“Be Original” Branding of PT Sharp Electronic Indonesia

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Abstract. Sharp Electronics Indonesia is a Japanese electronics company. Sharp started to give its best service since 1970. As one of the most popular electronics company in Indonesia, Sharp has created a great brand. It proved by several awards which achieved in January 2017, such as The Highest Top of Mind and Brand Used Most Often (BUMO). Though the economic situation wasn’t good enough, it didn’t affect Sharp’s selling. Product brand is an important asset for a company. It’s not only a name, term, or logo, but more than that. Brand contains specific identity, personality, and positioning. It helps customer to differ a company from other competitors. This research uses descriptive method. The purposes of the research are to explain how Sharp Electronics Indonesia built its brand and maintain it perfectly.

Keywords: Brand, Branding, and Brand Strategy.

Introduction

Who does not know television, fridge, and air conditioning? Now these electronic goods have become an integral part of the life of the modern world community, including Indonesia. Nowadays, people do not have enough opportunity to create a balance of work time and personal time.

Most Indonesians started to use electronic goods for helping their daily activities. Dense working time sometimes makes most people use electronic goods to complete these home works in easy way. Electronics goods are not only helpful machines, but they can also be entertainment facilities. Nowadays, electronic goods are equipped with a reliable machine which a very useful for humans.

The high numbers of residents in Indonesia become a fresh breeze for marketing of electronic goods companies. It also supported by the consumptive culture adopted by Indonesian people. The high market share and the magnitude of open opportunities in front of the eye attract the producers’ attention. Each company started to offer its varieties benefit and competitive price. This atmosphere heated the competition up and became the real battle field for the company.

PT Sharp Electronics Indonesia (SEID) is one of the electronic goods companies that continue to survive in the midst of intense competition. Sharp is a well-known Japanese electronics company which accompanies Indonesian family for ages. Sharp presented to serve Indonesian for 46 years by providing creative and innovative electronic goods. In January 2017, Sharp received four prestigious Indonesia Prestige Brand Award 2017 titles. It was awarded the Highest Top of Mind Brand and Brand Used Most Often (BUMO) through four product categories: refrigerator, television and air conditioning.

The Highest Top of Mind award was achieved by PT Sharp Electronics Indonesia in the refrigerator category. In addition, SEID
Top Brand Award is the highest award in the field of brand that is only given to the brands that reach the top position. Only really powerful brands are able to achieve it. In 2017 SHARP proved it, not only grabbing but maintaining the award for 15 consecutive years for refrigerator products, and more than 7 consecutive years for other products. It proves that SHARP brand has become part of Indonesian society and become the Top of the Mind in the minds of Indonesian consumers.

The success of a brand to reach Top Brand is certainly supported by product excellence with interesting features. Local fit and the one-of-a-kind technology concept presented only by SEID products make it superior. It is also inseparable from the SEID DNA created by the founder, Tokuji Hayakawa, who became the foundation in the creation of products, namely making products that always want to be imitated.

Being the winner in several categories on a prestigious survey became a verification of SEIDS quality and customer's awareness of the brand. Top Brand Survey is the longest and even the longest one in the world. Surveys have been started since 1999 and are able to see the movement of brands in Indonesia, even predict the future of brand movement by observing the performance of the brands from year to year. This prestigious award is certainly a benchmark for the company's success in shaping the brand in the minds of consumers. Successfully winning is clearly a testament to the company's successful brand-building on consumers.

It was not a smooth path for SEID to go this far. In 2016, the national electronics market fell about by 2.7 percent. Nevertheless, SEID still posted a growth of around two percent, with sales of around Rp7.8 trillion. The fallen market did not stop their steps to continue the competition.

The fallen market proved that SEID still a chosen brand. People choose SEID’s goods even when the Indonesian electronics market is declining. The strength of this brand attracted the researchers’ attention to find out more about the formation of corporate brand and brand strategy used by PT Sharp Electronics Indonesia in maintaining its existence in the midst of competition.

**Purpose**

This study aims to determine the formation of corporate brands and brand strategies used by PT Sharp Electronics Indonesia in maintaining its existence in the competition of electronic goods Indonesia.

**Research Method**

Researchers used descriptive method. Descriptive research is a problem-solving procedure that is investigated by describing the state of the subject or research object (someone, institution, society, etc.) at present based on facts that appear or as it is (Nawawi, 2003: 63). Descriptive method has a central feature of focusing on phenomenon or actual social reality and describing facts on the ground as they are, accompanied by adequate rational interpretation.

In addition to descriptive methods, researchers also used a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a research approach used to examine the natural object in which the researcher is the key instrument, the data collection technique is done by triangulation, the data analysis is inductive, and the qualitative research results emphasize the meaning of generalization (Sugiyono, 2012).

