

THE IMPORTANCE OF BRANDING IN THE LOW COST RETAIL INDUSTRY

MICHELLE JÄCKEL

Assignment presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of
Economic and Management Sciences (Industrial Psychology) at the University of
Stellenbosch



PROMOTER: PROF. J.B. DU TOIT

MARCH 2001

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Date: March 2001

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(Bebnen Capa N blue sell brand trousers
cheaply N blue sell no-name trousers.)

ABSTRACT

by: Analysis of the importance of branding in the low cost retail industry

The field study reported here examined the importance of branding in the low cost retail industry. Two low cost retailers were identified, who sell boys grey school trousers. The one retailer sells the trousers with a brand name, while the other doesn't sell the grey school trousers with a brand name. Sales volumes of both retailers were drawn for a certain period and questionnaires were developed and sent to the different shops to be completed by the customers to determine how important brands were to them. The results of the research indicated that the retailer selling grey school trousers with a brand name sold more units than the retailer selling the grey school trousers without a brand name. Furthermore, the customers indicated that they would buy grey school trousers with a brand name rather than buying grey school trousers without a brand name.

OPSOMMING

Die navorsing wat hier gerapporteer word, ondersoek die belangrikheid van handelsmerke in die lae-koste kleinhandel industrie. Twee lae-koste kleinhandelaars is geïdentifiseer wat grys skool langbroeke vir seuns verkoop. Die een kleinhandelaar verkoop die grys skool langbroek met 'n handelsnaam, terwyl die ander kleinhandelaar nie die broek met 'n handelsnaam verkoop nie. Verkoopsvolume data vir 'n sekere periode is van beide kleinhandelaars getrek en vraelyste is ontwikkel en na die winkels gestuur. Die kliënt moes die vraelys voltooi om te bepaal hoe belangrik handelsmerke vir die kliënt is. Die resultate van die studie het daarop gedui dat die kleinhandelaar wat die grys skool langbroek met die handelsmerk verkoop, meer eenhede verkoop het as die kleinhandelaar wat die grys skool langbroek sonder handelsmerk verkoop. Verder het die kliënt aangedui dat die grys skool langbroek met 'n handelsnaam eerder gekoop sal word as 'n grys skool langbroek sonder handelsmerk.

“Cars rust, buildings become dilapidated, people die, but what lives on are brands.” (Du Plessis, Rousseau & Blom, 1994).

The retailing industry has undergone some dramatic changes over the years. Back at the turn of the century, most shop owners were independent. They knew their customers personally and knew what to stock to meet their special needs. Significant population growth and the emergence of large and powerful retail chains over the past fifty years have led to a mass-retailing approach. In the seventies and eighties, consumers eagerly spent their money, boosting consumption levels to new heights. However, the past ten years have seen some tough times for retailers. Many consumers cut back on their spending at a time when retail chains were expanding their store space in a race for market leadership. The next decade promises to escalate the upheaval and change as retailers adjust to globalisation, new technologies and to emerging new consumers. Competition will intensify as mega-retailers continue to aggressively pursue growth and market share. (Roberts, 1998).

The competition between retailers and manufactures will increase as well. Retailers will focus more on turning their private label products into strong brands which will communicate to the customer: “Hands on, this is for you” (Crainer, 1995). Manufacturers looking for ways to improve their profitability, will cross paths with retailers as they attempt to sell directly to customers, mainly in a non-store environment (Roberts, 1998).

As mentioned above, retailers will start developing their own brands in order to move away from the manufacturer’s brand. Ten Kate (1991, p. 20) summarised the value of brands in the industry as follows: “Brands have value in the marketplace. They are company assets that need to be managed like any other asset. Marketers realise that the more consumers equate quality with their brands, the more they will buy.”

Consumers simply do not purchase brands that they do not recognise or trust, no matter how much sales promotion is put behind the brands (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1995).

Since there have been spoken a lot about brands, we still do not know the origin and the meaning of brands: *Where does the word brand come from and what does it mean?*

The word “brand” was derived from the Norwegian word “brandr” which means “to burn”, this was the only way people knew how to mark their own possessions.

The meaning of the word brand, can be described by the wide variety of definitions. For the purpose of the study, a few definitions have been identified.

Doyle (1990) defined a brand as: “a name, symbol, design or some combination which identifies the product of a particular organisation as having a sustainable differentiated advantage.” In other words, the definite “mark” on the product is not the brand, it is only a symbol or sign of the brand. So the brand can be seen as a set of intangible values and not just as a name, logo or graphic mark (Southgate, 1995).

Another definition of brands is Kotler's (1994) definition:

"A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, which is intended to identify the goods or services of one group of sellers and differentiate them from those of competitors." So the brand name is that part of the brand that can be pronounced.

Crainer (1995) supported the above-mentioned definitions with his assumption that everybody will have a certain image or feeling of the brand when they hear the names of well-known brands, for example Coca Cola, Rolex, Kodak and Club-Med. Hopefully, the image/feeling of the brand that they see/hear, is positive. The reason for this is to ensure a positive influence, the next time the customer goes on a shopping spree.

Lastly, a brand must be seen as a form of identification of the product, which can be used to advertise the product.

In the case of the study, one retailer sells branded grey school trousers. The brand is well-known, but also the retail chain, selling the products. The retailers name on its own, thus can be seen as a brand. It nearly sounds like a brand in a brand. Randall (1997) describes these classifications as: "Supportive company and corporate brands". The company name is visible, but less dominant than the main brand.

The question now raises: What is the difference between marketing and branding?

The ingredients of a brand consists of the product, the packaging, the brand name, promotions, advertising and the entire presentation. Thus can the brand be seen as a summary of all the elements, physical, rational and emotional.

Marketing is a much broader function which includes branding. It is about the development and implementation of strategies to "move" the products from the manufacturer to the customer in a profitable fashion (Murphy, 1987).

How do customers perceive and choose brands?

