

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF BRAND IMAGE ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE- AIRTEL

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ABSTRACT

Brand image plays a crucial role in influencing customer perceptions, purchasing decisions, and long-term relationships with a company. A strong and positive brand image helps organizations differentiate themselves from competitors, build customer trust, and create a favorable reputation in the marketplace. In today's highly competitive business environment, companies invest significant resources in developing and maintaining a strong brand image to enhance customer loyalty and improve overall business performance.

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of brand image on customer loyalty and business performance. The study examines how factors such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and customer satisfaction contribute to customer loyalty and organizational success. It also analyzes the relationship between a company's brand image and customers' repeat purchase intentions, recommendations, and emotional attachment to the brand.

The research is based on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data is collected through structured questionnaires administered to customers, while secondary data is gathered from books, journals, research articles, company reports, and online sources. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, tables, and charts are used to interpret and analyze the collected data.

The study concludes that maintaining a positive brand image is essential for sustaining customer loyalty and achieving business growth. Organizations should focus on delivering quality products and services, effective communication, customer engagement, and consistent brand experiences to strengthen their brand image and ensure long-term success in the marketplace.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern business environment, branding has become one of the most important strategic tools for organizations seeking sustainable growth and competitive advantage. A brand is more than just a name, logo, or symbol; it represents the overall perception and impression that customers have about a company and its products or services. Brand image refers to the set of beliefs, ideas, and perceptions that consumers associate with a particular brand. A strong and positive brand image helps organizations attract new customers, retain existing ones, and establish long-term relationships with their target market.

Customer loyalty is a critical factor that determines the success and profitability of a business. Loyal customers not only make repeated purchases but also recommend the brand to others, contributing to positive word-of-mouth promotion. In today's highly competitive marketplace, where

consumers have numerous choices, maintaining customer loyalty has become increasingly challenging. Therefore, organizations focus on building a favorable brand image to influence customer attitudes, satisfaction levels, and purchasing behavior.

A positive brand image creates trust, confidence, and emotional attachment among customers. When consumers perceive a brand as reliable, high-quality, and trustworthy, they are more likely to remain loyal and continue purchasing its products or services. On the other hand, a negative brand image can lead to customer dissatisfaction, reduced loyalty, and loss of market share. Consequently, companies invest substantial resources in advertising, customer relationship management, product quality improvement, and promotional activities to strengthen their brand image.

Business performance is closely linked to brand image and customer loyalty. Organizations with strong brand equity often experience higher sales, increased profitability, greater market share, and enhanced customer retention. Brand image serves as a valuable intangible asset that contributes to long-term business success and sustainability. Understanding the relationship between brand image, customer loyalty, and business performance is therefore essential for managers and marketers in developing effective business strategies.

This study aims to evaluate the impact of brand image on customer loyalty and business performance. It examines the various factors that influence customer perceptions of a brand and analyzes how these perceptions affect customer loyalty and organizational outcomes. The findings of the study will help businesses understand the significance of brand image in achieving customer satisfaction, fostering loyalty, and improving overall business performance.

NEED OF THE PROJECT

The need for this project arises from the increasing importance of brand image in influencing customer behavior and determining business success. In today's competitive market, customers have numerous alternatives available, making it essential for organizations to create and maintain a strong and positive brand image. A favorable brand image helps businesses attract new customers, retain existing customers, and establish long-term relationships that contribute to sustainable growth.

Customer loyalty has become a key factor in achieving organizational objectives. Loyal customers are more likely to make repeat purchases, recommend the brand to others, and remain committed even when competitors offer similar products or services. Understanding the relationship between brand image and customer loyalty enables organizations to develop effective marketing strategies and improve customer retention.

The project is also necessary to identify the factors that influence customers' perceptions of a brand

and to evaluate how these perceptions affect purchasing decisions and loyalty levels. It helps businesses understand customer expectations, preferences, and satisfaction levels, which are essential for improving products, services, and customer experiences.

