

BRAND AWARENESS AND SUCCESS IN THE MARKET

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Abstract

Successful brand in the present-day conditions is not just well selected and original name or mark. Loyalty of consumers is connected to success of the brand in the market. It is very difficult for a brand to find success and then to maintain it. It requires constant attention, gathering of information, analysis and taking of right decisions. The difficulty is that the brand constitutes a set of different aspects and elements. The aim of the research was to study the attitude of consumers to Georgian brands at Tbilisi (the capital of Georgia) consumer market. Proceeding from the goal of this research the tasks of the study were: to determine consumer evaluations about Georgian brands and their separate components; to find out the attitude of consumers to the advantages of Georgian brands, associations of consumers concerning successful brands. As a result of the marketing research successful Georgian brands at Tbilisi consumer market were determined. In the process of their evaluation the several characteristics were taken into consideration. The research method was of exploratory and descriptive nature. In the conclusive part of the work are given research results, conclusions and recommendations.

Key words: branding, brand awareness, brand image, marketing research, successful brand

INTRODUCTION

In the modern environments, a product is recognized as the most important element of the marketing theory and practice. Brand plays a huge role in the product's commercial success in the market (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, p. 250). The use of branding helps companies to draw consumers' attention to their products and establish at the market. One of the most actual topics in the marketing's theory and practice is the matter of the brands ruling. The key point in the Brand's success is held by creating its positive image and ensuring its recognizability and awareness. Trademark image has great influence on decisions concerning the purchase of consumable products. The greater is a popularity of brand, the stronger is acceptance of the brand by consumers. When a consumer is satisfied with consuming and using of concrete brand, little by little she/he becomes a loyal buyer. Thus, the achievement and maintenance of the positive results in branding are in direct connection to the company's constant and interminable hard work in this direction.

In the past, when Georgia was one of the republic of the Soviet Union, marketing, branding and other scientific directions or their usage in practice was not widely recognized. As they were connected to capitalism, which was unacceptable at that time. Transition to market relations for Georgia (South Caucasus) is very important to acquire knowledge and experience, the use of which can contribute variety of local enterprises to operate more efficiently.

Despite this some Georgian brands were recognized widely in the past. Among old Georgian marks a mineral water of volcanic origin "Borjomi" deserves attention. It was very popular in the Russian Empire, and after in the former Soviet Union, as well as abroad. One of the old Georgian brands of spirits is "Sarajishvili", production of which was initiated by the famous Georgian businessman and patron of art Davit Sarajishvili in the 80s of the 19th century. He prepared the spirits according to French technology which was very popular in Georgia, as well as in the Russian Empire. The well-known Georgian marks was nonalcoholic soft drinks "Lagidze Waters". This title comes from its founder Mitrofan Lagidze who started production of soft drinks in the beginning of the 20th century. He used a variety of natural syrups derived from fruits and herbs by creation of unique recipe. Among old Georgian brands a Georgian red semi-sweet wine "Khvanchkara" also worth to be mentioned, which was produced by a Georgian nobleman Kipiani in the 19th century and in the beginning was sold

under the title “Kipiani Wine” at Kutaisi (City in West Georgia) market. But this is not the full list of old Georgian famous trademarks (Ten Oldest Georgian Brands).

Interest in Georgia toward branding has significantly increased in recent years. However, for various reasons, the usage of branding by local companies is accompanied by some drawbacks which hinder their success on the market. Therefore, issues connected with the effective management of branding is actual nowadays. In this work, we have presented the results of the research.

The tasks of this research was: to determine consumer evaluations at Tbilisi (the capital of Georgia) consumers market about Georgian brands; to find out the attitude of consumers to the advantages of Georgian brands. Based on the results of the research to determine weaknesses which prevent Georgian brands from success. The research method was of exploratory and descriptive nature. In the conclusive part of the work are given research results, conclusions and some recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A profitable relationship with consumers is being established by: clarifying their wants, creating the buyer-orientated marketing strategy, creating and starting the marketing programs that are necessary to get the best values. The establishment of relationship with consumers includes the management of this process. Consumer relationship management means the whole process of offering them the best values and achieving their satisfaction. Creating loyal customers is at the heart of every business. “Businesses succeed by getting, keeping, and growing customers. Customers are the only reason you build factories, hire employees, schedule meetings, lay fiber-optic lines, or engage in any business activity” (Kotler & Keller, 2012, p. 124). Branding plays an important role in creating loyal customers. The brand helps consumers to take right decision in the process of choosing products. Brand make consumers believe that they will not make mistake when buying goods, will have one and the same quality.