There is a brand name image in the consciousness of the customer. This image is the sum total of all the information received on the brand, it could have been received by word of mouth, experience, advertising, packaging or the services offered. The information in the consciousness can be altered by selective perception, previous convictions, social norms and absent-mindedness. There is a possibility that the image can be disorganised and mixed-up, but that is what is currently in the consciousness and the customer has to work from that (Randall, 1997).

Murphy (1987) has identified product attributes that contribute to the brand name image and influence customers in buying branded products:

(i) Product

The manufacturer must try to differentiate their product. By differentiating, the brand will become stronger and the customer can satisfy his/her needs by buying the exact product they want. The clothing industry is very dynamic, meaning that a lot of products move in – and – out of the industry over a certain period. So, clothing manufacturers will try to design clothing styles that are unique and different from the competitors. The reason for the different styles is to positively influence the retailer and customer to buy their products.

(ii) Promotions

The purpose of promotions is to inform the customer about the product and to motivate him/her to buy it. Promotions can thus be seen as the main communication link between the clothing manufacturer and the customer. There are different ways in which the information can be transferred to the customer. By using the mass media, for example newspapers, magazines and television. Customers see how actors and well-known television personalities dress – so they are exposed to the different clothing and lifestyles which will influence them to buy a certain brand. By placing the brand on a prominent place on the clothing garment, visual perception will increase which could lead to the successful promotion of the manufacturer's clothes, for example Calvin Klein, Billabong and Levi's. This type of visual perception can lead to a desire of the potential customer to own that particular brand (Sproles, 1979). In the case of the study, the one retailer selling the branded grey school trousers, promotes its branded school products extensively twice a year. It is called the "Back to School" campaign and it is launched in every shop, where the school wear department is expanded. The advertising material is bigger and brighter and furthermore it is advertised on television and in magazines.

(iii) Place

The retailer can be seen as a link in the chain between the manufacturer and the customer. It can be distinguished among four different types of retailers: department stores, discount stores, speciality stores and chain stores. Certain brands will be associated with certain types of retailers. Manufacturers choose to limit their brands only to certain shops that focus on specific income groups in order to keep the premium on their brands.

(iv) Price

Price is normally used as an indicator of the quality of the products. However, studies have also shown that customers attach different qualities to products that are identical, but different in price. To take it a bit further, there is a possibility that customers are influenced by more expensive brands when buying clothing. So it is believed that the brand is playing a much more important part during the purchasing decision. Previously tennis tackies were bought to be worn when playing tennis, nowadays the customer has a choice between Adidas or Nike tackies (Murphy, 1987).

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL BRANDS

Given the complexity between the customer and the products they buy, it follows that a successful brand is complex. Remembering that quality is not an inherent physical characteristic but a customer perception, the following criteria for successful brands can be highlighted:

- * *On the product level, the brand must deliver functional benefits to meet the market need at least, as well as competition*
A brand is not only the creation of advertising or packaging. So, a brand will not survive if it does not perform. Furthermore, a brand cannot be created by simply changing the name of a failing brand and putting a large advertising budget behind it.
- * *A brand will offer intangible benefits over and above the product*
To develop brand loyalty, the brand must offer some intangible benefits to the customer. These benefits are usually referred to as values. The delight of watching Lendl play against Agassi at tennis is much more than just watching the angle or pace of the shots.
- * *The various benefits of a brand must be consistent with each other and present a unified character or personality*
Customers' perception of brands is not only based on analysis, sometimes customers will come to a quick conclusion, using their buying "shorthand". If the offer to the customer is complex, or different this year from the previous year, it may not be considered. Not because the customer is ignorant but because they may not be willing to take the necessary trouble to work out what is being offered. The brand must stand out from the rest of the competitors.
- * *The values offered must be wanted by the customer*
No brand personality is significant if it is not "wanted" by the customer. All purchases are based on the basis of value. Value is not some intrinsic quality measurable on an absolute scale, but a customer's perception. If the brand can offer something which is valued and which the customer judge that nobody else can offer, it can become a long-term preference. But wants change, for example in the 1990's brands offered promises like "ozone friendly" or "low in cholesterol" which would not have added any value in earlier years (Arnold, 1992).

THE BRAND LIFECYCLE

Products and brands are submissive to a lifecycle. That implies that the demand period for the product or brand is limited. Lifecycles will differ for different products and brand, some brands will be in demand for a long period because of a constant demand for that brand. The product lifecycle is divided into four different phases, namely the introductory phase, the growth phase, the maturity phase and lastly, the decline phase.

(i) The introduction phase

As the name implies, this is the phase where the product/brand is introduced in the market. This is also the stage which will “make or break” the brand, meaning the customers can accept the brand and buy it against the option of rejecting it. If the brand is accepted, sales will increase slowly. To explain this phase, we can look at the example of a customer doubting the idea of buying a portable CD player for the first time (Arnold, 1992).

(ii) The growth phase

In this phase, the market shares will grow for a specific product/brand and sales will increase. More customers become aware of the new product/brand and is willing to try the product because it survived the market so far. It often happens that the product/brand is altered a bit to compete more effectively against the strong competition.

(iii) The maturity phase

At this stage, the climax of the product/brand has been reached and slowly sales will start declining. The customer’s demand for the product/brand has been satisfied and the customer will start observing new innovations.

(iv) The decline phase

The stage where the demand for the product/brand declines and disappears from the market, is known as the decline phase. All parties that were interested before have been satisfied and are now spending their money on other products/brands.

The lifecycle of brands will most probably be short, because brands are normally linked to fashion, which has a short lifecycle. Sometimes the brand is only a fashion fad. In such a case, the demand for the product/brand increases quickly and the maximum of the lifecycle is reached early in the lifecycle. So, the introduction and growth phase were reached early and now the demand for the product/brand will decrease as the product/brand enters the maturity phase. These changes can be seen as a reflection of the way the seasons of fashion change.

THE RETAIL INDUSTRY

The study focuses on brands in the low cost industry. In the above mentioned theory so far, brands have been described extensively. The retail industry needs to be explained as well to make the connection between retailers and brands.

