
Foreword

Consumer brand relationships

Journal of Brand Management (2014) **21**, 365. doi:10.1057/bm.2014.21

The topic of consumer brand relationships (CBR) continues to be of critical importance to marketers in all types of industries and markets all over the world. Fortunately, academic researchers have continued to investigate the topic to provide important new insights and inspiration. The five articles in this special issue of the *Journal of Brand Management* represent another step in that journey, helping to highlight various issues likely to be of great interest to both academics and industry practitioners.

Fetscherin and Heinrich provide two compact taxonomies that usefully classify the different articles of the special issue in terms of the functional and emotional focus of CBR and in terms of the valence of brand attitudes and strength of those relationships. As will be noted below, other dimensions are certainly possible for other potentially useful taxonomies. All of this points out how richly CBR are built and managed and how many factors must be considered in doing so.

In that light, note how many different concepts are covered by the five articles in the special issue – anthropomorphism, gift-giving, brand crises, brand experiences and country of origin to just highlight a few. These concepts each play a role in the formation of CBR and their resulting consequences. Each of them has different effects and implications for CBR and each deserve the close scrutiny they received from the researchers in this special issue.

Only through a comprehensive, detailed examination of CBR will our understanding of this complex topic be improved. In doing so, I would make one suggestion. I would urge researchers to keep in mind the extent of consumer engagement or level of

interaction with brands and the resulting intensity and activity of the relationship that consumers have. I have found the concept of brand resonance to be helpful in the regard.

Brand resonance describes the level of identification that a consumer has with a brand and the extent to which customers feel that they are ‘in sync’ with it. Specifically, brand resonance is defined in terms of the intensity of the consumer relationship with a brand, as well as the level of activity engendered by this relationship. *Intensity* reflects the depth of the psychological bond that customers have with the brand, such as the strength of attitudinal attachment and sense of community. *Activity* reflects how frequently the consumer buys and uses the brand, as well as engages in other activities not related to purchase and consumption, such as seeking out brand information, events and other loyal customers.

Although there are many possible dimensions to consider in investigating consumer brand relationships, these two dimensions of intensity and activity capture important brand-building qualities. As suggested by the research in this special issue, intensity and activity may be manifested in many different ways.

In closing, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the helpful contributions of the researchers in the special issue and their concerted efforts to increase our knowledge of the topic. I would also note that the *Journal of Brand Management* is the ideal outlet for them to have done so.

Kevin Lane Keller
Tuck School of Business,
100 Tuck Hall, Dartmouth College,
Hanover, NH, USA