

Marketing Plan Assignment

Since antiquity, men and women have worn flip-flops due to their ability to ease the movement, while offering a feeling of casual chic. Flip-flops can be worn both indoors and outdoors. Summer often associates with a fabulous pair of flip-flops, and, in a place like UAE, where summer never seems to end, flip-flops seem to be the only solution. Due to its versatility, this type of shoes has become popular in the UAE market. Thus, an introduction of a brand will not be a big hustle, unlike ensuring profitable sales. Since the product is already on the market, the company should primary focus on acquiring and keeping new customers, while ensuring a competitive advantage. This essay analyzes the competitors in the market and the attitude of consumers towards the product in order to find new ways for the brand to thrive in this business environment.

Competitor Analysis

The most common flip-flop brands in the UAE are Nike, Havaianas, Adidas, among others.

Table 1

Competitors

	Market Share	Revenue	Quality	Market Power	Aggressiveness	Cost
Nike	14.3%	US\$30.601 Billion	High	High	High	High
Havaianas	Unknown	BRL\$3.7 Billion	High	High	Very High	low
Adidas	13.8%	€14.49 billion	High	High	High	High

Source: (Roazen, 2016).

Nike Multinational Company

Nike is a multinational corporation in the USA involved in designing, developing, manufacturing, marketing, and selling products worldwide. The goods company specializes at are footwear, equipment, apparel, services, and accessories, etc. Nike stands as the world's largest supplier and manufacturer of athletic shoes and clothing as well as sports equipment. Its brand alone was valued at US\$19 billion in 2014, and during 2015, the corporation was operating with revenue of US\$30.601 billion (Roazen, 2016, para. 1). At the beginning of this year, Nike has experienced an increase in its market share from 11.2% to 14.3% (Roazen, 2016, para. 1). The company offers flip-flops with unique designs, ranging from different colors to shapes. As world-renowned brand, most people consider it a stylish option and wear it as a symbol of social status.

Havaianas Flip-flop Company

Havaianas is a Brazilian brand that specializes in flip-flops only. Inspired by Japanese, the company engaged in mass production of flip-flops made out of rubber. Havaianas is a major competitor in UAE because it is considered the most famous brand in the world, producing hundred and fifty million pairs each year. They make various flip-flops of different colors and designs. They stand out as the most remarkable casual wear shoes for both young and old customers. They also make baby friendly flip-flops that are safe and attractive to a child's eye.

Adidas Footwear Company

Adidas is a German multinational corporation focused on designing and manufacturing clothing, sports shoes and accessories. It stands as the largest sportswear manufacturer in Europe and occupies the second place in the world. As of 2012, the organization gains a revenue of €14.49 billion and an operating income of €1.20 billion (Roazen, 2016, para. 1). Adidas has improved tremendously from an average market share of 8.5% to 13.8% by the beginning of this

year (Roazen, 2016, para. 1). The company's first flip-flop was called Adilette, which was a shoe made specifically for the locker room. To this day, they stand as the best seller. The company made the next flip-flop called Santiossage, which was a unisex shoe. Then next design offered was the Adissage, which was also unisex. The Adidas flip-flops are made with uniquely massage nubs at the foot bed. This strategy is as a counter argument to the debate that flip-flops are not feet friendly.

Competitive Strategy

Most of these brands have established a market for themselves over the years. Introduction of a new brand in the market requires a lot of effort, creativity, and dedication (Paley, 2008). First, the new brand of flip-flops must capitalize on the disadvantage widely known about the use of flip-flops. Most people complain about the utilization of this footwear due to its design. They have little arch support, while some have none at all. Thus, the company must create a product that capitalizes on this weakness and ensure that the flip-flop has better arch support. In addition, this type of footwear is made out of rubber or leather, which can be very hard and uncomfortable on the feet. Thus, the company must find a new material that will be feet friendly.

Secondly, a company has to design a unique flip-flop. The season when people wear this product provides a good environment for creativity. The company must be very creative to catch automatically an eye of a customer. With a company like Havaianas in the market, creativity must be the priority. Lastly, focus on advertisement is essential. People nowadays turn to the internet as to their constant helper in every life quest; hence, utilizing the internet as a marketing strategy is of a high value (Alikhan & Mashelkar, 2009). The new brand has to launch a website

where they will advertise their products. They should also open an online store and deliver goods to the customers.

Consumer Behavior

Needs Analysis

The consumers of this product frequently seek to fulfil utilitarian and social needs. Flip-flops are easy to wear, and it takes a few seconds to remove them. Furthermore, during the summer when it is scorching hot in the UAE, they can be very comfortable to wear. One can walk comfortably on the sand in flip-flops without having any difficulties. Flip flops also provide good air circulation. Therefore, consumers prefer them in warm countries and seasons. The feet are practically bare, so they do not get sweaty as compared to other footwear. Therefore, there is less chance of bacterial growth on the feet. In addition, flip-flops are very comfortable because they are light. People usually enjoy walking in them during summer. On the contrary, people wear flip-flops because they are usually the best option during summer seasons. For one, they make up a summer look, and can be worn with any clothes. They also look simple and very comfortable. They come in several designs, which can be very appealing to many.

Decision-Making Process Analysis

When it comes to making decisions on which flip-flops to buy, consumers in the UAE go through five stages of the decision-making process. First, the potential customer recognizes a need of new pair of flip-flops. At this stage, a person notices that the flip-flops he/she has in the house are worn out, or outdated. Maybe this customer went for an outdoor activity or the gym with friends, and notices new trendy and appealing flip-flops. Hence, his/her new pair seems substandard. In their desire for belongingness in the social environment of friends, the potential consumer elevates to the next stage.

In the information search stage, the individual seeks information on where to get the flip-flops worn by the friend. If this person does not already know where to get this particular product, they can go ahead and ask the friend or search for the model on the internet. According to Marshall & Johnston (2011), during this period the potential customer will pay close attention to the available internal knowledge and information given to them by other consumers, like friends and families. The customer can also consider the pros and cons list to help his/her make a wise decision so that he/she does not end up making a wrong decision.

Thirdly, the consumer makes an evaluation of the alternatives. He/she starts asking if the brand of flip-flops he/she wants to purchase is the correct product or he/she needs a different one. The person will evaluate the product regarding its quality as well as its reputation. However, each consumer attributes different importance to the commodity comparing to another person, and hence it varies. At this stage, the user will refer to the information he/she has gathered before and his/her perception of the brand and evaluate the alternatives.

The customer then moves to the level of purchase. Based on the information he/she has gathered, the customer buys the chosen product. During this period, the client has either come to a logical conclusion due to an adequate research or bases the decision on emotional grounds, experiences or perceived advertising strategies (Marshall & Johnston, 2011). Lastly, the consumer experiences post-purchase behavior. When the customer finds out that the flip flops they purchased either exceed or match the expectations they will become the brand's ambassador and influence other potential buyers. The reaction of the buyer will affect the sales of the product. Either way, when the customer is not satisfied with the purchase, he/she will either not talk about the product, or go around sharing his/her negative experience. Negative word of mouth can lower the sales of the commodity.

Conclusion

To introduce a new brand of flip-flops in the UAE, one has to study the competitive environment as well as the consumers strategically. The success of the brand depends on the formulation of an effective strategy to gain competitive advantage in the market. The company must learn how competitors maneuver, their weaknesses and use their disadvantages to find better solutions and offer better models, in other words, they have to fill in the gaps in the market. Understanding the consumers is also another key strategy aimed at gaining sales. It is important to know what encourages customer buy products and build on that to establish a successful brand.