

Marketing Fundamentals

LCBB4004

Assessment 1

Blogging to communicate

The brief history of the Body Shop

The Body Shop is often considered one of the pioneers in the British ethical cosmetics and beauty industry. Founded in 1976, the Body Shop was the brainchild of the British environmentalist and human rights campaigner Dame Anita Roddick (The Body Shop, 2021). Anita Roddick started The Body Shop as a small skincare and perfume seller based in Berkely to generate income for her family while promoting the purchase and consumption of cruelty-free cosmetics and beauty items. At first, the primary goal was to survive (Chesters, 2021). Because of the lack of capital, the business didn't even have enough bottles to package all its products. At the initial stage, the company just sold 25 items in total. But with effective positioning and proper targeting, the business soon grew to become one of the leading brands for ethical cosmetics and beauty items. Currently, it has over 300 products and more than 2500 stores in different countries (Chesters, 2021).

When starting the company, Anita Roddick didn't expect to become rich with her small beauty and cosmetics outlet (Chesters, 2021). However, she did have an entrepreneurial approach to starting the business. She identified the market gap for ethical and quality cosmetics and beauty items. The companies at that time were selling their products purely based on hype and over-advertisements. Thus, the selling concept of marketing was prevalent at that time (The Body Shop, 2021). However, Anita Roddick wanted to take a different approach. Instead of relying on advertisements and unethical low-cost ingredients, she positioned her product following the social concept of marketing (Korovkin, 2020). The marketing approach was relatively rare at that point. However, her marketing approach soon turned out to be hugely successful as the consumers appreciated the social messaging and the ethical aspect of the value proposition (Chesters, 2021). According to market experts, the key ingredient that made Anita Roddick successful in this industry was her social activism. Her case study also proves that the demand for sustainable and ethical products have been a main driving factor in the consumer market, even before these concepts became mainstream (Korovkin, 2020).

In 1984, the Body Shop became a public limited company. Eventually, the company came under new management and leadership. This had some effect on what the brand used to stand for. In 2006, the company was purchased by L'Oréal (Chesters, 2021). The brand came under significant criticism at that time because L'Oréal's business portfolio consisted of cosmetics and beauty

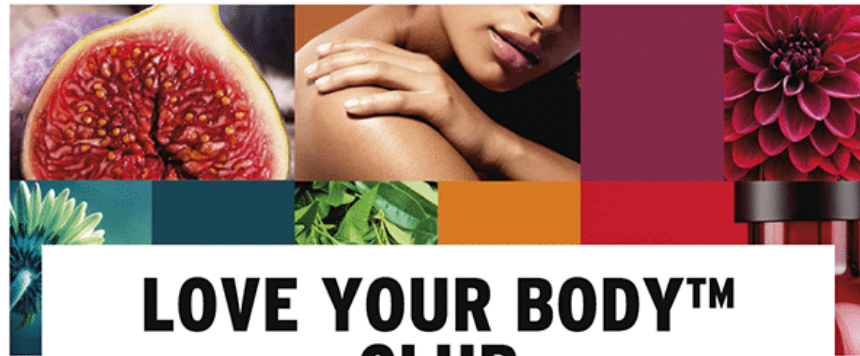
brands that still tested on animals and often procured items from unethical sources. Thus, the ownership of the brand became a source of controversy for The Body Shop. It shows that the customers would reject a brand that does not commit to its promises. In 2017, the company's ownership changed hands, and it became a subsidiary of Natura, a Brazilian cosmetics company that commits to ethical sources and sustainability values (Korovkin, 2020).

The brief history of The Body Shop points out the importance of sustainable product marketing, social concept of marketing and the originality in branding. It also shows why it is important for companies to commit to their brand messages. The Body Shop's success is an example of the consumers' preference for ethical and socially responsible brands.

Investigating the Potentials of Retail Personalisation: The Body Shop

One of the recent developments in Body Shop's marketing strategies is retail personalisation. Personalisation involves designing or positioning products, experiences or services to meet the individual needs of the customers (Kotler, Armstrong and Opresnik, 2020). In recent years, The Body Shop has been focusing on personalising its shopping experience for the customers, reporting a 25% increase in net revenues.

The company uses the Retail Personalisation Index to make shopping more dynamic, creative and value-adding for the customers (McDougall, 2010). The company uses social media platforms to enrich consumer awareness. It has improved its editorial contents, which complement the recommendations engine used by the brand (Sailthru, 2021). A visual hierarchy of attribute-based recommendations is generated by the recommendation engine, which helps personalise products for specific consumer groups (Korovkin, 2020).



Welcome to The Club! Our loyalty program lets you earn points and enjoy rewards every time you shop.

