



Thoughts on an Umbrella Brand Strategy for Tata Consumer Products

By Geeta Sundaram

Why Tata Consumer Products needs a new branding strategy

As part of the restructuring within Tata companies, Tata Tea and Tata Global beverages were merged and rechristened Tata Consumer Products Ltd. For a while Tata Coffee stayed a separate company, but perhaps it is also now part of Tata Consumer Products Ltd. as it indeed should be.

The Company makes a wide range of products which spans beverages such as tea, coffee and water, as well as food products such as lentils, spices, salt, and perhaps some others that I am not aware of.

I am not aware of what plans the company might have for the future either, but even with such a wide range of products, a branding strategy becomes essential. For even within teas, they have a range of offerings, including Tetley, a British brand which they acquired decades ago. In coffee too, they have Indian brands as well as American brands such as Eight O'clock Coffee and Starbucks, the latter being a strategic alliance, while the former was an acquisition.

Tata Consumer Products also has formidable competition in the Indian market in the form of well-established companies, many of them multinationals, such as Nestle and Hindustan Unilever. Then, there are other FMCG companies such as ITC.

To manage their range of brands better and to take on competition more effectively, Tata Consumer Products needs to have a branding strategy that reflects the corporate brand and its vision.

Competition

In different product categories, Tata Consumer Products faces competition from different companies and brands.

- Hindustan Unilever (tea, coffee)
- Twinings (tea)
- Nestle (coffee)
- ITC (cooking ingredients such as lentils/wheat flour etc)
- Adani Fortune (ditto)
- Everest, MDH, Catch (spices and condiments)
- Coca Cola, Pepsi, Bisleri (packaged water)

Not only do we have multiple competitors across product categories, many of the products straddle several consumer segments, based on quality and price.

An umbrella branding strategy will help position Tata Consumer Products' brands as superior to competition across product categories as well as consumer segments. This would require the company to identify a core consumer group for all their products and to position itself distinctively in their minds. In fact, the objective for Tata Consumer Products ought to be to raise the consumer profile of their brands. Consumers from segments above and below this core segment too (in socio-economic terms) are welcome to join and the idea of such an umbrella brand would be to attract them as well.

Target Audience

Because Tata Consumer Products Ltd is not likely to be able to match the distribution strength and muscle of HUL, Nestle and ITC (since FMCG is the sole business for these companies) the strategy should be to focus on a specific upscale audience that resides in Indian metros and Class 1 towns. This will mean Tata Consumer Products will have to raise the level of their product as well as pricing.

The target consumer ought to be upper-middle class to affluent households in urban India, especially the metros and Tier 1 cities. More importantly, these would be families that are cosmopolitan and international in their food habits and enjoy consuming food and drink from different parts of the country and the world. They would also be people who have slightly sophisticated tastes in food and drink, even if not connoisseurs. The kind of households that like to cook Chinese, Thai, Italian and continental meals at home, for a change once in a while.

Therefore, these are people who enjoy good food and like cooking themselves, now and then, even if not every day.

Vision statement

Although the vision and mission of the company should be arrived at after discussion between the top management of a company, I am trying to articulate what ought to be the vision of the company for the purposes of this document.

The direction I am recommending for the vision statement is to help Tata Consumer Products Ltd achieve some kind of leadership in the FMCG food and beverages industry, both in market share terms as well as in brand image terms. It must be one of the three most considered brands in each category among our target audience.

Vision: To be the preferred brand of choice in foods and beverages by bringing consumers a range of pure, well-sourced and refined tastes and flavours from India and around the world over the next decade.

Mission statement

To help consumers live zestfully, by bringing them a range of fine quality food and beverage products that are unmatched in purity and taste, and sourced from the best regions in the country and the world.

Recommended brand strategy

Tata Consumer Products can compete better with all its varied competitors across several product categories if it

- Premiumises its product offerings
- Positions itself distinctly from competition
- Aligns its brand positioning better with the overall Tata corporate brand

This can be best achieved through an umbrella brand at the intermediate level, between product and corporate brand.

I recommend an umbrella brand, Tierra, meaning the earth or land and all the goodness that it promises us. Tierra can work in one of two ways:

- As an umbrella brand across all product categories
- As an umbrella brand for the food cooking ingredients category such as lentils, flour etc. With similar brands for beverages as well as spices and condiments: Terracea and Terrine respectively.

Brand positioning of Tierra

Tierra food and beverages are for those who live life zestfully.

Brand promise

Tierra helps you savour the finest quality food and beverages from the best regions in India and around the world.

How Tierra can help build Tata Consumer Products Ltd

- This umbrella brand strategy helps the company build its brands in a more cohesive way, with enough room for growth as new products/line extensions are added in future

- It helps Tata build a strong brand in packaged consumer goods in a way similar to Titan and Tanishq
- It helps raise the fine quality of its products, especially against stiff competition
- As a brand, it will stand for fine quality food and beverage products sourced from the best regions
- Therefore, it will help Tata build a strong brand in what is otherwise a highly commoditized business
- If Tierra and the other brands gain traction and acceptance among the core consumer group, the categories themselves can expand to include new products such as nutmeg and saffron in spices, or soups in foods, and specialty teas such as chamomile, jasmine, etc.

It is important to note, however, that brands that Tata Consumer Products has acquired overseas or has an alliance with, such as Tetley, Eight O'clock and Starbucks will continue to remain stand-alone brands, as these are already well-established in their home markets and overseas.

Brand identity

Like Titan and Tanishq, Tierra and other brands will have as their instantly recognizable symbol, the alphabet T designed in a way that works with the food and beverages category.

The main stem of the T perhaps leading to floral ornamentation in the form of sepals and tendrils, done in a highly elegant, subtle and artistic manner.

Branding Strategy 1:



Branding Strategy 2:



Research requirements

Both these branding strategies first need to be tested among the relevant target audience groups, to ascertain acceptance, comprehension, distinctiveness, image associations, etc.

They ought to be researched as positioning concepts, not advertising campaigns, leading to further insights and improvements for finetuning the brand strategy and finally for creating the brand communication.



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