

Study on the Adaptability of Brand Temperament and Spokesperson Image

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Abstract: In today's market environment, choosing a spokesperson is a strategy many brands implement to improve profitability. The importance and influence of spokespersons on brands have been widely studied and recognized. However, there is still a gap in research on the compatibility between brands and spokespersons. Therefore, through case studies and literature analysis, this study explores the reasons for the brand selection of spokespersons, their focus, and strategies for enhancing the adaptability of brand temperament and spokesperson image. Research has found that endorsement relationships have a high degree of fit and complement each other, positively impacting brand marketing. Based on the research results, this study believes that the compatibility between brand temperament and spokesperson image is one of the crucial factors for the success of brand marketing. A brand should accurately grasp its disposition and choose a spokesperson image that matches it to enhance its recognition and market competitiveness. In addition, this study provides corresponding strategies for improving the fit of endorsement relationships and avoiding endorsement risks.

Keywords: celebrity endorsements, brand personality, spokesperson image, brand-endorser congruence, case-study

1. Introduction

Celebrity endorsements have been an essential means of marketing and promotion in various industries for decades. A spokesperson strategy is crucial for brand image construction to gain a competitive advantage in today's market that is approaching saturation and homogenization. Brand promotion and advertising success depend on who the spokesperson is [1]. Excellent celebrity spokespersons have high attractiveness, credibility, acceptance, and integrity [2]. Consumers can thus develop a strong emotional attachment to spokespersons, stimulate purchasing desire, and develop a positive attitude towards products and brands [3]. Driven by the power of spokespersons, the brand's influence, recognition, and recall can be further enhanced, making it stand out in the industry [4]. For the endorsement to be practical, the characteristics of the spokesperson must match the product's attributes [5]. When the spokesperson's temperament can convey a consistent image, values, and personality with the product or brand, the endorsement will have a positive impact. On the contrary, this will significantly weaken the brand's reliability and consumer trust, causing sponsors to suffer losses [6]. Therefore, celebrity endorsements are sometimes risky investments.

Choosing suitable spokespersons and ensuring the brand highly matches the brand image is a

complex problem to solve. However, existing research primarily focuses on the impact of celebrity endorsements on brand development. Few studies focus on the synergistic effect between brands and spokespersons. Analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of a specific endorsement relationship and the points of attention for both parties in cooperation cannot be ignored. These gaps in the literature imply an unexplored research area with potential practical impacts on both brands and celebrities. The exploration and analysis of the above issues are of great significance for brand marketing and celebrity development.

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the importance of the fit between brand temperament and spokesperson personality. Specifically, the study will focus on the reasons and priorities for brands choosing celebrity spokespersons and strategies to improve the compatibility between brands and spokespersons. The research will adopt the methods of case study and literature analysis through a comprehensive review of existing research on celebrity endorsements and an in-depth interpretation of representative and persuasive cases in the history of spokesperson selection. The ultimate goal of this study is to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect celebrity endorsement selection, the rewards and risks associated with celebrity endorsements, and strategies to improve the compatibility between brands and celebrities. These findings also hope to help managers choose suitable spokespersons to enhance the company's value.

2. Case Description

The sports goods industry has gone through many critical periods in history. In the 1980s, with the radiation of trend culture, product technology innovation, and diversification of brand products, the sports goods industry encountered new development nodes. In order to avoid being eliminated by the fiercely competitive market, some brands have chosen the strategy of using spokespersons and achieved significant success. The following is a detailed case study representing how brands can benefit themselves by utilizing suitable spokespersons.

In the early 1980s, Nike was an emerging company with a low market share in the sports brand market. Recognizing the power of celebrity endorsements, Nike signed a young basketball player as its first spokesperson in the mid-1980s to enhance its brand's competitiveness and recognition. The athlete's temperament resonates highly with his brand image emphasizing perseverance, determination, and excellence. The cooperation between the two parties has also become an essential milestone in the history of the Nike brand. In the first year after the spokesperson signed the contract, Nike's annual sales revenue was \$919 million, and its market share increased from 18% in 1984 to 22% [7]. Since then, Nike's financial returns have been improving and breaking through every year. Their collaboration also created a highly profitable and influential "Air Jordan" product line. Ultimately, Nike gained unprecedented popularity and recognition, becoming the world's highest market-value sports goods company.

