conditions, Vietnam ranks third in the world in rubber manufacturing (Hoa, 2018). Durex will have an advantage if they want to open a plant in Vietnam because there would be plenty of cheap rubber.

However, it is undeniable that condoms can have detrimental impacts on the environment. According to "A macro-marketing view of sustainability development in Vietnam", these days, Vietnam is confronted with issues related to energy use, water resources, and greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, Vietnamese consumers are more worried about the long-term viability of their purchases. Customers will prioritize any products who have a clear strategy for sustainable growth. Since condoms made of latex or rubber are not biodegradable, this phenomenon has had a major effect on Durex (Birley, 2002), become condom can pollute the natural environment when they are disposed outside. Durex, in particular, did not have any clear guidelines or programs about how to properly dispose of used condoms.

As a result, condoms are being disposed of improperly, and they could remain in the ecosystem for decades, endangering wildlife and lowering human living standards. Approximately 2,147 billion condoms were consumed in Vietnam between 2011 and 2020, posing a significant threat to the country's climate. To meet the current demands of the Vietnamese people, Durex should consider sustainability in its product.

MICRO ENVIRONMENT

The micro environment, which includes all actors in an organization's immediate environment, affects the company's performance since they directly impact the firm's daily business activities. The task environment or operating environment are frequent terms for the micro-environment. The micro environment's features are tightly linked to the company. They do not affect other companies in the industry in the same way, as some characteristics are unique to the firm. The micro environment is one that the firm addresses in its specific arenas, such as the industry or the strategic group. (S., 2020)

There are 6 factors of microenvironment of Durex that influences its business activities to serve customers. These factors are the suppliers, marketing intermediaries, customers, competitors, and publics (Bhasin, 2018).

a. Suppliers

Durex has extended its manufacturing facilities from within the United Kingdom to foreign locations with low labour costs, such as China, India, and Thailand, after launching its first condoms. Durex has ceased all production within the United Kingdom since 2007. Durex continues to manufacture condoms in China, India, and Thailand while also placing orders with Karex, the world's largest condom supplier (Smale, 2010). As a result, all of Durex goods are imported into Vietnam. Furthermore, temporary lockdowns had a detrimental impact on global supply chains. The current situation could result in a shortage of condoms for the Vietnamese market.

The majority of Durex goods on the Vietnamese market, such as condoms and lube, are imported from Thailand by RB Bangpakhong (TimGiaNgon, n.d). As a cargo flight from Vietnam to Thailand takes just one hour, which is considered a relatively quick delivery, there is little chance that the products' quality will be compromised. Healthy Life Co.,Ltd and shop-thehetre are two other Vietnamese suppliers to consider (Suppliers, n.d).

To begin with the opportunities, as previously mentioned, it only takes a short time to transport products from Thailand to Vietnam, due to close distance, therefore, quality of products will not be adversely affected. In addition, because of the close proximity, shipping

can be performed on a regular basis, allowing Vietnamese importers to measure the number of products to be imported depending on market conditions, reducing the amount of unsold goods. An additional benefit will be the cost. Since Thailand has signed with Vietnam Free Trade Agreement, there would be some tariff advantages when exporting to Vietnam, which could result in a lower overall price, in comparison with goods from Western countries, for example.

b. Marketing intermediaries

Durex gains its popularity thanks to its effective marketing campaigns, as their product is well-known and readily available in almost any store. Their wholesale market in Vietnam consists of convenient stores (Circle K), retail stores, pharmacies, of which Durex has a market share of 80 to 90 percent. Retail and convenient stores in the country display Durex goods on their shelves, despite the fact that only about 16 percent of the population consumes Durex products (LDO, 2018). Every checkout counter in Vietnam has a "condom" booth, as any Vietnamese would notice. Durex condoms are marketed to individual customers by retailers in Vietnam. Big C and Coop-mart are two of Vietnam's largest grocery distributors, distributing various customer commodities. Big C concentrates on both retailing and wholesaling for small businesses, while Coopmart only focuses on retailing. Condom booths are also displayed near the counter in smaller convenience store labels. Durex can also be obtained from a variety of pharmacies in Vietnam.

Durex uses an exclusive distributor, and DKSH Vietnam is their only distributor in Vietnam. DKSH is a business expansion company based in Switzerland. The company has a significant presence in the Asia-Pacific region. The company's global network and experience will assist businesses in expanding into new markets. DKSH has a headquarter, distribution centers, and cross docks all over Vietnam, putting it among the top Vietnamese companies (DKSH, 2016). Since it has been importing Durex condoms from Thailand for many years, DKSH is considered a DUREX wholesaler. Wholesalers must work with them in order to obtain the brand's condom; this is Durex's strength in focusing on only one distributor, allowing for more control over the product.

Finally, as a result of the 4.0 technology age, online trading platforms grew in popularity. Consumers can easily order their desired defences from well-known platforms such as Tiki, Lazada, or Shopee.

c. Customers

Customer Market: The consumer market in Vietnam is continuously shifting as consumer lifestyles, wages, and behaviour change. Vietnam had its own "baby booming" time after the war. With a population of nearly 100 million people, Vietnam is still considered a young

nation. Furthermore, the country is undergoing rapid economic development. MarketLine published research in 2019 that showed a 6.47 percent increase in economic growth. China, Malaysia, and Thailand all have higher rates. In recent years, the nation has seen a stable increase in disposable income, as shown by the rapid increase in total consumer spending from 79 billion USD to 170 billion USD between 2010 and 2017. This indicates that Vietnamese customers have more disposable income. As a matter of fact, during the first nine months of 2017, the country's spending increased by 11.3 percent (Associates, 2019). As a result, Vietnam has a large number of young and potential Durex customers. It will not be difficult for the company to reach Vietnamese customers, particularly since its products do not contradict any of the Vietnamese people's beliefs or values.