There has been a huge growth in the concentration of retailing. The result is a complete switch in the balance power between manufactures and retailers, with the latter now having the victory (Randall, 1997). The fact that retailers have more power than the manufactures, had a dramatic impact. Previously manufacturers decided on the price and promotion that would be used, the retailer was only the place where the customer went to buy the brand that was advertised by the manufacturer. Today, the retailer decides what the price of the product will be, how it will be displayed and what type of promotion will be acceptable. The manufacturer will not negotiate for shelf space any more.

If the retailer of the future wants to be different from that of the past, the difference must start with the customer. The lifestyle of the customer must be taken into account and the way customers buy products, must be understood (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1995). How the retailer organises itself, manages its brands and people begins and ends with the needs, demands and aspirations of the customer. On a practical level, the retailer must bring employees into direct contact with the customer. People must be the living representation of the brand (Crainer, 1995).

So, retailers face new challenges which are central to successful brands, namely customer relationships. The critical moment of purchases takes place at a certain time and place over which the retailer do not have any direct control.

Furthermore, the community is influenced by changes, example the opening of shopping centres which promises a whole new shopping experience. The prosperity of the customer increases, more people own motor vehicles, more ladies are entering the workforce and more people are travelling extensively overseas.

The trend of the retailer can thus be seen as trying to improve the managing of business better, to realise that the expectations of suppliers are higher, customer needs change and must be identified. Lastly, the marketing orientation changed and the trend of internationalisation is becoming more common. Randall (1997) summarised this by saying that the total market orientation is becoming better.

Who manages the marketing process?

Any manufacturer will argue that they manage the marketing process better against the opinion of retailers arguing that they have a better knowledge of the customer and knows how to display brands better. To differentiate the unique functions of each party is rather difficult because there are similarities, but the most important difference can be classified as follows: the manufacturer develops brands after studying the marketplace very thoroughly, advertise and develop brands after studying the customer very thoroughly. The retailer, on the other hand, has the advantage to see the effect of the marketing action, because they receive data on purchasing patterns in detail. Very accurate data can be obtained on the inflow and outflow patterns of the products and brands, so the retailer has the advantage of valuable information (Crainer, 1995).

To understand the purchasing behaviour of customers, retailer trends must be taken into account. It has a tremendous impact on the purchasing behaviour of the customer. Examples of these trends are:

- (i) Fewer, clearly differentiated retail chains will survive
Mega retailers, purchasing growth and market share, have expanded which caused bankrupts of some retailers in the late 1990's. Retailers had to learn how to differentiate their products/brands from competitors and convince customers that they sell brands which the customer would like. The most successful retailers normally choose a strategy among the following options:
 - * Lowest prices
 - * Specialised merchandise
 - * Most personalised service
 - * Merchandise guarantee and support
 - * Specialised/unique private label merchandise
- (ii) Local community retailers will grow
Most of the mega retailers are located at the major highway intersections on the outskirts of suburbia and have huge parking areas. The local retailers will be able to meet the customers needs for service and information because in most cases, they will know the merchandise better than large retailers. These local retailers will also meet customer needs for fresh, less-processed products, such as fresh fruit, vegetables and meat and baked goods that are fresher. They will, however, have to offer the same guarantees on merchandise and "return policies" than larger retailer must do (Roberts, 1998).
- (iii) Non store retail environments will grow
Although shopping on the world-wide web is not yet a significant commercial vehicle, the expectancy is that it will become one soon in the next five to ten years. Electronic banking and financial services are also going online. Furthermore, there are cybermalls which have over a thousand listings of retail web pages.

- (iv) The lines of competition will continue to blur between types of retailers
Retailers are trying to grab a larger share of the customer's money by attempting to improve the shopping experience. The competition lines among retailers are blurring because the traditional and discount departments, grocery stores, drug stores and convenience stores are all selling one another's merchandise. Customers will start choosing one-stop retailers so that their shopping time will be more productive. As a result, they will shop in fewer stores for this type of merchandise.
- (v) The lines of competition will increasingly blur between retailers and manufacturers
Creating and promoting private label products will become an even higher priority for retailers as they are constantly trying to differentiate themselves from competition. On the other hand, more manufacturers will try to sell directly to customers instead of selling brands via their own retail stores.
- (vi) Technological advances will allow retailers to become truly customer driven
The scanning of universal product codes on packages is providing retailers with the information to determine customers immediate responses to merchandise in each store. This data tells the retailer which items sell better and helps individual stores to have the right product at the right time based on what customers have purchased. So, retailers will continue to capitalise on technological advances that will allow them to be more in touch with their customers (Roberts, 1998).

Pearson (1996) concluded that the strongest competition in the retail industry comes from products with private labels. This trend is very common in everyday, low cost merchandise (Pearson, 1996).

It is important to note that there are some factors that influence the customer before he/she can decide to buy a specific brand.

- (i) Social Class and fashion awareness

Packard & Paine (1979, p. 190) define social class as: "a group of people who are more or less in prestige and community status". The consumer's purchase pattern and lifestyle will give an indication that there is a definite type of class to be taken into account. The customer can be recognised in the community by belonging to a certain social class and having a specific lifestyle. What and how we buy merchandise can be connected with the consumer's position in the social class hierarchy. "Everybody wants to be somebody" was the conclusion Packard & Paine (1979, p. 196) came to.

The level of fashion and brand awareness of consumers can differ, because income and social interaction in the expected social circles differ. Even people in the lower social class want to wear brands that they can identify with but also being an indication of their social class level.

Members of a specific social class, will most probably have different views on what they see as fashionable. Most consumers will wear garments that symbolise their self image, including their self perception of where they fit in with the social class hierarchy (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997).

(ii) Motivation for clothing purchases

* Price

In the nineties the trend became value for money. Consumers want to buy the best product at the best price.

* Fit

The fitting of the garment is an important process because the given size is not a guarantee that the product will fit.

* Comfort

The fitness era and the fact that people travel a lot more often highlighted the need for comfortable clothing. While travelling, the customer for example, still wants to look fresh and well-groomed.