[SIGN IN/SIGN UP](#)

WHAT YOU'LL GET WHEN YOU SIGN UP



REWARDS

The more you shop, the more you earn. Get 1 point for every \$1 you spend. When you earn 100 points, we'll reward you with \$10 to spend. Plus, we'll treat you to a \$10 reward to spend on your birthday. Who doesn't like a present?



EVENTS

Get invited to exclusive members-only parties and sneak previews of our new collections.



DONATIONS

As a member, you can choose to donate your loyalty rewards to [Born Free USA](#)

The brand has also recently introduced its Love Your Body Club mobile app, which further facilitates the personalisation process by collecting more personalised consumer information through mobile devices (Sailthru, 2021). This personalisation scheme involves offering rewards and sharing product-related messages that would be useful to the individual receivers. Thus, their decision to purchase is influenced by effective value propositions and outcome-oriented marketing messages.

The personalisation strategy of The Body Shop reflects the application of a customer-oriented marketing approach. The objective of the personalisation strategy is to increase consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Korovkin, 2020). Personalisation helps the brand deliver what the

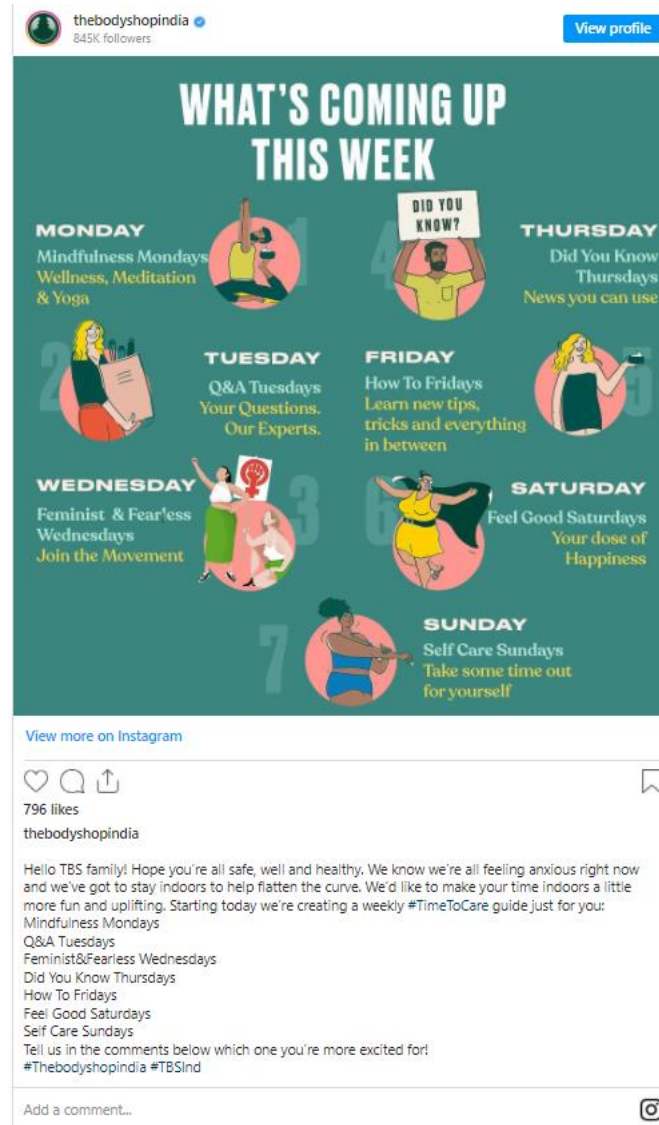
customers actually want from it. Thus, by fulfilling the needs of the customers, the brand is able to satisfy the customers and gain their loyalty.

How The Body Shop uses social media for brand storytelling

Brand storytelling has been a key part of the Body Shop's strategy since the beginning. According to Escalas (1998), brand storytelling is an effective method for communicating brand value with the customers. It helps attract, engage and persuade the target audiences. With markets suffering from the effects of the pandemic, it would be intriguing to look at The Body Shop's digital storytelling tactics as the means to stay connected with the customers and reassure them on the values of the products (McDougall, 2010).

The pandemic created twisted opportunities for the skin care and beauty brands to promote their products. The reason for using the term twisted is that there were many difficulties to that as well (Sailthru, 2021). As things start to get back to normal, it is important to look at the ways in which brands are using social media to their advantage to let the customers know about their presence (Hoyle, 2021). A brand's storytelling capabilities is viewed as the means to make marketing communication as seamless as possible. A brand like the Body Shop can fully capitalize on this capability as it has a lot to communicate to the customers (The Body Shop, 2021). The company's commitment to environmental and social sustainability, the brand's support for feminism, the recycling process at the Body Shop- each can be communicated with the audiences through storytelling.