Furthermore, a strong brand image contributes significantly to business performance by increasing sales, market share, profitability, and competitive advantage. Therefore, this study is important for analyzing the extent to which brand image influences business outcomes and organizational success.

The findings of this project will provide valuable insights to managers, marketers, and business organizations in designing branding strategies that enhance customer loyalty and improve overall business performance. The study will also serve as a useful reference for future research in the areas of branding, customer relationship management, and marketing effectiveness.

SCOPE OF PROJECT

The scope of this project is to examine and evaluate the impact of brand image on customer loyalty and business performance. The study focuses on understanding how customers perceive a brand and how these perceptions influence their purchasing decisions, satisfaction levels, and long-term loyalty toward the organization.

The study is limited to collecting and analyzing customer opinions and experiences regarding a particular brand or organization. It aims to identify the relationship between a positive brand image and customers' willingness to make repeat purchases, recommend the brand to others, and maintain a long-term association with the company.

The project also explores the role of branding strategies, marketing communications, and customer relationship management practices in strengthening brand image and enhancing customer loyalty. The findings will help organizations understand customer expectations and develop effective strategies to improve their brand value and business performance.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Definition:

Research methodology is the specification of the method of acquiring the information needed to the structure or to solve the problem at hand.

It is the pattern of the framework of the project that stipulates what information is to be collected, from which source and by what method.

Primary Source Data:

A questionnaire was prepared helped in gaining an insight view of the factors effecting the customer needs and related issues. The addresses of various customers were given and with the help of the questionnaire prepared, I need to find out the first hand information regarding the share of the Toyota in every segment in the market and the satisfaction level of each customer. Further I need to find out the future plans of the customer regarding the purchase of the Toyota products.

Each day I met 5 customers for 4 weeks the sample size of 100 respondents was decided upon.

Secondary Data:

Secondary data is the annual report of the company and the official.

Research Objective:

OBJECTIVES

- To study about the symbol of AIRTEL.
- To study about the AIRTEL BRAND.
- To know about the brand image of AIRTEL tale services.
- To know how customers feel about AIRTEL TELESERVICES
- Are they happy with the service?
- To know about what customer needs and what the company is providing.

SAMPLING

Sampling Procedure:

The sampling technique use here was Quota Sampling, which is one of the most commonly used non-probability sample design.

Sampling Unit:

The target population from which the sample is chosen is owners of all brands of cars.

Sample Size:

The sample of 100 from the target population was chosen.

Analysis Used:

The data collected in form of questionnaires was tabulated and analyzed using basic statistical method percentages.

LIMITATIONS

- The study is limited to a specific geographical area and therefore the findings may not represent the opinions of customers in other regions.
- The research is based on the responses provided by the respondents, and there is a possibility of personal bias or inaccurate information.
- The sample size selected for the study is limited; hence, the results may not fully reflect the views of the entire customer population.
- Time constraints restricted the collection of data from a larger number of respondents and different market segments.
- The study focuses primarily on brand image, customer loyalty, and business performance, while other factors influencing customer behavior are not considered in detail.
- Customer perceptions and preferences are dynamic in nature and may change over time due to market conditions, competition, and technological advancements.
- The accuracy of the findings depends on the honesty, understanding, and cooperation of the respondents while answering the questionnaire.
- Secondary data used in the study were collected from books, journals, websites, and reports, and their accuracy depends on the reliability of those sources.

- Financial and resource constraints limited the extent of data collection and analysis.
- The conclusions drawn from the study are applicable only within the scope and objectives defined for the research and may not be generalized to all industries or organizations.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Branding is simple but it's amazing how few business leaders understand its importance. I have met directors from large, international businesses who do not see any reason for investing in fresh design, in pr, in web innovation or in core messages.

How a business, product or individual is branded plays a big role in whether they succeed or fail. A brand is not just a logo, it is all your ethics and persona. This includes your style of design, your execution of that design, your attitude, your logo, your marketing, your internal policies and even your business process can all influence your brand image. If image is everything then this image needs to be right.

