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IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSMENT ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR AND ON BRAND IMAGE

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Abstract:

Everyday consumers are exposed to thousands of voices and images in magazines, newspapers, billboards, websites, radio and television, etc. Every brand attempts to steal at least fraction of a person's time to inform him/her of the amazing and different attributes of the product at hand. The challenge of the marketer is to find a hook that will hold the subject's attention. In helping to achieve this, use of celebrity for endorsement of a brand is widely used marketing strategy. In this modern age, people tend to ignore all commercials and advertisements while flipping through the magazines and newspapers or viewing TV. But even then, the glamour of a celebrity seldom goes unnoticed. Thus, celebrity endorsement in advertisement and its impact on the overall brand is of great significance. In this process, the companies hire celebrities from a particular field to feature in its advertisement campaigns. The promotional features and images of the product are matched with the celebrity image, which tends to persuade a consumer to fix-up his choice from a variety of brands. Although this sounds pretty simple, but the design of such campaigns and the subsequent success in achieving the desired result calls for an in-depth understanding of the product, the brand objective, choice of a celebrity, associating the celebrity with the brand, and a framework for measuring the effectiveness.

Marketers spend enormous amounts of money annually on celebrity endorsement contracts based on the belief that celebrities are effective spokespeople for their products or brands. Celebrity Endorsement is viewed as a billion dollar industry in today's era. Various companies are signing deals with celebrities in the hope that by using celebrities they can accomplish a unique and relevant position in the minds of the consumers. Celebrity endorsement is increasingly being employed across various industries regardless of the product type. It is known to be playing the role of a signalling strategy.

This paper is an effort to analyze the impact of celebrity endorsements on brands. Objective of this article is to examine the relationship between celebrity endorsements and brands, and the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer's buying behaviour as well as how consumer makes brand preferences. Celebrity endorsement is always a two-edged sword and it has a number of positives— if properly matched it can do wonders for the company, and if not it may produce a bad image of the company and its brand.

KEYWORDS:

Celebrity Endorsment , Behaviour And On Brand Image , commercials and advertisements .

INTRODUCTION

CELEBRITY

According to Oxford dictionary, celebrity means "a famous person". A person who is excelled in his/her field of action or activity. In our day-to-day activity, we perform many acts at home, at work place, on field in sports, in social life. But these acts may be daily routine or just "acts". It means that giving no extra-ordinary results, not noticed by anybody surrounding, and not taken into notice by Media. But if a person acts or performs something which gives spectacular results is noticed by masses. That person has done something special that we and masses cannot do. He is regarded as a special person with some "extra" given by that "Almighty" above. We start feeling that he/she is great. We start celebrating his/her all acts which produce success. If the success rate for that person is very high to "deliver" same results, he becomes a "CELEBRITY". It may be in field of sports, cinema, theatre, social life, politics or science anything but something with some special results.

"Celebrity" refers to an „individual who is known to the public, such as actors, sport figures, entertainers? and others of the like for his or her achievement in areas other than that of the product class endorsed (Friedman and Friedman 1979). The general belief among advertisers is that advertising messages delivered by celebrities provide a higher degree of appeal, attention and possibly message recall than those delivered by non-celebrities. Marketers also claim that celebrities affect the credibility of the claims made, increase the memorability of the message, and may provide a positive effect that could be generalized to the brand Copper (1984).

CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

The use of celebrities in order to increase the sales and/ or the recall value of a brand is known as celebrity endorsement. The late '80s saw the beginning of celebrity endorsements in advertising in India. Hindi film and TV stars as well as sportspersons began encroaching on a territory that was, until then, the exclusive domain of models. There was a spurt of advertising, featuring stars like Tabassum (Prestige pressure cookers), Jalal Agha (Pan Parag), KapilDev (Palmolive Shaving Cream) and Sunil Gavaskar (Dinesh Suitings). Of course, probably the first ad to cash in on star power in a strategic long-term mission statement kind of way was for Lux soap, a brand which has, perhaps as a result of this, been among the top three in the country for much of its lifetime. Endorsements by celebrities have started since a long time.