Reseller market: As mentioned previously, the Durex reseller market in Vietnam is big, both on a traditional and digital platform. They are sold in retail stores, convenience shops, and even pharmacies, but it is best to buy from stores that have a good reputation to avoid fakes. Durex items can also be found on almost any online shopping website; one notable exception is "<http://durex.com.vn/>", which, as the name suggests, is a Durex-only website aimed at Vietnamese.

d. Competitors of Durex

Apart from Durex, many international brands compete in the condom market in Vietnam. The Japanese condom brands Sagami and Okamoto have a significant presence in the industry. Most amazingly, according to a statistics reports, in Ho Chi Minh City, Durex was ranked first with 16.0 percent, Sagami was second with 12.7%, and the domestic brand "Ok" was third with 9.0 % (L&O, 2018). The domestic brands are "OK" and "Happy", with O.K becoming the first local brand to conquer the market in 1993, well ahead of foreign brands, thanks to its low price and popularity among middle-aged men (Vinaresearch, 2017).

Despite this, Durex appears to be the market leader, with prices ranging from 30,000 VND to 80,000 VND (Durex) and 23,000 VND to 70,000 VND (Sagami) for both products (Hồng, 2017). Durex has effectively dominated the Digital Media using excellent and innovative posters, which is its chance in consumer embracement, despite the fact that it has been competing against Japanese brands for many years. During the first day of the US-North Korea summit, the Facebook post "Ngăn đạn lạc. Vì hoà bình" (Translate: Preventing bullets, keeping the peace" 30 thousand views (MAI, 2019).

In 2014, Crown Agent, an English firm, discovered that 25 percent of over 180 million condoms failed to meet ISO, WHO, and UNFPA requirements, posing a direct challenge to Durex and the condom industry (Anh, 2015). As a result, birth control pill manufacturers

became Durex's indirect rival, accounting for roughly 70 percent of Vietnamese women's consumption (Gynopedia, n.d). The major names in the market for everyday uses type are NewChoice, Regulon, Diane 35, and Marvelon (Duong, 2011). Furthermore, "birth control pills" are only available from pharmacies and hospitals, and they can be obtained without a prescription (Anh, 2015).

e. Publics

Aside from Durex's success in the digital media market, which they dominated critically. Durex's creative is often talked about in the media, particularly in domestic news, and the World Cup posters by Durex have been used for many digital news stories (Nguyen, 2018). For years, the usage of news has drawn the digital audience to Durex's official fan page on Facebook, displaying a consumer attraction possibility, particularly among the younger generation; the fan page presently has 11 million subscribers out of a total population of 90 million (Durex Vietnam, n.d).

Durex has also launched an AIDS awareness campaign in collaboration with (RED), which will benefit the general public. The "#DUREXRED" has gained vast popularity throughout Vietnam, and e-commerce retailers such as Tiki, Lazada, and Shopee are exclusive sellers to the market (LDO, 2018). Durex saw an opportunity to embrace younger customers in the mobile-first region market by utilizing both the campaign and e-commerce retailers (LDO, 2018).

f. The company

Durex has some financial and strategic advantages since it is owned by Reckitt Benckiser, one of the world's largest companies. Reckitt Benckiser has a market capital of \$59 billion, which is 100 times that of Sagami, which has a market capital of \$5.26 million. Although Durex does not account for all of Reckitt Benckiser's assets, the parent company's financial clout will benefit Durex in the long run. Durex also gains access to RB's market share, logistics, and global distribution network.

S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, and so a SWOT Analysis is a technique for assessing these four aspects of business to competition or project planning. (The Mind Tools content team, n.d.)

SWOT analysis reveals that internal strengths and weaknesses are more common than external opportunities and threats. The technique's name is an acronym for the four parameters it examines: (Wikipedia, n.d.)

- Strengths are a company's or initiative's characteristics that provide an advantage over competitors.
- Weaknesses are characteristics that disadvantage an organization or initiative in comparison to others.
- Opportunity is a feature of the environment that a company or initiative can take advantage of.
- Threats are environmental elements that could have a negative impact on the business or project.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong brand name • Strong parent company • History and Experience • Large market share • Marketing strategy • Strong R&D strategy • Distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pricing • Core product is highly substitutable • No headquarters in Vietnam • Taste • Environmental sustainability
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of safe sexuality • Changing mindset in Vietnam • Customer's shopping behaviour • Customer buying behaviour • Increase in population • The popularity of social networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High degree of market rivalry • Authenticity • Substitute products • Cultural Barriers

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appearance of Covid-19 | |
|--|--|

Table 1: SWOT analysis of Durex in Vietnam.

STRENGTHS:

Strong brand name: With its long history, the Durex brand has been well-known to consumers for the past few decades. Generations of people have used Durex, trusting in its durability and strength. Durex's parent company – "Reckitt-Benckiser", ranked as number 1 of the most innovative companies in the world according to Forbes, also adds to Durex's reputation. Durex constantly reinforces its strong brand presence through advertisements on print and social media to increase consumer familiarity. Durex is known for its high-quality condoms that are safe and reliable – essential factors for condoms.

Strong parent company: The company has been steadily rising since being acquired by Reckitt Benckiser. Durex benefits from RB's extensive global network, from financial and strategic aspects. (Forbes, 2020)

History and Experience: Durex has a thorough understanding of the market after 90 years in the company. It uses scientific technology in its manufacturing and analysis. Durex condoms are known for their dependability and high build quality. Durex would have to handle challenges and risks from rivals, and moreover, the ever-changing needs of market as well. (Durex, n.d)

Large market share: Durex has risen to the top of the industry after 90 years. This implies that the organization has already gained a competitive edge in terms of reputation and superiority. Durex would have an easier time introducing new items, such as condoms or lubricants. Large market share will aid in the rapid placement of new products on store shelves for sale. Despite the fact that Durex entered the Vietnamese market after O.K, the company has 55 percent brand awareness in Vietnam, compared to 30.5 percent for O.K condoms. (Vinaresearch, 2017)

Marketing strategy: It is notable that the marketing and communication strategies of Durex have designed to adapt to local tradition. It is undeniable that the company has invested a great deal of time and money to develop marketing contents that are tailored to unique cultures and characteristics. Durex, for example, focuses on social media content posts in Vietnam (official Facebook page). Its Facebook content is a blend of sex and humour, and it has been successful as shown by the increase in likes and engagement rates.

