



The Strategy of Nostalgic Brand – Experts’ Study

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<p>2016 Research Leap/Inovatus Services Ltd. All rights reserved.</p> <p>DOI: 10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.56.3004 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.56.3004</p>	<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>Nowadays, the customers often feel in danger in current unstable and unpredictable period of industrial, political, social and economic transition. In this environment, the weakened individuals find themselves in search of security references, identity, well-being, dream, emotion and re-enchantment, and consequently they want to return to the past and their memories, yearning for a sense of security and stability. They become nostalgic, seeking values of authenticity. On this basis, enterprises develop a strategy of nostalgic brands that appeal to the emotions, experiences and memories of the consumers. As a result, the basis of relations between the consumer and the brand is nostalgia, which is a positive attitude towards brands that are directly or indirectly related to the consumer’s past. The aim of this article is to evaluate the possibilities of implementation of the strategy of nostalgic brand. The results of own empirical research conducted in 2018 on a group of 16 international experts are presented. Both French and Polish experts positively evaluated the potential of nostalgic brands. Some differences in the opinions of the French and Polish experts are visible. The proposition of model of the nostalgic brands positioning is also presented. According to the experts, the basic principle for positioning of the nostalgic brand is having a strong brand history. Nostalgic brands are recommended for the following sectors: fashion, food, cosmetic (especially perfumes), luxury products, automotive, high-tech (music), entertainment and decorative. The results can serve as a guide for managers in implementing the strategy of nostalgic brand and can help identify the crucial elements needed for positioning of the brand based on the nostalgic feelings.</p>
<p>Keywords: Nostalgia, Nostalgic brand, Brand strategy, Brand positioning</p>	

1. Introduction

The developing strategy of nostalgic brand, incorporating the codes and symbols of the past, is increasingly popular. This strategy responds to the consumer yearning for their roots, their past, their youth and happiness, diving into their memories. Individuals seek to be reassured by secure affective values in the fleeting and aggressive context of society. They are attracted by products evoking reminiscences. The society moves to the point where the consumer loses their bearings and seeks those one, more stable, soothing and reassuring, resulting from the past. Consequently, in our postmodern environment, consumer expectations are rational, emotionally charged and nostalgic. The aim of this article is to evaluate the possibilities of implementation of the strategy of nostalgic brand. Due to the fact that the problem of the implementation of the strategy of nostalgic brand is complex and depends on numerous factors, the experts’ study was applied. The results of own empirical research conducted in 2018 on a group of 16 international experts are presented. The research is a part of a project funded by the National Science Centre (project Opus 9, No.

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2. Literature Review

2.1 Modernity and Post-Modernity – The Background for the Behavior of Modern Consumer

The modernity was the product of a constant effort to break away from traditions, arbitrary hierarchies, obscure beliefs, maintaining an ideal of progress in knowledge, techniques and social relationships. The modernity was related with the cult of the individual. This generated a weakening of the social bond, parallel to the erosion of traditional values (like family, corporations, church). Modernity was characterized by a constant stream of events that break up and dissolve at the same moment they emerge. In consequence, the individuals were agitated on all sides, busy with multiple activities, without completing any of them. For Charles (2006), the founding principles of modernity were the liberation and valorisation of the individual, the pre-eminence of democracy as the only viable political system, the promotion of the market as an economic system and the technical-scientific development. The

salient feature of modern thought was the autonomy of reason in breaking with earlier traditions and cultures. It was to enable the progress of science and knowledge as well as that of the human sciences, “the promise of a bright future” (Cova, 2015). The societies are swept away by the ever faster, ever more extreme escalation in all spheres of social and individual life: finance, consumption, communication, information, urban planning, sport, shows. With the persistent need for short-term results, achieving more in the shortest time possible, to act without delay: the competition leads to prioritizing the urgent over the important, the immediate action on the reflection, the accessory on the essential. Since the mid-1970s, we observe development of the trend of postmodernity. In consequence, Lipovetsky’s individualism has often been contrasted with Maffesoli’s tribalism (1998, 2011). For Lipovetsky (2004), postmodernity is a historical moment of disintegration of traditional structures and desynchronization of rhythms and individual paths. By the loss of confidence in the values of progress and emancipation (typical for the modernism), Lipovetsky (2004) embodies a deep reaction of disenchantment with the modern world. The postmodernity, called often “modernity of a new genre”, has accelerated in the 80’s and 90’s. We observe that the emotional cues develop from a local rehabilitation, secure traditional practices and stabilize the vulnerable individual in search of identity. It is connected with the reversal of tendencies such as the valorisation of the collective in relation to the individual, of the emotion and affectivity in relation to the rational. There are conflicting needs that should be reconciled, e.g. (Marchal, 2014):

- Mobility, nomadism, looseness of the link with the company, autonomy versus need of belonging to the collective, references.
- Intensive and informal collaborative work versus the need for individual concentration.
- Permanent connectivity versus privacy.
- Globalisation versus localisation.
- Reason versus emotion.

