

Analyzing the Marketing Strategies of Babolat and the Impact of RafaNadal on Consumers

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Abstract: Nowadays, there are varieties of tennis equipment brands, and it was a huge industry. As more brands were founded, the competition between each brands increases and become more intense. Among all of the brands, Babolat had become the biggest and most famous brand globally. There were studies about sports marketing strategies previously, but barely no studies about Babolat specifically and their marketing strategies. Therefore, the topic of this paper will be to analyze the reason of Babolat being the biggest brand around the world and the impact of star players on consumer's decisions. Additionally, the paper will also provide some solutions and suggestions based on the marketing strategies. The research method that will be used is literature analysis. The sports marketing strategies of Babolat will be collected. It is concluded that star players not only could enlarge the products but also increase the consumption rate of consumers. Additionally, sports athletes could also spread positive spirits of this particular sports.

Keywords: babolat, sports marketing, tennis, social media, sports stars, analyze

1. Introduction

Babolat is the biggest tennis brand in the world. It was famous for the string and tennis racket. Among all the different tennis brands, Babolat won the competition and became popular. There must be reasons behind this great success. In this paper, the authors are going to analyze the marketing strategies of Babolat. Especially the influence of star tennis players to the reputation of this brand. Babolat must have used several efficient marketing strategies to attract consumers. From previous studies, it was known that Babolat actually has RafaNadal as their representative and propagate their products [1]. This helped them a lot to attract people and make profits. It is actually a really smart marketing strategies to connect consumers and this brand together through a start player. Additionally, as internet become more advanced, Babolat actually used social media as one of their marketing strategies also. According to previous source, Babolat use YouTube as one of the platforms to advertise their products [2]. They use those ads in YouTube to demonstrate how good are their products compare to other brands. This could let the consumers who already have other products to change their mind and by Babolat's products instead. Eventually, this advertisement through social media could help Babolat to boost their profits. Through YouTube, Babolat could present videos of players playing use their products. This is actually more effective than a simple

picture. Additionally, advertising through social media helped them to widen their target audience. Since not only people who play the sport use social media but also the general public including teenagers, adults even elder people and so on. All of those could benefit Babolat to bring them more profits and consumers. This is an example of previous study on Babolat. Overall, Babolat had used many smart and efficient marketing strategies to attract potential audience [3]. This is also the key for their success among all of the tennis brands. Advertising through social media could attract many varieties of audience and consumers.

In this paper, the authors are going to focus more on the effect of star players on Babolat. As mentioned, Babolat had RafaNadal as their representative for advertising. This had a great impact on Babolat and is a very effective way as a marketing strategy. The way the authors are going to use for this paper is case study which analyzes are based on other papers. This could make analyze more reliable and valuable. Since there were already previous study based on this area of knowledge which will be helpful for this research. Additionally, based on other studies could help the authors to better dig deeper into the topic.

2. Background Information of RafaNadal

Babolat was founded in 1875 as a family business. It was under the lead Pierre Babolat and created the first natural gut strings for rackets around the world. After that, they specialize in racquet industry and continued to develop. At first, Babolat used cow and sheep gut as the raw material for the strings. Afterwards, they decided to find an alternative and more sustainable raw material for the strings. Since there was an increase in demand of a thinner sting with higher tension. In 1925, Pierre Babolat's son Albert Babolat had invented a revolutionary string. It had met all the demands and became the benchmark for all the tennis strings for centuries. By this huge success, in 1950, Babolat had finally became a famous brand globally. Additionally, one of the members in Babolat company Paul Babolat had built a retail network for selling the products worldwide. This was a huge development for Babolat as their reputation expanded all around the world. Some countries includes the US, Germany, Italy, Japan and so on [2]. In the year 1960 was another breakthrough for Babolat. Since there were many new products and accessories along with the rackets. Below is a picture of the products Babolat released at that time.

From year 1981 to 1982, Babolat had invented a first exclusive stringing machine. After this, Babolat also released a new technology called Elastocross where the life of the strings got enhanced. This technology allows the strings easier for reposition and repair. This was another innovation of the strings which further enhanced the quality of Babolat. Much later to 1995, Babolat had made their first badminton racket. This marked the further step made by Babolat as they widen their industry to badminton. However, Babolat did not do as well for badminton as they did for tennis which was what they are famous for. In 2005, a young tennis player named RafaNadal had used Babolat rackets since the age of nine. He won his first championship at the age of 19 using special designed Babolat rackets for him. This helps to increase reputation and credibility of Babolat. Afterwards, Babolat kept improve their strings and products based on the rules changed. Since as rules changed, the ways that athletes have to use also changed. Therefore, it was important to keep improving the products to best suit for athletes to play and receive more honor.

