Nostalgia Marketing – A Potent Tool for the Promotion of Products

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Abstract

Nostalgia can be described as the desire or longing for the past or the liking for the tangible or intangible possessions, actions that are linked with past memories of an individual. According to the research studies done in Psychology, many people experience ‘Nostalgia’ at least once, twice or thrice in a week which in turn makes them feel better. In one such studies it is found that, playing old songs with meaningful lyrics and soothing music makes people feel good and happy. Through this paper it will be examined how the nostalgic feeling is aligned with the promotion of the products. This paper is an attempt to study the concept of Nostalgia Marketing in respect of the contemporary market and the trend of using nostalgia in the promotion of products by studying the case of Paper Boat drinks, India.

Keywords: Nostalgia, Nostalgic, Promotion, Nostalgic Products

1. Introduction

Nostalgia is a term that is derived from two Greek words namely, ‘nostos’ meaning return home or to one’s native place and ‘algos’ meaning pain, suffering or grief. Johannes Hofer used this term for the first time in his theses. He described ‘nostalgia as a medical condition stating a painful yearning for returning the home or homesickness. Later on, the concept of nostalgia was defined as the desire or longing for the past or the liking for the tangible or intangible possessions which are linked with past memories of an individual.

Nostalgia can be described as the sentimental or bittersweet desire for an experience from the past of an individual. The same is associated with sadness as well as happiness.

e.g. when a person recalls the memory of the first Independence Day, the person is getting feeling of happiness. At the same time, when he remembers the freedom struggle, the bitter partition incident, he gets the feeling of sadness.

The experience or the memories that brings pleasant memories or emotions are described as ‘Nostalgic’. Considering the influx of brands available in the market, the marketers try to
evoke this positive feeling that stems from nostalgia for developing a strong brand association.

In the developed markets, the recent trends in nostalgia marketing have tried to exploit the current social, economic, political conditions and the consumers’ perception about the past memories as happier and less complexities in life. Given to understand to the pervasiveness of nostalgia, in the marketplace various research studies were undertaken. Based on the outcomes of these studies it can be inferred nostalgia effects can be evoked through certain consumer goods in general. In addition to this, the research studies have demonstrated that, the brands which are positioned by using nostalgia enjoy higher brand equity, more favorable product decisions (Gineikiene and Diamantopoulou 2017) and heightened purchase intentions and the positive word of mouth. (Ford et al. 2018).

In the contemporary market, the retro brands are able to invite the attention of the target market, which in turn has resulted in the arousal of interest and the subsequent action. It has also influenced the consumers’ attitudes and their buying behaviour in retail sector. (Katija 2017).

2. Overview of Nostalgic Marketing

Consumer Nostalgia is associated with Nostalgic Marketing. According to Holbrook, consumer nostalgia is passion for people, places and things from the past which are popular among the young people. The consumer nostalgia consists of the following categories:

   a) Personal nostalgia- It is related to an individual’s personal experience and anecdotes stored in his or her memory.

   b) Inter-personal nostalgia- It pertains to an individual’s indirect experiences, memories etc. which may come from parents, common experiences and memories.

   c) Cultural nostalgia- It is described as memories of a group.

   d) Virtual nostalgia- It is related to books, videos and indirect experiences of a group and memories.

Nostalgic Marketing is an innovative marketing strategy wherein the sponsor i.e. a company provides a particular nostalgic element through marketing activities aimed at stimulating and activating consumers’ nostalgia. This in turn, results in recalling old memories of targeted customers and eliciting favorable consumer behaviour towards the products or services.
3. Elements of Nostalgic Marketing Strategy

Nostalgic Marketing aims at stimulating consumers’ nostalgia by meticulously interweaving it with the given product or service. To do it effectively, it is imperative on the part of the company to use the right set of stimuli or strategy to induce the feelings of nostalgia. The elements of Nostalgic Marketing consist of

- **Character nostalgia**- Parents, family friends, friends can evoke the warmth of good old memories. These characters are major stimulus to a consumer’s behaviour which are best utilized by commercial organizations in developing new products.