If you are a start up company, it is common to be branded as such. The benefit of this is that you are young and enthusiastic – the downside is far worse. People are less likely to invest in something that does not carry much experience or credibility. So you want to look like an industry leader. How do you go about that? Well it all starts, in my opinion, with your target audience. If you can get inside their heads you can appeal to them. If you do not you may find you offend them, upset them, or put them off. You may have a few target audiences but try and consider your key audience.

Next you need to think about what it is that you wish to communicate with them. What are your messages and why do they need to know these messages. Also how can you back these messages up, not only with evidence but also graphically in your brand style, in your logo, the name of your business, in your typography and in your copy.

All these things are a lot easier to make effective if they are proactive rather than reactive. By getting these things clear in your head at the

start can help you with everything else that follows. If you wait “to see how things go” then you may find that this simple process becomes a lot more complicated and expensive. Not only will getting these messages straight in your head help you to sell your service or product, but it will also help your employees and their motivation and behavior.

Most companies are so worried about their image to the end user that they forget about communicating this to employees which can create mixed messages when these employees are representing the company elsewhere. Make sure all of your staff are on board and believe passionately in your brand and key messaging. Also your suppliers are good advocates for your brand and they will also spread the word about your service and style of approach.

In terms of the design element of your brand – once you have got a solid style this needs to be implemented consistently across all marketing materials. Not only on your letter heads, business cards and compliment slips, but on your signage, leaflets, brochures, email signatures, PowerPoint presentations and website. Think MacDonald's. It will cost you in money but not in respectability. I have come across so many businesses which have about 6 variations on their logo. This causes confusion in a target audience and gives you a unorganized persona.

You need to make life easy for your target audience. If you can create consistency with your brand this leads to a comfort zone. Simplicity is the key. Your messages may be complex but the way you communicate them needs to be simple.

When starting a company it's important to start building brand identity. Reach potential customers through the use of logo products and create a favorable impression with fun freebies like stress balls and personalized travel mugs. Your company logo is the most recognizable feature of your business whether you've been in business for 2 days or 20 years. Take advantage of the benefits that promotional items can give you.

So in this brief article you will have noticed that you don't have to be a genius to be

good at branding. All it is communicating, in a simple way, your messages to your audience. It will take time, money and attention to detail. The starting point is the recognition that branding is worthwhile. Once this is established it's up to you how far you want to go. As they say "your attitude affects your altitude". So if you get the ball rolling soon you will realize you are flying. It's all in the brand.

Branding helps buyers in many ways. Brand names help consumers identify products that might benefit them. Brands also tell the buyer something about product quality. Buyers who always buy the same brand know that they will get the same features, benefits, And quality each time they buy. Branding also gives the seller several advantages; the brand name becomes the basis on which a whole story can be built about a product special qualities.

Building and managing brands is perhaps the marketer most important task. Will discuss branding strategy in more details in the below.

Definition Of Brand:

A name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of this intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.

Branding Strategy:

Some analysts see brands as the major enduring asset of a company, outlasting the company's specific products and facilities.

John Stewart, co founder of Quaker oats, once said, "If this business were spilt up , I would give you the land and bricks and mortar, and I would keep the brands and trade marks, and I would fare better than you.

Brands are more than just names and symbols, brands represents consumers perceptions and feeling about a product and its performance--everything that the product or service means to consumers. As one branding expert suggests, "Ultimately, brands reside in the minds of consumers".

A powerful brand as high brand equity. Brand equity is the positive differential affects that knowing the brand name as on consumer response

to the product or service. A measure of a brand's equity is the extent to which customers are willing to pay more for The brand. A brand with strong brand equity is a very valuable asset. Brand valuation is the process of estimating the total financial value of brand.

High brand equity provides a many competitive advantages. A powerful brand enjoys a high level of consumer brand awareness and loyalty. Because consumers expect stores top carry the brand, the company has more leverage in bargaining with resellers.

