

Original Paper

How can the Public Relations Increase Brand Awareness

Zhao Yanqiu^{1*} & Lin Chuan¹

¹ Research Center for International Business and Economy, Sichuan International Studies University, Chongqing 400031, China

* Zhao Yanqiu, E-mail: 1256825233@qq.com

Received: February 1, 2022 Accepted: February 25, 2022 Online Published: March 13, 2022

doi:10.22158/jbtp.v10n1p1

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jbtp.v10n1p1>

Abstract

The central idea of this paper is to explore the relationship between public relations and brand Awareness. In order to clarify the relationship between them, the paper uses the following method: On the basis of previous theories, clarify relevant definitions, and then give examples to illustrate the relationship between public relations and brand awareness. Finally, explain the result that public relations can act as Brand Awareness Booster in some circumstances.

Keywords

Public Relation, Brand Awareness, Procter & Gamble, Wuzhen China

Funds Supporting: Key Research Project of Humanities and Social Sciences of Chongqing Municipal Education Commission (21SKGH129)

1. Introduction

In the development of the times, countries are closely related, and the world is the stage for all countries. Technology has made communication in a simple way, it's easy to connect thousands of families without leaving homes. So, the establishment of Connections became possible. While being endowed with new connotations of the times, public relations have gradually become a common phenomenon in modern society, and its social functions have become increasingly important.

As we know, the theory of public relation was put forward not for a long time, it was proposed in 1920. Although, it's doesn't have a long story about its development, it exerted great influences across borders.

Yu and Xu (2017) thought that the blurring of the boundaries of public disciplines is a comprehensive integration of public relations, branding, image, and advertising. So as for enterprises, in order to build a good brand relationship and maintain the image of the organization, an enterprise uses various public relations tools and activities to deliver information about the enterprise or product to the target consumer (Liu, 2018). However, in China, the status quo of corporate brand development is not optimistic. Brand is a strategic resource for enterprises to participate in competition (Yuan, 2013). Domestic enterprises' brand value enhancement often relies too much on a single marketing method, while ignoring the consideration of overall factors. In terms of linkage to a product, public relations' brand differentiation has a multiplying effect on brand knowledge (Chia-Hung Hung, 2008). Concretely embody as follow: Public relations could establish brand awareness through recall and recognition, and further enhance the brand associations of brand image, draw brand emotions, and

create brand attitude and experience. Also, some scholars analyzed the application fields of public relations in our country and found that it's extremely broad and has great research value and room for improvement. Among them, publishing, enterprise, teaching and other fields account for a relatively high proportion. In summary, there is less research on corporate branding in public relations, let alone the role of public relations in brand awareness, which exactly needs to be explored.

2. Theoretical Analyses

Public Relations refers to a series of planning and communication activities, which aims to improve the relationship between organization and the public, to promote the public's awareness, and to understanding or support of the organization, in order to achieve the purpose of establishing a good image of the organization and promoting the sale of goods (Wu, 2005). In the communication activities, social organizations as the subject while the public as the object, they get in touch by two-way information exchange. Companies usually define this process as part of business management activities. In particular, the business management mentioned here is not a tangible product, but an intangible corporate reputation and image (Gong, 2008). In other words, the purpose of public relations is usually to establish a stable state of good relations with the various internal and external publics around it. From the perspective of public relations theory, consumer relations are the most important one in the external relations of enterprises. In fact, the connotation of public relations is very broad (Ju, 2010). Usually, it includes the relationship between enterprises and the government, social organizations and other commercial institutions. Meanwhile, it can be divided into the relationship with consumers, industry, and the government. But no matter how to divide them, it will ultimately be attributed to the public relations between enterprises and consumers. Just like Xing (2019) says, Public relations are a kind of people-oriented management art or thought.

By referring to relevant literature, Philip Kotler, An American marketing authority, said that: a brand is a name, symbol or design, or the sum of the above, the purpose of which is to make your own products or service is different from other competitors. Brand is a general term, which is organized by brand name, brand logo and trademark (Wu, 2005). Therefore, brands need to be differentiated, and there cannot be two brands that are exactly the same.

