

Nostalgia and brand management –Churning human emotions for Business profits

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America has no “now”...Our Culture is composed of sequels ,reruns, remakes, revivals, reissues, re-releases, recreations, re-enactments, adaptations...and nostalgia record collections.

George Carlin¹, Brain Dropping,1998

ABSTRACT

Capitalizing on human emotions has been a powerful dynamo influencing sales of almost all major brands, Some times it may be silent but dominant enough to trigger longlines for the product, a storm brews within the human mind which drowns the intellect and surpasses factors like modern features and latest trends to give way to desire for procuring a vintage product with sometimes old features. Whenever there is economic uncertainty, retro marketing works as a charm, heritage brands exploit their historical legacy and social acceptance of yesterdays to boost current saturated sales. Brand management aims to create an emotional connection between products, companies and their customers and constituents. Brand managers may try to control the image of the brand (Shamoon et al)².

This paper deals with understanding link of nostalgia in boosting sales, importance of nostalgic branding, the types of nostalgic brand relationships and its impact on consumption behaviour of consumers. It goes on to analyze why sometimes nostalgia fails.

Keywords: Conflict management, Thomas –Kilmann, Rahim, Pre Conflict management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nostalgia was first described by Johannes Hoffer in 1688 (Havlena and Holak)³ It's a clever potpourri of past and present highlights, we never seem to be tired of deceased celebrities, it may be probably our parents related to them and since we have blind faith on their action and thoughts we also unconsciously relate to nostalgia. According to websters⁴, nostalgia refers to a longing for the past, a yearning for yesterday, or a fondness for possessions and activities associated with days of yore (Holbrook, 1993)⁵, it is the good times we remember of our past and all the products or brands we used begins soothing our subconscious mind. "My first Levi's". Advertising campaigns also appeal to timeless icons such as Marilyn Monroe and John Lennon. Adidas has relaunched the famous SL 72 sneakers, Rover and Fiat have re-interpreted mythic cars like the Mini and Fiat 500 off late there has been a surge of ecommerce websites and blogs catering to vintage products sales and resale which indicates our subliminal cravings to be associated with nostalgia brands. In the world of marketing and advertisement nostalgia may refer to a mood (Belk, 1990)⁶, a preference (Holbrook and Schindler, 1991)⁷, a state (Stern, 1992)⁸, a desire (Baker and Kennedy, 1994)⁹ or an affective reaction (Divard and Robert-Demontrond, 1997)¹⁰. While others have taken a step forward in giving a more spicer debate on the roots of nostalgia itself Goulding¹¹ (2002) introduced the term "vicarious nostalgia" to describe non-personally experienced nostalgia he says one could identify nostalgically with people, places, or things from a bygone era that one has experienced only through books, films or other narratives this means that one no longer needs to have lived a past in order to feel nostalgic for it. We thus have the concept of 'stimulated' nostalgia, its here the marketing fraternity try advertising gimmicks to make a psychological dent inside prospective buyers. "Nostalgia, whether real or fantasized, whether in the recent or distant past exerts an influence in varied aspects of consumer and consumption behaviour. The apparent tendency of individuals to feel nostalgic emotions more strongly during transitional periods in the life cycle has not gone unrecognized by advertisers and marketers". (Halvena and Holak, 1991).

2 NOSTALGIA TRIGGER ELEMENTS

They can be

2.1 From everyday past

Say for example when you were a child you liked popins sweets and now when you are a teenager you may still long to eat poppins, it helps reliving our innocent childhood. It makes it possible to relive fun moments from the past via the participation of regressive experiences (Cova and Pace, 2006)¹³

