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Multidimensional dashboards for evaluating strategic brand management processes for multi-brand companies

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Abstract

Focusing on digital marketing brand managers have to focus on current and future customer demands and need to find new ways of penetrating into the lives of consumers, offering the 'right' advertisement at the 'right' time. In order to promote the e-commerce or the brand image of the company, the marketing strategy has moved to digital marketing. Branding can be defined as an outgoing process, where the outputs are a brand and a brand identity for differentiating products, services, divisions, companies, industries, or target groups. Branding is an output-generating process, with a brand and brand identity for differentiating products, services, and corporations, as outputs. Brands are critical marketing and communication assets, and it is important to invest time in researching, developing, and implementing a brand. In this study a four level brand management dashboard was developed focusing on the dimensions stakeholder, market, media sources and internal dimension. The dashboard was then implemented in a company operating the telecommunications market, having one master brand and several sub brands. Objectives of the project were to deliver better brand briefs, establish a clear internal communication hierarchy, get a greater visibility of projects in the pipeline. Indicators to evaluate brand effectiveness and the whole strategic brand management process after the brand performance dashboard has been implemented are the accuracy of branded materials, on time delivery, preservation of brand values and equity. The evaluation of the strategic brand management process with the dashboard applied and the new set of indicators implemented gives after one year in use the following results: values for already implemented indicators, such as brand development index, close rate and brand equity improved in the 1 year study period. Newly implemented indicators, such as brand penetration index, master brand influence rate, stakeholder value, sub brand sales rate, brand cross index, customer index, employee index and market penetration index, have all values within the pre-defined ranges. The developed brand performance dashboard offers an opportunity to analyze brands, brand dimensions and the brand environment in a structured way.

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1. Introduction

Digital marketing summarizes activities used for promoting products or brands via different forms of electronic media. Challenges digital marketers face are an intensifying competition, exploding data volumes and development of several digital channels. What makes a digital marketer successful? They are able to respond to and interact with customers who are increasingly independent, dynamic with a nearly full knowledge on products and brands. They have the ability to manage complex customer relationships in and across different channels, focusing on the traditional way and the digital one. Successful digital marketers are able to handle huge amounts of data (big data) to initiate a faster decision making process.

Brands are critical marketing and communication assets, and it is important to invest time in researching, developing, and implementing a brand.

Brand management is responsible for monitoring, measuring and managing brand equity, increasing brand awareness, driving brand understanding within the organization, managing brand identity consistency and helping to develop new brands and sub brands.

2. Study

2.1. Research problem

There must be a balance between brand awareness and e-commerce (performance marketing) to create the image of the brand as well as raising the revenue. Therefore, defining, implementing, developing, and making a brand grow are the main issues for brand builders in a company.

In a strategic brand management process basically four steps have to be included: identifying and establishing a brand, planning and implementing a brand marketing program, measuring and interpreting brand performance, brand equity.

Nowadays, companies are aware of the importance of branding for becoming or remaining competitive. Having one single brand, companies have learned how to handle the management of this brand. But in case there are several brands to be managed by a brand manager or companies have created a master brand / sub brand construct it is nearly impossible to draw attention to all brand and master brands valuing the importance of every single brand; and considering the relationship between these brands.

In this study it is developed a multidimensional dashboard (4-level approach) for multi brand companies. The developed brand dashboard should affect positively the following dimensions of the strategic brand management process: brand equity, monitoring, brand awareness external and brand awareness internal. Categories relevant for evaluating the dashboard impact are the master brand / sub brand relationship, stakeholder satisfaction.

2.2. Objectives and research questions

The main objectives of this paper are as follows:

- to determine which factors are integral parts of brand management practice
- to determine how these factors affect the performance of a brand
- to determine how master brand / sub brand relationships have to be handled in a multi brand company
- to analyze if a brand dashboard could improve brand performance.

Based on the overall objective of the study, described above, we have defined our main research questions as follows:

RQ1: Which dimensions have to be included in a brand performance dashboard?

RQ2: Could a 4 level brand performance dashboard be applied for a multi brand company?

Research question 1 (RQ1) is addressed in section 2.5 model development, introducing the brand performance dashboard developed by the authors. Research question 2 (RQ2) is addressed in section 2.6 case study analysis, summarizing how the developed dashboard is implemented in a multi brand company operating the

telecommunications market.

