



A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MARKETING MIX USED BY STARBUCKS IN INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the marketing mix of Starbucks in two different markets. The objective is to understand and analyze the similarities and differences of the marketing mix strategy by the company. The two chosen markets are: India and the United States of America. Both the markets are at a different level of lifecycle. Whereas Starbucks is operational in the USA since decades, it is only nearly half a decade old in India and has a lot of untapped potential to offer. USA is the home country for Starbucks and was chosen to be partner after almost 40 years of its existence. Yet, Starbucks localizes a lot of functions whereas keeps a handful global. Starbucks was found in Seattle, Washington (USA) in the year 1971. The first store was located in the historic Pike Place Market (Starbucks, 2016 Our Heritage). The first store in India was opened in October, 2012 as a joint venture with Tata Global Beverages Ltd. The outlets are branded as 'Starbucks, A Tata Alliance'. (Agarwal,2012) The USA's market has evolved over a number of years. The market in India is growing at a fast pace yet a lot of it remains unexplored. This paper aims to study the 7 P's of Marketing Mix and make a comparative study between the similarities as well as the differences in both the markets.

KEYWORDS: STARBUCKS, MARKETING MIX, 7Ps, COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

STARBUCKS

Starbucks had started as a small single store in Pike Place Market, Seattle (Washington, USA). The name is inspired from 'Moby Dick'. Howard Schultz visited Starbucks in 1981 for the first time and joined it a year later. Howard once went to Italy and was totally awed by the concept of coffee bars and aspired to incorporate the romantic relation with coffee in the Starbucks experience as well. Starbucks, since the beginning does not sell merely coffee but an enriching connection. Starbucks mission statement (unveiled in 1990) is to inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time. It opened its first store outside USA in 1987 in Vancouver, Canada. (Starbucks, 2016 Company Information).

Starbucks entered in India as a joint venture with Tata Global Beverages Ltd. The outlets are branded as 'Starbucks, A Tata Alliance'. The first store was located at Hornimancircle, Mumbai. India became the first country where the sourcing and roasting of coffee is done locally. (Agarwal, 2012). Starbucks has adopted customization and localization strategies to win over the tea preferring population of India and is now proving to be the fastest growing country for the corporation.

As of April, 2017 Starbucks has 91 outlets in 8 cities of India and more than 13,500 stores in USA. The stark contrast in the number has been a major reason for choosing India and United States of America for the purpose of a comparative study in this paper. From this basic statistical difference, it can be inferred that Starbucks has established a huge presence in The USA whereas it is beginning to carve a niche for itself in India. The long established brand name has helped Starbucks achieve its momentum in India but it is long before that Starbucks is known as an indispensable part of the India coffee market the way it is in USA.

MARKETING MIX

The concept of the marketing mix and the 4Ps product, price, place and promotion entered into academic discussion around 1960s. The marketing mix built from a concept of the marketer as a 'mixer of ingredients' that plans various means of competition and blends them into a 'marketing mix' so that a profit function is optimized, or rather satisfied. (Gronroos, 1994). McCarthy (1975) formulated the concept of 4Ps- product, price, promotion and place marketing mix. For many years, these have been used as the principal foundation on which a marketing plan is based. However, with particular attention being paid to services in recent

years, theorists have identified additional variables which could be added to the 4Ps. The following are the additional 3Ps: process, physical and people.(Fifield and Gilligan,1996)

For the purpose of this paper, the following have been taken into consideration:

1. Product: Product offering, quantity and quality
2. Place: Ownership and location strategy
3. Price: A comparative analysis
4. Promotion: Advertising, sales promotion, community relations
5. People: Organisation structure, recruitments, training
6. Process: Supply chain management
7. Physical: Décor, ambience, service, experience.

PRODUCT

PRODUCT OFFERINGS:Starbucks has a few trademark drinks which are served same and alike in any given market of the world. The Frappuccino and the Teavana are two drinks which are available both in India as well as the United States of America. This ensures the customers get the same coffee experience in both parts of the world. The Frappuccino though does have certain international variants which are country specific like the Sakura in Japan and Blackberry Green Tea Frappuccino available in Philippines and Australia.

The other trademark drinks which are available in the USA but not in India include Fizzo handcrafted sodas and Starbucks refreshers beverages.