2.2 From tradition

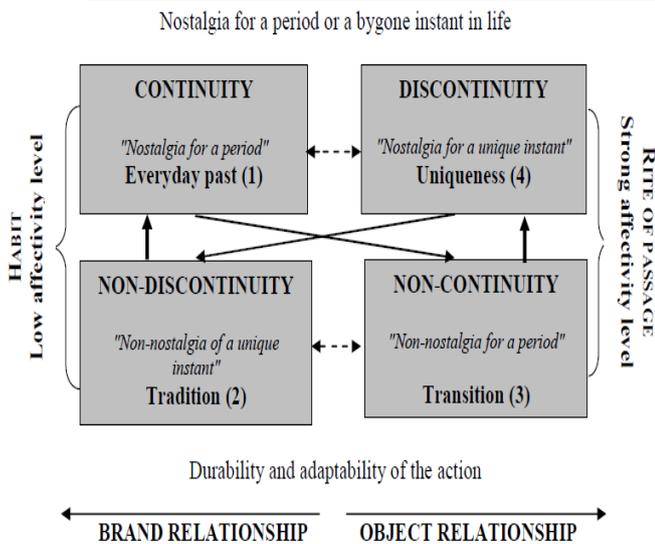
Woodward's has been used by mothers worldwide for around 150 years, its punch line says it all "we have been burping babies since generations"¹⁴.

2.3 From uniqueness

These are unforgettable incidents in ones life, say for example we all remember the DIY lego¹⁵ toy, this retro brand is growing strong since last 80 years in over 130 countries, we still give our children lego toys since it reminds us of the toy creating uniqueness which used to enthrall us when we were kids.

2.4 From transition

remember the first time you used an aftershave, Old-Spice.. Still use it too. It's what my grandpa used, what my dad used, and what I use...¹⁶



International Conference on Brand Management, Lugano, 11-12 Mars 2011)

3.1 Teenadults:

It refers to the period of carefree attitude of childhood and adolescence.

3.2 Traditionals

The consumer relationship with nostalgia is a question of tradition. The most important thing is to perpetuate the past and transmit its history.

3.3 Transgenerational:

here nostalgia is a memory quest, for ex keeping a product or symbol may remind him of someone.

3.5 Transitional:

it corresponds to the end of adolescence and the beginning of adulthood, the most important influencer here is the feeling of freedom of choice.

4 INDIAN SCENARIOS ON NOSTALGIA MARKETING:

Indian companies have long been using the Nostalgia trigger stimulus in boosting their sales for example how can we forget the Bajaj's hugely emotional advertisement of Hamara Bajaj which evoked the feeling of owning a perfect family Vehicle ,the advertisement skyrocketed the scooter sales as on 31 March 2013²², its market capitalisation was INR 520 billion , making it India's 23rd largest publicly traded company by market value. Similarly Rasna's "I Love you Campaign" Advertisement captured the young childrens attention and as of 2009, Rasna had a 93% market share in the soft drink concentrate market in India and as of 2011, the company had a turnover of ₹3.5 billion²³ .Rasna Still commands the nostalgic respect in the market.

5 What it takes to win

The retro brand needs to have strong brand values and brand authenticity, powerful retro brands have an almost fanatic consumer base. The brand needs to cater to multigenerational appeal, the brands should give a clever feel of the past and the modern view. Sometimes uncertain times pave way to retro brand when people want to shy away from the modern glitz but vintage style needs to fit properly, says Marie Ridgley²⁴, the beetle car featured more power and modern amenities , It was a classic package with modern conveniences. The New Beetle sold an astonishing 83,434 units the following year. The New Beetle's design evoked feelings of nostalgia, freedom, and fun. Its spirit was friendly, honest, and optimistic²⁵. Simplicity is yet another silent but powerful influencer for a retro brand ,Ford Thunderbird in 2002 was meant to be a reinvention of the 1955 classic. While it shared aesthetic qualities with the original, it also had modern features to satisfy current drivers. But unfortunately the designers made the car overly posh like a luxury land yacht while it was originally a sports coupe . The Thunderbird failed by modernizing itself too much. Finally it was curtains for this bird.

The ever competitive marketing strategies in the cutthroat market has now begun experimenting with new techniques for ex successful marketing now involves continuously sowing of evangelists -Chuck Brymer relates in his book, The Nature of Marketing, "...our job is to continually reach out to our brand's most passionate advocates in these communities, who spread the word from peer to peer and multiply their efforts exponentially"²⁶ There is a famous english adage that "strike when the iron is hot" similarly marketers need to launch retro brands considering an ideal market gap .

