



A STUDY ON CUSTOMER ACQUISITION THROUGH MARKETING TECHNIQUES USED BY CONCU, OVERCOMING THE COMPETITION

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ABSTRACT

Marketing strategy is a long-term, forward-looking approach to planning with the fundamental goal of achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. Strategic planning involves an analysis of the company's strategic initial situation prior to the formulation, evaluation and selection of market-oriented competitive position that contributes to the company's goals and marketing objectives. The aim of the study was to identify the way the target customers looked at Conçu and how their needs and expectations of the business are reached. The research work thus conducted was focused on analysing the viewpoint of the business in becoming a brand. The study concluded that people prefer Conçu for their top-notch quality and over the past ten years the quality has been constant without any degradation in taste and the variety of cakes & desserts introduced and also the prices are maintained.

Key Words: Concu, Marketing Strategies, Segmenting, Positioning, Customer, Brand

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Philip Kotler defines marketing as “the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. Marketing is the process of getting potential clients or customers interested in your products and services. Marketing involves researching, promoting, selling, and distributing your products or services.

According to American Marketing Association, marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. This discipline centres on the study of market and consumer behaviours and it analyses the commercial management of companies in order to attract, acquire, and retain customers by satisfying their wants and needs and instilling brand loyalty.

A marketing mix includes multiple areas of focus as part of a comprehensive marketing plan. Effective marketing touches on a broad range of areas as opposed to fixating on one message. Doing so helps reach a wider audience, and by keeping the seven elements in mind, marketing professionals are better able to maintain focus on the things that really matter. Focusing on a marketing mix helps organizations make strategic decisions when launching new products or revising existing products.

Elements of Service Marketing Mix:

- **Product** – The customer cares about one thing, what your product can do for them. Thus, you should prioritize optimizing product in terms of design, quality, features, options etc.
- **Price** – price is the main ‘make or break’ factor for any product. Pricing strategies should be used to attract customers and gain market position.
- **Promotion** -Promotion is the part of the marketing mix that the public notices most. It includes television and print advertising, content marketing, coupons or scheduled discounts, social media strategies, email marketing, display ads, digital strategies, marketing communication, search engine marketing, public relations and more.
- **Place** - Where will you sell your product? The same market research that informed your product and price decisions will inform your placement as well, which goes beyond physical locations.
- **People** - People refers to anyone who comes in contact with your customer, even indirectly, so make sure you're recruiting the best talent at all levels—not just in customer service and sales force.
- **Physical Evidence** – Physical evidence refers to everything your customers see when interacting with your business. It includes – 1) The physical environment; 2) The layout or interior design; 3) The packaging; and 4) The branding
- **Process**- Prioritize processes that overlap with the customer experience. The more specific and seamless your processes are, the more smoothly your staff can carry them out. If your staff isn't focused on navigating procedures, they have more attention available for customers—translating directly to personal and exceptional customer experiences.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the marketing strategies used by the business.
2. To understand SWOT analysis of the business.
3. To study customer acquisition.
4. To study the survival of the business despite comparatively higher prices

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the survey was to identify the way the target customers looked at Conçu and how their needs and expectations of the business are reached. The research work thus conducted was focused on analysing the viewpoint of the business in becoming a brand.

Our project is mainly focused on one of the branches of concu that is located in Sainikpuri. Though our project talks about concu as a whole, our main source of primary information was gathered from this particular branch. The total period that was taken to complete the project is 3 months. Starting from February 2022 to April 2022

NEED OF THE STUDY

After conducting personal interview with manager of Conçu it was found that the business is working towards expansion of its operations. Conçu constantly looks for techniques to maximise consumer reach and increase efficiency of its operations.

The aim of study is to understand how a newly emerged patisserie is able to establish itself in a competitive market without compromise of price or quality.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Time factor and restriction: Most of our respondents didn't have the time to fill out questionnaires or answer us while conducting personal interviews. As they have busy schedules and do not find time to answer us and fill the questionnaires.