Multi-brands

Brand extension

The existing strong brand name can be used as a vehicle for new or modified products; for example, many fashion and designer companies extended brands into fragrances, shoes and accessories, home textile, home decor, luggage, (sun-) glasses, furniture, hotels, etc.

Mars extended its brand to ice cream, Caterpillar to shoes and watches, Michelin to a restaurant guide, Adidas and Puma to personal hygiene. Dunlop extended its brand from tires to other rubber products such as shoes, golf balls, tennis racquets and adhesives.

Alternatively, in a market that is fragmented amongst a number of brands a supplier can choose deliberately to launch totally new brands in apparent competition with its own existing strong brand (and often with identical product characteristics); simply to soak up some of the share of the market which will in any case go to minor brands. The rationale is that having 3 out of 12 brands in such a market will give a greater overall share than having 1 out of 10 (even if much of the share of these new brands is taken from the existing one). In its most extreme manifestation, a supplier pioneering a new market which it believes will be particularly attractive may choose immediately to launch a second brand in competition with its first, in order to pre-empt others entering the market.

Individual brand names naturally allow greater flexibility by permitting a variety of different products, of differing quality, to be sold

without confusing the consumer's perception of what business the company is in or diluting higher quality products.

Individual and Organizational Brands

There are kinds of branding that treat individuals and organizations as the "products" to be branded. Personal branding treats persons and their careers as brands. The term is thought to have been first used in a 1997 article by Tom Peters. Faith branding treats religious figures and organizations as brands. Religious media expert Phil Cooke has written that faith branding handles the question of how to express faith in a media-dominated culture. Nation branding works with the perception and reputation of countries as brands.

Branding is a very powerful component in business. The brand must have a logo to make branding easier and more possible. The consumers decide if they will buy a product or use a service based on how they view the brand. The brand itself tells us or let us imagine how good or bad the product is even if we never tasted it before! All that brand promotion and advertising really do tell us how great a brand can be (like Nike). Once a customer likes your brand he/she will definitely come back for repeated services or products. The qualities of the product or services are ensured through the customers minds from the brand image.

Brand is not only convenient for businesses for repeated customer purchase but also easier for customers to filter out the countless generic items. Brand gives consumers the reason to buy it and wastes less time for consumer to choose.

There are ways to improve a brand from advertising such as viral campaign (more trustworthy), online ads, print ads and commercials. Another way is to improve your product or services that will reinforce the brand. This is a good way to promote your brand by always being in the cutting edge or "customer's first image".

The qualities of your products and services will reinforce the brand. Advertise as much as possible to spread that message and make it into a

cult brand. Branding doesn't only benefit the business but you as well (yes I mean it). The brand you choose reflects who you are and expresses yourself on what you like to do and be able to join the community of like minded people. Branding is a win: win situation for both the businesses and the loyal customers.

Brand Identity: The Importance of Color

Color is an important consideration in your brand identity system. Colors have a significant impact on people's emotional state. They also have been shown to impact people's ability to concentrate and learn. They have a wide variety of specific mental associations. In fact, the effects are physiological, psychological, and sociological.

Brand Connection

Most consumers have very strong opinions regarding their favorite brand. These opinions are more emotional than rational. Some brands (e.g. Nike, Coca-Cola etc.) resonate with customers more than others. They form an emotional attachment to these brands, often disregarding better products and services for ones with higher visibility and brand recognition.

Some brands even become synonymous with the product and the consumer starts recognizing the product by its brand name (e.g. Xerox).

It is therefore of the utmost importance that every company – especially the small business, has a sound brand strategy and a strong brand identity with a unique identifiable logo.

Logo Design & Brand Identity

Brand Identity and Small Business Logo Design helps small businesses in many ways. A few of the more important ones are listed below.

1. It helps give the company an established and professional feel. This increases the customers trust in the products or services the company offers.
2. A powerful brand identity is important as in general, people find it easier to recall images than text. There is an old saying "A picture is worth a thousand words". The logo represents that picture and can be remembered and identified with greater

ease than a thousand words describing the company.