(the semiotic square by (Kessous and Roux, 2008²⁰) Nostalgia may also surface from

2.5 Trans generational period :

Cadbury's started the vogue for nostalgia- that-makes-you-feel-better marketing¹⁷ by reintroducing the Wispa bar with clever use of social media sites Consumers embraced the brand's return so enthusiastically that it resulted in 12 million bars being sold in 12 weeks to December 2008.

2.6 Emotions:

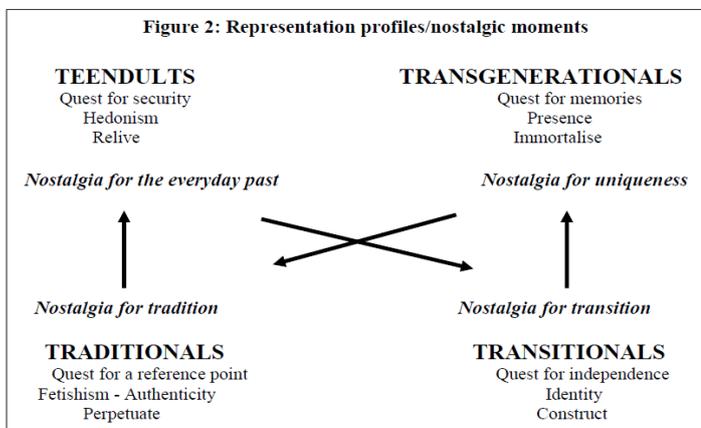
Virgin Atlantic The '25 years, still red hot' ad¹⁸ is packed with references to 1980s Britain, It cheekily celebrates the idea that Virgin has long had the sexiest cabin crew of any airline.

2.7 From legacy and history:

Johnnie Walker worlds widely distributed brand of blended scotch has a staggering yearly sale sales of over 130 million bottles, its rich legacy and history since 1820 has been so high that in 2005 the Walker,s blue label 200 years old blended bottle fetched an astonishing \$3,600¹⁹ Per bottle.

3 NOSTALGIA CONSUMER PROFILES:

Depending on the nostalgia trigger elements we have four consumer profiles ie everyday past corresponds to Teenadults, Tradition with traditional ,Transition with Transitional and Uniqueness with Transgenerational.



(sourced from KESSOUS- NOSTALGIA AND BRAND MANAGEMENT :A SEMIOTIC STUDY²¹- 7th Thought Leaders

6 WHY SOMETIMES NOSTALGIA MISSES:

Nostalgia marketing is complex, cognitive and emotional attempt to relaunch an old brand. Nova²⁷ a popular women's magazine in 1965 was re launched in 2000. It collapsed because the magazine market was already overcrowded making it difficult to make a dent. Brands need to be iconic and towering then only can they remain alive in human memory waiting to be awakened. Daniels (1985)²⁸ who wrote,

"Nostalgia can be peculiarly private he simple echoes " what is nostalgic for me may leave another indifferent". Lundgren²⁹ (2010) argues that nostalgia is difficult to grasp. La Tour³⁰ (2010) by explaining that "memory is a reconstructive process, so what is remembered at any one time may differ substantially from how the event actually transpired" and goes on to state that consumers fill in the gaps according to their lifestyle and personal preferences.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Its quite true that remembering the past evokes positive feelings. Makes people feel younger. Nostalgia marketing clearly strikes a chord and consumer power is highly influential. Companies need to take advantage of existing brand equity. The Product Image should evoke positive and warm feelings, even though it doesn't have anything in common with the product. However there is some risk of recalling negative associations Advertisements, Certain nostalgic advertisements may alienate different target groups. Dr Beverley³¹ projects an interesting thought" The 'brand' has never been so important and people are seeking brands and services from transparent sources, so organisations have to manage customers' perceptions of authenticity, which is crucial to sustained growth and profitability.

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