Biased answers from respondents: Keeping in mind the individuality of the respondent, the answers we got from the respondents were quite different. It was very difficult for us to derive a conclusion as the opinions were quite different.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data consists of Interview with the business manager; Questionnaire for customers to understand their perspective and personal experience at Concu; Information about Concu, its operations, strategies used, customer approach; and Information about our primary location, Concu Sainikpuri. The Secondary Data was taken from Concu Website; and Social Media handles.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

1. ANALYSE THE MARKETING STRATEGIES USED BY THE BUSINESS

Conçu has been making customers feel cosy with its Hot chocolate, the cafe serves seasonal crafts such as dipped strawberries in the winter and mango-based cakes in the summer. These type of seasonal based good not only attract customers but also keep the idea of customer satisfaction. A recent addition to the menu is All Day Breakfast comprising of Eggs Benedict, Eggs Florentine to give an example of English breakfasts. Also, the cafe serves Shakshuka, a North African/Middle Eastern dish thus bringing diversity among traditional Indian breakfasts. Breakfast in a café.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, Concu faced some difficulties as there was a wide spread lockdown in Hyderabad. Lockdown restrictions gave a huge loss to many businesses. The only time anyone could run the shop is from 6:00 am to 11:30 am. Concu took this as an opportunity rather than a threat. This gave birth to the idea of breakfast. Concu provides a card which can be redeemed by grabbing 9th hot beverage at free of cost for all the 8 hot beverages bought before.

Customer satisfaction is the first priority. Concu uses marketing tactics such as chocolate boxes, hampers for Valentine's Day, plum cakes for Christmas and sweet relish hampers for Diwali draws in the attention of many. This not only attracts the customers but meets their requirements. Rise in technology has made life easier. In cities like Hyderabad, we have can order food with just a click away. Concu used this opportunity. From Pancakes to Cakes all of Concu menu can be ordered through Zomato. Concu holds an outstanding star rating on 4.9 out of 5 on Zomato. The highest any Café, restaurant or bakery has.

1.1 Concu and CSR Activity: Concu volunteers in corporate social responsibility by trading hampers with NGOs at a little price. The NGO's which bought these hampers sell them to IT industry at market price making coin of a profit which in turn helps them to provide for the needy. Concu maintains important morals such as diversity, equity, inclusion and participating in fair trade. Investing self in socially and environmentally conscious agendas by using paper straws and minimal plastic.

1.2 Concu's STP Model:

Segmenting: Concu is segmented as a patisserie, cafe, bakery and comfort foods industry. Concu has made a geographical segmentation according to the tastes and preferences of customer at various places. Concu has made a Demographic segmentation such as it has Food according to the age of the customers for middle aged string of crowd, they provide customised products. For the aged people to devour Quality food. Concu has made a psychographic segmentation consists of grouping the target audience based on their behaviour and lifestyle. Concu has made a behavioural segmentation by Considering the Likes and dislikes of customer string. It focuses on specific reactions and the way customers go through their purchasing processes.

Targeting: Targeting determines which customer group to focus your marketing efforts on.

Concu targets all the customer group irrespective of their age and income level. It has various Ideas to target customers namely: On valentine's day they design Concu with heart symbols and red theme; On festivals they Provide hampers; They Customize various cakes and pastries.

Positioning: It is the process of creating a distinct mental position or image of a product or a service in the minds of customer as compared to other brands in the market. It is all about how Concu is able to attract and retain customers though they are many other Patisseries and bakeries as competition. It is able to project itself as best when compared to others. Concu is considered as a symbol of quality and taste in the minds of people.

1.3 Events and Treats by Conçu:

- Christmas market is held every year at their flagship store.
- Workshops on making Christmas cards, tags and clay ornaments are also conducted.
- Coffee Master class around the Christmas holidays are held and lead by Master Suhas Dwarakanath.
- PALĀŚAH, NALINI, GÜL, ÜRJĀ, NISARG are the treat boxes from Conçu.
- TEJOMAYA is the name of their Diwali Hampers which includes delights from the cafe.

After conducting an Interview with the business managers, it was found that Concu uses marketing Strategies such as Social Media Marketing (Instagram); Word of mouth; Website; Theme based marketing; and Customized Cakes and items

The Business uses these promotional strategies extensively and does it continuously. Concu mainly focuses on customers satisfaction. As the trend for quality food is growing, people are getting interested in quality food with great taste.

Concu's main source of marketing is its people. Concu does not invest any money particularly on advertisement. As the branch manager explains, the main source of marketing is word of mouth. That's explains its slow and study growth.