The very fact that their use has continued for so long is proof enough of its immense advantages, but they have several disadvantages too. When it comes to celebrity endorsement, the first brand that comes to the Indian mind is that of Lux, the Beauty Bar of the Stars. Since its inception, Lux brand has grown positioning itself. However, recently Lux has tried to change its positioning from being a woman's soap to being soap for men as well. Sticking to its strategy of using celebrities to appeal to its target audience, this time around it has used Shah Rukh Khan to endorse Lux. But this time the response has been confusing.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1)How does celebrity endorsement impact the perception of Indian consumers?
- 2)How does it impact their buying behaviour?.

EARLIER WORKS –

"Celebrity is an omnipresent feature of society, blazing lasting impressions in the memories of all who cross its path." Kurzman et.al (2007)

Indian market is not by a large space, an easy audience to target for the advertisers. The one billion people of the country are speckled in terms of beliefs, ethnicity, states, culture, language, dialects, norms and values. Other aspects such as the economic discrepancy in the country separates it in a way which has resulted in a large number of lower and upper middle class, with a very small class falling under in the middle class. This demonstrates a vast disparity in the buying power and decision making clout, one which the advertisers should keep in mind. Indian advertisement has been placing a vital amount of importance on both recall and persuasion as brand differentiating messages.(Dixit,2005). Very often, various advertising styles are used by advertisers to influence consumer brand choice behaviour and among these different available choices one very popular choice is Celebrity Endorsements. (Alsmadi 2006).

"Traditional celebrity endorsements are as well established as the concept of celebrity

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itself.”(Anonymous, 2007).Celebrities influence on consumers appears to be larger than ever before. (Alperstein 1991). When used effectively celebrity endorsers have the potential of serving a valuable role in enhancing a brand's competitive position and developing brand equity. (Till 1998).Schikel (1985) highlights the subtle yet intense impact of celebrities on everyday thinking and living. Defined as 'intimacy at a distance', it is seen that individuals have a tendency to form illusions of an interpersonal relationship with celebrities. (Horton & Wohl 1956).

A person who enjoys public recognition from a large share of a certain group of people and uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in advertisements is known as a celebrity. (McCracken 1989). They are usually known to the public for their accomplishments in areas other than the product endorsed by them. (Friedman & Friedman 1979). This stands true for classic forms of celebrities such as actors like Shah Rukh Khan, models like Milan Somen, Sports athletes like Sachin Tendulkar and entertainers like Maliaka Arora Khan but also for less obvious groups such as businessmen like the Ambani's or politicians like Rahul Gandhi. (Schlecht 2003).

In India especially, it is not difficult to find motives for the increasing use of celebrities in advertisements as Indians have always been in awe of the stars of the celluloid world. Unlike the foreign counterparts they have always consecrated them and placed a halo behind their heads implying that their celebrities could do no wrong. (Anonymous, 2001). Indeed, some people are seen to admire, imitate, and become besotted with their favorite celebrities, which forms the crux for the celebrity endorsement being quite a sought after advertisement technique. (McCutcheon et al 2003)

Today celebrity endorsement is being seen more and more as an integral part in an integrated marketing communication strategy. Hamish and Pringle (2004) suggest 3 macro factors present in the market today that in principal justifies the validity of celebrity endorsement as a promotional strategy. The first factors the increasing opportunity for interactivity between brands and their consumers. Second is the “era of consent” situation present today where consumers have more control over the messages they receive. And lastly is the increasing media fragmentation and commercial communication clutter. (Temperley and Tangen, 2006). Pappas (1999) examined the value of star power in an endorsement and pointed towards how a well-designed advertising helped celebrities convert their star power into brand equity.