The product offerings in USA are quite varied as compared to what are offered in India. From the drinks section Cinnamon rolled Frappuccino Blended Coffee, Cotton Candy Crème Frappuccino Blended Crème, Coffee Traveler,IcedTeavana London Fog Tea Latte are few of the drinks currently not available in India. Out of the food menu, some of the items that are absent from the Indian market include Starbucks petites, protein boxes, hot breakfast, yogurt, fruit and spread and Starbucks snack collection.(Starbucks, 2016 Menu)

Additionally, Starbucks has customized its menu as per the local Indian requirements. No beef or pork containing items are served in India. (Agarwal, 2012) The food assortments include chicken Tikka Panini, ChatpataParantha Wrap, MurgKathi Wrap which are unique to India.

The tea section has India Spice majesty blend which is available only in India and has been introduced keeping in mind the tea preferring population. India Spice Majesty Blend is a blend of full leaf Assam black tea infused with whole cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, pepper, star anise and ginger. Tata coffee supplies the Indian roasted coffee to be used in espressos. It also offers Alphonso special in summers and Christmas special in winters.(Starbucks,2016 Menu List)

Starbucks also sells bottled versions of its drinks. There are 50 variants available in USA whereas only basic Frappuccino flavours can be found in India. Starbucks also sells coffee beans and coffee mugs whose sales are regulated as per local requirements of each country.

QUANTITY: The sizes of coffee glasses remain same in both the countries. The following are drink sizes as offered by Starbucks:

1. Demi: Demi, meaning half in French is used to define an espresso shot. The size measures three ounces (89 ml).
2. Short: This particular size is majorly available for hot drinks and is not very popularly used at Starbucks. Short, is one of the original two sizes that Starbucks used to offer (other being tall). It measures eight fluid ounces (240 ml)
3. Tall: This was the original large, when Starbucks had started. It measures 12 fluid ounces (350 ml)
4. Grande: 'Grande' means large in 'Italian'. Starbucks grande is 16 fluid ounces (470 ml)
5. Venti: 'Venti' is Italian for twenty. A venti measures 20 fluid ounces (590 ml). This is the only drink size literally represents the number of ounces in it.
6. Trenta: introduced in May, 2011 trenta is the largest drink size available. Trenta contains 31 ounces (920 ml). It is reserved for iced drinks only. (Lindsey, 2017)

QUALITY: The quality standards of all products are maintained by the global standards and any product failing to do so is discarded.

In USA and globally Starbucks adheres to the SCS Global Standards (They provide trusted third party verification and certification on sustainable development). SCS inspects and verifies the supply of highly quality, ethically sourced coffee and cocoa. (SCS, 2016 Starbucks Ethical Sourcing)

In India, Starbucks works diligently with the Food safety and standards authority of India to ensure all the ingredients are approved by this food regulator. Subsequently, it even removed a few ingredients which failed to pass the tests by FSSAI. Whatever is imported into India, it is

made sure that FSSAI approved ingredients meet the global Starbucks standards as well. (PTI, 2015)

PLACE

In his book "Pour Your Heart Into It,"(1997) Howard Schultz described in more detail why he's opposed to franchising, admitting he wants to maintain a "fanatical" level of control over his stores. He mentioned that he considers franchisees as middlemen who would stand between them and the customers. They teach the barsistas to impart the customers the passion they hold. The employees are referred to as partners and that is why they understand the vision and the value system of the company.

Starbucks had its initial public offering (IPO) on the stock market in 1992. Most of the stores in USA are company owned and operated or licensed whereas all the stores in India are in 50-50 Joint venture with the Tata Global Beverages Ltd.

LOCATION STRATEGY: Starbucks' location strategy focuses on urban centers, especially those with large middle and upper class populations. Most of its cafés are in densely populated areas. Also, Starbucks occasionally uses strategic clustering of cafés in the same geographic area to gain market share and drive competitors away. This decision area of operations management shows that Starbucks emphasizes areas with affluent consumers who could afford its premium priced products.(Gregory, 2017)

The USA is well settled market. Through the decades Starbucks has established more than 13,500 stores. There is a Starbucks for every neighbourhood. Some of the Starbucks' are so close to one another that a customer can see both the outlets in one frame. It is believed that such a strategy reduces the waiting time and the length of the queues. Also, Starbucks owns almost all its store so there is no fear of one outlet alienating client from another. (10news, 2012). This however does not guarantee equal distribution of stores across USA. U.S. Census data on race and income shows 83 percent of Starbucks stores in the U.S. serve predominately white areas, mostly wealthy or middle class ones.