A society is therefore being constituted on the ruins of the belief of freedom and progress. The myth of progress is nuanced, completed, corrected, while it is not outright denied. People believe less and less that they can change the world and change their life through progress; change from progress to “regress” or at least a rebalancing of the values of progress by that of regress. Progress becomes old-fashioned and traditional. What makes customers fantasize today is the lost world that they idealize. The attraction of the past and the proximity seems to prevail more and more over that of a glitzy future on an interconnected planet: the traditional today is modernity and progress, the modern is the tradition and regress. The best definition of postmodernity given by Maffesoli (2011) is that it is the synergy between archaism and techno-development. Lyotard in 1979 described postmodernity as the opportunity of societies disappointed by the promises of modernism.

It is a period opened by the loss of confidence in the values of modernity. Sociologists of postmodernity describe our era as the imminent advent of classless societies, without a fixed job and without a dominant culture. Networks, tribes, distance

interactions and consumption styles would then serve as benchmarks for everyone. The next stage of the postmodernity period will come. The postmodern order would be, from this point of view: a post-scarcity economic system, a system of the humanisation of technology. In contrast to modernity, postmodernity is defined by the cult of the present, emphasizing the sensitive, the imaginary, the emotion, the affective, the well-being. Paradoxically, the postmodern era also contributes to the fragmentation of the individual and his identity. The customers feel in danger in unstable and unpredictable period of transition (industrial, economic, sociological, ecological, political, etc.). In this environment, the weakened individuals find themselves in search of security references, identity, well-being, dream, emotion and re-enchantment, and consequently they want to return to the past, to memories, seeking a sense of security and stability. They become nostalgic, seek values of authenticity. On this basis, enterprises develop a strategy of nostalgic brands.

2.2 Strategy of Nostalgic Brand

Nostalgia is a sentimental longing for the past and is experienced when one reminisces about positive events in the past that are unlikely to reoccur (Sedikides, Wildschut, Baden 2004; Zauberman, Ratner, Kim 2009; Huang, Huang, Wyer 2016). The interest of academic and research communities focuses primarily on the analysis of the impact of nostalgia on consumers behaviours in the context of demand for the products associated with the past, the impact of nostalgia on consumers’ behaviours for certain product categories or the impact of nostalgia on the attitudes towards brands (e.g. Holbrook & Schindler, 1991; Holbrook, 1993; Kessous et al., 2015; Kessous & Roux, 2008, 2010; Lambert-Pandraud & Laurent, 2010; Loveland et al., 2010; Rindfleisch et al., 2000; Sierra & McQuitty, 2007). The results of these research confirmed the positive impact of nostalgia on the attitudes and behaviours of consumers. In brand management, nostalgia is a positive feeling and is described as a preference towards objects that were more common in the past (Holbrook, Schindler 1991).

Table 1: Categories of nostalgic brands (Grebosz-Krawczyk, 2018, p. 392-401)

Category of nostalgic brand	Characteristic
Generational brands	These brands are based on a real nostalgia that is referring to the own direct and personal memories and has the individual or collective character.
Transgenerational brands	These brands are based on a real nostalgia or simulated nostalgia (that is referring indirectly to the individual experiences or memories of other people, as well as to the collective experiences and memories in case of historical nostalgia and has the individual or collective character).

Based on the literature review, the nostalgic brand can be described as a brand associated with close or far, own or historical past. As a result, two categories of nostalgic brands can be distinguished: generational and transgenerational brands (Table 1). The strategy of a nostalgic brand is based on the assumption that the foundation of the bond between the consumer and the brand is nostalgia. The implementation of a nostalgic brand strategy allows to build a competitive advantage, not only based on the functional features of products or services, but above all based on emotional benefits. The nostalgic brand is a reflection of the symbolic benefits offered.

The nostalgic brand gives added value related to symbolism of the past, historical relations with consumers, users past identity and sentimental personality.

This brand can provide consumers with additional benefits if it effectively refers to the values appreciated by one or several generations.