Qualitative research's object is a natural object (natural setting). The natural object is an object that is what it is, not manipulated by the researcher so that the conditions at which the researcher enters the object as well as after exiting the object is relatively unchanged. Qualitative research is a type of research that results in discoveries that cannot be achieved by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. In qualitative research, all the techniques of data collection depend on the researcher as the main instrument. Therefore, a critical and open attitude is essential, and the data collection techniques used are open and flexible-adjusting to new conditions that may change (Sutopo, 1996).

Qualitative research aims to explain the phenomenon deeply. If the data obtained is deep and can explain the phenomenon being studied, then there is no need to look for other sampling. Qualitative research is more emphasis on the problem of data depth and not on the number of data (Kriyantono, 2007).

Researchers use a qualitative approach so that the data obtained more deeply. Qualitative approach helps the researchers to understand the existing problems. Especially to examine the branding strategy applied by Sharp Electronic Indonesia to get the Highest Top of Mind Brand and Brand Used Most Often (BUMO).

**Theoretical Concept**
Brand

Most of things or service in the world has its own brand. It can be found anywhere; redeem almost all aspects of human life ranging from economic, social, cultural, sports, and even religion. Some of it nailed easily on people’s mind. According to the American Marketing Association (1960), the brand defines as:

“A name, term, signal, symbol, or design, and these combined are intended to identify products or services of an organization or group to differentiate them from their competitors.” (Kotler, 2009:258)

Brand has a specific character. It helps people to separate a product from the competitor. Brand is not only about a name or symbol but also some values on it. Company puts their values on the brand so people can know then remember it.

Brand is an invisible asset and also a conditional asset. Brand becomes a key point that can generate profits in the long term. So why is brand becoming a conditional asset? It is because to gain these benefits, the brand needs financial value and works in conjunction with the underlying asset as product facilitation. There is no brand without the product or service that carries it. Of course there will be consequences of this method of measuring financial value. Humility is indispensable in this position. While many people claim that a brand is everything, a brand cannot survive without the support of a product or service.

Brand is also undergoing a process of development. Goodyear shares the process of developing a brand into six stages: Unbranded Goods, Brand as Reference, Brand as Personality, Brand as a Symbol, Brand as a Company and Brand As a moral policy (Goodyear, 1996)

At the first stage (Unbranded Goods), the product is managed as a commodity, so the brand is virtually unnecessary. This condition is very supportive when demand bigger than supply. It usually happens in monolithic economic situation. The most important goal of a product that does not have a brand is its function and its price cheap.

At the second stage (Brand as Reference), the competition already happened although the level has not been so tight. This competition stimulates producers to differentiate the products which they produce. The goal is that the resulting product has a difference from the products of other companies. The differentiation strategy applied at this stage is to make changes to the physical attributes of the product.

Third, brand as a personality. At this stage, brand differentiation based on function attributes is becoming more difficult. The Company adds personality values to each brand. At this stage, the personality owned by customers and brands increasingly brought closer, so the value of the brand is a reflection of its customers.

Fourth, brand as a symbol. At this stage, the brand belongs to the customer. The customer has a deeper knowledge of the brand used. Customers who use the brand at this stage can express themselves or be able to show their true identity.

In this fifth stage, the brand has a very complex identity so that customers can easily contact the brand. Because the brand is a company’s representative, then the company has the same perception about the brand it has.

The last stage, the brand acts as a moral policy. At this stage, the customer has a high commitment to gain profit in marketing and finance. The assets contained in the brand is an identity so that customers can easily contact the brand. Because the brand is a company’s representative, then the company has the same perception about the brand it has.

David Haigh, CEO of Brand Finance stated that brands have three primary functions. First, brand serves as navigation. Brand helps customers choose from a bewildering array of choices. Second, brands give reassurance to customers. Brands communicate the intrinsic quality of the product or service and reassurance customers that they have made the right choice. Last but not least, brands serve as engagement. Brands use distinctive imagery, language, and associations to encourage customers to identify with the brand (Wheeler, 2013).

Brand Strategy

Brand strategy is the management of a brand where there are activities that govern all the elements that aims to form a brand (Schutz&Bames, 1999). While Gelder defines brand strategy as a thing that should be achieved by the brand associated with the attitude and behavior of customers (Gelder, 2005).

According to Gelder (2005), brand strategy consists of brand positioning, brand identity, and brand personality. In addition, Schultz and Barnes (1999) included the brand strategy of communication. Thus, brand strategy is brand management that aims to manage all brand elements in relation to consumer attitudes and behavior. In this case, the company becomes brand strategy as a communication system that regulates product or service contacts or itself with stakeholders and supports all strategies that are done directly.