Strong R&D strategy: Durex performs gender research every year, with over 5000 people of all ages from all over the world participating. Durex acknowledged that consumers' expectations evolved over time and has shown that it cares about what they want. As a result, Durex has the ability to comprehend their desires and adapt, as well as actively adjust. This will assist the company in generating and satisfying loyal customers, allowing it to stay ahead of the competition.

Distribution: Durex's popularity in different networks is largely due to its distribution power. Consumers can quickly locate Durex items in any store they visit. Durex will directly increase the accessibility of consumers to its goods with a distribution level of approximately 95%.

WEAKNESS:

Pricing: Durex does not have a price that is truly affordable. Despite the fact that Durex offers different prices for boxes of 3 and 10, both are costly as compared to Vietnam's average daily income. Consumers will have to pay 220.000 dong for a package of 10 Durex Invisible. Meanwhile, statistics from Worldbank (2020) suggested that a Vietnamese earns only about \$8.2/day, which is around 210.000 Vietnamese Dongs. While many customers can afford Durex, given that its price is higher than the average daily income, Durex's prices can have a negative impact on its sales.

Core product is highly substitutable: Durex condoms are relatively more expensive than its competitors, making it unattractive to consumers who do not wish to spend too much or do not have the purchasing power. The large effort spent by Durex to promote sexual health may also benefit competitors as customers choose to go for their lower-priced condoms.

No headquarters in Vietnam: Due to the lack of a headquarters and customer support center in Vietnam, Durex is unable to provide direct customer service or assistance in related matters. Meanwhile, Sagami, one of its rivals, has two Customer Care Centers in Vietnam, which makes it easy for consumers to contact them.

Taste: While having a non-latex product line, the majority of Durex products, including "Durex Invisible", have one flaw: an overpowering rubber odour. The substance of the condoms is to blame for this trait. Users' impressions will certainly be influenced by catching a rubbery, unpleasant odour during sexual intercourse, which can scare them away from Durex latex products.

Environmental sustainability: Since latex is used in the majority of condoms around the world, like Durex, it can be toxic if not disposed of properly. Rubber can take years to decompose entirely. Durex, on the other hand, has no clear instructions or actions for its goods that can be deemed environmentally friendly. Vietnamese people are becoming increasingly

concerned about sustainability of the environment. pay attention to concerned about the environmental impact of its condoms.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Increased awareness of safe sexuality: Vietnamese are more and more concerned about sex safely as well as the family planning. In addition, young people living in Vietnam are increasingly more aware of their health and sexual safety. They receive more sex education, which includes the knowledge of sexual self-protection. The increase in the knowledge of young generation about STDs can open up chances for Durex to promote the brand and increase sales in Vietnam, where HIV-AIDS is on the rise. The company could spend extra budget on marketing campaigns and constantly improve product quality to approach this potential market. (Bhasin, 2020)

Changing mindset in Vietnam: When it came to sexual topic, Vietnam's society used to be rigid and narrow-minded. The young generation, on the other hand, has become more accessible to sexual discussions in recent years, especially when it comes to contraceptives and gender-related issues. Furthermore, younger generations are adopting a more liberated lifestyle. Durex will be in a strong position to start marketing strategies to increase revenue in this situation.

Customer's shopping behaviour: During the outbreak of COVID-19, people are staying at home and not going out to shop because of online shopping sites like Shopee and Tiki. With the power of content marketing, the brand can choose to concentrate more on content on social media to gain customer attention. Durex also has a solid team in place to create entertaining and innovative content. (Vinaresearch, 2017)

Customer buying behaviour: Vietnamese consumers tend to favour foreign commodities, as they are perceived that such products have higher quality than domestic ones.

Increase in population: Vietnam have witnessed a rapid increase in population with the number of male populations is on the fastest rise. Increase in male population, the main consumers of Durex products may open chances for doing business in Vietnam.

The popularity of social networks: Durex can take advantage of social media in Vietnam, which remains popular with young adults – the target customers of Durex. It is more convenient and more effective for Durex to advertise its products on social networks.

The appearance of Covid-19: Many people would not risk their lives because Covid-19 is constantly threatening their life. Staying indoors, on the other hand, may be tedious. During

quarantine, sex can become more prevalent. Karex, the world's largest condom manufacturer, predicted a condom shortage as a result of Covid-19.

THREATS:

High degree of market rivalry: It is not easy for Durex to gain a competitive advantage over its direct competitors, Okamoto and Espire, due to the ease in replicating products at lower prices. Indirect competitors such as birth control pills or surgical procedures also pose a threat. There is thus a high degree of market rivalry and substitution of products that could affect Durex's sales. Although the threat of potential entrants is low due to the large amount of capital required as well as the heavy government regulation, Durex still faces a considerable amount of competition from existing competitors who offer lower prices for similar products.

Authenticity: Many companies, such as Durex, manufacture knockoffs of well-known brands. Customers who have a limited knowledge of the goods are unable to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit. In addition, in the year 2020, an incredible event occurred. In Binh Duong province, up to 325,000 items (equivalent to 361kg) of used condoms that had been recycled for retail use were discovered and confiscated. (Ha, 2020) This would make people wary of buying condoms, particularly from well-known but often-fake brands like Durex.

