

Anthony Mania

Professor Marc Kalan

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After reading both “The Brand Report Card” by Kevin Lane Keller, and “The Balanced Scorecard – Measures that Drive Performance” by Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, I feel that I agree more with Keller’s article and the points he makes throughout it. Keller’s approach and framework to successful brand evaluation resonates with what I’ve been taught in marketing classes as well as what I’ve learned in a professional setting as a marketing intern. Although I feel that Keller is too broad in some of his frameworks, I still feel that his article resonates the most with my understanding of marketing and brands.

In “The Brand Report Card”, Keller introduces the top ten traits that the world’s strongest brands share which are: the brand delivering benefits, brand relevance, pricing strategy, brand positioning, brand consistency, sufficient brand portfolio/hierarchy, brand equity, brand awareness, brand sustainability, and monitoring sources of brand equity. This resonates with what I’ve learned both in college and in professional settings as in almost every marketing class the different sectors of what makes a brand successful are discussed. Right now I am taking Brand Management and we have done simulations where all different sectors of a brand have to be evaluated to be able to make the brand successful. Additionally, in my professional experience as a marketing intern, I was tasked with identifying some of these different segments of a brand including brand awareness, brand relevance, pricing strategy, and brand positioning to name a few. Every brand in the world needs some sort of brand evaluation; an article on LinkedIn supports this idea when it states that, “brand valuation can help companies identify the key drivers of brand value and allocate resources effectively. It provides insights into the brand's strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement, allowing businesses to make informed decisions regarding marketing, product development, and brand positioning” (Desai). As we talked about throughout the year in this class, when companies don’t take time to properly

evaluate different segments of brand evaluation they can run into trouble; with issues such as marketing myopia for example. Keller's emphasis on brand awareness specifically is also something I agree with as he talks about how a high brand awareness helps lead to increased customer trust while also attracting more customers. A perfect way to put this is how an article by Attest does, when they say, "brand awareness is the foundation all your marketing efforts have to rely on, from social media to SEO. It's what helps you make people aware of your brand and what you have to offer, so you can gain their trust and influence their decision-making process, in order to get more sales, faster" (Killip). Overall, Keller is efficient in telling the reader the prime ways a brand will succeed.

The only complaint I have with Keller's article is that it doesn't take into account that although his framework is good, it is not always applicable to every company or brand. An example of this is when Keller talks about the importance of brand exclusivity. Brands, however, are often successful when focusing on brand inclusivity instead. An example of this is when, "Target began featuring different kinds of people in their marketing—not only showcasing racial diversity, but also children with Down syndrome and people in wheelchairs" (Forbes), which helped to not just feature those with differences but to also be able to serve and include a broader audience. This campaign helped Target's brand elevate and reach a large audience. Depending on the brand or situation, brand exclusivity is not always the right way to go.

All in all, Keller's article still does a great job of outlining the keys to success for a successful brand and assessing the overall health of a brand. This framework is something I highly agree with and something that I've both learned in class and used somewhat as a marketing intern. Although some of what he says is a bit specific and may not apply to all brands, overall he's right on the money with the keys to brand success.

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