Other marketing strategies include Season- Seasonal fruits, Valentine's day- customized chocolate, Christmas- Plum cakes, Diwali hampers, Summer- Mango based desserts, Instagram marketing, Stories of Instagram, Snapchat-70% (word of mouth).

Out of the 100 People who had responded to our Survey, and said they know about Conçu, when asked what they liked best about Concu's menu, 23 people said that there are many options to choose from, 27 people said that they like the seasonal menu, 17 people said that they liked simplified menu, 1 person said that she liked the font used in the menu.

When asked about how frequently they visit Conçu, 0 respondents said every day, 13 respondents said once a week, 23 respondents said frequently and 32 respondents said they visit Conçu very rarely.

When asked if Concu's menu is varied enough to satisfy everyone's preference, 47 respondents said yes, 17 respondents said no and 4 respondents said maybe.

When asked if they were satisfied with Concu's menu, 47 respondents said yes, 17 respondents said no and 4 respondents said maybe.

When asked if they would add anything to Concu's menu, 22 respondents said yes, 41 respondents said no and 5 respondents said maybe. Those who responded yes, when asked what they would add, said they would add simpler dessert items, cold beverages, ice cream options

When asked why they visit Conçu despite of prices being high, 31 respondents said ambience, 13 respondents said Quality of food, and 22 respondents said Taste and 2 responded other things.

When asked if Concu accommodates their dietary restriction, 54 respondents said yes, 5 respondents said no and 9 respondents said maybe.

The Key Strategies include Each store is operated by its own staff; Manager who works in Conçu invest in a new outlet; Employee retention is practiced to maintain quality; No franchise; Not a monopoly and Market share-high in terms of location.

1.2 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE BUSINESS

For any business to sustain and survive in the market has to keep Swot in mind. Swot analysis helps the business to be prepared for future outcomes.

STRENGTHS ▪ Quality ▪ Centralized Kitchen ▪ Experienced staff ▪ Good seating arrangement ▪ Taste and quantity	WEAKNESSES ▪ High Price for small quantity. ▪ Biased opinions ▪ Marketing strategies ▪ Limited shelf life of items
OPPORTUNITIES ▪ Availability of human resource ▪ Interested customers (helps to new product development) ▪ Location of the patisseries	THREATS ▪ Concu's pricing strategy ▪ Competition from other patisseries ▪ Quantity of food ▪ External threats like pandemic

1.3 CUSTOMER ACQUISITION

The main source of marketing for Concu, is word of mouth. Through the survey conducted we understand that the customers are satisfied with the idea of Concu. Both the Company and the Customers are clear on what they need.

Most of the customers are regular, as noticed while interviewing the manager. The target customers are rich and upper middle class. We also notice that the customers are willing to pay the higher prices set by the patisserie, this shows that the customers are focused in the Taste and Quality of the food.

Concu acquires its customers through the taste and quality of the food and not to forget the vibe that Concu's ambience gives. Concu is not only acquiring customers but it is also focused on customer retention.

1.3.1 How does Concu retain its customers?

Concu provides best quality of food and best ambience. That is the simple answer, but the actual reason why customers keep coming back to concu is its brand value. Young customers like students and employees see visiting Concu as a status symbol. And not to forget the fact that they do provide the best service.

1.3.2 Concu's Gap Model

Gap Model provides the roadmap for the overall service delivery process and it identifies the gap between the processes so that the complete model of service quality helps to identify the gaps between the received service and expected service.

Gap 1: Gap Between management perception and customer expectation.

This kind of a gap occurs when a customer has an expectation from the service provider and if they doesn't analyse the need properly then this kind of a Gap Occurs. If a customer visits concu to have some food but doesn't like the Ambience or the service provided by Concu. Then, there is a condition that the customer may not visit Concu Again.

Gap 2: Gap between Service quality specification and management perception. This kind of a gap occurs when the Service provider might correctly understand what the customer requires, but may not set a performance standard. If a customer visits concu and the service provide understand what the customer requires but still the customer faces poor service design, Unsystematic service. This kind of a Gap Occurs.

Gap 3: Gap between service quality specification and service delivery. This kind of a gap occurs to the management personnel. It's because of improper training, unwillingness to meet the set service standards. If a customer visits Concu having specific standards for the food served but the Concu staff may not be given proper instruction as to how to follow these standards.