* Suitability

The decision to buy clothing to wear to office or to wear as casual clothing will be influenced by the suitability factor.

* Brand or designer label

Some consumers will buy, branded products just because of extensive advertising. The designer Armani (1992, p.6) said the following: "I believe consumers in some markets are becoming less brand-conscious. A brand name is important as long as it is combined with a proper relationship of quality and price".

* Material durability

The durability of the garment or accessories is important as well as the easiness to clean the product and taking care of it.

* Quality

Consumers prefer better and stronger quality.

* Capability

Consumers are spending lesser time buying products than previous years (Frings, 1994).

(iii) Self esteem needs and brands

The consumer of today decides when and where to do shopping. So it is a bigger choice to decide on how to spend money. The purchasing excursion must fit into the consumer's daily planning. These days, however, consumers tend to buy food on impulse. They want more flexibility in choosing the shops and products. Modern shops that are easily accessible, with enough parking space and long shopping hours are expected. The shopping environment must be clean and shop assistants must be customer focused (Murphy, 1987).

The retailer who is sensitive to these changes and builds the kind of store today's consumer want, will probably have more loyal customers. Within the context of a personal store, the consumer will most probably make his/her decision on the quality or price of the product. If a store offers a product under its own name of the same high quality as a brand, but at a lower price, the consumer will buy that product (Murphy, 1987).

As regards to brands, it is important to understand why certain brands are preferred and some not. *In most cases the consumer buys the brand and not the product.* This statement supports the study in this article very strongly. Consumers, for example, do not buy shaving cream, but they buy Gillette.

Normally, a consumer's behaviour will be driven by the consumer's beliefs. Decisions are made in the sequence of "think, then do". In the modern economy it is a bit unrealistic. Most decisions are taken in the sequence of "do, think it over and do it again". Therefore, experience will be the driving factor in beliefs and behaviour.

Wieden (Campaign, 1994) from the American agency Wieden en Kennedy said the following: "We have to relearn the relationship (between) brand and consumer. A brand is not a thing but a series of dynamic relationships. Brand is a verb, not a noun."

To build brands, marketing must influence behaviour and experience directly. Advertising and marketing communication are not the only factors influencing the brand experience. Factors like direct contact with the people selling the brand are also important. Every time the consumer comes into contact with the employees, they can improve the relationship with the consumer and build the brand personality.

Advertising cannot be separated from the buying and consuming process, as Professor Giep Franzen quoted from Larry Light's article, the chairman of the American coalition for brand righteousness: "the constant interaction between brand and advertising use, helps to reinforce attitudes leading to universal loyalty" (Advertising Age, 10 Jan. 1994).

Companies who understand the “total brand experience” will automatically include aspects like advertising, direct marketing, sales promotions, public relations and client services. Marketing is an operational function, meaning it is just as important to target, develop and manage a specific target market as to manufacture products and distribute them to consumers. Marketing cannot be switched on and off - without adequate marketing the communication chain to the consumer will be broken. The way in which a consumer will make contact with the brand, will be determined by the consumer’s personality and lifestyle.

BRAND MANAGEMENT

If the retailer decides to sell branded products, the process must be managed in the company. This process is called Brand Management. Traditionally, companies organise themselves by functions – research and development, sales, production and accounting. A brand, however, while drawing on all management levels for support, is one entity, and it is the consumer’s perception and not the company’s. Brand management is therefore a balancing act. Balances have to be struck between the external market and the internal capabilities of the company. Arnold (1992) identified five steps describing the brand management process:

(i) Step 1: Market Analysis

The starting point is the market and not the company. The key to a successful strategy involves the scope of the desired brand position. No armed force would venture into battle having considered its own strengths and weaknesses, but without having conducted a reconnaissance of the terrain. In the business world, however, this happens all the time. Companies often begin their planning with their own history, and from that moment on they are restricted to their vision.

(ii) Step 2: Brand situation analysis

Secondly, management should examine the strengths and weaknesses of its own position, to get behind the simple quantitative data gathered in step 1 (where are we?) to examine the brand perception in full detail (why are we there?). At this stage, the competition’s brands must also be analysed.

The biggest danger facing management at this stage is that of over-confidence. Since a company’s management knows its industry fairly well, it often assumes that it knows how consumers think and feel about the products on the market. In practice, however, the dynamics of brand perception can not always be understood through mere familiarity with a market. Even consumers are often unaware of the full nature of their relationship with a brand, some of it being at subconscious level. Very often it turns out that the brand is not what management thought it to be; it has taken on what seems like a life of its own.

- (iii) **Step 3: Targeting future positions**
With a clear understanding of the current position, the brand manager is now in a position to define a target for the future. Any brand strategy should incorporate the information gathered in steps 1 and 2, to see how the market will evolve and what strategic response would be most appropriate. The company's situation, in areas as varied as its financial resources and its political background, defines the parameters within which the company can act.

- (iv) **Step 4: Testing new offers**
Test of marketing programmes are conducted in two ways. First, individual elements of the marketing mix can be tested on their own: advertisements are usually pre-tested as would a change to the formulation of the product. Other elements, such as price or packaging, can also be tested. The important point is to see that individual elements are tested to see not simply whether consumers like them, but whether they contribute to the overall strategy. Secondly, it is common to test the whole offer (the marketing programme as it eventually would be) in a limited area before trying to cover the market as a whole. This is most necessary when developing a new brand, but a test may still be desirable if changes are being made to an existing brand which may influence its position. A test should not result in major changes – if it does, it suggests that previous steps have either been skipped or done improperly. Most important, it should be possible to make estimates of the volume and nature of business that will be gained, this will form the basis for planning the company's future operations (Arnold, 1992).