3. Logo graphics can bring about awareness of the products or services that you offer in cases where the company name is not self-explanatory.
4. As the company grows, the consumer base stays loyal to the brand.
5. The brand value generated can also be leveraged when selling stock in the company or the company itself for a higher perceived value than the actual value.



One of the biggest mistakes that business owners and professionals often make is the underestimation of their brand. You might say to yourself, “I’m a hairstylist,” or “I’m a car salesman,” and wonder how you have a brand without having your own business.

It’s simple. No matter what your profession is, just as we all earn money, we all have a brand. This is why it is very important to behave, dress, and speak at all times in the way that you wish to be remembered.

Association is important as well. You have to be very selective when it comes to business partners, employees, and even clientele. Each can affect your brand in both a positive and negative manner.

The first steps to building your brand is to identify what makes you stand out among the competition. It’s also imperative to be sure that you and your allies and employees share the same vision and quality of service.

Your clients should be those that have an appreciation and understand the needs of your services. There is nothing worst than a client that complains about your prices, does not respect you as a professional, and requires more time than those with no complaints. However that is a conversation for another day.

Lastly, support your brand with other mediums and make sure that each medium solidifies your expertise. For example, if you’re a chef you could publish a cookbook and write the weekly food column for the local newspaper. This exemplifies your expertise.

Today, begin thinking about your brand and what you can do to improve it. Become BRAND New.

When we think about the leading retailers of the most commonly used products and services one thing that is for sure, they all have competition. In July 2011, Forbes Magazine reported that over the next three to five years more than 80 million Americans will open home-based businesses. So what does that mean to you?

IV. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

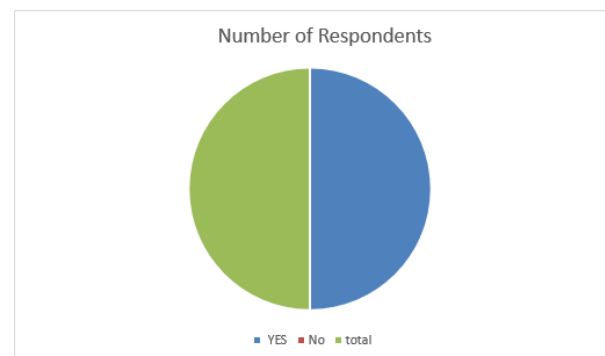
BRAND IMAGE ANALYSIS

The 100 respondents were asked to scale the performance of various brands

You

1. Do you use teleservices(cell or Land line)?

Options	Number of Respondents
YES	100
No	0
total	100

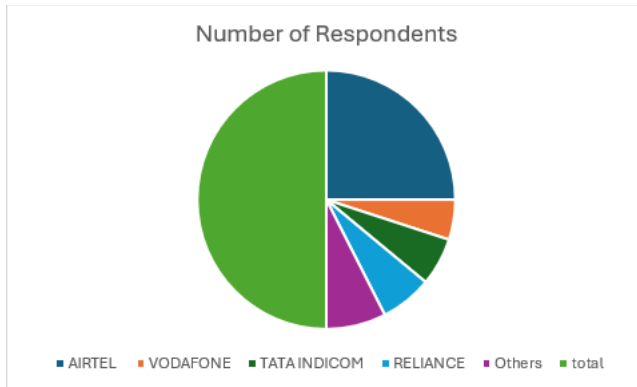


Interpretation:

- From above pie chart it can be stated that 100% people using teleservices for their constructions

2. Which tele services do you use?

Type of system	Number of Respondents
AIRTEL	50
VODAFONE	10
TATA INDICOM	12
RELIANCE	13
Others	15
total	100