2.3. *Research design*

This study is a combination of library research and field research. Based on a model the authors developed in 2011 there was done a document analysis on how to manage multi brands in general and how to apply this model. A framework for a multi brand dashboard was developed. Based on that a field research was conducted, applying a non-participant direct observation method, by implementing the developed dashboard in a company and analyzing the impact factors for the strategic brand management process. The research approach is an applied qualitative one, where applied research aims at finding a solution for an immediate problem facing an industrial/business organization.

2.4. *Literature review*

Digital marketing refers to a form of marketing that circulates information in digital format, which can be characterized as computers, smart phones, or any form of digital devices, for promoting the brand image, deliver the message of the brand and increase the sales through advertising of the product. A brand helps to establish a unique company identity and appearance in turn enabling the company to attract their target customers for repeat purchases and attract their interest in long-run business relations (Ghachem 2011, Erkollar/Oberer 2010). Branding can be defined as an outgoing process, where the outputs are a brand and a brand identity for differentiating products, services, divisions, companies, industries, or target groups. The digital marketing department, that advances marketing promotions based on a calendar, has an aim of achieving a successful online sales campaign. Consistent brand messages encourage target groups and start the development of long run oriented business relations (Duduciuc/Ivan 2014, Lakeworth 2008, Erkollar/Oberer 2010, Grigore et al. 2010). Brand builders consider their brand from a controller's perspective and ask for the brand's effectiveness and its contribution to generate added value, cover fixed costs, and creating sustainability. Apart from this perspective, another one is important as well: the customer preferences /popularity one. Generally, brands are moving and cannot be considered separately from cost management, shareholder, and stakeholder value as well as value chain impacts, return on investment and cash flow. The main purpose of the brand awareness side is to build a brand image in the eyes of the customer through creative online advertisements. The sales of the products come secondary. It targets at highly-specific audiences to increase brand loyalty, creating strong ties between the customer and the brand so that the customer can recall it, engaged into activities like visiting the shop, buying the products or talking about the brand to jump into the bandwagon. In other words, it aims to make consumer understand the brand and internalize the brand image as if it is part of the self. In order to customize the brand, the brand awareness team engage in various channels to reach to the customer of the luxury customers. It is a goal of brand builders to reason the factors influencing the popularity of their products to start some kind of lessons learned about their past activities and to get an idea as to what should be relevant steps for the near future and in the longer run as well as to be successful on the market or to market newly planned brands, sub-brands, or brand products. In order to survive, manufacturers have to consider the upcoming short run and longer run market trends that will influence their industry and have an impact on brand performance and the management of their brands (Izadi Manesh,/Hozouri 2013, Abdullah & Asngari 2011). The affiliate marketing is a term to describe "an agreement between two sites in which one site (the affiliate) agrees to feature content or an ad designed to drive traffic to another site. In return, the affiliate receives a percentage of sales or some other form of compensation generated by that traffic."† The main aim in this form of marketing is to reach to the main customer segment of the brand through the website, where the targeted customer have traffic. This form of marketing is much preferable when the website that display the ad of the brand has a similar content. In other words, if the website that affiliates has a similar content with the ad owner, then the customer can be more curious on the content of the advertiser (Mousavi/Far/Shahrokh/Taghavifard 2013, Story/Hess 2010, Wong/Merrilees 2008). Brands are created to obtain uniqueness in the products with regard to their competitors and developing an attachment of their customers to the products by building up their attachment, empathy and loyalty. Brand name of a

product is outcome of the marketing effects or outcomes in comparison with those that would have been build up if same product was considered without that respective brand name. Brand knowledge affects the potential purchases by means of a brand relationship pursuit including the brand satisfaction driven, trust on the brand and brands attachment. To be able to establish a performance management for brands, the brand performance scorecard can be used as a main source in the strategic dimension as well as in the operational one.

There are various methods of data collection, focusing on factors such as nature, scope and object of inquiry, availability of funds, time factor and the precision required. The authors focused in their study on primary research as well as on the case study method. The data collection process of this study consists of two approaches: a content analysis (of research articles already published by the authors and other researchers) and a case study analysis. The case study method is a very popular form of qualitative analysis.

2.5. Model development

With the brand dashboard a model for evaluating the strategic brand management process should be developed. The multidimensional brand performance dashboard, introduced in this publication, is based on a brand performance scorecard model developed by the authors in 2011 for a company focusing on international multidimensional branding and the literature review done on brand management.