  *e.g.* a restaurant that has come up with unique dishes having the taste similar to that of a dish prepared by a mother can use it to stimulate consumers’ nostalgia.

- **Event nostalgia**- Every individual has some memorable anecdotes or good old memories of special day or time. It includes school days, festivals, engagements, weddings, birth day celebrations etc. These events act as a source of energy, positive vibes and feelings. The same are recalled by the people at large when their chips are down, they are exhausted, tired etc. In such situation, the companies use these events in determining the marketing mix.

  *e.g.* Moti Soap, in the advertisement the sponsor has used the nostalgia of the protagonist in promoting the brand at the time of Diwali.

- **Collective nostalgia**- It refers to a group that has same memories shared by all the members of the group.

  *e.g.* Sholay, an iconic movie in the Indian Cinema has a distinct place in the minds of Indian viewers as it is a part their collective memory. The same has been used by Google India in one of their advertisements ‘The Hero – A Bollywood Story’.

4. Review of Literature

Katherine A. Russell(2013) has described Nostalgia Marketing as an important tool for a marketer to achieve certain goals and objectives. Considering the increasing popularity of the retro styles and products, it has become all the more important for the commercial organizations to understand this trend and adapt itself to the market conditions.
Cui, R.B. (2015) in the review of Nostalgia Marketing has described nostalgia as one of the ways to communicate with the targeted customers. The said paper has also thrown light on the target markets of Nostalgia Marketing, the mechanism of nostalgia marketing, approaches to Nostalgia Marketing etc.

Ervina Nathasia and Reza Ashari Nasution (2016) have tried to understand the effect of Nostalgia Marketing towards Advertising Engagements by taking the case of Acqua – the world’s largest bottled water brand.

Ford J.B., Merchant A, Bartier A.L. & Friedman M (2017) in their paper have shed light on Nostalgia as a marketing tool preferred by number of companies for carrying out their branding activities in the contemporary market. According to them the purpose of using nostalgia is to make the people at large to delve into their past and thereby enable them to connect with their brands.

Shin H. and Parker J. (2017) in their research paper shed light on consumer nostalgia in a retail sector and the environment therein. In addition to this, they have also discussed three different types of nostalgic memories in respect of retailers.

According to Hartmann B. J. and K. H. Brunk (2019), the marketing and branding efforts of the companies are essentially related to enchantment. The purpose of the same is to convert the ordinary into something special. To facilitate the same the companies are increasingly using retro themes for promoting their products or service brands. In this paper, they have talked about three different ways for creating enchantment and the same is grounded in the following nostalgia approaches:

- **a)** re-instantiation (symbolic retrojection into a past)
- **b)** reenactment (reflexively informing the present with retro themed brands and practices) and
- **c)** re-appropriation (lucid interpretations of the past).

These options have implications for marketers in terms of marketing strategies, targeting and positioning and the integrated marketing communications.
Wen T., Qin T. & Liu R. (2019) through their research paper have talked on the nostalgic emotions and its positive impact on brand trust and attachment in respect of China. The Nostalgic Emotions have four dimensions namely atmospheric nostalgia, interpersonal nostalgia, family nostalgia and personal nostalgia. This paper is helpful in developing a good nostalgic experience for the patrons of a restaurant and enhancing their trust in restaurant brands. This in turn, provides a reference point for a service firm like restaurant to rejuvenate their brand.

5. Objectives of the study
   i. To understand the concept of Nostalgia Marketing
   ii. To study ‘Nostalgia Marketing’ strategies in the context of product promotion.

6. Research Methodology

The present study is based on the case study method. The case of Paper Boat Drinks is considered for this study.


Paper Boat is a popular brand of Indian juices and drink, which is owned by Hector Beverages. It was started by four friends namely, Neeraj Kakkar, Suhas Misra, Neeraj Bivani and James Nuttalin the year 2011 at Gurgoan. With a view to achieve an emotional connect with customers, Paper Boat played its cards prudently so as to increase brand awareness and emotionally connect with the target market. To do it in an effective manner, the Paper Boat has designed a marketing strategy that revolves around nostalgia and the simplicity in storytelling campaign. The target audience for this campaign was the people from urban area who are in 20 to 40 years age group.