3. Research Methodology

In this paper, the research results concerning the implementation of the brand strategy in case of nostalgic brands are presented.

The scientific problem indicates the following research questions related to the strategy of nostalgic brand:

- Q1: If nostalgic brands should be used and why?
- Q2: In which sectors, the strategy of nostalgic brands can be implemented?

Due to the fact that the problem of the implementation of the strategy of nostalgic brand is complex and depends on numerous factors, the experts' study was applied. The study included sixteen experts, eight from France and eight from Poland (Table 2). The study was aimed at evaluating the possibilities of implementation of the strategy of nostalgic brand.

Table 2: Experts' characteristic (own elaboration based on the research results)

Experts	Characteristic
Expert 1	Sales & Marketing Director, Chemical sector, 45 years of experience, Men, Nationality: French
Expert 2	Professor of Marketing, 45 years of experience, Women, Nationality: French
Expert 3	Brand manager, Cosmetic sector, 5 years of experience, Women, Nationality: French
Expert 4	Business Development Director, Cosmetic sector, 40 years of experience, Men, Nationality: French
Expert 5	Brand manager, Cosmetic sector, 38 years of experience, Men, Nationality: French
Expert 6	Consultant, advertising agency, 20 years of experience, Men, Nationality: French
Expert 7	Marketing Director, Cosmetic sector, 30 years of experience, Women, Nationality: French
Expert 8	Independent consultant, Women, 15 years of experience, Nationality: French
Expert 9	Professor of Brand Management, 30 years of experience, Men, Nationality: Polish
Expert 10	Professor of Marketing, 20 years of experience, Women, Nationality: Polish
Expert 11	Professor of Marketing, 35 years of experience, Men, Nationality: Polish
Expert 12	Independent consultant, owner of consulting agency, high-tech sector, 23 years of experience, Men, Nationality: Polish
Expert 13	Brand manager, Cosmetic sector, 8 years of experience, Women, Nationality: Polish
Expert 14	Brand manager, Food sector, 15 years of experience, Women, Nationality: Polish
Expert 15	Marketing manager, FMCG sector, 16 years of experience, Men, Nationality: Polish
Expert 16	Consultant, advertising agency, 25 years of experience, Men, Nationality: Polish

A group of experts was gathered, composed of professors of Polish and French higher education institutions, brand and marketing managers of international companies putting brand management into practice as well as representatives of consulting companies dealing with marketing and brand management area. When selecting experts the principle of specialization was followed. This stage of the project was aimed at examining the opinions of experts and enriching the findings, therefore the Delphic method was not applied. The

expert studies were conducted from March to July 2018 using the method of direct or indirect communication with the use of the interview with questions' list. The interview consisted of 5 questions related to the concept of nostalgia in marketing, nostalgic generational and transgenerational brands, retro brands, implementation of the strategy of nostalgic brand and positioning of the nostalgic brands.

4. Research results and discussion

4.1 The Role of Nostalgic Brands according the Experts Opinions

The general opinions of experts about nostalgic brands are positive. They underlined the strong relation between the perceived quality and perceived know-how of brand and its nostalgic character. According to the experts, the nostalgic brands are consider as the brands with experience and consequently the opinions about their products quality and properties are good. They are the secure benchmarks for consumers and guarantee of quality for consumers. According to the experts, nostalgic brands often play a protective bubble role - they protect against the risks associated with the purchase and are a guarantee, but on the other hand, they allow to return to the times of the past associated with a sense of security, pleasure and joy. Nostalgic brands base on myths and emotions and they are the symbols of the past time. They evoke the positive memories and help to find the lost pleasure. Both French and Polish experts positively evaluated the potential of nostalgic brands. Some differences in the opinions of the French and Polish experts are visible. The experts from the Western Europe underlined the role of the nostalgic brand that is the secure landmark and the guarantee of the good quality. They emphasised the role of nostalgic brands that are often treated as solution on the fear of the future, taking into consideration the instable situation on the market (GMO, economic crisis, emigres etc.). The experts from Eastern Europe evaluated nostalgic brands on more intangible level. They perceive these brands as a source of good personal memories and emphasise the role of personal nostalgia in brand management. The role of nostalgic brands as a guarantee of the good quality is not so significant. It can be related with the specific historical background and the fact that some nostalgic brands have the communist experience. The example of the most interesting experts' opinions about nostalgic brands are presented in table 3.