A brand performance dashboard follows the idea of the balanced scorecard, defining different dimensions, key objectives, actions to be taken, performance indicators, and metrics as well as time frames.

Figure 1 shows the four level structure of the brand performance dashboard, filled with sample objectives, dimensions, and performance indicators for brand performance measurement.

Level 1 shows the basic structure (objectives, dimensions, key performance indicators, time frame, priorities). Level 2 shows the dimensions stakeholders, market segment, internal dimension and media sources, combined with related categories for each and a detailed impact analysis for each dimension and each relationship. Level 3 contains an impact analysis, focusing on the dimensions brand, master brand, impact, brand dimension. Level 4 focuses on the equal brand system developed for the brand performance dashboard.

Table 1 gives an overview of the first level dashboard structure, filled with some sample data.. In this view, the basics of a single-brand performance dashboard are considered. Objectives are defined and prioritized and related dimensions added, such as customer related, process related or staff related. The dimensions stakeholders, market segments, internal dimension, as well as media sources are defined and divided into further sub-categories, such as current or prospective customers, as well as market segments. For every sub-dimension, main targets are defined and key performance indicators added, which allow for the measurement of the defined targets. Furthermore, time frames as well as comments can be added and priority rules used to select issues of the highest priority before the minor ones. For the targets added, in the section performance indicator, references to other dimensions or sub-dimensions, that the current one is related to, can be added as well. With this functionality it is possible to get a first overview about the independence of different dimensions. For all key performance indicators, measures have to be defined, such as two sponsor activities each quarter, ten articles in journals until Q3, both for the media sources dimension. The same has to be done for all the other dimensions as well. Generally, the dimensions in the brand performance dashboard are a 'must' because they reflect the whole brand related environment. Sub-categories can be defined by brand builders. The same is valid for the added further dimensions. Basically, there is no limit for adding dimensions, but there should not be more than 7 in order to guarantee that the scorecard still can be handled.

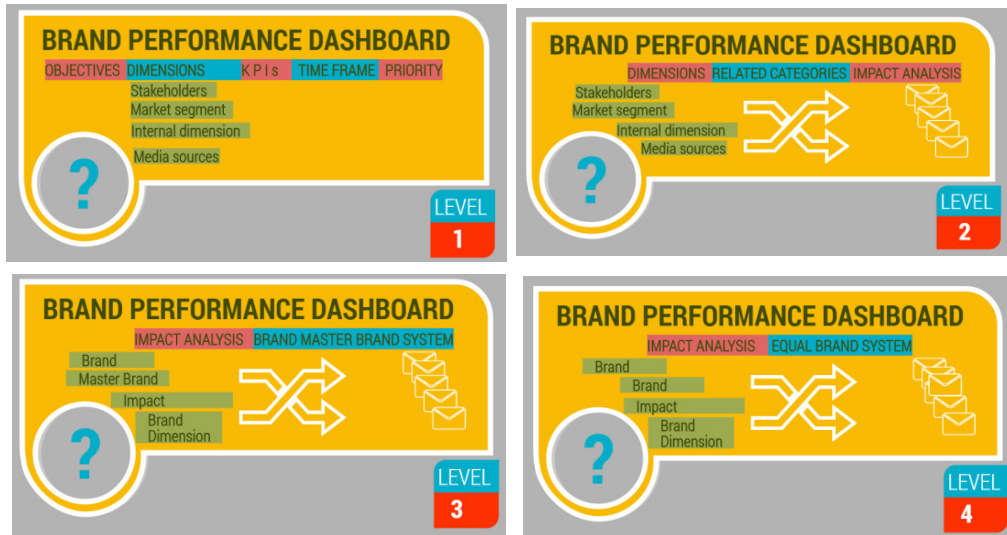


Fig. 1. Brand Performance Dashboard

Table 1. Level 1 Dashboard, basic structure (filled in with sample data)