The partnership between the spokesperson and Nike is long-term, in-depth, and win-win, with revolutionary significance. It provides a feasible reference for the spokesperson cooperation model of the sports industry and even the entire industry. This case reveals the critical role of choosing a spokesperson with a highly matched image and brand personality in helping the brand profit, increasing brand awareness and recognition. The following text will analyze the reasons, priorities, and risks of choosing a spokesperson from industry, brand, and spokesperson. The research will demonstrate the importance of matching brand temperament with spokesperson image.

3. Analysis on the Problems

The theory of social identity states that the social group people belong to shapes their self-concept [8]. Consumers will associate their identity with specific brands or spokespersons. Suppose the

spokesperson matches the brand, and the endorsement aligns with the emotional cognition of the target audience. In that case, consumers will gain a sense of belonging and identification, increasing purchasing intention and trust. The brand's loyalty and recognition will also increase, which can gain an advantage in market competition.

3.1. Reasons for Choosing a Spokesperson

In a fiercely competitive, homogenized, and unpredictable market environment, many industries face survival and development challenges. In order to break through development bottlenecks, brands need to implement innovative strategies to emphasize their individuality and advantages over other brands. Choosing a spokesperson is an effective strategy for the following reasons.

3.1.1. The Influence and Image of the Spokesperson

Celebrities are individuals who are recognized and supported by a large portion of the public among a specific group of people, with high visibility and influence [9]. When endorsing, they can serve as a powerful brand communication tool to increase brand and product exposure [10]. The brand will also directly have a substantial potential consumer group, which is the fan base of the spokesperson.

In addition, excellent spokespersons with high brand compatibility can transfer their image and personality to the brand and products [11]. In this situation, the spokesperson can amplify the brand's values and advantages over its competitors. Thus, consumers can have a positive cognitive and emotional response to the brand and a higher level of loyalty, becoming a more cohesive consumer group.

3.1.2. Transformation of the Entertainment Industry and Fan Economy

The reform of the entertainment industry has brought a new market environment and consumer behavior patterns. The rise of the fan economy has made the celebrity fan group as consumers have huge market potential. Choosing endorsers with a stronger connection with consumers can conform to the trend of the times. The fan group is attached to the spokesperson. The brand will thus gain consumer loyalty, which improves the brand recall rate and brings considerable profits to the brand [12].

Take Nike as an example. Before choosing the first spokesperson in 1984, Nike urgently needed to increase its sales and market share of basketball shoes. With the popularity and influence of highly matched spokespersons, Nike has achieved significant profits, and its basketball shoes have become a symbol of the industry. Figure 1 shows the changes in basketball shoe sales and market share over the past ten years before and after Nike signed a spokesperson [13]. The market share data of basketball shoes refers to the market share of Nike basketball shoes in the entire basketball shoe market.

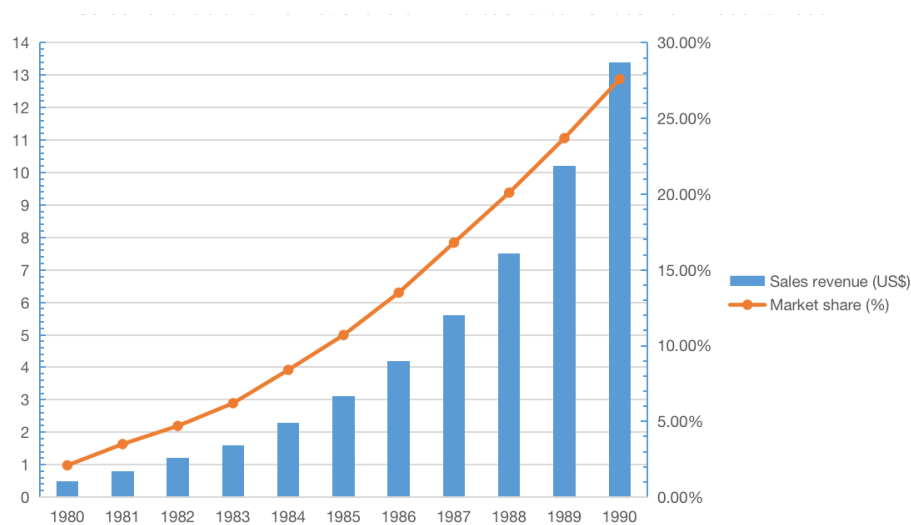


Figure 1: Sales revenue and market share of Nike basketball shoes from 1980 to 1990.

