

Food Branding Strategies; Foreign Practices

Khodjiev Ibrohim Ikramovich
Researcher at Department of Marketing
Tashkent State University of Economics,
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Abstract. This article examines the specifics of brand building in the food market, factors in brand image formation, and successful branding strategies. The analysis discusses effective tools for increasing consumer brand loyalty, based on international practice.

Keywords: Brand, food market, consumer brand loyalty, international practice, food branding.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a market economy, one of the important factors for ensuring competitiveness and achieving long-term success for food producers is the formation of a strong and reliable brand. Globalization, technological progress and increasing consumer demand require new approaches in the field of marketing. Especially for everyday consumer goods such as food products, a brand is perceived not only as a trademark, but also as a set of quality, trust and values.

The lack of sufficient experience of food production enterprises in Uzbekistan in creating brands and transforming them into international brands requires expanding the scientific and methodological base for using new approaches, tools and brand concepts in their marketing activities. In this regard, taking into account the current budget constraints and the impact of the competitive environment, the agenda is to effectively organize the process of developing a brand with maximum consumer and added value and develop theoretical and methodological approaches to increasing brand value. These circumstances require scientific research aimed at improving the methodology for assessing food brands and increasing their value.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The scientific and theoretical aspects of solving the problems of food production and marketing, including the study of the formation of food brands, are reflected in the works of many foreign scientists. In this regard, the scientific works of Assel G., Churchill G.A.[1], Brown T.J., Kotler Ph.[2], Keller K.L., Setiawan I., Karatajaya H., Malhotra N.K.[3], Kennedy D.[4], Praet V.D.[5], Salenbacher J. Traindl A., Trout J.[6], Doyle P have become classic works. Despite the significant contribution of these foreign scientists to marketing, marketing strategy and brand formation, the scientific methodological foundations of food brand formation and its evaluation have not been created.

In the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, scientists such as Bagiev G.L.[7], Tarasevich V.M., Bulanov A., Veselova A.O.[8], Godin A.M., Golubkov Ye.P., Grechin Ye.Yu., Makashyov M.O., Pravda P., Rozhkov I.Ya., Kismirishkin V.G. conducted research on this issue. Although these studies covered the scientific and theoretical aspects of brand theories and the development of branding strategies for consumer goods, the issues of developing a marketing strategy for the formation of a brand for milk and dairy products were not studied.

Among the economists of our republic, S.S. Gulyamov[9], A.Sh. Bekmurodov, M.R. Boltabayev, M.A. Ikramov[10], A.A. Fattakhov, Sh.J. Ergashkhodjaeva, M.S. Qosimova, A.N. Samadov, S.Odilova [11]. Abdukhalilova, B. Mamayev and others have made a great contribution to the development of marketing science. In recent years, U. Sharifkhodjayev, Z. Khakimov, A. Oqboyev, N. Zufarova, S. Odilova have conducted research aimed at using branding strategies in brands and enterprises, methodological aspects of creating and evaluating enterprise brands, and increasing brand competitiveness. However, no research has been conducted in the areas of creating food product brands, increasing their international competitiveness, assessing the value of brands, and transforming them into global brands. The topic of this dissertation was chosen based on these aspects.

3. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Branding is now considered not only as a marketing tool, but also as a complex phenomenon related to political, social, cultural and psychological factors. Creating a strong national brand requires a technological approach and systematic management, as it is one of the factors determining the success of a country on the international stage.

Scholars such as Kunczik and Wang define a national brand as “a cognitive symbol representing the prestige of a nation in the international arena” or “the reputational capital of a nation”. Experts such as S. Anholt and F. Kotler also actively participate in the research, linking branding with the “soft power” model. First of all, the authors indicate image development technologies as the main tool in forming a country brand and evaluate it as an important factor in attracting international investments. F. Kotler’s work “Marketing Places”, published in 1993, specifically emphasizes the need to create a country brand through marketing and branding technologies. In 2007, S. Anholt introduced the term “competitive identity” and justified the importance of a national brand in ensuring competitive advantages at the international level.

At the same time, at the initial stages of branding technologies, their superficial application, that is, limiting the country brand to slogans, logos and advertising campaigns, caused caution and, in some cases, negative attitudes among politicians. This situation indicates that the concept of a national brand requires a deep strategic and systematic approach.

