

Ithaca 2018 Abstract Submission

Title

How product involvement affects consumer purchase decision time for acceptable wine brands

I want to submit an abstract for:

Conference Presentation

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Keywords

decision time, retail, brand appeal, purchase behavior

Research Question

How does a consumer's wine involvement impact a brand's appeal and preference in the retail purchasing environment?

Methods

Using an on-line panel of acceptable wine brands, respondents chose acceptable brands, and then preferred choices from within that set.

Results

Low involvement wine consumers chose acceptable brands more rapidly than high involvement consumers as part of a consideration set. High involvement consumers decided on preferred wines more rapidly.

Abstract

Wine brands succeed in the modern retail environment through a function of being prominent in the consumer's mind, and being available at the point of sale when customers are looking for them. Data provided by market analysts such as Nielsen, Marvin Shanken's Impact, and Euromonitor suggest that more than 90% of all wine purchases in the US wine retail market occur in the 'under \$20-' price bracket. Accordingly, even though wine can be categorized as either a consumer good or a luxury good, the overwhelming bulk of wine purchases all fall within the consumer goods market. In this market, any brand's aim is to become part of a consumer's 'repertoire' of acceptable brands, which requires the brand owner to work to converge the two primary aims of making the brand aware enough in the consumer's mind, and available at the point of purchase.

In order for a brand to fall into a consumer's 'consideration set' of acceptable choices, it needs to communicate that it fits within the criteria that a consumer uses to evaluate alternative purchase options from within a clearly

defined retail category. The brand owner's aim is thus to start with a message that is generic enough to communicate category membership for the range of criteria that consumers use to establish purchase acceptability. For those consumers who accept that a brand falls within a specific category, a brand owner must then convince a sufficient number of consumers that their brand is a preferable purchase alternative to competing brands in the retail environment. Given that the wine retail environment often accommodates between 500 and 2000 competing brands at the point of sale, and that customers spend just under 90 seconds deliberating their purchase options in that product category, any brand that captures more than milliseconds of consideration is performing better than expectations.

At the point of deliberation, any brand of which the customer is unfamiliar must utilize packaging to convey a sufficiently emotive message so as to rapidly confirm membership to the category of which the customer is searching. In the case of familiar brands, the communication of preference must be conveyed strongly enough in a limited time-frame in order to counter the emotive appeal of competitors' brands so as to facilitate purchase. Evidence has illustrated how time-scarce this exposure window is for every brand in the retail environment. All branding messages have an increasingly short time in which to be conveyed to customers, who are actively filtering out such messages to all but the desired brands during a retail exposure window. The time taken by consumers to form a consideration set, then to select from between competing brand options is little-known. Research findings suggest that the number of purchasing cues used by customers to evaluate acceptable purchasing options increases in direct proportion with the consumer's level of product involvement. However, the relationship between time taken to process this increased number of cues is unclear. While the literature on psychology and neuromarketing suggests that more consideration elements equate with longer mental processing times, wine marketing practice suggests that higher product involvement equates to faster processing time of available decision cues.

By exposing a sample of 1600 wine consumers to numerous purchasing scenarios of a number of different wines within consumers' consideration sets, this study provides evidence for the different processing times for acceptable brands to capture attention, through to preference selection for a range of wine consumers based on their level of product involvement. This method analyzed different wine consumer groups' involvement from the moment that a wine brand captured the customer's attention, through to the period in which each acceptable brand was categorized by preference, by revealing retail prices.

Respondents were screened for membership into the category of regular wine consumers. Each respondent was exposed to successive panels of 9 wine labels. Within each panel, respondents were asked to indicate which labels caught their attention, the price they felt that each label illustrated, and which of these brands they'd prefer to purchase. After having made these selections, respondents were then informed the actual retail price of their selections, and then asking to reconfirm the level of purchase interest. On completion of this exercise, each respondent was asked to specify their purchase frequency, wine preferences and general knowledge of wine, allowing respondents to be categorized by their wine consumption behavior and category involvement.

The results illustrate that consumers with lower levels of wine involvement are faster to decide on a wine brand's appeal, but slower at deciding preference when compared with the time taken by higher wine involvement consumers. The evidence suggests that lower-involvement wine consumers decide on the appeal of a wine brand more on the emotive than rational message the brand conveys. Higher involvement wine consumers take longer to determine brand appeal, but the more rapid processing of preference from a consideration set suggests a more rational than emotional decision-making process. Further research should be conducted in order to determine the mediating effects of having previously consumed the brand in decision processing speed. Wine brand owners can use these findings to aid in decisions on improving brand design, placement and promotional strategies.