The marketing mix of Paper Boat has constructively contributed to the growth of Hector Beverages. The details of its marketing mix is as following:

   a) **Product:** The products of Paper Boat comes under the category of beverages. Considering the huge potential for the traditional and indigenous drinks, The Hector Beverages introduced these drinks in the Indian Market. The coconut water, apple juice, kala khatta juice, guava, mixed fruit etc. comes under traditional Indian drink category and aampanha, sarbat-e-khaas, jaljeera juice, aam-ras etc. comes under the indigenous drinks category. These products are aimed at quenching the thirst of the
consumers and also act as a health drink. The company on its part, strives to educate the consumers about the ingredients used and their utility in enhancing their immunity levels and the other nutrients required for the human beings. In order to reach a wider base of customers the company has made changes in the packaging, quantity offered etc.

b) **Price:** The prices of the Paper Boat Drinks are reasonable for the customers and competitive in nature. The company has successfully used a psychological pricing strategy which is well received by the market. *e.g.* Rs. 05, Rs. 10, Rs. 15, Rs. 25 etc.

c) **Place:** The Paper Boat products are available in retail outlets, retail stores, school and college canteens, on platforms like e-retailers etc. The company has a strong distribution network that consists of agents, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, e-retailers etc. in it. The Paper Boat has immensely benefitted from the tie up with Amazon India for making their products available at the customers’ doorstep. In order to keep its retailers happy, the Paper Boat has offered attractive margins to them. With a view to make its products available swiftly and on time across the length and breadth of our country, the company has tied up with Indigo Airlines.

d) **Promotion:** The promotion of Paper Boat has turned out to be a game changer in the beverage industry. The details of the same are as following:

- Paper Boat has done its advertising in both the print and digital media, which includes newspapers, social media platforms and the positive word of mouth.

- The Paper Boat resorted to a story telling approach for promoting its drinks on social media. In this particular initiative it invited people to share their childhood memories or stories on social media. This facilitated the brand building exercise.

- Used multimedia campaign that aired a three and half minute-long video leading to pure nostalgia. To do it effectively, the Paper Boat collected heart touching and thoughtful childhood memories and interwoven it subtly with some other stuff from these memories. *e.g.* an advertisement that moves around a popular serial ‘Malgudi Days’.
- Conceived and executed the ‘Float Boat Campaign’ wherein, people were invited to take part in this campaign. The only thing which was expected from the participants was that, they should make a paper boat and upload the picture of the same on the Paper Boat website, or its social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with a #FloatABoat.

8. Findings of the study

1. Nostalgia Marketing evokes a feeling of happy and pleasant memories in the minds of the customers.
2. Consumers are motivated to continue their patronage to a product or service in the future as well.
3. The older the brand, higher is the chance of having an emotional appeal. ‘Classic’ never goes out of fashion.

9. Conclusion:

In the contemporary scenario where the life is full of tensions, targets to be achieved, stress etc. In such a situation Nostalgia has the power as well as ability to make the people feel relaxed, happy. The same thing is used by the marketers to further the interests of the company. It is imperative for the marketers to define the target market precisely, use of suitable ad appeal in the promotional efforts through ‘Nostalgia Marketing’.

Managerial Implications:

In an increasingly digital and impersonal world, marketing managers across the world are facing a challenge in creating an emotional connect with the consumers (Friedman 2016) especially in the current pandemic situationin the world. In such situation where people are confined to their household, nostalgia marketing strategies related to the promotion are of great help to marketers.

Nostalgia Marketing strategies facilitate the much required emotional connect with the target market, which in turn elicit positive response on the part of the buyers.

Future Research Directions:

The present study was done in respect of consumer products and marketing mix decisions. In future, the research can be done with regards to furniture, jewelry etc.
References:

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