In 2021 Babolat had made a total revenue of 71million [4]. The main marketing strategies that Babolat used is through social media. For instance, they used social media such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to promote their new products or show the star player who used their products. Additionally, they had invited RafaNadal as representative of their brand. As mentioned, RafaNadal had used Babolat products since nine years old. Nowadays, he had become the spokesman for Babolat. Babolat used his reputation to attract more potential consumers and people

could easily bond Rafa Nadal and Babolat together. This also helped Babolat to become the biggest tennis company around the world [2].

3. Analysis of Fans of Tennis and Advertisement Effect of Consumer's on Babolat

During the analysis of the whole brand, it can be illustrated and connected with vicarious attachment which is about fan's feeling and their purchasing motivation. According to the scientific research, it has been found that people have more motivation and wants to buy products that are advertised by superstars who they have known before. It is obvious that advertisements that people have noticed before or people who did this advertisement is who they have known before can increase consumer's preference and feel more familiar. For example, in the Babolat brand. It has found that people are more tend to buy rackets which are advertised by well-known tennis players such as Li Na and Rafa Nadal. Based on the database has found on the purchasing APP called 'Tao Bao'. It suggests that there are several different phenomena with consumption trend of tennis racket. In 100 tennis shops, there are half of people would like to buy rackets which are suggested by those superstars. There are most of rackets cannot be sell in a whole year because there low advertising rate and advertisements power. In the whole article, it will introduce for how Babolat need super stars support and why as well as the positive effect of advertisements. Despite those introductions, it also includes comparison for no advertisements products and having advertisements products sales differentiation.

First of all, despite some rackets that are not advertised by superstars. It is obvious that products without people's suggestions is less well known by consumers which determines the number of sales. Different superstar advertisement and superstars playing skill could affect people's purchasing preference. It is related to playing skills on the court of those superstars and rank on the world tennis competition. For instance, Rafa Nadal is the strongest player in the past few years in the whole brand of Babolat and tennis competition ranking system. He has a great deal of fans in global. It exclaims vicarious attachment of consumers and fans of Rafa Nadal. Many fans saw that Rafa Nadal uses one racket which is Babolat to win the competition and have training. Fan's own preference system will be initiated. They may think that if they also purchase this racket or buy the racket, it is beneficial for improve their playing skills about tennis. Despite of this aspect, it is also possible that fans will increase their preference and increase their self-satisfaction from purchasing those specific rackets advertised by famous superstars such as Rafa Nadal. It is because fans will think that they are getting closer with their superstars.

In addition, playing quality of superstar and tennis racket quality are also important characters for consumer's choosing which affect people's preference. For instance, if Rafa Nadal has wonderful performance on the tennis court. Index is seemed to be perfect for tennis players so that people are more likely to buy the same racket that he used before [5]. According to the Rafa Nadal playing technic analysis on 2022 in France tennis competition, which suggests that those beautiful player's technic accompanied with beautiful colors racket increases audience's preference for Babolat tennis racket because Nadal used this brand racket won the game. Under this circumstance, existing rate on the competition of brand products can also be determined to be a choosing factor. If a player uses one racket for a long time which means that this brand rackets are reliable and it can be used in big match. Therefore, this brand can use some attractive colors to grasp consumer's heart. With the bonus of color and player's wonderful performance, which increases purchase of Babolat products. In contrast, for some players they have not well on one competition which makes loss a much money to supporters on rackets advertisement. Less customers and fans feel the 'eustress' because they feel the feeling of defeated rather than winning feeling. Sport is an entertainment route, people are more want to obtain happiness via games and watching competition. Lose of game will lower the mood for customers and purchasing confidence. It makes Babolat total

revenue smaller than total cost spending on invitation fee for superstar. It makes Babolat losing money and losing customers. In this way, this superstar will be dismissed.

Route of advertisements is also deciding factors for rackets sales. Marketing profile of different rockets on selling APPs show that different superstars have their own rackets. These rockets have different functions and those functions are adaptable to different kinds of players. In Babolat, Dominica, Tim once mentioned that using PURE STRIKE racket created by Babolat gives him more control and confidence, and that feeling played a big role on the pitch. This route of advertisement shows the real experience by superstar, which is a strong and effective way to attract more customers [6]. It is because if those super stars are relying on this rackets which means this racket is strong enough and have high quality. Superstars have used a great deal of kinds of rackets but they only publish those comments on one rackets. It determines their agreement and wants more customers to buy it. This route of advertisement makes customers and fans feel the eustress and first-hand experience. Fans may let themselves participate in Dominica. Tim's competition. This imagination is significant because fans will have more satisfaction. The total utility is far bigger than total cost, then, customers will buy rackets advertised by Dominica Tim.