Substitute products: Durex products are comparatively more costly than its rivals and thus unattractive to customers who do not want to invest too much or have not the power to purchase. Competitors will also benefit from Durex's major efforts to improve sexual well-being as consumers opt into their cheaper condoms.

Cultural Barriers: Although Vietnam society has become more and more liberal when it comes to sex topic, cultural barriers for Durex in Vietnam is still great. A part of buyers are unwilling to purchase condoms in supermarkets and stores, as they fear of their privacy being invaded. For this reason, Durex should promote their market online or placing their products on e-commerce websites, such as Tiki and Lazada.

a. Durex S.W.O.T analysis evaluations

With regard to sex and the use of condoms, Durex will take advantage of a culture which is increasingly liberal and sell its product on the basis of sex education. Durex should be careful, however, not to overstep the Vietnamese government's regulations and also be mindful of the cultural obstacles of Vietnam's older, more traditional generation. Durex has a powerful brand identity and a highly reputable parent company, which gives its rivals respect for

Durex's quality, in spite of intensive competition and ease in which customers can replace Durex goods. Durex's revolutionary condom models are well known on the market.

b. Customer buying behavior

Consumer Buying Behavior refers to the actions performed by customers before purchasing a product or service (both online and offline). This could include things like using search engines, responding to social media posts, and a variety of other things. Organizations benefit from understanding this process because it helps them to match their marketing initiatives to previous marketing efforts that have successfully induced consumers to purchase. (Demand Jump team, 2020)

Many elements influence the customer buying process. They may not result in a purchase if viewed independently. These elements combine in any number of ways, the chances of someone connecting with a brand and making a purchase improves. Four factors influence consumer purchasing behavior: (Demand Jump team, 2020)

- Cultural Factors - A person's nationality does not automatically define their culture. It might be defined by their affiliations, religious views, or even their geographical location.
 - Social Factors - Aspects of a person's environment that influence their perceptions of products.
 - Personal Factors - These may include ages, marital status, budget, opinions, values, and morals.
 - Psychological Factors - When a person is presented with a product, their state of mind frequently determines how they feel about the item and the brand as a whole.
- Social and cultural

Vietnam's conservative culture may affect the use of condoms since pre-matrimonial sex is seen as promiscuous and is therefore frowned upon. Family elders who want more children for married couples may also prevent them from using contraception.

- Personal

Generally, consumers favor Durex since it is the country's most popular condom brand. The more tolerant young people and young adults in Vietnam are more receptive to the notion of premarital sex. They are driven mainly by self-expression and social or physical desire, variety and danger. They are also known as survivors who concentrate on responding to

needs and wishes. Additionally, married workers, who prefer to delay childcare, increase their spouse's use of condoms to avoid accidental pregnancies.

- Psychological behavior

With time and with different people, understanding of sex is shifting. In comparison with the older generation X, younger generations – Y generation – appear to embrace premarital sex. By the shift in convictions and perceptions, sex is no longer regarded as sacred, but as an expression of self. Children may opt for a sexual activity that matches or is regarded as cool to their group of friends. For this reason, it is important that Durex should highlight the importance of sexual safety to this generation

- Buying decision behavior

Durex customers show a common purchasing pattern because there is a low level of customer engagement with little brand variations. Condoms are put on customers' stands and advertisement is not required individually. Condoms often play the same role, with only variations in sensation, taste, thickness, and scale.

2.2.2 Market trend and Evolution

The three major consumption patterns in Vietnam in 2020 are: health and hygiene literacy, e-commerce, and convenience. Furthermore, the effect of Covid-19 in 2020 must be considered. Because of social distancing and the fear of contracting Covid-19, Vietnamese consumers are becoming more receptive to online shopping. Durex seems to be on the right track. Durex is able to keep in touch with its customers and maintain a consistent sales figure by encouraging safe sex and going online (Huong, 2019).

2.3 Marketing Strategy

A marketing strategy is a company's overall plan to reach out to potential customers and convert them into paying clients for their goods or services. The company's value proposition, core brand message, statistics on target customer demographics, and other high-level elements are included in a marketing plan. A comprehensive marketing plan considers "the four Ps" of marketing: product, price, place, and promotion. (James, 2021)

A solid marketing strategy should focus on the firm's value proposition, which tells customers what the company stands for, how it runs, and why they should do business with it. This gives marketing teams a template to follow for all of the company's products and services.

2.3.1 Objective

Durex is dedicated to encouraging responsible sex and reproductive healthcare around the world, as well as raising awareness of the safer sex message, through developing and supporting sexual health initiatives. They are optimistic that their consumer product distribution and marketing strategy will not only set Durex apart from the market but will also boost overall sales on a shoestring budget. (Durex Network, n.d.)

To begin, raise Durex Condom awareness among single males aged 18 to 34. Then, Durex must work to illustrate the multiple and brand-specific product developments that are focused on customer satisfaction. Finally, Durex needs to expand the number of sample sales for new product launches. (BrandIndex CMO Network, 2018)

2.3.2 Segmentation

Market segmentation is the process of breaking down a target market into smaller, more defined divisions. Clients and viewers are divided into categories based on similar demographics, interests, needs, or geographic location. Market segmentation is significant because it allows businesses to focus their marketing efforts and resources on the most valuable customers and achieve their goals. Market segmentation enables companies to get to know their customers, learn what they require in their market segment, and choose which product or service will best meet those requirements. (YESBECK, n.d.)

Age	Young and inexperienced customers	Older and experienced customers
	15 – 19 years old	20 – 45 years old
	Generation: Z	Generation: Y
	This age group contains young and inexperienced consumers who are at the beginning of their sexual lives, they are acquainted to using condoms to prevent unwanted pregnancy and avoid sexual diseases.	People in this age groups are mature and experienced customers. They are in demand for high quality and safe products. Some customers in this age group are critical about the sensation and comfort when using this product.