From a theoretical perspective, celebrities are considered to be effective endorsers as because of the presence of their symbolic desirable reference group alliance. (Soloman and Assael, 1987). Assael (1984) suggests that the effectiveness of the celebrity endorsement is present because of its ability to tap into the consumer's symbolic union with its aspirational reference group. (Menon)

Reference groups among consumers are viewed as being a critical source of brand meanings as it helps them to evaluate their believe about the world particularly with others who share the same beliefs or are similar on relevant dimensions. Consumers form associations between reference groups and the brands they use and transfer this meaning from brand to self and one forms the crux for the celebrity endorsement being quite a sought after advertisement technique. (McCutcheon et al 2003)

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Celebrities are deemed to be referents by consumers, which refers to imaginary or actual individuals envisioned to have significant bearing on the consumer's evaluations, aspirations and behaviour. The power of the celebrities lies in these influences that they exert on consumers, even though they themselves are physically and socially distant from an average consumer. (Choi & Rifon, 2007)

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Towel-clad models can sell just about any thing soaps, shampoos, body lotions, safety razors, men's toiletries, ceramic tiles, bathroom fittings, and any consumer durable even cars. And if the model happens to be a television icon that enjoys a huge fan following among masses, the product will sell like hot cakes.

Using celebrities the pedal is a ware is not new for Rs. 5000 crore Indian advertising industry. After all it is easier to influence if the celebrity is endorsee the brand. Says Imran Siddiqui, model

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coordinator, Ammirai Puries. Lintas: "The strategy helps because a celebrity is instantly recognizable and brand recognition becomes easy."

But that's where the similarity with the past ends. Now even small and medium sized companies are roping in big names to sell their brand. For instance, one of the highest paid celebrity models, Sachin Tendulkar features in Today's pen's advertisement. That's not all, Rani Mukharji, who features in high profile Pepsi advertisement along with Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol is also endorsing the Hero Bicycle.

Advertisers pay millions of dollars to celebrity hoping that the stars will bring their magic in the brand they endorse and make them more appealing and successful.

This study aimed at understanding the impact of celebrity endorsee on brand building and consumer buying behavior. Before moving to next chapter, let's clearly understand the objectives of the study.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

To identify the influence of celebrity endorsee on consumer buying behavior and brand building.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

To identify other factors which influence consumer-buying behavior?

To identify is celebrity endorsee advertising more attention getting and memorable than other kind of advertising.

To identify how is celebrity endorsee advertisement perceived.

To identify that who make the best celebrity endorsee

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of research

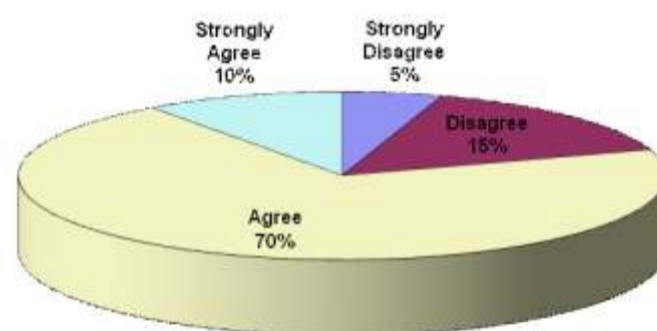
The research was exclusively exploratory in nature. The research design was characterized by flexibility in order to be sensitive to the unexpected and to discover insight not previously recognized.

Research is totally done through Secondary Data collected from different journals, magazines, academic books etc., to understand consumer behavior and role of celebrity endorsee.

Findings & Analysis

Influence of brand name on purchase decision

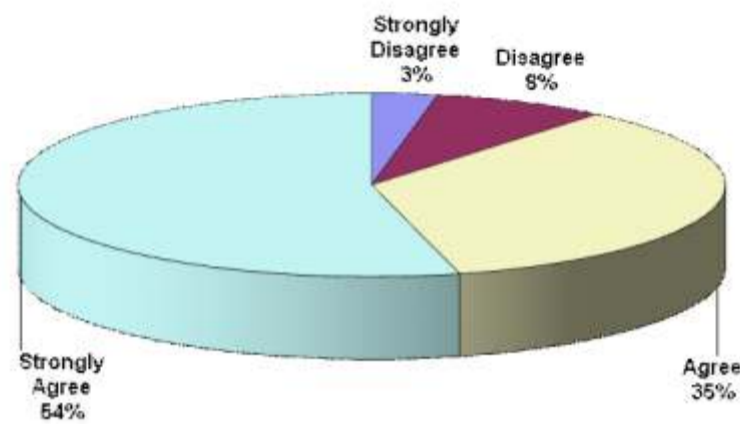
A brand is more than just a product. A product is what a company makes. A brand is what customer buys-hopes/expectation/services. Most of the company is acquired for the brand it has built not for its real estate, plant etc., according to our survey about 80% of the respondents agree on the fact that brand name influence the buying decisions. Brands, which



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have positive image like Nike, Reebok, Mercedes, Volvo Tata etc., differently influence the buying behavior of the customer.