Satisfaction is a person’s feelings of pleasure or disappointment that result from comparing a product’s perceived performance (or outcome) to expectations. If the performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. If it matches expectations, the customer is satisfied. If it exceeds expectations, the customer is highly satisfied or delighted.

Brands are valuable intangible assets that offer a number of benefits to customers and firms and need to be managed carefully. The key to branding is that consumers perceive differences among brands in a product category. Brand equity should be defined in terms of marketing effects uniquely attributable to a brand. That is, different outcomes result in the marketing of a product or service because of its brand, compared to the results if that same product or service was not identified by that brand.

To be successful the brand should meet functional needs of consumers, as well as to contain additional values for them. Additional values should satisfy certain psychological needs. But the basis for additional values is that the presented brand should be of outstanding quality and better in comparison with other similar products. Marketing communications allow companies to link their brands to other people, places, events, brands, experiences, feelings, and things. They can contribute to brand equity by establishing the brand in memory and creating a brand image as well as drive sales and even affect shareholder value.

Trademark image has great influence on decisions concerning purchase of consumable products. The greater is popularity of brand, the stronger is acceptance of brand by consumers. When consumer is satisfied with consuming and using of concrete brand, little by little she/he becomes a loyal buyer. Brand loyalty provides predictability and security of demand for the firm, and it creates barriers to entry that make it difficult for other firms to enter the market.

Marketing communications are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about the products and brands they sell. In a sense, marketing communications represent the voice of the company and its brands; they are a means by which the firm can establish a dialogue and build relationships with consumers. By strengthening customer loyalty, marketing

communications can contribute to customer equity. Marketing communications also work for consumers when they show how and why a product is used, by whom, where, and when. Consumers can learn who makes the product and what the company and brand stand for, and they can get an incentive for trial or use.

To maintain success of the brand needs constant development. Branding creation and development should be characteristic for its clarity. It should be well adapted to environmental conditions. The company itself shall have a clear idea of its objectives and tasks in the field of branding, of what is important for the company, of measure it should take. But the companies make mistakes in branding. One of the most common mistakes is that the companies consider the brand as their "property. The brand is not always what the company wants to see in it". Brand success (or failure) is determined by the buyer choice, notions and perceptions.

Brand strength depends on what customers think about it (brand). The brand equity is the accumulation of values associated with product (service) by consumers. These associations can further increase brand value, than it was in the past. They can be found with the help of Keller CBBE (Customer-Based Brand Equity model).

Transition from the lower level to a higher one indicates greater recognition and success of the brand. In this process following steps are allocated:

- Brand visibility (to make your brand noticeable),
- Brand effectiveness and Brand image,
- Brand judgment and Customers' emotions,
- Brand resonance (the highest level).

Brand should be visible for customers, which is related to its awareness. According to the opinion of the scientist K. Keller: "At the given moment the awareness of the brand appears when it becomes recognizable for customer. This is related to the buyer's ability to recall previous relationship with the brand" (Kotler & Pfoertch, 2007, p.222).

We should consider successful brand with certain components: high quality goods, differential characteristic and additional values (Doyle & Stern, 2007, pp. 216-223). Successful brand cannot exist if its product is of low quality. Companies also should create preconditions to make products distinguished and different from analogues. Company will not be able to do it without getting differential characteristics of brand across consumers. Brand should satisfy specific needs as they present products with unique combination of properties. As to additional values, it can be evaluated according to perception by consumer of concrete brand and its advantages. Although competitors may duplicate manufacturing processes and product designs, they cannot easily match lasting impressions left in the minds of individuals and organizations by years of product experience and marketing activity.

METHODOLOGY

In our study we used marketing research methods. In the work there are used the concepts of marketing theories, data analysis statistical methods, results of the carried out research, information existing on web-pages of certain Georgian organizations, etc.

It is well known, that in the research process researcher can gather secondary data, primary data, or both. Secondary data are data that were collected for another purpose and already exist somewhere. Primary data are data freshly gathered for a specific purpose or for a specific research project. Researchers usually start their investigation by examining some of the rich variety of low-cost and readily available secondary data, to see whether they can partly or wholly solve the problem without collecting costly primary data. When the needed data don't exist or are dated, inaccurate, incomplete, or unreliable, the researcher will need to collect primary data.

Our research was carried out in several stages. First of all we became acquainted with different theories recognized in branding from the literary sources. Then based on the secondary data (information) internet sources, statistical data, information existed on Georgian companies web sites we studied the current situation in Georgia, which was followed by the customer marketing research.

