The Makeup of Momentous Brands

Background

2020 was a remarkable year in so many ways. The U.S. financial markets included. From the meteoric rise of companies like Tesla, cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and record declines in commodities like gold, what made this year so unique?

As a brand consultant, one hypothesis is that consumer/public brand perception plays a major role in company performance and their future influence in culture. Not just in 2020, but in prior years as well. The key question is what brand traits or attributes contribute most to their strength in culture?

My client and employer, Landor & Fitch, is the world's largest branding consultancy. As a child company of WPP Group, Landor & Fitch has proprietary access to consumer brand perception survey data—data that tracks the shifting perception of brands in the minds of consumers every year since 1993. This data is known in the industry as the Brand Asset Valuator (BAV). BAV plays an important role in the marketing work WPP companies conduct for current and prospective clients. Important enough to have garnered over $160 Million investment dollars from the company since its inception. However, even with all of that investment, the reporting of the data is complex to interpret, explain and understand. And when you're in the business of communication, the understandability of your recommendations is everything.

The Data

BAV is viewed as a veritable goldmine of consumer data—tracking the perception of 57,000 brands across 50 global markets for almost 30 years—and is in fact the largest quantitative consumer study of brands in the world.

The data are collected via online or pen-and-paper surveys with 1.9 million consumers. The philosophy behind the study is that consumer relationships with brands are defined similarly to those with people. Grounded in psychology, the study tracks consumer sentiment on brands, usage and advocacy through their rank among 48 unique personality attributes: things like kindness, uniqueness, authenticity and trendiness. This framework allows for a category agnostic view of brands, meaning an attribute like 'kindness' can be compared apples-to-apples for a shoe retailer, a hotel, phone network and bank, for example. Each of these attributes are reported in the dataset as both raw and scaled (percentile) values.

Project Scope

This project will leverage the last 2-3 years of BAV data in conjunction with publicly available data (stock market records) for analysis. The data will be limited to the United States brand study only consisting of about 5,000 brands. The ultimate intent is to arrive at a new or deeper understanding of how consumer brand perception impacts their role in culture and the financial

markets. Armed with this understanding, Landor & Fitch will be better poised to both sell its services and communicate its value to major brands in the years to come. A more interpretable BAV will lead to stronger and more actionable brand recommendations. Impacting how clients direct their brand strategies over the next few years and the roles they chose to play in culture.

The resulting deliverables will include:
- An initial model
- Code, in the form of Jupyter Notebooks
- A written, technical report of the findings, methodology, and model performance
- A slide deck of the findings designed for stakeholders of Landor & Fitch:
    - Insights & Analytics, Executive Director
    - Brand Strategy, Executive Director
    - Managing Director, Landor & Fitch Chicago
    - New Business Director, Landor & Fitch Chicago