Influence of quality on purchase decision

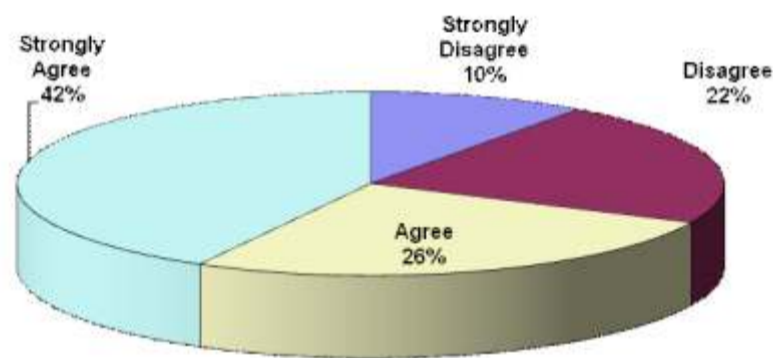


Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.

According to G.E's chairman, John F. Welch Jr. "Quality is our best assurance of customer allegiance, our strongest defense against foreign competition and the only path to sustained growth and coming.

In the purchase decision quality of the product is one of the important factors considered by customers. As data also shows that about 90% of the respondent either agree or strongly agree on this aspect. During survey it company provide good quality. In market there are brands like Sony that have better quality and have very good brand equity.

Influence of price on purchase decision

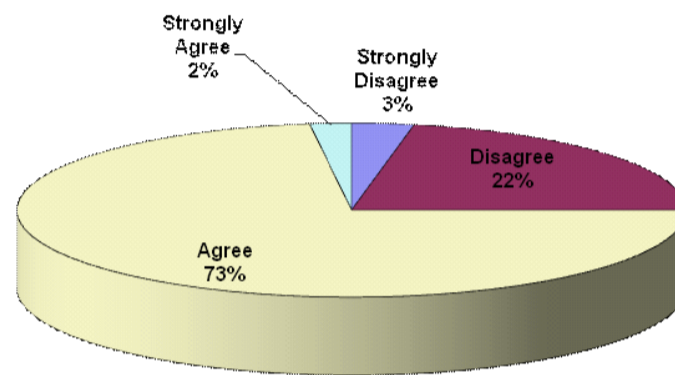


A critical marketing mix tool is price, the amount of money that customers pay for the product company has to decide on wholesale and retail prices, discounts, allowances and credit terms. Its price

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should be commensurate with the offer's perceived value. If it is not, buyers will turn to competitors' product. So we can say that price is definitely one of the important factor which influence buying decision of customers, according to the survey about 70% of the respondent agree on this fact and rest of the respondent said that them price is not an important consideration while buying they look for quality and brand.

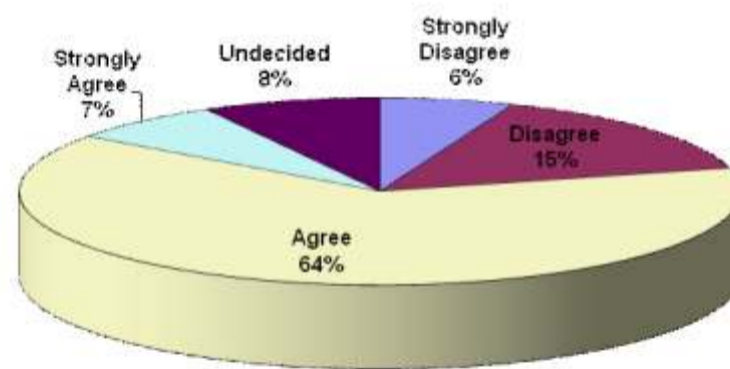
Influence of product features on purchase decision



Days are gone when there are few players in the market now competition is so intense that one can't sustain without having good quality and advanced technology in their products. Especially in the consumer durable segment product feature becomes more important. And this is also reflected by the survey, 75% of the respondent said that product feature influence. This purchase decision.