3.2. Focus of Spokesperson Selection

3.2.1. Adaptability of Spokesperson to Industry and Brand

The market is increasingly inclined towards personalized and humanized brand communication methods. Brands must keep up with industry development trends and choose spokespersons that meet market demand and brand positioning. In this situation, the brand can strengthen its characteristics and image, ensure that the brand image is consistent with market expectations, and better resonate with the target audience [10]. For example, brands that emphasize vitality and fashion have younger consumer groups and higher demands for style. So brands must prioritize young celebrities or social media bloggers with excellent external images and strong fashion expression. For brands that emphasize professionalism, stability, and reliability, celebrities and professionals with a professional background and trustworthy image will be more favored by the target audience.

However, the influence and role of endorsers vary in different markets or periods. When the new market environment and trends no longer match the temperament of the spokesperson, the brand's market performance will also be poor. This situation can confuse consumers' brand perception and damage the brand image [14]. Take foreign athletes endorsing domestic mobile phone brands as an example. Consumers may believe that the spokesperson has insufficient knowledge of the product, question the brand's motivation and integrity to choose a spokesperson and sell the product, and reduce trust in the brand and purchase intention. For spokespersons, their image, business capabilities, and celebrity influence may be controversial, which is not conducive to the sustainable development of celebrity careers.

3.2.2. The Creativity of the Spokesperson

A spokesperson who understands brand concepts and provides independent, innovative, and constructive ideas for product design and promotion will be particularly needed and loved by the brand. Assuming that the brand's products have a strong personal style of the spokesperson, and even the spokesperson personally designed the patterns and elements. So such co-branded products will help brands explore new product lines and career blueprints and greatly enhance their attractiveness and competitiveness in homogeneous markets.

Nike's most representative spokesperson designed and created an "Air Jordan" product line. These co-branded products gradually dominate the basketball and sports shoe markets with their unique design and good quality. The Nike brand has also achieved historic growth in global awareness, market share, and recalls.

3.2.3. Sustainability of Spokespersons

The popularity and fan effect of celebrities are undoubtedly beneficial for brand appreciation. On this basis, the brand hopes that the spokesperson has attractiveness, credibility, compatibility with the brand, and ethical qualities. These personal qualities are not only an essential reflection of the sustainability of the spokesperson but also a critical factor in enhancing the effectiveness of brand promotion [15]. When the spokesperson has a good image and temperament, it will leave a positive first impression of the brand on consumers. If celebrities have a high aesthetic level and professional knowledge in the product field they endorse, it will enhance consumers' trust in the brand and product. In addition, celebrities with affinity and noble values can generate solid emotional attachments and identification among consumers. The brand's loyalty will thus significantly increase and achieve profitability.

But suppose a brand only focuses on the celebrity effect of its spokesperson and ignores the sustainability of celebrities. In this situation, choosing a spokesperson who does not regulate their behavior is possible. Once the spokesperson encounters scandals such as inappropriate speech and unethical conduct, their image and career will be damaged. Consumers and society may also lose trust in the brand, causing severe damage to the brand's profits and reputation [14]. Similarly, suppose a brand engages in deceptive behavior towards consumers, such as excessive marketing and false advertising, and even involves sensitive topics or political controversies. In this situation, the brand will implicate the spokesperson and face public and social opposition and resistance [16].

4. Suggestion

This study provides feasible suggestions from industry, brand, and spokesperson to address potential issues in endorsement relationships, improve brand and spokesperson fit, and promote the development of brand and spokesperson careers.

