

Literature Review:

Brainbuild: Brand Awareness

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Introduction

Brainbuild is a mobile application that improves users' health by automatically syncing with users' personal schedule to optimize the timing of their meals, snacks, hydration, and sleep each day. Its mission is to help humanity thrive by enabling people to make better health decisions at the best times each day.

The primary need of Brainbuild is to find the users who will receive the greatest amount of value from it. In uncovering the demographics (gender, age, income range, occupation, geographic location, other proxy products they may have, etc.) of potential customers, our team's approach is from an advertising with a public relations branding perspective. We would like to develop 2-4 profiles of the best target audiences and determine how to connect with those customers and achieve fastest adoption in the consumer market within that vertical.

The primary target public we have identified are females aged 25-34 that are employed full-time, most likely from the West, with an average income level of \$25,000 to \$49,999. Among the primary target public, most have graduated college and are currently not married. Many of them center around healthy eating, as they try to eat healthier foods, often snack between meals and work at a well-balanced diet. We found that this target public is likely to say that because of their busy lifestyle, they struggle with taking care of themselves as well as they should. The public is also likely to both follow their favorite brands and companies on social media and talk about the things they see on social media websites in face-to-face conversation. Their most visited websites in the last seven days are Facebook, Google, YouTube, Amazon and Pinterest.

The secondary publics we have identified are full-time female college students and female student athletes aged 18 to 22, most likely from the South, with an average income level of \$5,000-\$9,999. They often do not have the time to prepare and eat actual healthy meals and tend to eat snack between meals. Though having busy schedules, the target publics express strong desires to improve their health and fitness. They often use mobile apps or websites to track their calories and exercise routines. They are willing to numerous social media and networking platforms to advocate for products and companies they like. Their most visited websites in the last seven days are Facebook, Google, Pinterest and Netflix respectively.

Low brand awareness is one challenge that Brainbuild is facing right now. As a startup company, Brainbuild has a small number of active users and low media presence, which lead to challenges in promoting brand, connecting with the public and driving user engagement. The following literature review will focus on the definition and importance of brand awareness, as well as approaches to raise brand awareness.

Literature Review

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is defined as the capacity of decision-makers to distinguish or recall a brand (Homburg, Klarmann, & Jens Schmitt, 2010). It includes two parts: brand recognition and brand recall (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). Brand recognition refers to whether consumers are able to recognize the brand (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). It requires consumers know the brand prior to their purchase (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). Brand recall means consumer can recall certain brand during their decision-making process without priming, which assumes that consumers go through decision making process prior to the purchase (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). As for Brainbuild, both brand recognition and brand recall need to be improved because they are vitally important to customer decision making.

Brand awareness is a necessary precursor to brand attitude (Rossiter, 2014). A recent research demonstrates a positive association between brand awareness and consumer preference for the brand, as well as brand market outcomes (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). While there is marketing theory that proposes high brand awareness can be valuable asset to a firm, Macdonald and Sharp (2003) found that the concept of brand awareness is frequently dismissed by managers as unimportant and not worth monitoring. In order to raise Brainbuild's brand awareness, there are several approaches mentioned in recent studies.

Social Media and Brand Awareness

Social media tools can be very powerful in raising brand awareness in the online environment and not only (Bîja & Balaş, 2014). The beauty of social media is that it is real-time and offers the opportunity to share information instantly and stay connected with customer (Mesenbrink, 2016).

Online Social Networks (OSN) profiles are the natural extension of brands' websites (Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair & Okumus, 2015). OSN refers to a variety of sources of online information, including common sites such as Facebook, Instagram, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn and Bebo and also encompasses wikis, blogs, message boards, podcast, and vlogs (Barreda et al., 2015). All of those are powerful and effective tools for boosting brand awareness, driving target traffic, customer engagement, conversions and even sales (Barreda et al., 2015). However, in order to increase brand awareness by means of social media, it is very important for Brainbuild to set clear goals which are easy to control and choose the right social media platforms (Bîja & Balaş, 2014).

For example, blog advertising effectiveness varies with different combination of products and blog types (Ho, Chiu, Chen & Papazafeiropoulou, 2015). For low brand awareness products like Brainbuild, typical consumer blogs can form a better brand attitude than celebrity blogs can (Ho et al., 2015). When consumers are unable to determine the quality of a product by its brand and need to make judgement by extrinsic cues, they pay attention to characteristics of typical consumer blogs that share extrinsic cues, such as user experience, feedback or reliability of product (Ho et al., 2015).

Social video can also boost company's brand awareness and its sales (Lehoczky, 2017). Facebook generates an average of eight billion video views per day and YouTube reaches more 18-to-49-year-olds than any cable network in the U.S (Lehoczky, 2017). Yet only around half of small-business owners have made a video, social or otherwise in 2016 (Lehoczky, 2017).

Instagram could be an ideal platform for Brainbuild to post social videos because it is best for any industry that trends young (Lehoczky, 2017).