- (v) **Step 5: Planning and evaluating performance**
If the brand management process has been conducted logically, there should be clear and well-understood objectives for the marketing activity. The objectives should not be simple objectives, like “selling x units” or achieving x% market share”. They must address the stages which consumers go through before the purchase decision. Objectives can include awareness, understanding of the brand's benefits, availability, etc. Once the objectives are there, the role of each marketing activity becomes clearer and easier to manage. Media spent can be calculated to reach the people the company wants to influence. Expenditure can then more accurately be estimated and controlled. Objectives are only half of the equation – they are useless without evaluation mechanics. One area in which market research has certainly advanced in recent decades is that of market analysis, and in particular of tracking consumers attitudes and motivations as well as behaviours. Without this information, the whole brand management process will be a waste of time (Arnold, 1992).

The different steps of the brand management process was explained thoroughly, but the steps alone will not guarantee successful brands. The brand ingredients must be taken into account, to develop successful brands. Positioning, image projection and differentiation are the brand ingredients that will be discussed:

(i) Positioning

What is positioning? It can be seen as the other half of the “branding issue”. Positioning is the process where the company is offering the brand to the customer. The message that is communicated to the customer is much more than just the advertisement.

It should be communicated through all the activities of the company because any one of these activities can be the vital attribute by which the consumer receives the brand message and develop a perception of the brand. The objective of positioning is to develop the “offer” of the product, into a brand on its own.

There are a lot of different ways to position the brand, but there are certain criteria which must be taken into account, before a specific position can be chosen:

- * The position must be based on the brand’s strengths
If the message promises something that cannot be delivered, the brand most probably will not be bought again. For example it is easy for the services sector to say that they deliver a faster and friendlier service.
- * The position must reflect a competitive advantage
It is worthless to position a brand on the same basis as a competitor. Without any difference, the risk is running high that the customer will see the products as the same and that purchases will be based on price.
- * The position must be communicated clearly to the market
If the position is too complex or only based on the extensive use of the brand, the consumer will not take too much note of the message. (Arnold, 1992).

(ii) Image projection

Image is the perception that a customer has of the company or shop. Perceptions among consumer will differ, that is why consumers perceive merchandise differently. Every market thus have a unique personality or image (Miller, 1997). Examples are factors like the shop layout, fixtures and fittings, clothing displays and clothing quality. These factors are used to improve the image of the retailer.

(a) Shop layout

The shop layout is the way space is used in the shop to ensure maximum exposure of the merchandise in the store. The layout will be determined by the space available and the number and size of merchandise that must be displayed. Pathways between shelves can be used to control traffic, but space is needed around these pathways. In most speciality shops there is a lot of space between the pathways that enables the customer to walk peacefully in the pathways, thus making the shopping experience more comfortable (Donnellan, 1996).

(b) Fixtures

Fixtures are the shopping equipment used to display the merchandise. It must display the merchandise attractively and it must minimise the floor space. Branded products are displayed on different fixtures to try and attract the customer's attention.

The different shapes, heights and weights of fixtures can help create excitement in the shop. For example, displays that are done in the front side of the shop, can create the feeling that the shop is expensive. By hanging up displays at the cash counters, sales can be stimulated (Donnellan, 1996).

(c) Clothing display

Clothing display is one of the most important factors influencing the management of brands. It involves standard techniques used to maximise the attractiveness of the garments and to facilitate the customer's selection. How the garment is displayed, plays an important role in the purchasing decision. A customer will prefer a product that is wrapped up in tissue paper rather than a product placed in a bin. So, clothing display involves the grouping of garments on a fixture or in a certain area in the shop (Donnellan, 1996). Normally these garments can be grouped according to:

Colour

It often happens that garments are associated with a certain holiday theme, for example, summer or a colour trend. If the garments are grouped according to colour, it will simplify the customer's search for a white blouse for example.

Fabricate/construction

Garments are grouped together because of the type of material used. Only then a statement like "soft dressing" can be made about the garment (Donnellan, 1996).

Size

Size can be used with colour, fabricate and construction. Where garments are co-ordinated according to colour, size can bring a different dimension. An example will be to group jeans with the smallest waist and shortest length together and jeans with the widest waist and longest length together.

Vendors

As mentioned above, vendors are also used to display garments. There are so many themes by which garments can be grouped, for example the "end use presentations" which show the customers how the garments are co-ordinated together. Music, colour and lightning can help to differentiate these areas from each other in the shop.

Retailers ensure that garments are displayed in a standard way, so every shop that is part of the chain will follow those standards. In most cases there is a display manual that gives the guidelines how to display the garments correctly. These guidelines are based on objectives like visual merchandising, the convenience by which the customer can buy and the easiness to maintain it. The way the garments are displayed must also be taken into account, because it must be easy to maintain those standards (for example folding up the garments). So if the garments are scattered, it will be easy for the floor staff to display the garments correct again.

(d) Clothing quality

The quality of clothing is an important factor that must be taken into account when positioning the garments, because it links to the company's image. It often happens that quality is seen as the "degree of excellence" (Miler, 1997). So the focus falls on the aesthetical and functional areas. Aesthetical values include appearance, fit, fabricate, construction and details. Functional features would be durability and dry cleaning. The customer's perception of quality can be as important as the real quality of the garment. It is actually difficult to test something like the durability of the garment before it has been bought. So, most decisions will be made on the aesthetical values. Donnellan (1996) describes the aesthetical values as the brand, price and origin. He says that brands are always well-known for their quality. It is important that the quality of the brand is checked before it goes to the consumer. We call this quality control. It is normally done while the garment is manufactured, today it even happens in the retailing company. Specifications must be approved by the retailer before the garments can be distributed to all the stores (Clodfelter, 1993).

(iii) Differentiating

To differentiate means to be different in the marketplace. A different marketing strategy must be followed to gain competitive advantage. There are some factors that must be taken into account when a retailer wants to differentiate (Weilbacher, 1993):

(a) Competition

Competition is important when the decision has to be made if a new shop is going to open. The store site should be in a better position as the competitor (Murphy, 1987).

(b) Niche merchandise

Well-known garments or brands are normally focussed on niche markets. These markets have specific needs and stores must offer a wide variety of garments to fulfil in those needs. The fact that these stores focus on aspects like availability, size, colour, design and fit, make them different from the competitor. The customers prefer these stores because they know that they will get what they are looking for (Miller, 1997).