Brand awareness is the degree of consumers' memory of a brand (Wu, 2005). The brand awareness of a successful company is an increasing process, starting from nothing, and finally playing a deep root. It's like a Chinese idiom—"The roots of love are deep" (Shen, 2013). As Marx said that a brand is a "perceptual product that transcends the general perception". From my perspectives, brand is an abstract channel that conveys company values to consumers; it has already surpassed materialized features, such as the proposal of brand awareness, which shows that the brand more represents the consumer's feelings about the company or its products. Generally speaking, the feelings have two aspects: first, love and trust, and second, dislike and avoidance. The role of brand awareness is to make products loved by people. That's what the public relations manage to do.

The value of public relations is also reflected in its efforts to help companies communicate efficiently and enhance brand value through a series of communication activities. Public relations usually play a role in creating value in corporate brands, which is embodied in the following three aspects: First, Public relations help the public to build trust in the corporate brand. If the news is blocked or the company does not make any publicity about its own brand, then the brand concept is invalid to the public. Second, the improvement of brand awareness coincides with one of the core goals of corporate public relations, which will help companies to enhance their core competitiveness, thereby making

healthy development possible. Third, consumer demand is the entry point for corporate public relations communication. On the one hand, with the rapid development of the market and the exchange of information, consumer preferences have not been extensively developed, so the phenomenon of product homogeneity has become more and more serious. However, traditional enterprises have to break the deadlock and only keep up with the pace of the times and continue to innovate. Exploring the connotation of the brand, establishing a distinctive brand image, and enhancing brand awareness is the first choice. On the other hand, Enterprises should pay attention to the individual needs of consumers and narrow the distance with them. Because to a certain extent, the brand is the image of the company and represents the quality of the product. Brand building needs to start from consumer demands, so as to make the corporate image plump and true. And this is precisely the benefit that corporate public relations can bring to corporate brand awareness.

Thus, the hypothesis is as follows.

H1: Public relations are able to positively promote brand awareness.

3. Research Methods and Case Analysis Objects

This paper uses the case study as analysis method to explore the relationship between public relations and brand awareness. Case study is the process of discovering new knowledge through investigation, research, analysis, and generalization of the case (Song, 2021). The main idea of this paper is what the relationship between public relation and brand awareness should be, which falls into the category of normative case studies. There are two research cases. The first one focuses on the corporate level, starting from the corporate relationship, and fully grasping the political and economic background of that time. In the case, a series of public relations activities were carried out, and the products were properly promoted. Moreover, the more attention should be pay to that helping emerging foreign companies to localize in the Chinese market, achieving good social and economic benefits, and greatly improving the brand awareness of the company. Another case is starting from the national level; it deeply reflects the promotion of public relations to the city's brand awareness. With the improvement of China's comprehensive national strength, the new type of international relations and the community with a shared future for mankind have also taken diplomacy with Chinese characteristics into the hearts of the people. Countries around the world have actively established peaceful and friendly diplomatic relations with China, which has laid a solid foundation for a good public relations environment from the outside. The second case reveals that China's public relations have given the historical and cultural city a new connotation, which has become a city's name card now. Both of the cases are representative. They analyze the relationship between different subjects and objects from a macroscopic and microscopic level, which contains the main application level of public relations.

4. Case Analyses

With the rapid development of economic globalization, the improvement of brand awareness is also imminent. The all-round development of international trade and international investment also requires the internationalization of corporate brands and products. Public relations play an important role in promoting brand awareness. For example:

4.1 Procter & Gamble Group

In 1988, the Procter & Gamble Group established its first joint venture in Guangzhou, China. Exploring the process of P&G's localization in China, brand promotion and awareness enhancement, we can find that after 11 years of entering the Chinese market, Guangzhou P&G launched a hair conditioner at the

50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. At that time, China was experiencing a good time to look forward to culture and history. Following the footsteps of China's development and establishing good and harmonious public relations with Chinese society, P&G Guangzhou cleverly grasped the social characteristics of China at that time and launched the "Pantene-Fall in Love with Your Hair-China Hairdressing Centennial Retrospective Exhibition", has achieved good social benefits and obtain a more Chinese brand image. Guangzhou Procter & Gamble's corporate strategy has always followed the good public relations with the Chinese market and has also achieved considerable benefits. This fully shows that the public relationship can indeed be used as a booster for corporate branding.