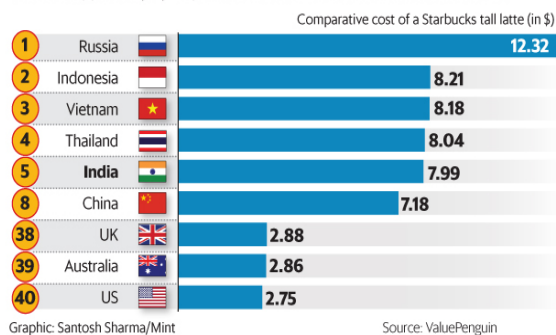
DISTRIBUTION: Starbucks sells all of its products directly at its outlets. Apart from direct selling, Starbucks sells bottled versions of its drinks in regular grocery stores and has opened stores within other store as well. This scenario is quite prevalent in USA. In India, there is a meager presence of bottled versions.

PRICING

The pricing decision as told by Sushant Dash, Senior Director – Marketing and Category, Tata Starbucks Limited is not based on any benchmarks across countries. It is based on what value Starbucks thinks it is going to give to consumers and how much they can charge for the value. (Nagpal, 2013)

Starbucks is extremely passionate about their favourite, drinks, location and the experience each customer gets on every visit. This is the reason Starbucks provides differentiated products at premium prices.

According to the Latte Index, a ranking of the cost of a tall hot latte at Starbucks in 44 countries, India was the fifth most expensive country to purchase the beverage based on January 2016 prices. The index published by US-based consumer research firm ValuePenguin found that a tall hot latte cost US\$7.99 in India, far higher than the \$2.75 it costs in the cheapest country, the United States, but much lower than the \$12.32 in the most expensive country, Russia. (Anonymous, 2017)



PROMOTION

Starbucks does not spend heavily on its direct advertising strategies. Its top priority remains to give customers a satisfying experience so much so that the customers spread the awareness by the word of mouth. Though, the foundation stone of its promotional strategy remains sturdy all over the world, it adopts localized sales promotion, advertising and awareness tools in every country.

In USA, Starbucks believes that they still not have been able to conceive a way for a TV advertisement to repeat that, to capture the heart and soul of the company. Starbucks runs occasional ads for certain products, and toward the end of each year it buys holiday-season advertising. There's also a full-page ad in The New York Times every Sunday focusing on

subjects such as environmental awareness. Starbucks also hosts and co-hosts parties and national level campaigns, which are not deemed to be advertising expense and their monetary values are kept under the veils. Starbucks spends merely 1.5% of its revenues on advertising. Starbucks offers numerous offers which are rarely displayed of. For example on 15 March, 2015, it hosted a nationwide coffee break and offered free coffee to customers across all stores in US from 10 am to noon that day. (Allison, 2016)

In India too Starbucks follows the policy of localized promotions. It is believed that marketing is a two way communication with the customer and therefore the focus is on engagement marketing. On the basis of this, efforts are being put to make Starbucks ‘the third place’ after home and office, to be. The flagship stores are designed in mind keeping in view the neighbourhood and the culture surrounding it so that it fits in perfectly. This will help customers to recognize Starbucks as a distinct community gathering place, as told by ManmeetVohra , Director, Marketing and Category, Tata Starbucks(Nair, 2016)

Starbucks also started #MyMood #MyStarbucks which allows customers to describe their current mood and get their drinks customized as per the mood with a view to personalize its marketing strategies. (Agarwal, 2016)

The digital handles are considered the 4th dimension. It is given same importance in both countries. The websites of both the countries are well maintained. The global website which falls under USA domain has a very extensive menu listed on its website. It offers an additional categorization, apart from food and drinks section which is on the basis of the nutritional value each product offers. With transparency in the ingredients and the calorie intake with each for item it makes sure the consumer knows what they are consuming. Such details are absent from the Indian counterpart. (Starbucks, 2016 Menu). The websites are regularly updated with all the current promotional offers available.

The global ‘Starbucks’ Facebook page has 36 million likes (as of 18 June, 2017) and the ‘Starbucks India’ Facebook page has 1.14 million likes (as of 18 June, 2017). The Twitter handle of ‘Starbucks’ has 11.9 million followers while the Indian counterpart ha 119k followers. (Source: the Official pages on Facebook/Twitter)

CUSTOMER LOYALTY PROGRAMS: The reward points and customer loyalty programs are similar in both the markets. My Starbucks Rewards customer loyalty program is an effective tool that plays an instrumental role to implement most sales promotion initiatives in practice. The program allows registered customers to “collect Stars and earn more rewards with every visit to

Starbucks” (Dudovskiy, 2017). The rewards include “buy one get one free” drinks, a complimentary slice of cake in birthday month of customers with any handcrafted drink purchased, complimentary drink customization and others.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS: Starbucks ensures that it is always giving back to the community and is following ethical standards of working. Starbucks strives to maintain cordial relations with every community all over the world hence, has handles local issues in every geographical area.