(c) Market research

Market research involves the collection and analysing of data. Aspects like shop sites, target population, determining needs of target markets, company image and promotions are the most well-known topics to research. The research findings help to take important market related decisions

(d) Target markets

This is one of the most important characteristics of market research. A target market is consumers who are identified and whom the company wants to reach.

It is most important that the brand ingredients, namely positioning, image projection and differentiation are taken into account when developing successful brands. The secret would be to combine all these elements in order to present a brand that will fulfil the needs of the customer. It must draw the customer's attention and lure the customer into the store. A requirement for a world-class brand would be to communicate the image successfully and to differentiate it from the competitors (Harrel, 1986).

THE USE OF ADVERTISING

An alternative way to differentiate can be by means of advertising. To communicate effectively with the target market, the company must plan and co-ordinate advertising to project a clear image of the company to the consumer (Miller, 1997).

There are a lot of retailers who advertise to their target consumers. The advertisements are generally found in local media, where specific information of the place, date and prices are given (Robolt & Miler, 1997).

The two main objectives of advertising can thus be seen as:

- (i) To sell a product – called promotions advertising
- (ii) To sell an image – called institutional advertising

Product advertising elicit immediate consumers' reaction, the consumer is motivated to enter the shop and to buy the specific product. Institutional advertising deals with the elaboration of a company's image or reputation – not really to sell the product. Benetton and Calvin Klein are for example well known for their image advertising which can be seen as a form of institutional advertising (Robolt & Miler, 1997).

Advertising also enables you to evaluate results. Increased sales are the most direct indicator of successful advertising. The effect of the advertisement on the consumer can be measured by counting the number of feet entering the store a few days before the advertisement was shown and then counting the feet again, a few days after the advertisement was shown. The timing of the competitor's advertisement must also be taken into account, because it will influence the effect of the original advertisement.

One important factor to remember is that the retailer must be careful when the decision has to be made of where the focus of the advertisement will fall. For instance, if product attributes like colour, design or style were advertised it places a limit on what can be highlighted in future (Packard, 1982).

Brand personality

Advertising helps a lot with the creation of brand personality and brand loyalty.

To understand brand personality, the personality dimensions must be explained. The physical dimension such as colour, price or ingredients can be observed easily. The second dimension is functional attributes, or the consequences of using the brand. So far, both of these types of attributes are objectively verifiable. The third dimension is their characterisation, the personality as perceived by the consumer. Brands may be characterised as modern or old fashioned, or lively or exotic, just as people are characterised. The Obsession brand of fragrance may be erotic to some consumers or pornographic to others, whereas the Poison brand of fragrance may evoke a perception of danger. These elements, with the information processing of consumers interacting with the brand, are transformed into a consumer's head as making the brand "appropriate for me" or "not appropriate for me" or possibly "me for it" (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1995).

Furthermore, the brand personality can influence the positioning of the brand (Macrae (1991).

Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is defined by Lamb, Hair en McDaniel (1998, bl.287) as: "a consistent preference for one brand over all others".

Some theorists suggest that brand loyalty can be correlated with the consumer's degree of involvement with the product. A person who is very involved with the product, will feel stronger about the brand and will search extensively for information about the brand that will most probably lead to brand loyalty at the end of the day. Low product involvement occurs when the consumer is less interested in the brand and use less energy to get to know the brand. So, low involvement will lead to product awareness and probably to brand usage. The moment a consumer is happy with repetitive shopping, for example the Polo range, the search for alternative brands will decrease.

Factors that will influence brand loyalty will be the service customers get. Is the employee willing to help the customer professionally? The moment a customer is treated in a way that makes him/her feel special, for instance remembering the customers' name, the customer will feel more positive about the shop and loyalty can increase, not only to the brand but also to the shop.

Furthermore, the quality and durability of the brand will also influence brand loyalty. The price, shop image and shopping atmosphere as well as friends opinions will play an important role in brand loyalty.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to determine if brands influence consumers in the purchasing process in the low cost retail industry. Data from two well-known clothing retailers was collected. For the purposes of the study, the one retailer selling branded grey school trousers will be introduced as company M, whereas the retailer selling grey school trousers without a brand, will be introduced as company N.

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1

Ho: Sales of Company M is equal to the sales of Company N

Ha: Sales of Company M is not equal to the sales of Company N

Hypothesis 2

Ho: The percentage consumers who prefer branded grey school trousers is equal to the percentage consumers who prefer grey school trousers without a brand

Ha: The percentage consumers who prefer branded grey school trousers is not equal to the percentage consumers who prefer grey school trousers without a brand

METHOD

SAMPLE

Two clothing retailers in the low cost industry were identified. Only the shops, of these two retailers, in the Western Cape region were chosen. The reason for that was that it made the distribution of the questionnaires easier as well as the management of the process. All the shops in a specific area could not be chosen because some areas only had shops of the one retailer in town. The criteria was that both retailers had to be in one town, before the sample could be drawn randomly. In cases where a retailer had more than one shop in town, only one shop was drawn randomly. At the end of the day, the result was that twenty-seven towns were identified in the Western Cape.

A practical experiment was done where questionnaires were developed and sent to the different shops, for completion by the customer. The criteria on which the customers were identified, was to see if he/she bought grey school trousers either for himself/herself, family or friends. Only then the customer was asked to complete the questionnaire.

In some cases where the customer was illiterate, the shop assistant was asked to assist the person in completing the questionnaire.

The number of questionnaires that was returned, was 564 (N=564). Table 1 is a frequency table which indicates that 237 questionnaires came for Company M, while 327 questionnaires came from Company N.

Table 1

According to the biographical data on the questionnaire, the spread of respondents as to sex, race and age can be seen in Table 2. The number of females who completed the questionnaire was 458 (81.2%) as opposed to the number of males 106 (18.8%). Most of the people who completed the questionnaire were coloured people, namely 331 (58.7%). Lastly, most of the respondents were classified amongst the 30 – 39 age category (44.5%).