Brand performance dashboard						
Objectives*	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Dimensions	Key performance indicators		Time frame		Priority	
Stakeholder_Customer	Use satisfaction surveys, calculate customer satisfaction index (CSI)		Results Q2		Priority: 2	
Benchmark current satisfaction level	improve brand performance on media [%, values]		update all significant media Q4		Priority: 1	
Market_segment_current	conduct brand perception surveys, calculate perception indicator (PI)		Q4		Priority: 2	
analyze brand performance in served markets	benchmark current brand awareness level		Use brand awareness surveys, calculate brand awareness indicator (BAI)		Q3	
increase brand awareness in markets [%]	COMBINE WITH 4 (MEDIA SOURCES)		Q1			
Market_segment_prospective	Brand perception surveys in test markets (BPS_T) use BPS_T, COMBINE WITH		Q2		Priority: 2	
analyze brand performance in test markets						

select target markets create brand awareness in prospective markets	1a, 4a & 4b. COMBINE WITH 4 (MEDIA SOURCES)	Q3	Priority: 5
Internal_processes			
increase brand identity	Update customer centered files & presentations COMBINE with 3a, 4	Q4	Priority: 2
	create new brand messages,	Q1	Priority: 4
Optimize brand related processes	COMBINE with 1, 3a, 4 Start an analysis on brand related processes, limitations, constraints, select an approach to solve these problems. COMBINE with 1, 2, 3a, 4	Q3	Priority: 2
Internal_staff			
evaluate service performance	Calculate service performance indicator (SPI)	Q3	Priority: 5
increase service performance (% , value)	COMBINE WITH 3ab, 3b, 4	Q3	Priority: n/a
Media_current			
increase brand appearance	Advertisement, research,	Q2	Priority: 2
Improve brand messaging	sponsoring COMBINE with 1,2,3	Q1	Priority: 1
Improve relationship with trend setters	COMBINE with 1,2,3	Q4	Priority: 4

*Notes: Q = quarter of the year [Q1-Q4]
priority: 1-5 (1= lowest priority, 5= highest priority)*

*sample objectives: (1) Improve brand awareness among media sources, (2) Establish a benchmark system for customer satisfaction, brand preferences & loyalty, and awareness, distinguishing different market segments and their corresponding brand behavior, (3) Increase the brand awareness of brand attributes among key persons with direct customer contact. The brand performance dashboard introduced focuses on one single brand to be managed. In case a company intends on developing a brand performance management for more than one brand (>1) in a first step for every brand the introduced brand dashboard can be filled in with the relevant data, which is the first step in a multi-dimensional brand scorecarding [step 1]. In step 2, the master brand question that has to be answered: have any of the brands already implemented a master one? In case there is one, the structure for handling the master brand and its sub-brands is as follows: if there is an impact of the master brand on every single sub-brand it needs to be indicated. In table 2 this structure is shown in a level 2 dashboard template. The impact analysis mentioned in the third column of the table is the founding content for level 3. In level 3 a detailed impact analysis is done to determine the relationship between dimensions and categories. Table 3 shows a level 2 dashboard template filled with sample relational data.

Table 2. Brand Performance Dashboard, template, level 2 (extract)



Brand Performance Dashboard		Level 2
Dimension	Related category	Impact analysis
Customer	Category: ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Category: ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Category: ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	
Market segment	Category: ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Category: ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Category: ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	

Table 3. Level 2 template, filled with sample relational data (extract)



Brand Performance Dashboard		Level 2
Dimension	Related category	Impact analysis
Customer		
1. Customer_current	Market segment_current	
	Market segment_prospective	
	Media sources_sponsoring	
	Media sources_advertisements	
	Media sources_research	
	Internal_staff_sales	
	Internal_processes	
Internal dimension		
3. Processes	Customer_current	
	Customer_prospective	
	Customer_former	
	Customer_contacts	
	Media_sources_research	
	Media_sources_advertisements	
	Media_sources_sponsoring	
Market segment_current		
Market segment_prospective		

Table 4. Level 3 (impact analysis) of the brand performance dashboard: master brand (extract)

Impact analysis MASTER BRAND		
Sub brand system	Impact/ Dimension	Impact / Detail

Sub brand 3 [Name] Dimension 1: YES/NO
 Dimension 2: YES/NO
 Dimension 4:: YES/NO



2.6. Case study analysis

The sample company is a division of a global telecommunication operator and delivers a combination of IT and communication services to more than 20.000 organizations, institutions and private households worldwide. The company has one master brand 'X' and five sub-brands X.1, X.2, X.3, X.4 and X.5. All of them are related somehow. Marketing activities on 'X' have direct and indirect impacts on all sub brands. Branding decisions on a single sub brand might have an impact on the other sub brands and has an influence on the brand management of the master brand.

The company had an active brand management, but this only focused on the master brand. For sub brands there were arranged some marketing activities; but these were not aligned with the master brand management and sometimes effects from X.1 brand related activities had direct impacts on other sub brands, which was not considered at all. The brand performance dashboard developed and introduced in the previous sections was implemented in this company. With the implementation of the brand management dashboard the management of the company also extended its strategic brand management process from the master brand to all sub brands.