Table 2: Age segmentation of experienced customers.

Geography	Rural	Urban
	People in rural areas have little knowledge about contraception measures. Their mindset is limited.	Have wide distribution network.
	The distribution network of condom is limited.	Citizens acquire more knowledge about sex and contraception measures.

Table 3: Geography segmentation.

Income	Middle income	High income
	Income of this age group is below 5 million dong/month in average.	Income is above 10 million dong per month in average.

Table 4: Income segmentation.

Behavioural patterns	Young and experienced customers	Older and experienced customers
	Well aware of love as well as sex education.	Well aware of love as well as sex education.
	People who are opened-minded and knowledgeable about sexual safety and contraception measures.	More concerned about quality and experience when using the product.
	They have tendencies to take part in parties and events, which may have alcohol and sex.	
	Frequently go online to search for information before buying, influenced by advertisements, packaging, and creative design of the product.	

Table 5: Behavioural patterns segmentation of experienced customers.

Behav- ioural patterns	Young and new customers	Old and new customers
	People in this group may have sex not frequently but in certain occasions, such as holidays or when they have high sexual needs.	These people do not use condom very frequently, but favour other methods such as contraception implant, due to high frequency of having sex.
	The benefits expected by this group are to avoid unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.	The benefits expected by this group are to avoid unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
	They may be regular user, because of the high prices and complexity of other contraception measures.	These are married couples and non-regular users. Their loyal status is low and medium.

Table 6: Behavioural patterns segmentation of new customers.

2.3.3 Targeting

Based on the above segmentation the target customer of Durex should be male, aging from 20 – 45 years old. Although the condoms are addressed to every kind of the population, people between 20 – 30 years old are most frequent users. People aged 20 to 30 are the most sensitive to sexual behavior, whereas those aged 35 and up are married or in long-term partnerships, and hence prefer other means of protection. Durex products are less relevant to those over the age of 35.

The target customer should live in big cities where condoms are widely distributed in supermarkets, convenient stores (such as Circle K and Vinmart). Durex's target customers like taking in parties and events, going out with friends for having a maximum of fun and laugh. They are high-income citizens, adopt modern lifestyle and open-minded about sexual issues.

2.3.4 Differentiation

a. Promotion

The greatest difference between Durex and other firms is the product marketing approach via the public content connection (Content PR). The idea of each advertisement as well as

posting on TV or social media has drawn Durex Vietnam's attention from thousands of people on the goods. The company slogan is "Feeling is everything" that is always part of any advertisement product. The Durex Vietnam PR team completed their work successfully, which is shown by the way they not only seize special opportunity, but also social media trends. For instance, Durex marketing team in Vietnam at the 2019 Hanoi Summit on the basis of a peaceful message.

b. Products

Durex not only pays great attention to its high-quality goods in promotional strategies. Your new development of technology is why Durex's average prices are above the local preservatives brand, such as Thailand and Japan. Though prices are fairly high, Durex still gain high level of customer loyalty due to their reputation and product quality. Durex always put quality over quantity. Just once in 2018 has Durex removed the below standard batch from its retrieval team. They were also proven in Vietnamese market by proceeds of them. In 2016 gross Durex condom income is 20,000,000 dollars. This rate grew significantly in 2017 by roughly 30%. Last year, the total number of condoms Durex sold in Vietnam was 4.2 million.

c. Packaging

The ODM Group states that packaging is the strength of Durex which both appeals to and absorbs its customers compared to other condoms brands. In reality, consumers often pay attention to the packaging of the goods first when purchasing any product. For young adults, vivid packaging is one of the main factors leading to their purchase behavior.

2.3.5 Positioning

Durex positioned itself as a company which is more than just being a condom brand but a company taking care of the emotional and sexual wellbeing of couples globally. The brand focuses on the strong emotional experience and feelings of customers when using the products, therefore, thickness and scents are two dimensions that the company considers and produces diversity. (Chien, 2020) Durex sells 16 different products of condoms that not only diversity in thinness and scents but also other factors such as gel support, ribbed and dotted, flavored. (Durex, n.d.)