Building a brand or better known as branding is an effort to build brand equity. Aaker defines brand equity as a set of assets associated with brand names and symbols, so as to add value to the product or service. The assets contained in the brand include: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1998: 8)

The company is relentlessly pursuing this target to achieve long-term competitive advantage. This is the responsibility of the CEO and everyone in the company to gain profit in marketing and finance.

Branding is a disciplined process consisting of six steps: market analysis, brand building, idea determination, marketing communications, employee engagement, and measurement. The meaning of a brand is deeper than just a name or logo. Brand deals
with long-term relationships between companies and consumers.

Branding has a single idea, concept, or feeling in the minds of consumers. Sometimes branding is just a word, a phrase, a thought, or a feeling. Whatever it is, the company wants to reach it in consumer awareness. Brand helps the company to stand out in the midst of business competition. Today people are flooded with thousands of brand choices in no time. Therefore, a strong brand is necessary to survive in the competition. There are eight reasons people buy goods from a brand: awareness, image, experience, perceived quality, trust, knowledge, perception, and feelings. A strong brand before sales has the ability to influence buying actions on irregular markets. The strong brand will make it easier for people to buy it and allow the company to sell at a higher price (Dunn, 2004: 3-4). The article must be original of the research report, related to social and development, and has not been published or submitted for publication elsewhere.

Brand strategy builds on a vision, aligned with business strategy, emerges from a company's values and culture, and reflects an in-depth understanding of the customer's needs and perceptions. Brand strategy defines positioning, differentiation, the competitive advantage, and a unique value proportion.

Brand strategy needs to resonate with all stakeholders: external customers, the media, and internal customers (employees, the board, and core suppliers). Brand strategy is a road map that guides marketing. It helps to force the sell and provides clarity, context, and inspiration to employees (Wheeler: 2013: 12).

**Discussion**

The declining public purchasing power condition in 2016 did not discourage SEID to continue to excel in electronic competition. The results of SEID sales throughout 2016 were actually grew to 19.6 percent for the total category. It showed that SEID have excellent performance to handle it. The fallen market still a big obstacle for the company but it did not stop their way to produce the best products.

Being the winner of four prestigious categories award needs a big responsibility. Maintaining a great brand is not easy. The company has to encourage its performance and quality for customer satisfaction so the customers will put SEID brand on top of their mind.

In Indonesia Prestige Brand Award 2017 research, Warta Ekonomi performs assessment based on total awareness. Total awareness is the total brand or company known to buyers and consumers in a market. This indicator is derived from the increase of the Top of Mind (the first mentioned brand name indicates the level of responding to a brand), Spontaneous (the brand mentioned by the consumer after TOM) And Aided (brands that need recognition or brand recognition may have low recognition rates). As for the assessment of Brand Used Most Often (BUMO), the level of usage of the brand used researched by Warta Ekonomi is: the brand ever used/ consumed, the brand ever purchased last three months and the brand most often consumed or used.

There are three parameters used in the Top Brand survey to calculate Top Brand Index (TBI) namely: Top of Mind Awareness is the brand that ranks first in the minds of consumers and successfully mentioned first. Last Used is based on the brand that was last used/ consumed by the respondent in one re-purchase cycle. Third, future intention derived based on the brand you want to use/consumed in the future. The value of each parameter for a brand within a given product category is obtained by calculating the percentage of brand frequencies relative to the overall frequency of the brand. TBI is then obtained by calculating the weighted average of each parameter.

It was a tough competition and selection. There are only few companies which can survive on the battle field. The awards proved that SHARP is a strong brand that is always selected by users of electronic goods in Indonesia. This achievement is certainly not obtained in one night. There are various things that contribute to maintaining consumer awareness on SHARP brand, one of which is the application of branding strategies through various activities. Brand cannot just form in one's mind. Companies need to use the right strategy to create a superior brand among competitors in the same business.

Preliminary research is the most important thing to do by the company. It is helpful to find many aspects out, for example function, price, shape, and services. SEID always researches the market conditions of the goods they will produce. This study aims to determine the quality of electronic products desired by consumers. Next, SEID equips itself with the best after-sales service, so that consumers feel safe and comfortable to use their products. After-sales services which given to the customers become an additional point which helps brand to stay longer in customer's mind.

Another early study conducted by SEID was a research to determine marketing strategy. There are several aspects that are noticed by the company, such as state of economic conditions, consumption patterns of society, religious
holidays, government programs, and the increase of middle and upper class. SEID also uses data released by government agencies such as the National Development Planning Agency to estimate the upcoming market.