The brand management team started to use the brand performance dashboard by adopting the template to the company's needs. Master brand and sub brand relationships were considered and organized in a structured way. Before the dashboard was implemented the company had a working system of basic key performance indicators (KPIs) used to analyze the performance of the brand management. This system was extended within the project. Objectives of the project were to deliver better brand briefs, establish a clear internal communication hierarchy, get a greater visibility of projects in the pipeline. Indicators to evaluate brand effectiveness and the whole strategic brand management process after the brand performance dashboard has been implemented are the accuracy of branded materials, on time delivery, preservation of brand values and equity.

2.7. Findings

Dimensions to be included in a brand performance dashboard (RQ1)

Based on the previously developed brand scorecard, literature review and a conducted content analysis the authors developed the performance dashboard, containing four main dimensions, which are stakeholders, market segment, media sources and an internal dimension. For each dimension related sub dimensions are developed. Below the developed structure is shown in some selected sample relationships.

LEVEL 1: Dimension => sub dimension 1 + sub dimension 2 + sub dimension n

Stakeholder => stakeholder_customer + stakeholder_employee + stakeholder_interest group

Stakeholder_customer => customer_current + customer_prospective + customer_former

LEVEL 2: Dimension => related category1 + related category 2 + related category n

Customer_current => market segment current + media sources_sponsoring + internal_staff_sales

LEVEL 3: master brand => sub brand 1 => impact dimension 1 => impact dimension 2

=> indicates 'next' level + indicates 'same' level

Implementation of a 4 level brand performance dashboard in a multi brand company (RQ2)

When the dashboard was implemented in the sample company the following key performance indicators (KPIs) were tracked: spend in production and creative work, spend by flexible packing, project duration time (organizational, technical, process related), rework cycles (organizational, technical, process related), incoming errors (organizational, technical, process related) and on time performance (organizational, technical, process related). The dashboard results were compared with the company performance before the dashboard

implementation, based on the following indicators. Some general indicators (brand development index (BDI), brand equity, close rate) were already in use, but with the dashboard implementation a set of new indicators, containing brand penetration, master brand influence rate, sub brand sales rate, press coverage, stakeholder value, employee index, customer index, brand cross index, was implemented as well. The evaluation of the strategic brand management process with the dashboard applied and the new set of indicators implemented gives after one year in use the following results for A) indicators already in use (*old value/new value*): brand development index: 1.2/1.8; close rate: 8/11; brand equity: 0.245/ 0.435; B) indicators implemented with the dashboard (*indicator [range from-range to]: value*): Brand penetration index: 1.0912 Master brand influence rate [0.01-0.09]: 0.05 Stakeholder value: 212 Sub brand sales rate [100-843]: 433 Brand cross index [0.03-0.08]: 0.053 Customer index: 87% Employee index: 55% Market penetration index: 1.09

3. Conclusions

Brand plays an important role on product development and it is always necessary to find important factors influencing brand for different purposes such as gaining more market share, customer retention. Brand performance is the result of desirability and profitability in a brand. In a nutshell, the developed brand performance dashboard offers an opportunity to analyze brands, brand dimensions and the brand environment in a structured way.

The brand performance dashboard introduced consists of 4 levels and was created for a multi dimensional brand performance management approach. In level 1 the basic brand performance objectives, dimensions, key performance indicators are defined and a priority list implemented. Dimensions include (but are not limited to) stakeholders, market segments, the internal dimension and media sources. As stakeholders brand managers may consider customers, suppliers, collaborators and partners. Customers might be divided in the categories customer_current, customer_former, customer_prospective and customer_contact. Market segments could be market_segment_current or market_segment_prospective. The internal dimension could be divided in the categories staff and processes. The staff dimension could be divided in staff_management and staff_sales_service. Media sources could be media_sources_current or media_sources_prospective, media_sources_advertisements, media_sources_sponsoring.

In level 2 the relationship between dimensions and categories are defined. For each dimension all sub-dimensions are considered and the relationship to the other dimensions and sub dimensions designed. In level 3 a detailed impact analysis can be conducted, focusing on a master_brand to sub_brand relationship. Level 4 focuses on a detailed impact analysis in case no master brand is available; in that case all brands are treated as equal and the relationship between all of them modeled.

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