As an object of the research was selected consumer market of Tbilisi, the attitude of consumers to Georgian brands and marketing aspects related thereto. In February – March 2016 we carried out the research using quantitative method of the marketing research, questionnaire survey.

Marketing researchers have a choice of research instruments in collecting primary data: questionnaires, qualitative measures, and technological devices. A questionnaire consists of a set of questions presented to respondents. Because of its flexibility, it is by far the most common instrument used to collect primary data. Researchers need to carefully develop, test, and debug questionnaires before administering them on a large scale. The form, wording, and sequence of the questions can all influence the responses. Closed-end questions specify all the possible answers and provide answers that are easier to interpret and tabulate. Open-end questions allow respondents to answer in their own words and often reveal more about how people think. They are especially useful in exploratory research, where the researcher is looking for insight into how people think rather than measuring how many people think a certain way (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015, pp.251-252).

In marketing research we had a choice of research instruments in collecting primary data: questionnaires, qualitative measures, and technological devices. Our questionnaire consisted of a set of questions (the questionnaire consisted of 20 questions). We used for collect primary data as closed-end questions and also open-end questions. We surveyed representative of different age, sex, nationality, religion, education, profession, having different income.

The format of the questionnaire was anonymous. Our goal was to adopt sincere and truthful answers from the respondents. We wanted to find out exactly what their thoughts and attitudes. Therefore we added some questions of qualitative method for get and find out what consumers think or feel about brands.

In our research we also used word associations, ask to the respondents, what words come to mind when they hear the brand's name. The primary purpose of free-association tasks was to identify the range of possible brand associations in consumers' minds. We decided to contact the subjects in person and to use questionnaire. It helped us explained to them (respondents) these questions, that they could not understand. After the survey the results were summed up and some conclusions made as a result of this work are given in the article.

FINDINGS

According to our research, the highest brand awareness is characterized by Georgian brand "Barambo". Although "Barambo" is no brand with long time history, it was able to gain high brand recognition (awareness) on Georgian market rather quickly.

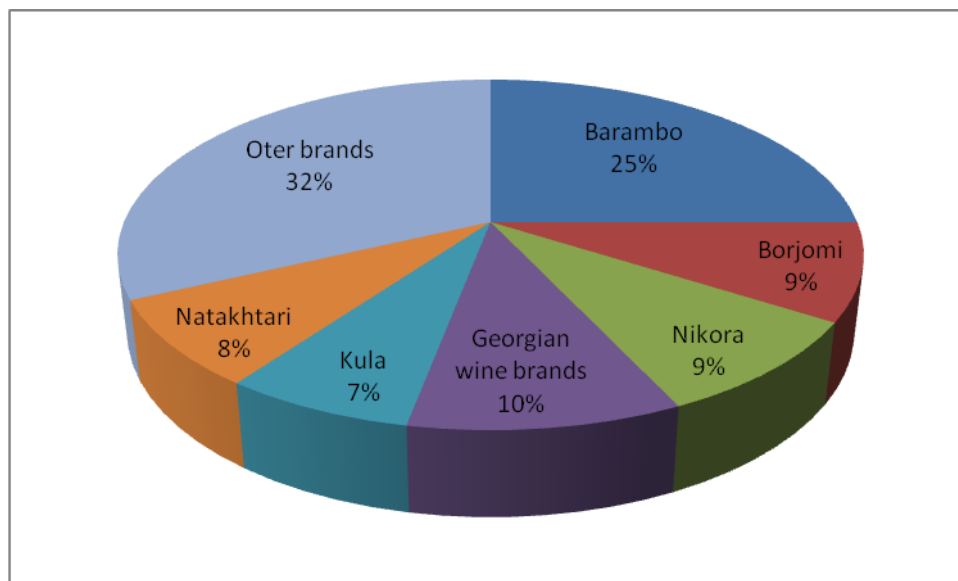


Fig. 1. Consumers' awareness for Georgian Brands (source: author)

Georgian sweets factory "Barambo" opened in 2009. It was the first time after the 15 years pause (during 15 years none of the company in Georgia have produced chocolate and caramel sweets) on the market appeared chocolate and caramel of local production. (The newspaper "Kviris Palitra", 2010).

The company brings raw materials from Belgium. "Barambo" manufacturers buy "Barry Callebaut" raw materials in Belgium, which is one of the famous chocolate company among the producers of chocolate raw materials. "Barambo" Company is distinguished by its diverse assortment: chocolate bar, chocolate stick, chocolate sweets, assorted sweets, caramel sweets, ice-cream, wafers and wafer tarts. Nowadays it exists in Azerbaijan market and its different products are taken abroad from Georgia. Also in the future is planned its export in the whole Caucasus. (Official web page of company "Barambo").