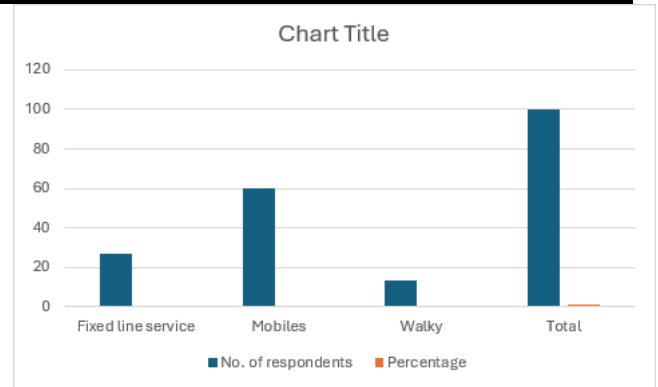
Interpretation:

- From above it can be stated that 50% of people using AIRTEL
- 10% of people using VODAFONE teleservices ,
- 12% of people using TATA teleservices ,
- 13% of people using RELIANCE teleservices ,
- 15% of people using other brands.

3) Which Kind of service are you using? Please mention?

Type of service	No. of respondents	Percentage
Fixed line service	27	27%
Mobiles	60	60%
Walky	13	13%
Total	100	100%

Kind of service:



Interpretation

From the above table it can be seen that 60% of them are using mobile services, while 27% are using fixed line services, and the remaining 3% are using walky services.

V. FINDINGS

- All the respondents (100%) are using telecommunication services for their communication needs.
- Airtel is the most preferred telecom service provider with 50% of the respondents using its services.
- Vodafone accounts for 10%, Tata for 12%, Reliance for 13%, and other service providers for 15% of the respondents.
- Mobile services are the most commonly used services, with 60% of customers preferring them.
- Fixed-line services are used by 27% of the respondents, while walky services are used by a small percentage.
- Brand name is the most important factor influencing customer preference, accounting for 40% of responses.
- Convenience and easy availability are the primary reasons for selecting a telecom service, as stated by 53% of respondents.
- A majority of Airtel customers (96%) are satisfied with the pricing of Airtel services.
- About 70% of the respondents are aware of Airtel services, indicating strong brand recognition.

- Friends are the major source of information about telecom services, followed by advertisements and events.
- Service quality is highly appreciated, with 60% of respondents rating the services as excellent.
- Around 80% of customers receive their services or orders on the same day.
- All respondents (100%) are satisfied with the clip facility provided by the company.
- Most customers (67%) expect additional features such as GPRS, MMS, call waiting, and other value-added services.
- About 90% of customers are satisfied with the availability and supply of Airtel services.
- Overall customer satisfaction levels are high, with the majority expressing satisfaction with Airtel's services and performance.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

- Airtel should continue strengthening its brand image, as brand name is a major factor influencing customer preference.
- The company should introduce more innovative features and value-added services to meet customer expectations.
- Efforts should be made to increase awareness among the remaining 30% of customers who are not fully aware of Airtel services.
- Customer service quality should be maintained and continuously improved to retain existing customers.
- Attractive promotional campaigns and advertisements can help increase market share and customer acquisition.
- Airtel should focus on improving network coverage and connectivity in all service areas.
- Competitive pricing strategies should be maintained to sustain the high level of customer satisfaction.

- Feedback mechanisms should be strengthened to identify customer needs and resolve complaints quickly.
- The company should encourage referral programs since friends are a major source of customer awareness.
- Continuous technological upgrades should be implemented to provide better and more advanced telecom services.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that Airtel enjoys a strong position in the telecom market due to its positive brand image, quality services, competitive pricing, and customer-oriented approach. The majority of customers are satisfied with Airtel's services and perceive the brand as reliable and trustworthy. Brand name, convenience, and service quality are the key factors influencing customer preference and loyalty. The findings indicate that customer satisfaction levels are high, and most customers are willing to continue using Airtel services. By introducing additional features, enhancing customer service, and maintaining its strong brand image, Airtel can further strengthen customer loyalty and improve its overall business performance in the highly competitive telecom industry.

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