Table 2

INSTRUMENTS

The SPSS statistical computer package was used to do the processing of the data and the Excel computer package was used to create some tables.

PROCEDURE

As mentioned in the study, two clothing retailers were identified who sell grey school trousers. All the different sizes of these trousers were taken into account, but both retailers sell the following four sizes which were used in the study:

- 66 cm
- 68 cm
- 70 cm
- 74 cm

Firstly, sales volume data for four months was drawn which stretched from May 2000 till the end of August 2000. These months were selected because the experimental study was launched in May and at the end of August the one retailer (Company M) changed to another supplier, which influenced size and price of grey school trousers.

The sales data helps to see how many of these items were sold in the different sizes in specific shops over a specific period. The purpose of using the sales data is to see whether sales of the one retailer selling the brand is higher than the retailer selling grey school trousers without a brand.

Secondly, questionnaires were developed to obtain consumers' perception on brands. Before the questionnaires were distributed, the Human Resources Directors of both retailers had to give their approval of the study, after which an e-mail message was sent to the identified shops to ask their co-operation.

The questionnaire was translated in both English and Afrikaans and the respondents were assured that the data would be kept confidential.

The intention of the data from the questionnaires was that it would support the above-mentioned findings and could give explanations as to why the sales figure of the retailers is what it is.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Hypothesis 1:

Ho: Sales of Company M is equal to sales of Company N

Ha: Sales of Company M is not equal to sales of Company N

To proof the above-mentioned hypothesis the *t-test* was used.

Table 3

The *group statistics* in table 3.1 show us that $N=108$, meaning the number of data points for Company M is 108, as well as the number of data points for Company N. It refers to the 108 ($=27 \times 4$) shop/trouser size combinations for which sales information was given.

For Company M, the average number of trousers per shop that was sold in a specific size is, 17.89 with a standard deviation of 13.41.

The average units per shop, per size for Company N is 34.51 with a standard deviation of 26.71.

With the use of the t-test, it was assumed that there are not any equal variances because the standard deviation differs so much (see table 3.2). The significance is 0.001, which implies that the H_0 hypothesis can be rejected. So there is significant evidence that the company's sales differ. Table 3.1 shows that the average sales of Company N are much higher than the average sales of Company M.

Table 4

Another way to test the first hypothesis statistically is by means of an *ANOVA* (one – way analysis of variance) were it is used to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in group means (table 4).

The significance of the Anova is 0.001. This test delivers the same result as the t-test and shows strong evidence that sales differ.

Hypothesis 2:

H_0 : The percentage consumers who prefer branded grey school trousers is equal to the percentage consumers who prefer grey school trousers without a brand

H_a : The percentage consumers who prefer branded grey school trousers is not equal to the percentage consumers who prefer grey school trousers without a brand

This hypothesis is statistically proven with the *Chi-square test* (table 5). Table 5.1 shows us that 360 out of the 564 respondents indicated that they would prefer to buy branded grey school trousers.

Table 5.2 gives the test statistics. The significance of this test is 0.001. This means that the H_0 can be rejected and the H_a cannot be rejected, namely that the percentage consumers who prefer buying the branded grey school trouser is not equal to the percentage consumers who prefer buying grey school trousers without a brand.

Table 5

RESULTS

In terms of the first hypothesis, the nil hypothesis (H_0) was rejected – which means that the sales of Company M, is not equal to the sales of Company N. To see the difference between the two retailers, in terms of sales – which are divided up among the different sizes, table 6 can be used. Company M's total sales for grey school trousers were 1932 units, whilst Company N's sales for the same trousers were 3727 units.

Table 6

Table 7 gives a more detailed picture of the sales and includes another variable, namely the town/city. The table thus shows the number of sales in Company M/N with the town/city where the product is sold. If the totals are taken into account for both Company M and Company N, the biggest total is next to town, number 12. This is Mitchell's Plain where Company M sold 200 units in total in contrast with 550 units from Company N. Furthermore, it can be seen, with the exemption of 2 towns/cities, that Company M, time and again had better sales in a town/city than Company N.

Table 7

In terms of the questionnaire, it was interesting that some of the respondents chose the other retailer, if they had a choice to choose where they would like to buy, as the one in which they completed the questionnaire. Table 8 shows the statistical test, whilst Table 9 explains the results.

Table 8

In Table 9 it can be seen that 233 respondents chose Company M, 2 respondents chose Company N and 2 respondents chose "Other". All these questionnaires were completed in Company M.

The questionnaires that was completed in Company N, delivered the following results: 312 respondents chose Company N, while 11 respondents chose Company M and 4 respondents chose "Other".

Table 9

With reference to Hypothesis 2, the H_0 can convincingly be rejected, which shows that the percentage consumers who prefer branded grey school trousers is not equal to the percentage consumers who prefers grey school trousers without brands. Table 10 is a frequency table which shows that 360 consumers chose the option in the questionnaire that they prefer to purchase branded grey school trousers as opposed to 240 consumers who do not deem a brand as important.

Table 10

If the percentage of respondents, who prefer buying branded grey school trousers (63.8%) is taken into account, it is clear that brands are an important consideration when purchasing.

CONCLUSION

Out of the statistical analysis, the following conclusions can be made: Firstly, the sales of the product for Company N, was statistically significant than the sales of Company M. Secondly, the majority of consumers indicated that they would prefer buying branded grey school trousers to grey school trousers without brands.

The company with the highest sales volume for the specific period, Company N, does sell grey school trousers under a well-known brand, while Company M does not sell grey school trousers under a brand name.

It can be considered from the study that brands are definitely taken into consideration when a pair of grey school trousers is being purchased.

