Sears Essay, Research Paper

Image

Brand Image can be defined as the way in which a brand’s product/service positions itself to be viewed in the eyes of the public. Sears Roebuck and Co. is a multi-line retailer that provides a wide array of merchandise and services through segmentation. At last count, the Full-line Store operations consisted of 858 mall-based retail stores selling the following categories of merchandise: Softlines, Hardlines, and Licensed Businesses. Softlines consists of apparel and accessories for the entire family, plus cosmetics, fine jewelry and home fashions. Hardlines consists of a full assortment of appliances, electronics and computers for the home, home improvement products, sporting goods, lawn and garden equipment and seasonal items. Licensed Businesses consist of third party concessions primarily operated within the Full-line Stores, and include portrait studios, optical and other licensees. All of the previously discussed segmentation acts to form salient beliefs about Sears and their respective brand image, in the minds of the consumer.

Salient Beliefs regarding Sears

Salient Beliefs are the set of beliefs activated in a particular situation and may be represented as an associative network of linked meanings. Because a person’s cognitive capacity is limited, only a few of our overall beliefs about a brand can be activated and considered at once. Only the salient beliefs about a brand can cause/create a person’s attitude toward that brand. The following list outlines the relationship between salient beliefs about Sears and attitude toward the store:

All beliefs about Sears:

oSears offers many different products and services

oSears is a very large and cluttered store

oVisiting a Sears store is timely

oSears has few sales representatives

oSears is a low-end retailer

oSears offers “everyday low-prices”

oSears has everything in one store

oFinding a product in a Sears store is not easy, and may be very complicated

oSears is usually located in a shopping mall with ample parking and easy entry

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oSears is a large and cluttered store

oSears is a low-end retailer

oFinding a product is difficult

Beliefs and the Means-End Chain Linkages

Beliefs are usually linked to means-end chains of product knowledge, which consist of attribute, functional consequences (of visiting a Sears store), and values (presented by Sears). Throughout the course of the semester, we have been evaluating the most common means-end chain linkages associated with Sears, which is as follows:

Attributes

1.Many products and services offered in one store

2.Low prices

3.Shopping mall location

Functional Consequences

1.Less money spent on individual products/services due to “everyday low-prices”

2.Less time spent shopping around, compared to going to individual specialty stores

3.Availability of many products/services offers immediate gratification

Psychosocial Consequences

1.Customer may feel like part of a special tradition of excellence, because of the long history of the corporation

2.Allows customer to feel that their time is being spent efficiently due to the variety of products/services offered

3.Gives customer feeling of gratification due to implied savings

Values

1.Traditional shopping venue- “my grandmother shopped at Sears” mentality

2.Feel good about spending less

3.Self-Esteem rises due to efficiency of behavior

The implications of our research force us to believe that Sears’ negative image is due to their lack of understanding the need and wants of their customers. The multiattribute model is useful for identifying which attributes are most salient to consumers, and in this case, the results should lead Sears to reevaluate and possibly restructure their marketing strategy. Attitude-change strategies may be the beginning of the road to rejuvenation of the company.