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Review Article

Hospital Branding and Its Market Positioning

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Abstract

Branding is vital in any industry considering the fact that it helps to encash the customers and increases the performance of the any industry. Branding can have impact on the minds of the consumers. Hospital is one of the complex industries among the various industries. Hospital administrators are endowed with difficult task of attracting patients towards their hospital. There is substantial increase in the awareness of the general population about the healthcare industry which has ultimately resulted in increase in the needs of the people. Therefore, in current scenario, need of the hour to concentrate on consumer rather than seller.

Keywords: Branding, healthcare industry, brand equity.

Introduction:

Brand can be defining as identity of the product which segregates it from the other products in the competition. Branding is one of the precious assets of any institution in this world of competition.

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Branding is vital in any industry considering the fact that it helps to encash the customers and increases the performance of the any industry. Branding can have impact on the minds of the consumers. As the choice making of the human relies more on emotion rather than logical conclusion, branding can be valuable tool for healthcare industry.[1]

Steve Johnson describes Branding as a process of enhancing the organization image. Brand is the image which appears in the mind of the consumers. For branding of the hospital, there has to be the knowledge of the geographical and cultures of the community.

It also depends on behaviors and psychological knowledge of the community. more information to be available of all the competitors and how the brands perception develops in the minds of consumers due to old marketing practices.

Kotler [2] 2000, defined brand as “the name linked with the product indicating initiation of the item feature.”

Brand positioning is the status of the brand in the market. It is mental image created about the product compelling the consumer to utilize the particular brand. It comprises all the links which arise in the mind of consumers when they hear particular product or service.

In case of hospital, branding can be linked with the treatment quality, services provided, nursing care and cost of the treatment. Positioning can be the foundation stone of the brand formation. Consumer creates an impression on utilizing the service or product and which on repeated use may further strengthen the bond between consumer and product or service.

Factors affecting brand positioning

1) Brand trait: What special features brand possesses.
2) Competitors traits: what another competitive brand gives
3) Consumer expectations: what the consumers expects from the hospitals.
4) Brand price in comparison to other competitors' price.

Hospital is one of the complex industries among the various industries. Hospital administrators are endowed with difficult task of attracting patients towards their hospital.

Hospital branding depends on multiple factors like

1) Proficiency and care of the doctors
2) Proficiency and care of the nursing staff
3) Standard of amenities provided
4) Target population the hospital actually provides the services.

2.1 Brand building concepts

2.1.1 Brand orientation:

It is commencement of brand building process in which the clear picture of the brand internal identity is produced in front of the consumers. Ultimately it will be stage for the contentment of the patients, and fulfilment of their needs.[3]

2.1.2 Brand leadership

Brand leader is the one of the widely known ingredient of target market segment. Brand management basically have two perspectives: Visionary and strategic perspective.

Aaker and Joachimsthaler[4] (2000) described model for making bigger brands and mention the four challenges for achieving it.

1) **Organizational challenge**: Main problem for any institution is to allocate the task of establishing the processes and developing bigger brands. Second problem is to create digital platform for discussing the experiences, initiatives and other related information about the organization McWilliam and Dumas [5] (1997) endorses this by stating that all brand team members are well versed with the brand building process.
   Doyle (2001b) [6] adds that management of brand not to be confined as specific task but as generalized process of complete management of marketing.
2) **The brand architecture challenge**:
   Basic problem is to recognize the brands and its sub brands along with its responsibilities.
   Aaker (2004a) [7] mentioned brand architecture as brand portfolio strategy which particularly indicates brand portfolio organization and mentions the linkage of various portfolio brands.
3) **The brand identity and position challenge**: Positioning of the brand is very essential to make clearer picture to the end users.
4) **The brand building program challenge**: The brand building can be helpful in changing the view of the end users towards the brand and increases the faith and approach towards the particular brand.

2.1.3 Brand asset development.

Brand asset development implies alteration of the brand. Davis and Dunn [8] (2002) mentioned that the important objectives are

1) Increasing the patient faithfulness
2) Developing the leadership in market
3) Segregation from the competitors

Davis [9] (2000) defines Brand Asset Management that "an impartial investment advancement for development of the brand, spreading it internally and externally, and leading to increase brand gains and brand asset value"

2.2.4. Brand equity

Farquhar [10] (1989) defined brand equity as extra worth with help of which particular brand bestow a product.

2.2.4.1 Financial perspective

Brand equity refers to additional income to owners by the sale of branded products over and above the sale of unbranded products.

2.2.4.2 Customer perspective

Lasser, Mittal and Sharma [11] (1995) described five dimensions i.e. performance, social image, value, commitment and trustworthiness.

Keller [12] (1993) brought the model Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) which shows brand equity from the perspective of customer.

2.2.4.3 Combined perspective

Motameni and shahrokhi [13] (1998) developed Global brand equity which measure brand equity and also its value. Baldauf, Cravens, and Binder [14] (2003) stated that cash flow and short-term parameters are what usually firms use as indicators of performance, without

considering brand-based performances. Brand equity is determined by perceived quality, brand association and brand loyalty. Dyson, Farr, and Hollis [15] (1996) establishes consumer value model which connects indefinable perception and real revenues generated.

2.2.5 Corporate branding

Balmer and Gray [16] (2003) emphasised that there is variation between product and corporate brands which differ in terms of make, constituencies, organization, continuance and disciplinary roots. Hatch and Schultz [17] (2003) mentioned difference between corporate brand and branding

1) Shifting the spotlight towards corporation rather than developing product brand.
2) The duration of connection may be responsible for firm's behaviour.
3) The Linking of the brand not just to customers but to all stakeholders of the company,
4) The requirement of an organization-wide support;
5) The corporate brand's temporal facet includes present, past and future also.
6) The corporate brands take on more strategic importance shown by greater reach of the corporate brands than product brands.

Knox and Bickerton [18] (2003), gave conventions for develop corporate branding which are as follows

1) Brand context: Current status of the brand.
2) Brand construction: the positioning of brand in agreement with stakeholder and customer value.
3) Brand confirmation: Way in brand pronounce to hospital and to the customers
4) Brand consistency: Process of providing information to all stakeholders.
5) Brand continuity: Connection of the business with the corporate.
6) Brand conditioning: Capacity to handle and supervise the brand on regular basis.

Kapferer [19] (1997), stated that brands serve to have eight functions shown in the table.

1) Identification
2) Practicality
3) Guarantee
4) Optimization
5) Characterization
6) Continuity
7) Individuality
8) Hedonistic
9) ethical

Building service brands

De Chernatony and seagal horn [20] (2001) suggested avoiding use of classic model in the service sector branding models as the Providing of the service brand relies on the experience of the consumer.

Bloemer et al., 1998; Lai et al. (2009) Positive brand image can be helpful in producing various results like faithfulness of the consumer, contentment of the consumer, repurchase of the product and maintaining the quality of service.

The LOGMAN model [21] (2004)

It is the most rational representation of brand management which comprise insights of Impartial scorecard method of Kaplan and Norton which is also the path scrutiny method, BCG's brand worth formation technique, the house of quality method and the gap scrutiny technique.

2.2.6 Brand identity

Park, Jaworski and MacInnis [22] (1986) defines brand image deriving the knowledge about the consumers from all the processes performed by the organization in relation to that brand.

Conclusion:

There is substantial increase in the awareness of the general population about the healthcare industry which has ultimately resulted in increase in the needs of the people. Therefore, in current scenario, need of the hour to concentrate on consumer rather than seller.

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