Brainbuild should consider about its brand personality in using social media. Study shows that being an active brand leads to higher brand awareness (Molinillo, Japutra, Nguyen & Chen, 2017). However, in order to build brand trust and brand loyalty, responsible brands are more preferred compared to active brands (Molinillo et al., 2017). Overly active could negatively affects brand trust and brand loyalty (Molinillo et al., 2017). Clearly defining Brainbuild's culture and be consistent with the messages would be important because social-media brand is Brainbuild's online persona and face (Laube, 2017).

While the effectiveness of social media in raising brand awareness is corroborated by multiple studies, social media does have negative aspects associated with it. One aspect is the negative user interaction (Mesenbrink, 2016). Being on social media means putting the brand under the social microscope and once it's out there, it's out there (Mesenbrink, 2016). The information Brainbuild shares on social media is instantaneously accessible, and if a follower is in a foul mood, for example, brand bashing could be an end result (Mesenbrink, 2016). Therefore, Brainbuild should prepare for the level of time and resources commitment to support social media (Mesenbrink, 2016).

Public Relations and Brand Awareness

Public relations is another tool Brainbuild can use in raising brand awareness. Good brand awareness means that the brand, are constantly in the public eye in a positive manner (Versi, 2017). The greater the media presence, the easier it is for Brainbuild to lift itself above the mass of its competitors and attract attention to the products and special qualities (Versi, 2017). This creates credibility and trust among the public and positive emotions (Versi, 2017).

Distribution and Brand Awareness

Brainbuild can also utilize distribution element to its full potential in order to improve brand awareness and brand market performance (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). It is proposed that product usage experiences enhance brand awareness (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). In other words, the more people buy a product, the higher their brand awareness for the product. Their study's regression results corroborate the significance of distribution by cross-prediction analysis, where distribution turns out to be the most important element establishing brand awareness (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). Both price and non-price promotions can help generate brand sales which induce brand usage experience and hence increasing brand awareness (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012).

Advertising and Brand Awareness

Advertising expenditures could have a significant positive effect on Brainbuild brand's stock of awareness, based on an empirical investigation using panel data (Clark, Doraszelski & Draganska, 2009). However, Brainbuild should consider the quality of the advertising content. Huang and Sarigöllü's (2012) finding shows that advertising does not predict brand awareness. Increasing advertising likely has little effect on increasing brand awareness, unless the advertising provides some unique or new information about products (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). The reach and visibility of online advertising are also major issues. (Singh, 2017). According to marketing and advertising blog Invesp, the average person is served more than 1,700 banner ads per month, but only half of them are ever viewed (Singh, 2017).

Games Sponsorship and Brand Awareness

As a health and fitness app, Brainbuild may consider games sponsorship to build brand awareness. However, we cannot reliably assume that simply having brand exposed during the game board cast will increase levels of brand awareness (Jensen, Walsh, Cobbs, & Turner, 2015). In addition to engaging consumers via their second screen, efforts need to be made to move beyond simple exposure metrics to measure the efficacy of brand integration approaches (Jensen et al., 2015). Investment must be made in consumer activation of sponsorship via sponsorship-linked marketing approaches if Brainbuild hope to achieve objectives beyond brand awareness by sponsorship (Jensen et al., 2015).

Brand awareness is an important factor that influence customer decision-making. Though there are many approaches mentioned in recent studies that can raise brand awareness, social media is the one that receive the greatest attention. In the further research, I would like to explore on how Brainbuild can use social media to raise brand awareness, connect and engage the group of users that need Brainbuild the most.

Research Questions

RQ1: What social media should Brainbuild focus on in order to raise brand awareness in target customer group?

With the rise of different social media platforms, it's common for a person to use multiple social media tools nowadays. However, it does not mean that Brainbuild should devote time and effort to every single social media platform that the targeted publics are using to raise brand awareness. In order to achieve the fastest connection with a specific vertical, Brainbuild should choose the right social media channels that can relate the brand to the publics the most. Different social media tools have their own customer group and user habits. Understanding target public's social media preference is vitally important because it can help Brainbuild to determine whether the content they generate fit into the platform as well as resonate with the target publics. Future research can be done in determining target public's social media usage, content preference and user engagement. All of those elements would help determine which social media platforms would be the best for Brainbuild to use to generate brand awareness in key publics.

RQ2: What brand personality can Brainbuild display on social media to relate to the target publics?

After determining social media channels, Brainbuild should also consider its brand personality on social media. Social media tools provide the brands an opportunity to shout out their identities easily. Brand personality determines target customers' perception of a brand, which is also transferable to its product. It should align with how Brainbuild want the target customers think about their product. With an appropriate brand personality, the publics are more likely to remember the brand and hence raise brand awareness. By building up social-media personality, Brainbuild can then generate consistent social media messaging to connect and engage the target publics. Future research can be done in finding out target publics' communication styles, perception on health and fitness app and preferred social media messaging types.

Social media channels and brand personality are two areas I would like to focus on in further research. Determining the best social media channels to connect with the target publics and establishing consistent brand personality to engage the audiences can both help Brainbuild to raise brand awareness. More research can be done in exploring the target publics' infographics, such as social media usage, content preference and communication styles.

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