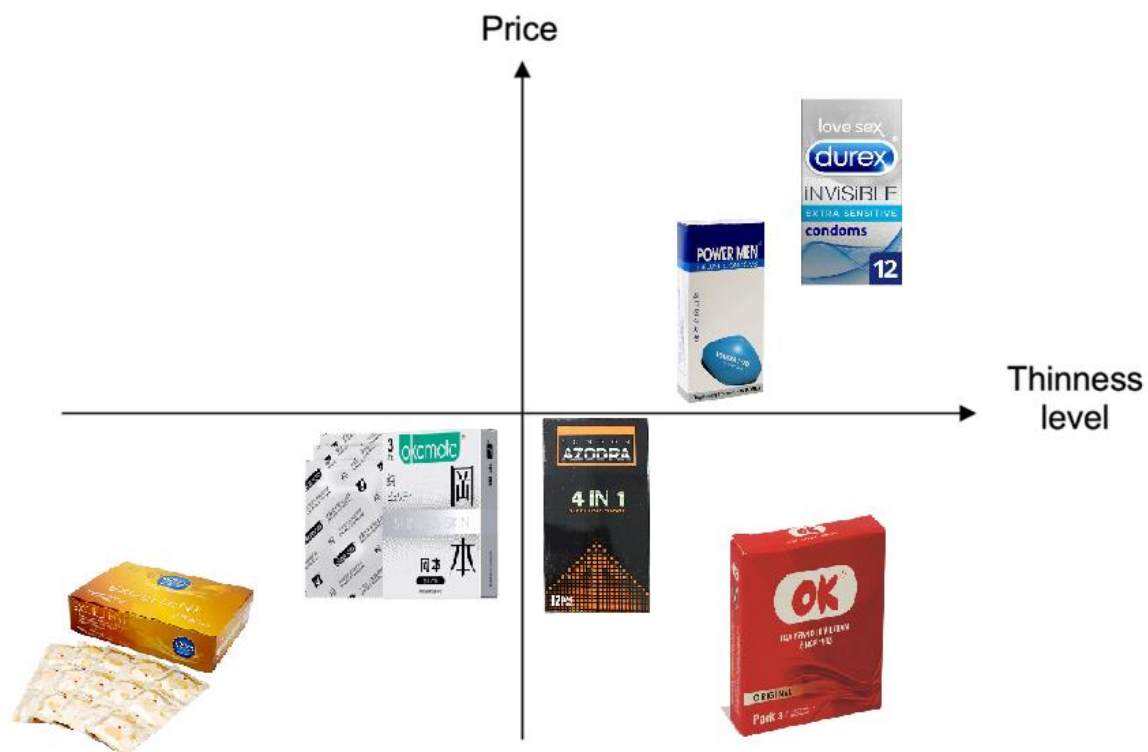


Figure 1: Thickness comparison in general. (Author)

(Brands in order from left to right: VRT Excellent, Okamoto, Azodra, Power Man, OK, Durex)

Consumers must not only consider the packaging when selecting a product, but also fully understand the product's properties. When it comes to condoms, the thinness is normally the most significant consideration that consumers consider. The above map compares two key characteristics of each condom brand: "price" and "thinness level". Despite the fact that Durex is very expensive, consumers are still satisfied with the product's consistency due to its thinness. Furthermore, Durex's key consumers are middle-class young people aged 16 to 35, so this price is appropriate for them. (Thao, 2021)



Figure 2: Scent comparison in general. (Author)

(Brands in order from left to right: ONE, Okamoto, OK, Pretex, Durex)

Durex also confirms its role in condom production technology with two elements: "price" and "scent." Durex condoms, according to the survey, are among the most valuable condoms with a scent, particularly strawberry scent. Durex's target market is young and novice couples. These individuals enjoy new experiences, flavors, and adventures. As a result, diversifying and changing the fragrance will help them have a better sex experience and emotions, which can contribute to increased loyalty. (Thao, 2021)

2.3.6 Marketing mix

a. Product Strategy

According to The ODM Community, Durex's packaging is the strength that appeals to and absorbs their customers as opposed to other condom brands. In fact, when purchasing any product, customers often pay close attention to the packaging. Durex's condoms are designed by Fesign Bridge - the company that designed the logo, creating a satisfactory packaging with many colors, as proof of great ability to change. Along with the brilliant colors,

customers also feel the change through the image. This method has helped Durex to be more focused when convincing customers.

The label of products varies differently based on the quality that each product line brings to customers. For example, For example: Durex Invisible Extra Thin, Extra Lubricated condom. Labeling of this product is Invisible Extra Thin, Extra Lubricated condom that is the quality which the producer wants to identify customers' demand.

- Product portfolio

Durex condoms are available with many different features as a way of staying competitive and increasing distribution effectiveness.

Pleasure focused on:	Comfort focused on:	Fun focused on:
+ Enhanced pleasure	+ Comfort	+ Colours and scents
+ Her sensation	+ Xxl	+ Gold
+ High sensation	+ Extra sensitive	+ Tropical
+ Maximum	+ Natural feeling	
+ Performax	+ Sheik sense thin	
+ Sheik ribbed		

Table 7: Features factors Durex focuses on.

b. Pricing strategy

Durex condom sales have been outstanding throughout the years, helping the company generate significant revenue thanks to its high-quality and diverse product range, as well as its price policies. Every product appeal to a particular demographic, with the younger generation wanting low pricing, young adults choosing convenience and willing to spend a little more, and the middle-aged group demanding the finest willing to pay a little more for desired results.

Durex has taken all of this into consideration and has implemented pricing policies that are affordable and reasonable for its users.

Pricing approaches:

- Product line pricing: for each product line, the manufacturer determines different prices corresponding to the value and production cost of each product. These prices will show different levels of value and quality in the minds of customers, customers can browse products by price range. (Currency of Vietnam is Vietnamese Dong-VND).
 - Ultrathin: 55.000-150.000VND
 - Spines, tendons, floating seeds: 60.000-180.000VND
 - Scent: 50.000-60.000VND
- Product bundle pricing: A method of combining multiple products together into 1 or many combos and then setting price for them. Ex: Durex's bundle and pleasure sets featuring variously from low to high prices:
 - Pleasure hunt combo 200.000VND (50% sale off): Pleasure Ring 1 Pack, Play Little Devil Vibrating Cock Ring, Thrilling Touch Stroker Vibrator.
 - Spring to sex combo: 320.000VND (46% sale off): "Durex Extended Pleasure Condoms 12 Pack", "Durex Emoji Thin Feel Condoms 12 Pack", "Durex Emoji Pleasure Me Condoms 12 Pack".

It is typical that combo's price less than the total cost of the items that make up the combo.

On the other hand, Durex's been applying discounts and allowances on products to introduce new products that have lower price but still ensure quality:

- Discount: Bill discount, cash discount, seasonal discount.
 - Ex: Customers using discount code get exclusive sale-off.
- Allowance discount: The manufacturer pays a sum of money to retailers to accept the manufacturer's products, as well as to support the management.
- Reducing pricing to encourage customers to do things such as paying early or promoting the product.

c. Promotion Strategy

Durex is constantly increasing amount of marketing budget for digital and social media marketing and they focus on interacting with the customer to build deeper and closer customer relationship. This has increased the influence and popularity of Durex among the Vietnam market significantly compared to other brands such as OK, Okamoto, etc. since these

brands do not have same strategy on social media either an official social Vietnam pages/website.