Table 3: The most important statements concerning nostalgic brands (own elaboration based on the research results)

Statements
<i>Nostalgia creates the desire for buying in more responsible way based on the past experiences.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands base on myths and emotions.</i>
<i>Products of nostalgic brands are cult.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands are the spectacular reference.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands make consumer feeling exceptional.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands create the potential for differentiation.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands have the heritage character.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands often play a protective bubble role.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands allow to compete by affirming the roots and heritage.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands are the guarantee of quality for consumers.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands should base on the authenticity.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands rely on the strong brand identity and not on the old products.</i>
<i>Consumers search for nostalgic brands because they search for the lost pleasure.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands bring back memories.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands are the secure landmarks.</i>
<i>Nostalgic brands bring to the company new solution in the area of marketing communication.</i>

4.2 The Implementation of the Strategy of Nostalgic Brand - The Experts Opinions

According experts, the strategy of nostalgic brand can be implemented to:

- restore vitality to a brand,
- revive the brand,
- differentiate the brand,
- launch the limited series,
- innovate towards concepts closer to customer expectations
- adopt a new packaging.

The model of nostalgic brand positioning is presented on the figure 1. The basic principle for launching the nostalgic brand is having a strong brand history. According the experts, during the brand implementation, it is important to revive the brand in the present based on its values or successes from the past. To be successful, the cultural heritage must be added to the modern quality and innovative solution. The experts underlined the role of both generational and transgenerational brands. The brand's positioning should be based on its history, values, identity and positioning on the past. All elements of the brand identity, like brand physicality, brand personality expressed through a value system, brand culture, brand reflection of the profile of target customers, brand relationship to the users' memories and brand self-image, should be analysed in details. Based on the historical background of the brand and the customers opinions, the brand should be classified as generational or transgenerational. This choice is crucial for the brand positioning. The brand managers need to find the key nostalgic values attended by customers. These values will be the basis for positioning and creating a promotional campaign. The benchmarking to compare potential brand position with competitive brands can be developed using the perception maps. Additional qualitative research can be also executed among potential group of customers. Finally the brand positioning that allows to reach the chosen target by establishing a clear, precise and unique place in the mind of the consumer, can be chosen.

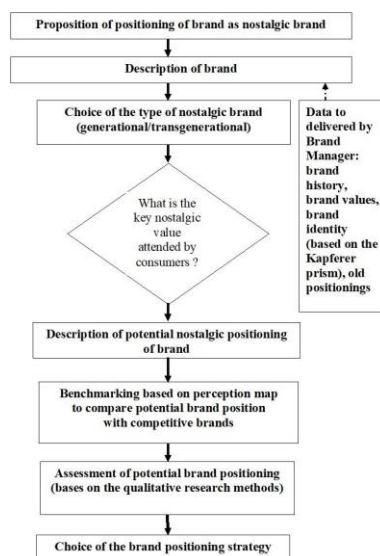


Figure 1: Model of the nostalgic brand positioning (own elaboration based on the own research results)

Nostalgic brands are recommended by experts for the following sectors: fashion, food, cosmetic (especially perfumes), luxury products, automotive industry, entertainment and decoration. Experts underlined especially the opportunities for nostalgic brands in food and cosmetic sectors. Consumers long for flavours and fragrances from childhood and youth, and the purchase of a nostalgic brand allows them to return to the past. The purchase of food and cosmetic products are often spontaneous, therefore the probability of choice of nostalgic brand is higher than in case of other sectors where decision making process is longer and different, more rational factors are taken into account.

5. Conclusion

This study expands the marketing discipline's understanding of nostalgia concept. Based on the empirical results, the authors may draw the following main conclusions:

- the development of nostalgic brands depends on the ambitions of the moment,
- the use of nostalgia in brand management helps to increase brand equity, especially perceived brand quality and reinforce the associations,
- the basic rule for launching the nostalgic brand is having a strong brand history,
- the nostalgic brands are recommended for the sectors of fashion, food, cosmetic, luxury products, automotive, entertainment and decorative.

It can be stated that this paper has resulted in two contributions. From a theoretical standpoint, it has contributed to the brand positioning concept as well as providing a better understanding of the impact of nostalgia on the brand management. From a substantive standpoint, it has shed light on the possibilities of development of the strategy of nostalgic brands for companies managing the brands with long history. The conclusions in this study are presented with the caveat as to the limitations of the sample (only 16 experts representing two countries). To provide a more comprehensive picture of the implementation of the strategy of nostalgic brand, similar studies could be conducted in other countries.

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