The data obtained by BAPPENAS in 2017 predicts Indonesia's economic growth will rise in the range of 5.1 to 5.3 percent. It is a breath of fresh air and a foundation for SEID to create marketing strategies, then increasing its sales and market share. Besides common commerce, SEID also look for electronic commerce (e-commerce) as a potential market. One of their upcoming projects is working more serious on electronic commerce market (e-commerce). Currently SEID has cooperated with several online stores in Indonesia. This channel contributed 1-2 percent during 2016 sales.

SEID, as a huge electronics company in the world, always apply the latest technology for their product. The company also used it for their selling activities, especially on electronic commerce. Technology, especially the internet, becomes the most powerful way to spread information across the world. There are no more boundaries between countries.

According to data obtained from the Indonesian E-commerce Association, the growth of electronic commerce in Indonesia in 2017 will grow by 122 percent. Andry Adi Utomo as National Sales Senior General Manager of PT SHARP Electronics Indonesia, in the Press Conference on Business Strategy revealed that this condition becomes a quite tempting opportunity to work on. Offline and online commerce will be a great market for the company. SEID will offer several differentiations between offline and online products which can attract and give advantages to customers in different way.

SHARP has targeted sales achievements for several product categories, especially on home appliances category. SEID sales’ target is 107 percent over the previous year. This target is set in view of religious holidays and New Year, government subsidized home programs, and several other aspects that can increase people's purchasing power.

SEID increasingly focus on working on the television market in Indonesia whose ownership level is still small. It opens many opportunities to grow and boost company’s growth. Moreover, SEID only controlled about 15 percent of the market in the segment. SEID realizes that the current success is due to loyal subscribers and media support. Initial research conducted to assist the company in determining the intended segment. This process of course allows the team to determine the branding strategy used.

Year 2017 brings a new spirit to PT Sharp Electronics Indonesia. Earlier this year, Sharp launched its new ‘Be Original’ slogan. The launch of this slogan is also expected to increase brand value and encourage the company to become an inspirational global brand. ‘Be Original’ becomes the company’s new commitment to its customers around the world who are committed to grow the business and improve its performance continuously. SEID continues to improve its performance and expand its business over the next 100 years by always keeping in mind the history of its founders.

Picture 1. Slogan and Logo of PT Sharp Electronics Indonesia

There are two important messages Sharp wants to convey through the slogan 'Be Original'. The company always strives to develop its originality in every product produced. This slogan illustrates the spirit of the company through the business principle of 'Sincerity and Creativity'. These principles guide the company in developing creativity and creating products and technologies that make others want to imitate it. Sharp is committing to these ideals which can derive genuine satisfaction from its work, while making a meaningful contribution to society.

Sincerity, creativity, harmony, politeness, and courage are five brand values which lie on those principles. Sincerity is a fundamental virtue to humanity. The company put sincerity as its main values. Creativity promotes progress, so SEID remain constantly aware of the need to innovate and improve. Harmony brings strength for the whole company. Trust each other and work together are the best way to make harmony. Politeness is a merit. That is why courteous and respectful are necessary. The last brand value is courage which is the basis of a rewarding life. It forced the company to accept every challenge with a positive attitude.