Figure 1. The Hair Conditioner of Pantene in China (left) and Western (right)

Case description: If an enterprise wants to gain a competitive advantage, it must not only have a strong product itself, but also a good image, a high brand awareness, and reputation. Only in this way can we win public understanding and trust to remain invincible in the fierce market competition. Establishing an image of an organization through information dissemination is exactly what corporate public relations work.

4.2 Wuzhen, China

Public relations can well promote the promotion of brand awareness. An ancient water town in the south of the Yangtze River in China with a history of six thousand years, it is known as the "land of fish and rice, and the home of silk". This beautiful town witnessing the vicissitudes of history attracts tourists from all over the world. With the flourish of Chinese digital economy, the times have given Wuzhen new connotations. In November 2014, the first World Internet Conference was held in Wuzhen, Zhejiang, China. Since then, a brand-new Internet+era in Wuzhen have been opened, and the permanent venue of the Internet Conference is in Wuzhen. Wuzhen's urban brand image has changed. It is a world-renowned small town with integrated scenery. In this process, the brand awareness of the city has also been enhanced under the good public relations and international image of the Chinese government. Obviously, this is a spiraling process. It has changed from a beautiful town in the south of the Yangtze River to an image of an era, Internet, modern, and international town.



Figure 2. WuZhen Charming

Case description: When public relations rise to the national level, city branding and national branding plans both reflect the role of public relations in promoting brand awareness. Shaping a branded city is the key to achieving high-quality development, and this is one of the effects that good public relations want to achieve.

5. Conclusions

Through case analysis, we can see that it is consistent with the previous theory and research hypothesis. Public relations have a positive effect on brand awareness.

The purpose of public relations has changed from persuading and influencing in the past to establishing partnerships. In this process, generally speaking, public relations can act as Brand Awareness Booster in some circumstances. Only when the public relations between the company and the society are not mutually exclusive, what's more, pursue the harmonious relationship, will help the company's reputation to some extent undoubtedly.

As mentioned earlier, to some extent, the public relations of enterprises will be attributed to the public relations between enterprises and consumers. Good public relations can Promote effective communication and exchanges with the public, so that the company's brand image is highly consistent with the public's sense of identity.

For companies, if public relations become a brand awareness booster rather than a burden, it must help companies realize their social, economic and market value.

References

- Gong, H. (2008). *Public Relations: Principles, Practices, Cases*. Tsinghua University Press; Beijing Jiaotong University Press.
- Huang, C. H. (2008). The Effect of Brand Image on Public Relations Perceptions and Customer Loyalty. *International Journal of Management*, 2008(2), 237-247.
- Ju Y. (2010). *Public Relations*. Shanghai: Fudan University Press.
- Liu B. J. (2018). *China Public Relations Development Report*. 2017 Social Science Archives Press.
- Shen, H. (2013). *Research on Public Relations in the Internationalization of Chinese Enterprise Brands*. Anhui University.
- Song C. (2021). On the Writing Method of Case Study Papers in Management. *Henan Education (Higher Education)*, 2021(7), 74-76.

- Wu, L. Y. (2005). *On Corporate Brand Building from the Perspective of Public Relations*. Huazhong University of Science and Technology.
- Xing, Y. (2019). Public Relations and Corporate Brand Building. *Public Relations World*, 2019(9), 18-35.
- Yu, M. Y., & Xue, K. (2017). Seven Major Trends of China's Public Relations Development: An Empirical Study Based on Industry and Academics. *Public Relations Research*, 2017(6), 12-25.
- Yuan, A. F., Huang, D., & Shao, Y. M. (2013). Study on the Factors Influencing the Enhancement of Brand Value. *Business Research*, 2013(6), 133-143.