For example, Starbucks USA will contribute \$0.25 of every drink 6 June, 2017 to 19 June, 2017 for every sale from its Cups of Kindness range to the Born This Way Foundation. It helps to pay the college fees of its employees in partnership with Arizona State University. In 2013, Starbucks committed to hiring 10,000 Veterans and Military spouses by November, 2018. In March, 2017 the goal was attained so the and pledge increased to 25,000 by 2025. Starbucks also plans to dedicate 100 more Military Family Stores across the U.S by 2022. It also gives people opportunity to join community services by finding projects in their nearby locations and volunteering for the same.(Starbucks, 2016 Responsibility)

Starbucks, along with Tata in India has been working to improve the lives of coffee growing communities in the State of Karnataka through ‘Swastha’. It started as a school for children with special needs and now aims to be more inclusive. Starbucks continues to work with the Community, Health and Advancement Initiative (CHAI)—a collaboration between the Starbucks Foundation, Tazo® Tea, Mercy Corps, Indian tea companies and origin communities in India and Guatemala. The collaboration aims to improve access to water and sanitation and inculcate leadership and entrepreneurial skills.(Starbucks In, 2016 Responsibility)

There are certain issues common across the whole world and Starbucks hopes to help those in need at the global level by taking my measures such as by making a Global Commitment to Hire 10,000 Refugees by 2022. It makes ethical farming decisions, provides loans to farmers and has collaborative farming programs. It has eight year’s collaboration with (RED) and all funds generated through (STARBUCKS)RED campaigns go to the Global Fund to help finance HIV/AIDS prevention, education and treatment programs. The Starbucks Foundation was created as part of our commitment to strengthen communities. It supports literacy and opportunities for the youth and social development all around the globe. (Starbucks, 2016 Responsibility)

PEOPLE

Starbucks has divided its employees into two categories: The Retail and The Corporate. The retail employees, who work at the storefronts, are referred to as ‘partners’ all over the world. The corporate segment is said to be the ‘support center’ as it provides a solid back to the retail segment.

Retail segment is the face of Starbucks. All the employees are a very important part of the organisation because it is they, who present the Starbucks culture to all the customers. The baristas (or the entry level partners) are majorly given on-the-job training. They are taught by working closely with the Shift Managers and honest feedbacks help them to improve over the period of time. The hierarchy of positions in the retail segment is:

1. Baristas: The indispensable part of Starbucks. These are the people who interact with the customers and indulge in engagement marketing.
2. Shift Supervisors/ Managers: They are the partners who impact the store decisions and run the team and store operations for the duration of a particular shift.
3. Assistant Store Managers: They are developing retail management skills through hands on training and getting ready for the supervisory and coaching skills and business sense required at the future levels.
4. Store Managers: They connect with the customers and their communities, fostering a deep sense of purpose at Starbucks. They run and grow their business, lead great teams, and build a meeting place in their communities.
5. District Managers: They are accountable for all stores in their district and responsible for building local strategies to manage their performance by knowing their markets, their communities and their customers.
6. Regional Directors: Regional Directors provide leadership for roughly 90-100 stores, driving long-term growth and business development for new and existing stores. (Starbucks, 2016 Retail Careers)

A new partner remains in the training period for the first four weeks of his joining. A coach is always there to guide and direct him. It follows a ‘tell, show and do’ process. They are also taught the values of customer relation building and the rich heritage of Starbucks. Partners learn to interact and understand the customer along with the skills of preparing coffees and serving them. (Fowler)

At later stages as well, Starbucks provides enough progressive training to employees to make sure the partners also progress up the career ladder. This training is provided on the job and off the job as well.

Starbucks also has a tie up with Arizona State University, which allows an opportunity for all benefits eligible U.S. partners (all brands) to complete a bachelor's degree with full-tuition coverage for every year of college. It is yet to offer such an incentive in India. In USA, Starbucks also offers a wide range of perks to certain eligible employees like discounted stock purchase options, adoption assistance, health coverage, sabbaticals and in store discounts. It also provides reasonable accommodations to job applicants with disabilities. It also supports by providing employment opportunities to veterans and military spouses. All over the globe, Starbucks has a commitment to provide work opportunities to refugees as well. (Starbucks, 2016 Careers)

The corporate careers are divided into: Administrative and Support services; Channel and Business Development; Finance and Accounting; Global Supply Chain Management; Legal; Marketing, Partner (Human) Resources; Public affairs, Communication and Community; Research and Development; Retail; Store Development; Design and Creative Studio and technology.(Starbucks, 2016 Corporate Careers)

