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Rebranding and repositioning a global power brand: Accenture case study

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Abstract

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Introduction

The thesis sheds light on the role of B2B brands, the message of reliability they carry on and eventually the concept of rewarding resulting from that. The researches have been oriented towards the Business-to-Business environment, which is the general framework for financial services providers and all those companies operating with other companies, rather than end-consumers.

The work emphasizes how the nature of B2B sector has changed its mentality of doing business. In fact, maintaining the primary objective of serving clients, firms are currently struggling to acquire a wider customer-base by improving the quality of their offers. In order to achieve such a result, they've implemented new strategies raising the 'Brand Perception' as the most powerful asset they own. As a result, a compelling and well-structured positioning, based upon the pillars of brand image, awareness and equity, does affect the perception people have about the firms itself, and also impacts on the evaluation of its products. The consequences, moreover, are reflected by further expectations on extensions and diversification (of both products and business). The study finishes with the analysis of empirical findings related to corporate branding strategy, in particular referring to re-branding and re-positioning. The model chosen to serve as a guideline in such a research, refers to the 'Accenture' Case Study. The

company, a successful as well as globally known consultancy provider, represents the most outstanding example of how B2B firms have to deal with Marketing and Brand Management, much more than it can be thought or deemed to be worthwhile. Therefore, as the company itself has proven, the more the offer is intangible, the more it needs to be supported by a powerful branding strategy.

The thesis is articulated as follows:

The first chapter is going to present how companies operating in B2B set up their brands, and the reasons why investing in brands has become a crucial matter, especially for those who promote financial or professional services. The last paragraph strongly supports this perspective by showing the impact of brand consistency on market performance.

The second chapter, instead, analyzes the literary review about Branding Management and organizes the speech following a step-by-step approach. At first it focuses on the essence of B2B brands, by rescuing both their nature and relevance; secondly, through a rethinking of marketing tools and a further insight into innovation, it highlights the successful experience of extending B2B brands' global strategies for consulting firms. Finally, it presents three alternatives of implementing these strategies in the business-to-business scenario. Co-branding, the most applied technique, provides firms a chance to establish global brands into local markets; Ingredient branding, instead, leverages the strengths of a known brand, and simultaneously exploits the dominance of local markets of minor ones. Online branding, again, is the new marketing tool, which raises at an exponential level the contacts of the firm through the word-of-mouth mechanism and the diffusion of shared experiences. The ultimate goal concerns the acquisition of a bigger

share of profits, by gathering a wider client-base. The devices that companies use to bridge this gap are those factors making the difference.

The third chapter continues on this track while introducing, at the same time, the Case Study. Indeed, it presents, in a well-round perspective, the activities and the marketing processes set up by Accenture during its climbing of the mountain of success (from the Strategic Brand Management to the Business Process Outsourcing, recently implemented). The material, which has been collected thanks to the cooperation of the Director of Marketing Department in Milan, embraces the company history from the origins, passing through the conflict with Arthur Andersen and the Accenture launch, the re-branding and repositioning process, which involved one of the greatest investments in advertising campaigns ever. The company excursus concludes by analyzing the current challenges of the service provider, concerning the integration of outsourcing solutions as well as the creation of value for shareholders through learning. The forth and last chapter, eventually, is a general discussion about the results obtained so far. In addition to that, it gives an interpretation of financial data and empirical results, preparing the soil for future researches.

Research Questions

The thesis develops a deep insight into the features on the B2B sector, analysing the pivotal role of brands for reaching a sustainable competitive advantage and outperforming competitors. In order to follow such a path, the work has been organized answering to three main questions, better known as Research Questions. The first one focuses on firms operating in B2B environments, and also deals with the Brand Management, stating: How would they implement successful strategies and leverage on brand awareness to increase their equities? The second question, instead, is more technical and carries on a multi-fold analysis of different marketing devices, respectively Co-branding, In-branding and E-branding. Are these the breakthrough marketing tools to lead the market and outperform competitors? The third and last question, eventually, refers to a global-known company, working in the consulting sector as financial service provider, Accenture. Referring always to such a company as the master example, the thesis finishes by addressing the issue: How do Re-branding and Re-positioning affects positively (or negatively) brand extension, brand reputation and brand image? It has been demonstrated that, when implemented in the right way, branding strategies are the keystone for the future management.

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