With competition intensifying in a market economy, it is becoming increasingly important for food manufacturers to use effective marketing tools to successfully promote their products on the market. In particular, having a strong and recognizable brand is now recognized as a decisive factor in guaranteeing product quality, gaining consumer trust, expanding market share and building customer loyalty. In the food market, a brand is not just a product symbol or logo, but a set of quality, safety, trust and values that are formed in the consumer's mind. Therefore, creating a brand in this area requires a unique approach and deep strategic planning.

One of the unique aspects of the food market is that since this segment is directly related to health, consumers are very demanding on product quality, production processes and hygiene standards. Therefore, when creating a brand, it is necessary to first of all study consumer needs in depth, form a brand position based on their values, tastes and requirements. For food products, a brand is not only a sales tool, but also a social and cultural phenomenon. Many consumers associate certain food brands with childhood memories, national dishes, family values or cultural traditions. Such brands affect human emotions and form emotional connections.



Figure 1: Brand Strategy Roadmap [12]

There are several key strategic approaches to creating a brand for food products. One of them is a differentiation strategy, which is based on the characteristics that distinguish the product from other competitors in the market. These aspects can include a special recipe, the use of natural or ecological raw materials, production based on national dishes, or other unique features. For example, terms such as “organic”, “halal”, “GMO-free” (i.e. not genetically modified) add additional value to the product and serve to strengthen the brand image.

Another important factor in creating a brand is the positioning strategy. This approach serves to determine the exact place of the product in the market. For example, a brand positioned as an expensive and high-quality product is fundamentally different from a brand aimed at the middle-income consumer segment. Positioning takes into account who the product is intended for, its main advantages, price level, aesthetic aspects and values. The right positioning strategy allows you to effectively use marketing resources by targeting the product to a specific audience.

In the modern marketing environment, an omnichannel approach also plays an important role in effective brand promotion. In this style, the brand is promoted simultaneously on different platforms - in stores, online marketplaces, social networks and mobile applications. Consumers are used to using different channels when shopping and communicating with the brand. Therefore, the brand must present the same, holistic and reliable image through each channel. For example, the brand identity on the product packaging should be consistent with advertising on social networks, and the brand voice and visual symbols should be expressed in the same style.

Product packaging and design are also considered one of the key elements in the process of creating a brand. Product packaging is not only a means of protecting the product, but also a means of creating an initial impression of the brand in the consumer. Beautiful, attractive and functional packaging increases interest in the product, it stands out from competitors and remains in the consumer's memory. Packaging design is an integral part of brand identity. This design is carried out through the choice of colors, fonts, logos, images and inscriptions. For example, food products intended for children are decorated in bright colors, with interesting characters. This plays a major role in attracting attention to the product and increasing sales.

Also, the modern consumer pays attention not only to the quality of the product, but also to the values behind it, the social responsibility and environmental approach of the manufacturer. Therefore, values such as sustainability, the pursuit of environmental friendliness, social initiatives and support for local producers play a special role in the brand strategy. This increases trust in the brand and distinguishes it from other competitors. For example, some brands announce that the packaging of their products is made of recyclable materials, or that they direct part of their profits to social projects. Such approaches bring a sustainable reputation to the brand.

The experience of the Czech Republic is cited as an effective model in forming a national brand. In particular, the network of “Czech Centers”, financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is aimed at strengthening the country’s international image. Operating in 24 countries around the world, these centers promote the Czech Republic as a country with a progressive culture, innovation and tourism potential. They pay special attention to widely disseminating achievements in the fields of art, design, fashion, cinema, theater, literature, science and technology, developing trade and strengthening positive perceptions of the country abroad.

In this regard, the text emphasizes that the national brand should be formed not as a marketing strategy, but as a complex political, social and cultural concept.

This agency was established under the Ministry of Regional Development in 1993 and carries out a wide range of activities aimed at developing tourism in domestic and international markets. The agency’s 21 foreign offices operate in European countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, as well as in non-European regions such as the United States, China and Brazil. The main goal is to promote a positive image of the Czech Republic, increase tourist arrivals, and strengthen its competitiveness in the international market.