The Starbucks culture respects diversity and inclusion. The goal is to build a diverse workforce, increase competencies, shape a culture of inclusion and develop a diverse network of suppliers. Starbucks Corporation is an Equal Opportunity employer. All qualified applicants receive consideration for employment without regard to race, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, gender identity or expression, or any other basis protected by local, state or federal law. (Starbucks, 2016 Careers)

PROCESS

Starbucks has a global supply chain and adheres to a common methodology globally. Starbucks obtains its raw materials from all over the world and supplies to every local store. In 2008, Starbucks realized it was overspending on operating expenses which were tied to outsourcing agreements for transportation, third-party logistics, and contract manufacturing. It reorganized its supply chain the same year on three foundation stones: 1. By simplifying the structure and defining functional roles more clearly

2. By focusing on reducing the cost of serve its stores while improving its day-to-day supply chain execution.

3. By laying the foundation for improved supply chain capability for the future as well.

The supply chain is divided into four categories: planning, sourcing (further sub divided into coffee and non-coffee), making and delivery.

Starbucks procures each specific coffee from different regions of the world and ships it across all stores. This involves huge transportation and delivery costs. From the port of entry the unroasted beans are trucked to storage sites for roasting and packing. The finished product is trucked to regional distribution centers which might be company owned or a third party company logistics. These centers handle everything that retail outlets need- everything from furniture to cappuccino mix. Depending on their location, the stores are supplied by either the large, regional DCs or by smaller warehouses called central distribution centers (CDCs). Almost all of CDCs are third party owned. They deliver all that a retail store needs including products like dairy products, baked goods cups, napkins etc. on a weekly basis. Starbucks also constantly measures and ranks the performance of the third party logistic companies to ensure that the costs and wastages are minimal.

Although Starbucks has a raft of metrics for evaluating supply chain performance, it focuses on four high-level categories to create consistency and balance across the global supply chain team: safety in operations, service measured by on-time delivery and order fill rates, total end-to-end supply chain costs, and enterprise savings. This last refers to cost savings that come from areas outside logistics, such as procurement, marketing, or research and development.(Cooke,2010)

PHYSICAL

At Starbucks, it is believed that the store should reflect back its roots. Since, the coffee is obtained from earth, utmost care is given to ensure the stores have minimal negative impact on the environment. The design, construction, building methods, materials and more are chosen with regard to the same. The design is always such that it invokes a feeling of belonging. The designs aim to connect everyone with sustainable design practices which not harm the environment the least but also conserve electricity and water.

Each store reflects the unique character of the neighbourhood to where it belongs. Similarly, the flagship stores In India and the USA reflect the unique culture and tradition of every territory where it operates. Starbucks design studios are located all around the globe so that the designers can fully understand the community they serve. (Starbucks, 2016 Store Design)

The interiors are often localized but the experience is not. Starbucks always aim to establish a human connect which would last longer than a cup of coffee. Therefore, the experience and the services provided remain globalized. All stores, in India or USA would offer the same kind of services and a similar experience.

The experience is determined by the virtue people are looking out for at Starbucks as well. In United states, to grab a cup and rush might be a prevalent virtue whereas in India people look out for a completely eatery experience. Starbucks ensures that its customers get whatever they are seeking. Comfortable sitting, pleasant ambience and good services will be found at every Starbucks store all over the world.

Starbucks offers free exchange if the customer is not happy with the coffee or accidentally spills inside the store. Starbucks stores also offer free Wi-Fi to all customers.

CONCLUSION

Starbucks as seen and analyzed has a core basic value which is reflected in every marketing element. It aims to provide customers with an experience so enriching that it is not only coffee that brings them back. It focuses a lot on the human element and the engagement with the community. As analysed, a globalized approach is followed in offering of trademarked products matching the global quality standards. This helps Starbucks to create a differentiated offering and be able to charge a premium pricing. It follows a single method of supply chain management to ensure timely and effective weekly delivery of products at all the retail outlets. The way people, which includes their employees as well as the community at large are handled remains common all throughout the world. Starbucks believes word of mouth to be the most effective way of communicating with people and avoids passive methods of advertising. Sales promotion and discounts and other offers follow a localization policy. The corporation localizes certain product assortments to cater to unique cultures of any given regions. The major control of the company is in the hands of the owners in the home country whereas it chose to have a joint venture when entering India to avoid franchising. All in all, Starbucks works to maintain a standard global image and follow the policies of localization optimally to not dilute the global Starbucks experience.

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