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TABLE 1
THE NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES FROM DIFFERENT COMPANIES

Frequencies

Statistics

Shop

N	Valid	564
	Missing	0

Shop

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid =Company M	237	42.0	42.0	42.0
=Company N	327	58.0	58.0	100.0
Total	564	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 2
RESPONDENT'S GEOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS

TABLE 2
RESPONDANT'S BIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS

Frequencies

Statistics

		Sex	Race	Age
N	Valid	564	564	564
	Missing	0	0	0

Frequency Table

Sex

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	106	18.8	18.8	18.8
	female	458	81.2	81.2	100.0
	Total	564	100.0	100.0	

Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	.2	.2	.2
	Asian	68	12.1	12.1	12.2
	White	98	17.4	17.4	29.6
	Coloured	331	58.7	58.7	88.3
	swart	66	11.7	11.7	100.0
	Total	564	100.0	100.0	

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	.2	.2	.2
	=0-19	14	2.5	2.5	2.7
	=20-29	93	16.5	16.5	19.1
	=30-39	251	44.5	44.5	63.7
	=40-49	154	27.3	27.3	91.0
	=50-59	39	6.9	6.9	97.9
	=60+	12	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	564	100.0	100.0	

**TABLE 3
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS : T-TEST**

Table 3.1

Group Statistics

Company	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Sales Units =Company M	108	17.89	13.41	1.29
=Company N	108	34.51	26.71	2.57

Table 3.2

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Sales Units Equal variances assumed	13.589	.001	.001	-16.62	2.88	-22.29	-10.95
Equal variances not assumed			.001	-16.62	2.88	-22.30	-10.94

TABLE 4
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS : ONEWAY ANOVA

ANOVA

Sales Units

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	14916.782	1	14916.782	33.405	.001
Within Groups	95561.657	214	446.550		
Total	110478.44	215			

TABLE 5
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS : CHI-SQUARE TEST

NPar Tests
Chi-Square Test
Frequencies

Table 5.1

Preference

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
With brand	360	282.0	78.0
Without brand	204	282.0	-78.0
Total	564		

Table 5.2

Test Statistics

	Preference
Chi-Square ^a	43.149
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.001

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 282.0.

TABLE 6
Sales per Company and Size
 1 May '00 - 31 Aug. '00

Sum of Sales	Size					
Comp	66	68	70	74	Grand Total	
M	430	415	588	499		1,932
N	882	812	903	1,130		3,727
Grand Total	1,312	1,227	1,491	1,629		5,659

TABLE 7
SALES PER STORE, COMPANY AND SIZE
 1 May '00 - 31 Aug '00

Sum of Sales		Size				Grand Total
Name	Comp	66	68	70	74	
ATHLONE	1	20	18	19	15	72
	2	38	49	38	60	185
BEAUFORT WEST	1	7	1	3	2	13
	2	13	15	14	12	54
BELLVILLE	1	14	41	42	44	141
	2	40	56	31	76	203
BRACKENFELL	1	5	14	34	38	91
	2	66	49	59	60	234
CERES	1	12	4	12	8	36
	2	38	32	36	43	149
CLAREMONT	1	29	23	26	27	105
	2	16	21	31	19	87
EERSTE RIVER	1	18	19	28	14	79
	2	18	20	1	17	56
GEORGE	1	15	28	42	32	117
	2	29	42	25	47	143
GOODWOOD	1	18	10	26	15	69
	2	35	17	18	30	100
KNYSNA	1	6	7	6	5	24
	2	19	18	29	24	90
KUILS RIVER	1	21	14	40	15	90
	2	30	21	33	42	126
MITCHELLS PLAIN(S/R)	1	57	45	46	52	200
	2	114	121	142	173	550
MOSEL BAY	1	10	10	4	3	27
	2	23	19	24	33	99
OUDTSHOORN	1	7	15	5	13	40
	2	31	8	14	15	68
PAARL	1	18	24	44	36	122
	2	43	32	52	41	168
PAROW SANLAM CENTRE	1	16	24	39	51	130
	2	60	57	53	52	222
RIVERSDALE	1	3	4	4	2	13
	2	7	4	9	11	31
ROBERTSON	1	2	8	7	8	25
	2	11	23	18	14	66
SOMERSET WEST NO 2	1	13	10	17	9	49
	2	28	28	40	42	138
STELLENBOSCH	1	15	15	13	15	58
	2	17	14	20	31	82
STRAND	1	10	10	9	4	33
	2	8	4	21	20	53
TABLE VIEW	1	28	14	25	27	94
	2	48	54	58	52	212
VREDENBURG	1	14	3	16	10	43
	2	56	31	50	66	203
VREDENDAL	1	10	4	10	9	33
	2	9	16	17	10	52
WELLINGTON	1	6	5	8	7	26
	2	16	19	22	34	91
WORCESTER	1	26	10	19	6	61
	2	23	18	14	35	90
WYNBERG	1	30	35	44	32	141
	2	46	24	34	71	175
Grand Total		1,312	1,227	1,491	1,629	5,659

TABLE 8 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS : CROSS TABULATIONS

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Shop * Choice: Comp M	564	100.0%	0	.0%	564	100.0%
Shop * Choice: Comp N	564	100.0%	0	.0%	564	100.0%
Shop * Choice: Other	564	100.0%	0	.0%	564	100.0%

Shop * Choice: Comp M Crosstabulation

Count

	Choice: Comp M		Total
	0	Company M	
Shop =Company M	4	233	237
=Company N	316	11	327
Total	320	244	564

Shop * Choice: Comp N Crosstabulation

Count

	Choice: Comp N		Total
	0	Company N	
Shop =Company M	235	2	237
=Company N	15	312	327
Total	250	314	564

Shop * Choice: Other Crosstabulation

Count

	Choice: Other			Total
	0	Other	2	
Shop =Company M	235	2		237
=Company N	322	4	1	327
Total	557	6	1	564

TABLE 9

CROSS TABULATION BETWEEN COMPANY AND COMPANY CHOICE

	M	N	Other	Total
Comp M	233	2	2	237
Comp N	11	312	4	327

TABLE 10
PREFERENCE INDICATION FOR GREY SCHOOL TROUSERS WITH OR WITHOUT BRAND

Frequencies

Statistics

Preference

N	Valid	564
	Missing	0

Preference

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid With brand	360	63.8	63.8	63.8
Without brand	204	36.2	36.2	100.0
Total	564	100.0	100.0	