These brand values in line with brand vision. Sharp vision’s is enables the company to deliver "one-of-a-kind" solutions that drive the
customers’ success and growth. It also creates profitable new sales opportunities for us and our partners. Sharp will take the customers and partners beyond individual products and their capabilities. Sharp will inspire new ideas from technology. The red and bold letters of SHARP is now added with "Be Original" words. It strengthened the values that Sharp always bring original thing to the customers. SEID produced every single electronic goods with sincerity, creativity, politeness, harmony, and courage. The company principles, “Sincerity and Creativity” direct company to the clear goal to improve the quality of people’s lives through state-of-the-art technologies. The results are not only unique and innovative products but true to our motto, "We make products that other want to imitate!” Sharp also create new lifestyles for the 21st century. Commitment embraced by SEID makes this company continue to focus on customer satisfaction through the best service. Therefore Sharp introduces unique and innovative products and services, creating ways to meet customer needs and to enable them to enjoy the convenience of technology. The launch of this new slogan is a testament to the company's efforts to show its identity to the company's public. At fifth stage of a brand development process, it said that brand is a complex identity. The identity helps customer to contact with the brand and the company. Brand identity fuels recognition, amplifies differentiation, and makes big ideas and meaning accessible (Wheeler, 2013:4). The principle of business that radiated in the slogan is characteristic of SEID in providing services to its customers. Originality or authenticity becomes an important aspect in the company, so that every line of company struggles to make it happen in their work. In Indonesia, PT SHARP Electronics Indonesia has set up several strategies to improve its brand image and sales volume. One of them is targeting the youth as an effort to increase market share. SEID also organize activities of brand activation, SHARP INFINITY Road Show, Live Your Life, an exhibition activity with unique concept and full of young nuance the present. In addition, SEID also utilizes digital channels by producing the drama mini-series 'Shield of Love' which has begun airing on January 23, 2017 and then on YouTube and social media and starring Donna Agnesia and Darius Sinatrya. In 2017 SHARP will also improve its after-sales service by adding service offices at some point and offering longer warranty time such as 10 years warranty for AC compressor, 3 years for LED TV, 5 years for motorcycle, and 10 years for compressor cabinet ice. This shows if the SHARP product does have a good quality because it dares to provide a longer warranty. SEID continues its branding strategy through Corporate Social Responsibility activities. SEID participated in some environmental activities such as SHARP Mobile Learning Station (SMLS) and Sharp Greenerator Prevent Flood Action. These activities are expected to create a strong brand in the midst of increasingly fierce business competition. Many natural disasters such as forest fires, landslide, flood, the hunting of protected animals are haunting human activities. The lack of awareness and public knowledge about the importance of preserving the environment and conserving biodiversity is a major factor in the occurrence of such natural disasters. Therefore SEID organized a great program named Sharp Mobile Learning Station (SMLS). SMLS is a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity of PT SHARP Electronics Indonesia in order to increase knowledge and awareness to love and protect the environment in community and school children since early age. There are books, audio visual system, Wi-Fi and many kind of games which educate people on that place. SEID hope that this program can be an educational center for kids and the entire society. They will be more aware of the importance of protecting the environment and start doing real actions and spreading awareness of the importance of preserving the environment to their closest environment. SEID provides a mobile learning bus that is part of Sharp Mobile Service. Mobile Service aims to provide after sales service for consumers of Sharp products. Buses that will surround the island of Borneo will provide knowledge about environmental conservation, technology, and healthy living behavior. Such knowledge is shared in interesting ways through puppets, quizzes, films, fairy tales, and so on. SHARP's learning car has been traveling to the Java, Sulawesi Island and now to Borneo Island. This activity started from SD Islam BungaBangsa located at Jalan D.I Panjaitan No. 51, Mugirejo, Kec. Sungai Pinang, Samarinda, East Kalimantan. As an educational tool that appeals to children, Sharp equips its vehicles with internet facilities, educational games, and a good audio visual system. The next activity is Sharp Greerator. Sharp Greerator is a
young community that cares about the environment. Its members are specially selected by the team of the company and can become ambassadors of the environment by practicing environmentally friendly life to the people around them. On May 7, 2017, Sharp through Greenerator conducted the ‘100 Biopores Hole in Park City’ activity. This activity was conducted at Taman Heulang Bogor because this location is one of the areas that are often flooded when it rains.

Biopore holes became one of the green actions of the other row of activities formulated by SHARP Greenerator. Their commitment and dedication to the environment will continue to emerge through several other programs such as voicing a day without plastic through social media on Monday, to workshops that will increase their knowledge of the environment along with the five environmental non-profit organizations that are partners of Sharp Indonesia, the Institute of Science Indonesian Knowledge (LIPI) Bogor Botanical Gardens, Green Transformation (Trashi), Indonesian Coral Reef Foundation (Terangi), World Wild Fund (WWF) Indonesia, and Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Foundation.

SHARP will never stop to provide the best for all our loyal customers around the world. SHARP has survived more than 100 years and will continue to grow in the next 100 years. With business strategy owned, Sharp is sure to be able to develop the business and master electronic market in Indonesia.

Conclusions

Based on the discussion of branding strategy applied by PT Sharp Electronics Indonesia, it can be concluded that Sharp managed to build a strong brand to be able to achieve prestigious awards such as The Highest Top of Mind Brand and Brand Used Most Often at the event of Indonesia Prestige Brand Award 2017.

Sharp has given its best service through several activities such as business cooperation, mobile service station, to Sharp Greenerator. These activities are able to meet the needs of the consumer's after-sales and also as a means to demonstrate to the external public that the company has environmental awareness.

Despite the award of Brand Used Most Often, Sharp has not managed to write his name on the top. Sharp should immediately improve its branding strategy and more to show its trademark to consumers.

Some environmental activities undertaken by SEID have shown a good impact for the younger generation of the nation involved. However SEID does not use its products as part of its activities. Sharp should have used its products as part of branding strategy activities so that participants can feel a real positive impact from the company's product.

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