Durex focuses on media such as Social Media, Digital Marketing (especially social networks like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube). Durex Vietnam marketing team has built a Facebook page that draws the attention of the community with funny, unique, creative images, catch the trend, turn a product sensitive to Asian culture into a product that people remember and receive sympathetically and comfortably. The most recent advertising campaign is the World Cup ad. Besides, Viral videos have very different and brief content, exploited based on the understanding and psychology of potential customers.

Marketing communication strategies during Covid 19 period:

Over a year recently, the whole world has to fight against the pandemic of COVID-19, digital networking increasingly asserts an important role in promoting products and services to customers in the safest and most effective way. Therefore, the change to adapt to modern media society is essential to keeping up with trends and not being outdated, increasing customer engagement, and creating brand value for businesses, social networks can have social purposes, business purposes, or both, through websites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram, among others. Social media has become an important base for marketers looking to attract exceptional customers in the unavoidable pandemic of COVID-19 more than a year recently. (Sotaydoanhtri, n.d.) Therefore, Durex has implant social marketing strategy successfully during this pandemic.

Social media platforms are incredibly effective at generating brand recognition because they allow businesses to promote their products to many targeted people in specific demographic areas and proximity. Durex will stand out above its competitors in the business by utilizing social media platforms to build loyal followers and engage new members. Social media, on the other hand, is a crowded market. To stand out from the crowd, the business must create and share informative and engaging content on the correct social channels at the correct time.

In COVID-19 pandemic, Durex conduct a communication campaign, known as "Let's not go back to normal". They cite "norms" such as shaming women who carry condoms and men who do not wear them because they are uncomfortable. Durex believes that the current situation presents a unique opportunity to redefine what "normal" looks like. (London, 2020)



Figure 3: "Let's not go back to normal" by Durex. (Global, 2020)



Figure 4: Durex's marketing trend 1 in Covid-19. (Durexzambia, 2020)

The aim of this campaign is to encourage both women and men wearing condoms when having sex, just like wearing masks when going out.



Figure 5: Durex's marketing trend 2 in Covid-19. (DurexVietnam, 2020)

Translate: Enough stock for 14 golden days (over 7400 interactions, 661 comments and 110 shares). This message follows an event when Hanoi citizens stockpiling meat and vegetables for the fear of lockdown in the city. At that time, shelves in the supermarkets were empty as people rushed to buy food for storage. This message was created to remind consumers that Durex products will always be enough for people, even during quarantine time – 14 days.



Figure 6: Durex's marketing trend 3 in Covid-19. (DurexVietNam, 2020)

Translate: Don't go out (over 1500 interactions, 158 comments and 33 shares). In the Covid-19 time, the Vietnamese government call for people to stay at home to prevent the spread of the Corona virus. The Durex message during this time "do not go out" not only encourage

people to stay at home for the sake of the safety of community but also implies people to conduct safe sexual activities during this time, that is using condoms when having sex.

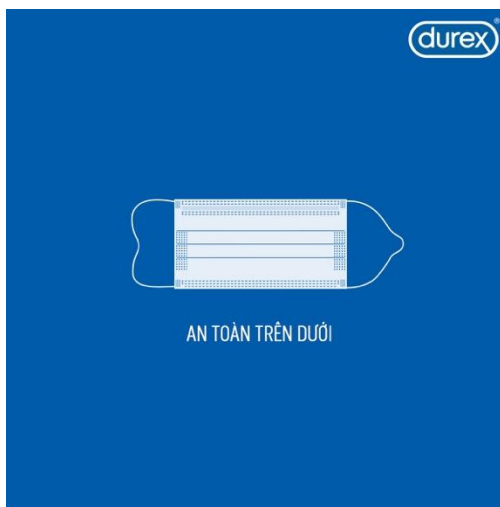


Figure 7: Durex's marketing trend 4 in Covid-19. (DurexVietNam, 2020)

Translate: Safety on top and bottom (over 10000 interactions, 642 comments and 236 shares). This message was created on Durex Facebook page to remind people of not only wearing masks when going out to prevent infecting the virus, but also wearing condoms when having sex for the safety of people. The image of condom and mask was integrated in the picture was a unique marketing message of Durex as it promoted the product in a way that linked with the situation.

Marketing communications activities that are strongly influenced by Vietnamese culture:

When doing business in Vietnam, Durex must modify its marketing communication strategy to adapt to Vietnam culture. Thanks to local adaptation strategy, the company can communicate better with the public, not only to promote the product, but also to deliver the message for sexual safety in an appropriate way.



Figure 8: Durex's marketing post 1 suits Vietnamese culture. (DurexVietNam, 2020)

Translate: Fireworks explode jubilantly inside and outside (over 6400 interactions, 455 comments and 150 shares). This message was created with a sense of humour by Durex, which reflects the atmosphere of New Year Eve. This image immediately became viral on the Internet and got thousands of likes of Facebook at that time because of the witty words Durex used.



Figure 9: Durex's marketing post 2 suits Vietnamese culture. (DurexVietNam, 2021)

Translate: Wishing new age, dancing all the way. In this banner, Durex reminds Vietnamese people of their traditional Tet holiday (Lunar New Year). The company also make use of yellow and red color, which were ubiquity in streets and houses, to advertise products. Yellow and Red represent the luck and happiness, according to Vietnamese's perception, was the major colour during days before Tet. This is a unique way of Durex to stand out

and draw customer attention to company (over 5400 interactions, 921 comments and 1000 shares).