Influence of family members on purchase decision

Family is the most important consumer-buying organization in society. Family members constitute the most influential primary group. Influence of family members in high involvement product category is more, According to survey about 70% of the respondent said

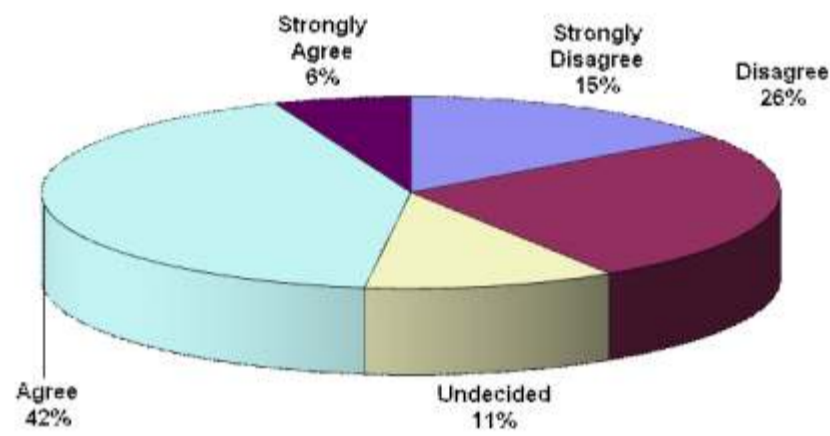


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that their purchase decisions were influenced by family members, it was quit interesting that about 10% respondent neither agree nor disagree on this point.

Influence of celebrity endorsee on purchase decision

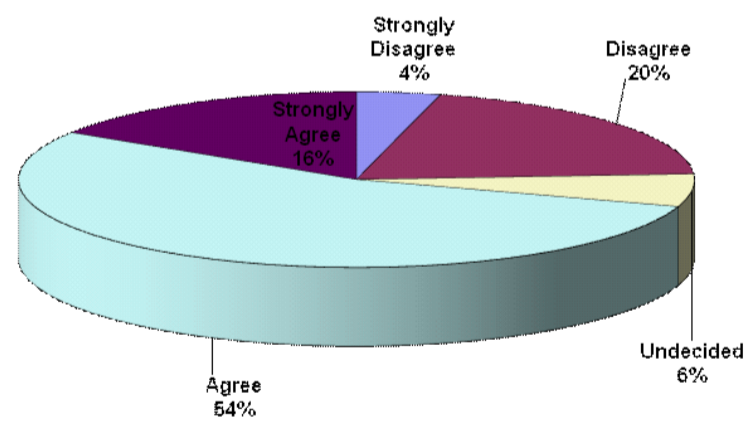
Advertisers pay millions of dollars to celebrities, hopping that the stars will bring their magic to the products and services they endorse and make them more appealing and



successful. Pepsi, Phillips, Total, Greenlabel, Coke, Pantene, Omega, BPL, Lux, Rotomac, Boost, Action, Santro, Top Ramon, Ganga, MRF, Atlas Cycle etc., some of the brands which are using celebrities to promote their products. According to our survey, about 50% of the respondents said their decision of purchasing influenced by celebrity endorsee and rest of the respondents said that brand name supported by famous personality did not influence this purchase decision

. Influence of advertisement on purchase decision

Companies are paying millions of dollars on their advertising campaign. The purpose of advertising differs from company to company. Some has brand awareness or some has



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sales, as this main objective for advertising. But does advertising really influence purchase decision of customers, it is the biggest whirlpool for every marketer. According to our survey about 70% of the respondents said that their purchase decisions were influenced by advertisement.

SOME PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN ON CELEBRITY USAGE

A celebrity used across product categories is likely to be less effective than a celebrity who starts with a few categories. Consumers tend to lose interest in the celebrity because of over-exposure. Besides that celebrity could dilute the credibility associated with his own image by the dilution of image created by diverse products.