In our opinion, in general, the structure of a national brand includes the following components:

1. The main message of the brand, which has a high impact potential for external stakeholders (for example, attracting tourists or investors);
2. Components that make up national identity (as a rule, common values that most citizens of the country share);
3. National products (various sub-brands, for example, specific products and services promoted under the umbrella brand "Made in Azerbaijan");
4. A gallery of visual images, which, on the one hand, reflect national values, and on the other hand, are unique visual “keys” to understanding the nature of the people, its history and future.
5. Brand discourse - a set of verbal textual forms of the national brand (slogans, names, brand-forming texts);
6. Brand heroes (persons with the potential to create a brand);

7. Sound speech - a set of sound forms that form a sound brand, including national songs, motifs, sound logos, national musical instruments, etc. (for example, the theme of the composition “Night Baku” by Vaqif Mustafa-zoda can be considered an unofficial musical logo of the capital of the republic);
8. Communications that form the brand of the event (for example, the Pomegranate Festival in Goychay or the Baku International Jazz Festival).

The criteria for assessing the attractiveness of national brands are emphasized, and among them, economic, demographic, political and investment indicators, tourist attractiveness, economic growth rates, production, consumption and export potential of national products and services, human capital and other factors play an important role. According to I.N. Krengauz, the value of a national brand is not limited only to economic indicators but also serves to form national identity and strengthen social unity in society as a type of symbolic capital. National identity is manifested through a person's sense of belonging to a particular nation or state, its integration with cultural values, legends, and historical symbols. This process contributes to the development of social capital, activates the flow of information, increases the efficiency of state administration and strengthens social cooperation in society. In the case of Azerbaijan, national products, such as pomegranates, tea, carpets, wine, mugham music, silk scarves and handicrafts, are considered symbolic brands of the country. Researchers A.A. Gasanov and V.N. Veliyev argue for the need to promote bekmez (“national fruit syrup”) as a key part of the “Made in Azerbaijan” umbrella brand. Visual elements such as logo, colors, fonts, packaging, characters, and design are of particular importance in brand creation. When assessing the tourism potential of the Silk Road countries, criteria such as the presence of official tourist sites, content quality, number of languages, and participation in international exhibitions and conferences are also considered. The national brand of Azerbaijan is enriched with various visual concepts corresponding to the stages of historical development, reflecting the directions of cultural and economic development of the country.

4. CONCLUSIONS

International practice shows that a food brand can find its place not only within the framework of one country, but also in the global market. Examples of this include companies such as Nestlé, Danone, Kraft Foods, or Coca-Cola. In addition to positioning their brands on a global scale, they also pay special attention to adapting them to the national values of each country. Localization strategy means being a global brand, but also an approach that is flexible to the culture and tastes of consumers in each market.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that creating a food brand is a complex and multi-stage process, which is closely related not only to marketing, but also to many other areas, such as management, production, design, psychology and social responsibility. An enterprise that can create a successful brand not only expands its market share, but also ensures long-term customer loyalty, has a reliable reputation and achieves stable economic results. Therefore, food manufacturers should take a strategic approach to the brand creation process, fully use modern marketing tools, and establish constant and sincere communication with the consumer. Only with such an approach will the brand take a stable place in the market and succeed in competition.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Churchill G.A, Brown T.V. Basic marketing research, – Thomson, United States, 2010;
- [2]. Kotler Ph., Setiawan I., Kartajaya H. Marketing 3.0: From Products to Customers to the Human Spirit. – wiley, 2012.;
- [3]. Malhotra N.K. Marketing research an applied orientation. – Prentice Hall, United States, 2016;
- [4]. Kennedy Dr No B.S. Guide to Brand – Building by Direct Response – Entrepreneur Press, 2014,
- [5]. Praet V.D. Unconscious Branding. How neuroscience can empower marketing. – Prentice Hall, USA, 2012
- [6]. Trout J. Big Brands Big Trouble. – John wiley&sons, inc. New York, 2013,
- [7]. Bagiev G.A., Tarasevich V.M. Marketing – Spb.: Peter, 2012;
- [8]. Veselova A.O. Development of marketing and small product subcomplex. - M.: 2010;
- [9]. Gulyamov S.S., Jumayev N.H., Rakhmanov D.A., Tashkhodzhayev M.M. Efficiency of investments in the social sphere. - T.: Economy, 2019;
- [10]. Ikramov M.A., Pardayev M.K., Abdukhaliyeva L.T. Statistical analysis in marketing research. – T.: Sano-standart, 2022;
- [11]. Odilova S. Development of marketing strategies for the formation of a fruit juice brand. 08.00.11 – Marketing. Abstract of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Economics. – T.: TSIU. 2022.
- [12]. Robertson, G. (2024). A simpler way to use brand strategy to help your brand win. beloved brands. <https://beloved-brands.com/brand-strategy-win/>