As our study (research) showed, one of the high-profile Georgian brand is Borjomi (mineral water). Unlike Barambo, Borjomi has a long history. It was very popular in the past and now it is known in Georgia as well as abroad, especially in the post-Soviet countries.

Georgian brand Nikora is characterized by high awareness (9% of respondents). The production and sale of meat products in Georgia is associated with this brand. His popularity is also contributed by the supermarket chain under (of) this name. These shops are spread not only in Tbilisi, but in other cities of Georgia as well. The company does not stand out with active advertising, but it is widely known and recognized brand among consumers (as we found out in our research).

10% of respondents named various Georgian wine products, as the most recognizable Georgian brands. We decided to join different types of wine in one group. However, we have done further analysis within the group, in order results to be more specific. It should be noted that Georgia is considered as one of the oldest wine-producing country (The National Wine Agency, 2014). It can be said that wine production is part of our history and culture. Georgia has an 8,000 year history of continuous wine making tradition, which is evidenced numerous archaeological discoveries. Georgians have shared the love for the grape the time immemorial and remains loyal to it through to modernity. Numerous displays related to wine making practices dating to millennia have been kept in Georgian museums. (The National Wine Agency, 2014).

According to our research, respondents' recognition towards the concrete Georgian wine brands is shown in the following diagram.

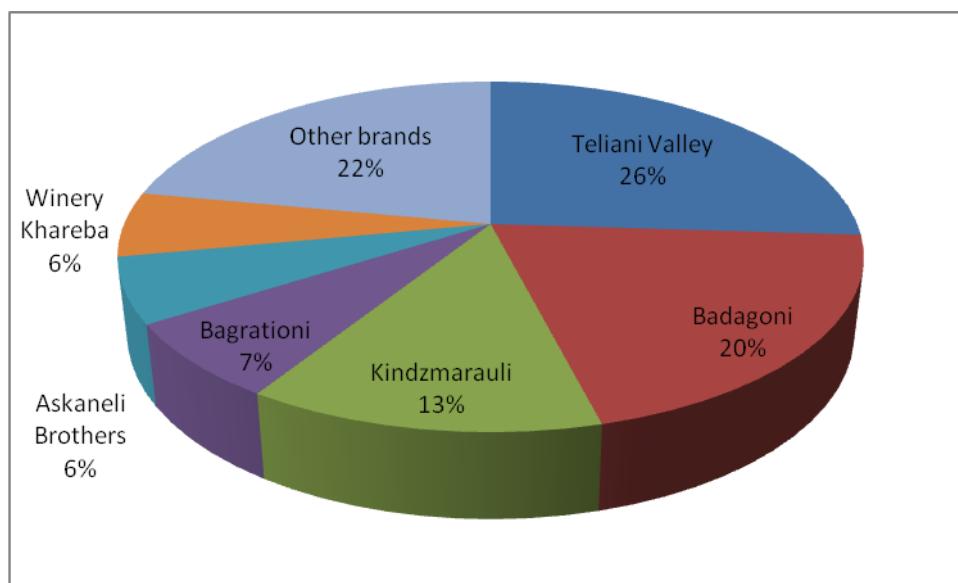


Fig. 2. Consumers' recognition towards the concrete Georgian wine brands (source: author)

The most well-known Georgian wine brands are: Teliani Valley and Badagoni. JSC Teliani Valley was founded in 1997 on the basis of "Teliani Winery of Vintage Wines", which was built in 19th century in Tsinandali (village in region of Georgia – Kakheti), in the neighborhood of Teliani's vineyards. Tsinandali, due to peculiarities of its soil and microclimate, has always been the center of Georgian viticulture. (Official web page of company Teliani Valley).

Thus, the above-discussed famous Georgian brands are noticeable and well-known for consumers. Customers freely recall the names and their previous relationships to these marks.

The Brand's awareness is stimulated by the correct and effective selection of the brands elements (the color, the symbol and etc.). So, for example, 77% of Barambo's consumers remembered the brand-related colors correctly, while they were asked to remember the colors related to the "Georgian Brand". 23% Barambo's consumers remembered the well-known individual – the popular Georgian actor G. Kipshidze (who acted in the Barambo's Commercial).