Celebrity image should fit in with the brand image or personality (as started earlier). A brand of jeans used a Western film celebrity (who is better known among middle-aged adults) while attempting to target youngsters.

The target segment should be able to identify with the celebrity. Sometimes the celebrity used may be too sophisticated for the target segment and the very concept of reference groups may not be reflected if this happens. Bombay Dyeing used a celebrity (for men's suiting) who may have been above the identification plane of the target segment.

There may be an alternative of creating a "Common-man appeal" for products like detergents and celebrities may have to be used carefully weighing a number of factors. Surf's Lalitaji typifying a middle class housewife may have been more effective than a glamorous celebrity for a product like detergent, which is for the mass market.

A "common-man appeal" brings in spontaneous identification with the commercial. The consumer feels a person like him or her is benefit the and hence identify with the brand. Ariel used this appeal with its candid camera technique. (A consumer in a super-market rejecting a free packet of another detergent in preference to Ariel).

When there are already a number of celebrities in the category, a new brand attempting the celebrity route may not be the best alternative. With a proliferation of celebrities in the cola category, one cannot imagine Sport cola (from Cadbury Schweppes) taking the celebrity route.

When a new concept product is introduced like an electric shaver, new to the Indian context, selling the product benefits is more important and hence the celebrity route if attempted has to be implemented on a low-key in a manner that would highlight the benefits of the product.

The image given by a celebrity to a brand should be sustained with appropriate appeals over a period of time. Rajdoot was associated with a rugged and tough film celebrity to appeal to the rural market almost a decade back when Hero Honda was gaining ground. The appeal was able to sustain Rajdoot, but the image of the bike would have been strengthened if the initial appeal had been reinforced in the past few years.

Reference group appeals could provide a creative dimension to brands if marketers are drawn by the rationale of using celebrities rather than by the emotion and excitement of celebrity usage.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The field of consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of product, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. And understanding the consumer behavior is the prime and toughest task in front of every marketer. There are a lot of factors, which influence consumer buyer behavior. This study aimed at to understand the "influence of celebrity endorsee on consumer buying behavior and marketing."

Marketers pay millions of Dollars to celebrity endorsee hoping that the stars will bring their magic to brand they endorse and make them more appealing and successful. But all celebrity glitter is not gold.

Celebrity sources may enhance attitude change for a variety of reasons. They may attract more attention to the advertisement than would non-celebrities or in many cases, they may be viewed as more credible than non-celebrities. Third, consumers may identify with or desire to emulate the celebrity. Finally, consumer may associate known characteristics of the celebrity with attributes of the product that coincide with their own needs or desire. The effectiveness of using a celebrity to endorse a firm's product can generally be improved by matching the image of the celebrity with the personality of the product and the actual or desired self concept of the target market.

What therefore seems relevant by the study is that, yes, definitely celebrity endorsee influence consumer buying behavior and brand building but while using celebrity endorsee, marketer has to take care of all the aspect that whether the brought personality and image of celebrity matches or not, whether

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celebrity endorsee has deep penetration among the masses or not, whether he is considered as credible source or not etc.

CONCLUSION

Understanding buying behavior of customer is the toughest task for a marketer, we can identify the factors, which influence purchase decisions, but it is next to impossible to know which factor influence when. We have countless permutation and combination for it, each individual has different behavior and different influencing factors.

Marketers spend millions of dollars on advertising and especially on celebrities. Hoping that the stars will bring their magic to the products and services they endorse and make them more appealing a successful. But, all that celebrity glitter is not gold, but it can be. If appropriately used, celebrity advertising has paid off and definitely influenced the purchase decision. Celebrity endorsement does a premium in term of impact and memorability. There is also a position influence on persuasion, though less strong.

It is not enough that the celebrity is the advertising be remembered, more important, the brand must be. In using celebrities as endorsed, advertisers need to understand not only how to choose celebrities but also how to use them in advertising. The strategy and creative execution should reinforce strongly and consistently the celebrity brand association. And the celebrity should not only evoke positive retains, but helps focus attention on the brand in the advertising. Thus the product will be made more desirable because of its association with the star.

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