The Body Shop's approach to storytelling on social media is aimed at keeping the contents fresh, simple, relatable, non-repeating and locally relevant. For example, the Body Shop UK's approach to storytelling would be significantly different from the brand's approach in India (The Body Shop, 2021). The company's geographic organizational structure and polycentric approach further facilitate storytelling with local market focus (Hoyle, 2021). The company also designs product messages using topical subjects for storytelling so that the interests of the customers can be made aligned with the values of the Body Shop.



Once the pandemic situation started to become more flexible, the brand shifted its focus towards the health and wellbeing and the safety of the customers. The brand's #SafeSpace campaign is an example of that (Hoyle, 2021). As people start to get back to living their normal lives, the Body Shop's storytelling strategy reminds them of the importance of self-care and how it makes daily lives safer for the consumers.

The effectiveness of this strategy has been covered in several recent research articles. For instance, the findings of Woodside's (2021) research on Brand Consumer Storytelling Theory suggest that human memory is story-based. Information is better stored, indexed and retrieved in human memory in the form of stories. When storytelling is repeated, the audiences would develop a need

to purchase from the brand. Thus, the application of Brand Consumer Storytelling theory leads to the stronger brand association and the tendency to purchase from the brand.

The Body Shop and Social Activism

Social activism has been embedded in The Body Shop's corporate culture since the beginning. Even after the departure of Anita Roddick from the management of the company, it has kept the social values that made it famous (The Body Shop, 2021). The positioning of the product with cruelty free and customer-oriented values were the first of the brand's social activism. In 1986, the Body Shop came to alliance with Greenpeace to save the marine lives. Anita also involved her company with various charitable and social activities (McDougall, 2010). Practicing "Good Business" was at the forefront of The Body Shop and Anita's motto (The Body Shop, 2021).

In 1987, the company launched its Community Trade Programme to aid the trading communities. The Programme involved paying fair prices to the bottom-line suppliers and workers and helping them become economically solvent (Sailthru, 2021). The company's supply chain is spread across different third world countries. Therefore, the Community Trade Programme has major implications to the brand's sustainability (McDougall, 2010). The Body Shop refrains from exporting from China, whereas, many other brands would do so for the access to cheaper materials (The Body Shop, 2021).

The Body Shop remains firm on its social and environmental commitments. The concept of sustainable marketing is well-evident from the strategies and business practices of the Body Shop.

The Body Shop's sustainable marketing strategy

A sustainable marketing strategy refers to “the type of marketing that uses products and services that respect the environment and social aspects around” (Kotler, Armstrong and Opresnik, 2020). The Body Shop adopts sustainable marketing strategies with the social and environmental dimensions of its business practices.

The company's sustainable marketing strategy is well-recognised and rewarded. The Body Shop is a B Corp certified company, which is a recognition for companies with the highest social and environmental standards. The company's Community Trade Programme, cruelty-free products, ethical sourcing, recycling procedures and eco-friendly refill technologies are evidence of its sustainable marketing strategy (The Body Shop, 2021).

With the merits of its sustainable marketing strategy, The Body Shop remains one of the most popular cosmetics and beauty product sellers worldwide (Chesters, 2021). The commercial success of the company's sustainable marketing strategy indicates that social and environmentally responsible business models are appreciated by the customers (Baines, Fill and Rosengren, 2020).

The Body Shop at Home: Multilevel marketing channel and direct sales tactics

The Body Shop has always been efficient with its marketing and promotion tactics and its distribution channels. However, the company also took some missteps over the years. In 1994, the company first started The Body Shop at Home multilevel marketing network. In the UK, it was named “The Body Shop Direct” (Hoyle, 2021). In theories, MLM involves selling products through non-salaried individuals in a pyramid scheme (Etzel, Walker and Stanton, 2007). At that time, the scheme did work for a while. Multilevel marketing fuelled sales growth for the company. It even exceeded the retail sales at one point. However, multilevel marketing came under controversy when one of the independent sellers was suspected of accessing the company’s confidential data (Korovkin, 2020). The Body Shop feared that the independent sellers working in multilevel marketing channels could threaten the commercial interest of the company by accessing sensitive information. In 2014, the matter was settled in court against The Body Shop, as an unfair dismissal case (Hoyle, 2021).

The issue with the company’s multilevel marketing channel is that because the approach followed by the brand is not completely illegal since it is not a pyramid scheme even though it is close to being that. Therefore, it is still a part of the company’s strategy (Etzel, Walker and Stanton, 2007). But critics view this marketing strategy as a controversial aspect of the Body Shop (Korovkin, 2020). A brand must protect its image with fair marketing practices and strategies. MLM doesn’t go with The Body Shop’s actual CSR principles (Hoyle, 2021). It puts the social image of the brand into question, despite the legality of The Body Shop’s MLM structure. The reason for the controversy is that this marketing practice fails for most of the independent sellers who lose money in the process. Market survey findings also reveal that around 90% of the customers do not take a brand engaging in network marketing seriously (Korovkin, 2020). Therefore, the approach does more harm to the brand image than good.

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