Barambo quickly established itself on Georgian market place. That was contributed with its commercials, which are often performed in the musical style, and aims to create cheerful and funny mood. Its advertising slogan is: "We love Barambo" (Seturi M. (2016b). p.132).

Teliani Valley and Badagoni (as well as other Georgian wine producers) use advertisements and other events to support brand. Among them should be noted wine tours. Teliani Valley offers its customers wine tours throughout the year. As the factory of Teliani Valley is in Telavi, wine tour goes through Kakheti region. Different tours are organized in different seasons:

- Teliani Valley factory can be visited any time of the year;
- In spring, summer and autumn Teliani Valley organize tours in whole Kakheti region;
- In autumn guests have an opportunity to participate in vintage. (Official web page of company Teliani Valley).

The effectiveness of the brand depends on functional needs of the buyer. These aspects are very important in the process of creating a brand. Should be defined its distinctive features, which must have a product.

Consumers believe that Georgian products with high recognition (Barambo, Borjomi, Nikora and etc...) is of good quality, buyers like species and range of products. According to customers, all these products are produced in a proper hygienic and sanitary norms, therefore they are safe for health. In

most cases, respondents like packaging of the product. Thus, as the above mentioned brands satisfy the functional requirements, so they can be considered as effective brands (considered).

The image of the brand emerges by the psychological satisfaction of the buyer. The brand image is created by the marketing program that connects a nice, strong and unique associations to the brand. In consumer's awareness these associations is controlled on the basis of personal experience, according to information received on the brand, the brand identification to the specific company, people, events, country. Therefore, in this case effectively prepared advertisements and PR events can perform the great role. The brand image has two aspects in accordance with the following two questions:

- How do you want people to perceive and get your brand?
- What is the customer's perception of your brand currently?

This depends not only on what people see, but also what they think and feel. The eyes and the mind create a lot of impressions, including past and present, real and imaginary, rational and emotional. The brand image is what is physically presents in front of the buyer and how it is perceived by sensory organs, what is happening in the mind after receiving this information.

As a result of the research it was found out that the majority of respondents, who had named some concrete brands as the most recognizable for them, buy these brands in most cases and are their consumers (Seturi M. (2016a), p.216).

Brand emotions are forming by the influence of consumers' emotional reactions. To find out this aspect we paid attention to the results of our research. In terms of brand emotions, one of the best brands is Borjomi and Georgian wine brands.

So, for example, according to the research revealed that buyers of "Borjomi" mineral water give high points to this drink because of the number of reasons:

- They believe that the "Borjomi" is rich with minerals;
- Borjomi is natural product;
- Borjomi is of volcanic origin;
- Has a high degree of manufacturing;
- This product is represented in many countries;
- The mineral water has a long history, and has been on the market for a long time;
- Borjomi a reliable product.

As Uniqueness and exclusiveness of the brand, users are given the highest assessments of Georgian wine brands: Teliani Valley and Badagoni. Respondents believe that these Georgian wine brands have not only different, but also unique features as well. The respondents named the following:

- Useful for the human health;
- Absolutely natural;
- Has good ingredients (composition);
- Has the healing properties;
- Is pleasant to drink;
- Has unique quality;
- Is made of the best technology.

After the respondents survey has revealed what kind of association individual Georgian wine brands cause in customers. In particular:

- Buyers of "Teliani Valley" connect this brand to Georgia and one of its region Kakheti which ranks first in the production of grapes;
- Brand "Teliani Valley" causes the association of health in consumers;
- This brand confers (gives) the buyer a sense of prestige.

Brand resonance is based on the customer's relations to the brand. Trust, mutual respect, consistency, the company's commitment to the principles, fulfillment of its promises is in the base of these relationships. For this we have analyzed the responses in the social network about some of Georgian Brands. We've paid attention as to the positive feedback, so the remarks and negative statements, which were spoken in the social network by people.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the marketing approaches of considered Georgian brands are characterized by a number of shortcomings. To overcome them we have following recommendations:

- It positively affects on consumers and their right choice is reinforced by the fact that the Georgian brands are sold not only inside the country but also goes abroad for export. Therefore, companies should focus on these aspects, as on the sales so information distribution.
- The research revealed that it is not enough only to reach a high level of awareness for brand success. The brand is much more than the product features and specifications. But brand is also what kind of emotions and associations have customers towards it. In addition, branding success depends on the buyer's relations with the brand. Base of these relations must be full implementation of brand promises.
- From our point of view, the systematical methods of approach and the complex use of recognized principles deserve a very high attention in branding, and all of it has to foresee and be in accordance with the changes that take place in the constantly mobile market environment.

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