4.1. Industry and Brand

4.1.1. Risk Prevention and Control

Industry and brands should implement risk prevention and control measures for endorsement relationships. Effective and timely risk identification, assessment, and decision-making can help brands maintain their reputation and image in crises and disputes and enhance brand stability [17]. Brands should use professional judgment on risk factors and impact levels to develop detailed emergency plans for risk prevention, response, and repair and strengthen their risk management system [18].

4.1.2. Relationship Evaluation

Brands need to evaluate their endorsement relationships and carefully choose their endorsers. Conducting in-depth research on the target audience and their preferences, and selecting spokespersons consistent with the brand image and value for a long time, has important guiding significance for brand marketing [4]. Regular market research, social media analysis, and consumer follow-up can provide adequate data support for monitoring brand operations and endorsement relationships [19]. Brands can use evaluation results to address potential endorsement issues and

strengthen their endorsement collaboration model by placing greater emphasis on selecting highly compatible endorsers. Brands should maintain and adjust relationships with short-term and inappropriate endorsements. They must also consolidate long-term friendly relationships with spokespersons who align with the brand and make it profitable. Mutual trust and commitment between both partners should be cultivated through clear communication and shared goals. In this situation, the brand's recognition, adaptability, and competitiveness can be improved.

In addition, brands need to innovate marketing and cooperation models constantly. After a comprehensive evaluation of the endorser relationship, a brand can involve the appropriate endorser in brand design or develop a collaborative product line related to the endorser's personality. This strategy can maximize the beneficial value of spokesperson and brand alignment. For spokespersons, their image and attractiveness are optimized to meet the fan community's consumer willingness and emotional weight [20]. For brands, innovative marketing models can make them more persuasive in conveying their uniqueness in a homogeneous market, greatly enhancing their attractiveness and competitiveness. Thus, the brand can occupy a leading position in the continuous transformation and innovation of the market and industry.

4.2. Spokesperson

The spokesperson should continuously optimize their image and enhance their compatibility with the brand. To begin with, spokespersons should strengthen their professionalism and credibility. The ability of spokespersons to accurately convey brand information is of great benefit in helping to increase brand value. Therefore, the spokesperson understands the history and values of the brand and learns professional knowledge related to the brand field. They should also actively participate in brand activities.

The spokesperson cannot just convert the fan economy into capital. It is more critical to maintain fan relationships. The intimacy and trust between fans and celebrities significantly affect the willingness and intensity of fans to spread information and purchase products [21]. Speakers should establish positive connections with fans and target audiences of the brand, such as interacting with consumers on social media platforms. This method can optimize the value of the fan economy.

In addition, spokespersons need to maintain a positive reputation. Sustainability is crucial for celebrity careers' longevity and brands' stable profitability. The spokesperson must regulate their behavior, abide by legal and ethical standards, and avoid scandals and controversial topics. They also need social responsibility and set a positive example for the public.

5. Conclusion

This study delves into the reasons and focus of brand choice of spokespersons, as well as how to improve the compatibility between brands and spokespersons. Research has found that the compatibility between brand temperament and spokesperson image has a significant impact on the development of a brand. By choosing spokespersons that align with the brand, the brand can not only gain consumer recognition and emotional connection through celebrity recognition and fan effect. Furthermore, brands can further enhance their trust, loyalty, and competitiveness, driven by celebrities' excellent reputations and persistence, and achieve considerable profits. But brands that do not focus on sustainability and have issues with endorsement relationships will face losses and negative impacts of resistance.

In addition, research has shown that brands need to clarify their brand positioning and values, ensuring that the image and reputation of the spokesperson match the brand's temperament. Moreover, brands should actively assess risks and establish reasonable and stable cooperative relationships. Brands also need to innovate marketing strategies to maximize the positive value of endorsers and

promote the joint development of both partners.

This study provides a new perspective and theoretical basis for the cooperative relationship between brands and spokespersons. It has important theoretical and practical significance for brand marketing and development. Future research can be combined with the current background of the digital economy. The study will also utilize diverse research methods and data to explore new cooperation models between spokespersons and brands. The study aims to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the significance of spokesperson and brand consistency and to provide more feasible strategies for the healthy development of sponsors and spokespersons.

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