Last but not least, despite Dominica. Tim, showing the comparison between different superstars advertising difference of same brand racket are also important. Within the comparison, there are two data showing the effect of Li Na and Rafa Nadal's advertisement of rackets purchasing in China. Li Na shows more passion and participates in more advertising activity in China. Therefore, the sales numbers of Li Na advertising racket has better index overall [7]. This racket has over 1000 comments and 99% good comments. However, Rafa Nadal's low mood of advertising and participation of endorsement activity lower the purchases index of his advertising racket although it has 100% good comment [8]. It has clearly contrast of 1000 and 16 sales and comments. Therefore, attending of advertisements and activity in different areas can also affect the sales of racket and products of Babolat. Plus, province difference can also become a differentiated part in the analysis. In Li Na and Rafa Nadal example shows that local player are more welcomed by local customers. Li Na was born in China, she has played tennis in China for a long time and plays competition for her own country [9]. She is extremely famous in China tennis and sport province. It is an obvious situation which is people are more likely to support local players. In sports fandom perspective, it is determined to be 'local connection'. Some fans are fixed because they have to support their own country's sports players. China rackets of Barbola advertised by Li Na is a good example. In China, local Chinese know that Li Na is represented their own country and they have to support her. Therefore, rackets advertised by Li Na is more welcoming by local customers. In contrast, Rafi Nadal has not provided too much affect as Li Na do in China [10]. He cannot come to Beijing and participate the local fans meeting, which decreases his height in China's sport market.

4. Solutions and Suggestions

Clearly, other brands cannot be as famous as Babolat and there are ways to improve their reputation. Babolat mainly used two marketing strategies, one is social media and another one is star players in this case is RafaNadal. Take Wilson as an example, Wilson is also a big tennis company. What they did is that they recently created an online campaign called "My Wilson" through social media. They invited many tennis athletes who were using Wilson equipment to create a video. This video was posted on social media to spread Wilson's reputation and sell their products. The reason they create this campaign is that Wilson had experienced a huge decline in consumer purchasing rate in the year of 2013. This campaign could help them to regain the purchasing rate and even further improve their consumer base [10]. Many athletes came and joined this campaign and even shared the video on social media. However, this online campaign still cannot help Wilson to become as popular as Babolat. There are two main reasons, first is that those

athletes might not be as famous as RafaNadal. Therefore, it is hard to attract new consumers other than fans who are already a consumer of Wilson. Second, this campaign is not a long-term solution. Since after a period of time, new campaign and activity will be created on social media. Meaning that this Wilson's campaign will no longer be so popular on the internet. This is also a disadvantage of advertising through social media. The company has to keep creating and post advertisement to create a long-term effect on consumers. The other thing that Babolat did in terms of marketing is using star players. In fact, using sports stars in advertising is actually very effective. Athletes could gain a huge influence on consumer's decisions on which brand and products. This impact could be extremely subjective meaning that those fans will prefer the players instead of the brand [5]. On top of this huge impact of star players, Babolat had let RafaNadal to endorse the products since 2005. This had made Babolat have a huge fan base especially fans of RafaNadal. Some suggestions for other brands is that first, the quality of the products has to be high. Since no matter how much money were spent on advertising, if the products are not good, the consumers will also not choose the brand. Then after a high and steady quality of products, it is also important to find a famous person to endorse the products. This person should be professional at the area of sports of the brand. For instance, if the products are basketball equipment, then the company should find a pro basketball star to endorse. Additionally, advertising on social media is also effective but the key are continuity and attractiveness. Only the advertisement could constantly be seen by consumers, the chance of them buying the product will be bigger. Besides that, if the advertisement is boring, the consumers would not even pay attention on the advertisement. Therefore, advertising through social media should be both consecutive and interesting. However, there are also factors that cannot be improved. For instance, the history of the brand is not changeable. Babolat was created since 1875. However, Wilson was founded since 1913. Clearly, people will prefer Babolat since it is the first ever tennis company with a long history. This is also a key of Babolat being so popular around the world. But this is a variable that cannot be changed and improved.

5. Conclusion

Research shows that Babolat mainly uses two marketing strategies to improve its brand reputation, one is social media, and the other is star player advertising. Through social media platforms, sports brands can post campaigns and videos. Consumers get to know the brand by participating in activities or forwarding videos to stimulate their purchase. Star advertisements and advertising routes are important factors affecting sports brands. Products with star ads work much better than those without ads. It is directly reflected in the purchase index and value. The more famous the superstar, the more money the brand makes. In future studies, there may be more data and data analysis of different brands of tennis brands as well as analysis of any other brands. This is helpful for marketers, who can choose who to hire to advertise their products. This study suggests that sports brands should first have high quality products. Secondly, it is also important to choose a professional athlete in the field of the sport as the spokesperson. Advertising on social media should be fun, consistent and engaging. This study provides a direction for the marketing strategies of other sports brands. However, this research project has some limitations, such as geographical limitations and customer personality limitations. These are not included in the study's analysis of purchasing power and consumption indices. In future studies, the analysis of consumers' purchasing power and consumption behavior preferences in different regions should provide more accurate information for sports brands' marketing strategies.

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