Gap 4: Gap Between external communication and service delivery. This kind of a gap occurs when these assumed expectations are not fulfilled at the time of delivery of service. If a customer visits concu and he would like to have the item which he had before and had good experience but the item doesn't taste the same and it doesn't reach the customer expectations. This kind of a gap occurs.

Gap 5: Gap between experienced service and expected service. This kind of a gap occurs when the customer misunderstands the service quality. If a customer visits Concu, the service provider may keep visiting their customer to ensure quality check and customer satisfaction but the customer may interpret this as an indication that there is something fishy with the service provider or there is something wrong with the service provider, this kind of a gap occurs.

Out of the 100 People who had responded to our Survey regarding their awareness about Concu, 68 people answered 'Yes' and 32 people answered 'No'. Out of those 68 people, when asked the question, "How did you hear about Conçu?" 12 people responded they heard about Conçu through their Website, 17 through Friends, 35 through social media and 4 people had no idea.

Out of the 100 People who had responded to our Survey, and said they know about Conçu, when asked what age group do you belong to, 28 people belong to age group of 16-26, 23 people belong to age group of 27- 42, 16 people belong to age group of 43-58 and 1 person belongs to age group 59 and above.

When asked about the most ordered items said, 28 respondents order Tiramisu, 21 respondents order Dip Strawberries, 15 respondents order Sea salt, Caramel & Chocolate Tart and 4 respondents said they order other items

When asked, if Concu's staff is friendly and welcoming, 67 respondents said yes, 0 respondents said no and 1 respondent said maybe.

When asked about the service Concu provide, 13 respondents said superfast, 19 respondents said fast, 33 respondents said moderate, 2 respondents said slow and 1 respondent said very slow.

When asked how would they rate Concu's ambience, we analyse that 42.70% of the respondents have rated 8, 47.10% as 9, 10.20% as 10. This shows the customers interest in ambience of Concu.

When asked if they use Concu's online ordering service, 4 respondents said yes, 64 respondents said no and 0 respondents said maybe.

1.4 SURVIVAL OF THE BUSINESS DESPITE COMPARATIVELY HIGHER PRICES

How could a business survive if the prices are too high? Here comes the idea of other driving factors. Customers are not focused on the prices of the products but rather are focused on the quality, taste and the ambience.

When asked customers, if they would choose other cafes and bakery's over Concu, we see that most of them said no. This shows the confidence they have on Concu. Customers are willing to pay higher prices and are coming back to Concu.

Out of the 100 People who had responded to our Survey, and said they know about Conçu, when asked if items in Conçu are overpriced, 37 respondents said yes, 21 respondents said no, 10 respondents said maybe, meaning they feel few items are overpriced but not all items.

When asked if they use special discounts that Concu provides, 30 respondents said yes, 36 respondents said no, and 2 respondents said maybe.

When asked if they order from Concu using Zomato, 5 respondents said yes, 63 respondents said no and 0 respondents said maybe.

When asked if they were aware of Concu's membership card, 58 respondents said yes, 10 respondents said no.

When asked if they would prefer other pâtisseries and cafes over Concu, 49 respondents said yes, 15 respondents said no, and 4 respondents said maybe.

CONCLUSION

After conducting a customer survey to identify the perspective and the expectations of the public surrounding the business, and analysing the data received we could now be able to arrive at a conclusion for the report based on the objectives set. The interview and the customer survey so conducted, along with the other primary data received by the business (about the business, about its functioning and marketing tactics, etc.) and the secondary data received via the internet it is now able to form a strong conclusion on the result thus generated. Conçu est. in 2011, does not have much competition except Karachi and other basic bakeries at Hyderabad area. The regular product innovations, high quality and huge parking space attracts customers at regular intervals. Although the price has only increased by 30%, from 2012 to 2022, Conçu continues to be high in pricing, considering the quality, increasing kitchen facilities, and increase of purchasing power of customers. Tiramisu and dip strawberries are the best- selling dishes across the region. Every year, during winter alone Conçu buys around Rs1crore worth of strawberries.

To sum up, people prefer Conçu for their top-notch quality. Over the past 10yrs the quality has been constant without any degradation in taste and the variety of cakes & desserts introduced and also the prices are maintained. The innovative concept of English Breakfast was introduced during the covid time. Conçu is expanding to emerging markets of the cities with young crowd and new settles from outside. It has also opened one of its outlets in the Bangalore airport.

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