Figure 10: Durex's marketing post suits Vietnamese culture. (DurexVietNam, 2021)

Translate: Valentine – All the way ups. Also, during Valentine, a holiday popular among Vietnamese generation, Durex never forgets to include its humour into campaign. The unique graphic design in which word “up” was illustrated by a scale, created a funny association in customer’s mind (over 8000 interactions, 962 comments and 171 shares). The message appeared few days before Valentine, a day for couples, became viral on the Internet at that time. It appears that using humour to deliver the brand message can help Durex to promote the product and increase the brand image in a sensible way that not offend Vietnamese culture – which is quite conservative when it comes to sensitive topics, such as sex.

It is undeniable that the advertising practice of Durex have adapted to Vietnamese local culture and situation well, especially in occasions such as Lunar New Year of Covid-19 times. Not only in the main posts of Durex Vietnam official Facebook page, the positive reactions from every other re-up posts of Vietnamese Facebook accounts/groups/pages strongly prove that the advertising of Durex in Vietnam implies a perfect appropriate message to Vietnamese culture.

In conclusion, it can be seen from examples below that Durex have used a unique, humorous strategy to attract the attention of the consumer and draw the public's attention. Durex can subtly show the core function of the durability of its condoms by its creative publicity posters, but it still retains a luminous, humorous tone.

d. Distribution strategy

Durex has a large customer base as a multinational brand, with goods available in more than 140 countries and 17 manufacturing facilities capable of producing more than 4 billion condoms each year (VN Express, 2009)

Durex use indirect distribution channels, in which a lot of marketing intermediaries take part in to distribute the products to end-users. As Durex does not have a factory in Vietnam, most of its products sold in Vietnam are imported from Thailand and China, where the company build its factory. First Durex will manufacture its goods in Thailand and China, then will export the products to Vietnam. In Vietnam, there is a distributor – DKSH a Swiss company specialized in market expansion - being in charge of importing the products and distribute to wholesalers.

The other main distribution channel is supermarket and hypermarkets, such as Vinmart, where condoms are usually sold in boxes of 12. Vinmart – Vietnamese biggest market chains offer 3 different types of condom brand. Condom brands have special display of their products at the checkout. This practice is intended to solicit customer base and increase brand equity. Because the prices are very affordable, a majority of shoppers buy condoms through this channel

Another distribution channel of Durex is Internet. During the months of Covid-19, Internet is the main distribution channels for most of customer goods, due to social distance. In Vietnam, Durex sell its products in some e-commerce platforms, such as Tiki, Shopee. By co-operating with Tiki, Durex could promote and communicate with customer extremely fast, whenever Durex has a new discount program or modern type of product Tiki will be the first channel expand information to social media such as Facebook or Instagrams for the customer. Besides, Tiki has an enormous delivery network coverage in 64 provinces with reasonable transportation cost, saving time. Furthermore, Tiki also has a cutting-edge website with numerous functions that customer accessible to purchase online and give the feedback directly to the manufacturer about the qualities of good (Bhasin, 2020).

In conclusion, Durex use indirect selling for Durex product. There are 2 main reasons to support this idea. First, distribution costs can be minimized, and it is easier for the company to sell to wholesaler first, rather than setting up its own retail outlets. Second, the intermediates such as wholesalers and retailers can understand consumer demand well. They have a clear understanding of how to market a product to a client. They even know how to cope with criticism and rejection from customers. Durex does not specialize in this field and prefers to delegate this responsibility to the intermediaries.

3 Discussion and Conclusion

Durex is doing exceptionally well in Vietnam. Durex demonstrates its performance by having a significant market share by using its unique advantages. Durex does not seem to be having many issues because it has the support in terms of distribution network, finance and marketing of its parent company, Reckitt Benckiser. It not only offers condoms for different fetishes, but it also pay attention to produce what Vietnamese customers want most: thickness and protection. The company does also target the right demographics, but advertisement and public relations were the most important factors in its growth. Durex has succeeded in adapting to local culture and thus boosted the brand's recognition, changing the customer's mindset about condom.

Durex focuses on customer standards and provides quality goods at higher prices. Despite this, given their rising wages, a box of Durex Invisible (of 3 or 10) is very affordable. Durex is also winning this market because of its abundance and availability in Vietnam's stores and markets. Durex is available anytime and wherever, with a 95 percent coverage rate. There is always space for growth, as we all know. Consumers are now more concerned about the future, but Durex has made no proposals for properly disposing and recycling used condoms. In nature, unprocessed condoms take years to decompose, and illegally reusing used condoms is a major issue.

Both factors could jeopardize the brand's credibility; as a result, Durex should address them as soon as possible in order to maintain its position as a successful company in such a competitive market as Vietnam.

Durex's strength is that it is a dependable brand of high-quality products at a fair price. Durex is well-known for its innovative marketing team, which comes up with bold ideas to help them attract customers. a large number of clients Durex items are commonly available in grocery stores, making them readily accessible to customers. All of these factors force Durex to deal with their competitors on a regular basis.

There are still several shortcomings for Durex. Since their product are not recyclable, it can have detrimental impacts on the environment. Furthermore, the selling price of Durex product is a bit higher than that of income of middle-class people. The key issue that Durex is dealing with is a lack of understanding among Vietnamese young people about sex education and protection when sex is involved in a relationship, so condom usage is still restricted. Due to the aging of the Vietnamese population, Durex will lose a certain number of customers in the future. Durex goods are toxic to the environment, and environmental concerns

are being increasingly heated around the world. Durex goods will no longer be supported by consumers or the government as a result of this.

By increasing online awareness and revenues, digital marketing is critical to the success of an online business. The marketing plan should be driven in the appropriate direction by a well-defined digital marketing strategy. Durex has offered great online value propositions to its clients by employing the appropriate material at the right time through the proper channels.

In general, mostly East and South-East Asia countries still have feudatory mindsets and cultures, leaving an invisible barrier in the topic of sex. Thus, Durex wants to promote its products more efficiently among Asia countries; good research of characteristics and market surveys in each culture and country should be prepared and scrutinized to develop a suitable marketing strategy beforehand.

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