Advisory report for Beaster’s brand equity strategy

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PART TWO

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Beaster is highly representative of the situation that many Chinese streetwear brands are currently experiencing. Thus, it provides a practical case for applying the brand equity model to improve the brand performance.

Beaster was founded in Hangzhou in 2014. The product collection mostly contains t-shirts, and hoodies with a representative unique print: a grimace face. This logo became popular among social media influencers in China last year. As they stated in the official website, they are the collector of fancy elements and interesting ideas.

As for distribution channel, Beaster has two official online stores: one targets the Chinese domestic customers on the Tmall website\(^1\). While the other is an international English language version\(^2\) for a broader audience. As far as I know, there are no physical stores.

The Weibo social media account of Beaster has not been updated since December 2016. However, there are still many posts on Weibo that spontaneously mention people wearing Beaster clothing. They also have an up-to-date Instagram\(^3\) account that mainly posts about the people who are wearing the clothing.

Beaster has done a good job in creating high-quality and unique products, that are in line with their USP. This has increased their competitive advantage over many other Chinese streetwear brands that could learn from how Beaster has built a positive perception around their brand. There are many positive comments from its customers such as “Beaster provides high-quality product and pay attention into the details, and it is a very conscientious Chinese streetwear brand.” (SWAGPOP, 2017)

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\(^1\) Please refer to https://beaster.world.tmall.com/?spm=a1z0b.7.w5001-16011121679.2.ByoWX-u&scene=taobao_shop: Tmall is one of the biggest online store platforms in China that everyone is using.

\(^2\) Please refer to https://beasterclo.com/ for more details.

\(^3\) Please refer to https://www.instagram.com/beaster_clo/ for more details.
The Beaster case will be analyzed based on Keller's four-step brand equity model. Then, a proposed branding approach will be explained for each step to solve the problems. Figure 1 is an illustrative overview of the branding approach for each step.

The aim of the overall proposed brand equity strategy for Beaster is to become a popular Chinese streetwear brand that has a clear and consistent brand identity, and surrounding a fancy ‘Dope’ vibe. In all aspects of company operation, whether production or marketing, Beaster should continue to generate positive brand associations. Besides, by thoroughly understanding its target group and engaging its subculture, Beaster will achieve brand loyalty.

![Figure 1 Overview of the proposed branding approach for each step of the brand equity model](image-url)
**Brand salience**

The brand identity of Beaster is obviously very unclear and vague. The two completely different official online websites create confusing and fail to communicate a consistent brand meaning. The inconsistency about brand information on different distribution platforms also generates more questions. For example, it shows ‘made in China’ with Chinese letters on Instagram, whereas on the ‘About us' page on the international online website state it states that ‘Beaster comes from NYC’. This inconsistency causes customers to doubt the authenticity of the brand.

By adhering to and supporting a redefined set of values, Beaster will attract more brand awareness. The following points represent the revised value proposition.

1. **Collector of all fancy elements and interesting ideas around the world.**

2. **Original, cutting-edge, and distinctive Chinese streetwear brand that produces high-quality clothing and accessories at an affordable price**

3. **Stands for local Chinese streetwear spirit and youth culture.**
Brand meaning & brand response

After Beaster establishes the favorable brand values, then it is very important to communicate a strong and positive brand image widely, to attract customers’ attention. The brand values should be consistently reflected throughout all aspects of Beaster operation. Beaster should work on adding values to its products and generate more positive brand associations. Therefore, Beaster should continue producing high quality clothing at affordable prices. In addition, they have only a few plain images that focus to much on just clothing and do not express the brand meanings. In order to take Beaster visual presentation to a higher level, it could be improved upon by creating an overall Chinese youth culture image. The look and feel, tone of voice and art direction of Beaster also should stick to it. There will be more story-telling concept photograph campaigns containing videos and images made from Beaster. By collaborating with other interesting brands that share similar values with Beaster can also help it to establish positive brand associations.

The two online websites are the main platforms that represent the brand identity of Beaster. These websites should maintain consistency with regard to company profile, look and feel, and collections. Beaster also should consider making the International website as the only official online website, and provide Chinese language option especially for the Chinese target group 90 Hou.

If Beaster wants to stay in its niche and continue the sophisticated style they promise, then it is necessary for them to provide the link to their official Tmall web shop on their International website. However, because Tmall targets a mainstream audience and is full of fake items, from a long-term perspective, its involvement could damage the brand image of Beaster. It is very important for customers to ensure the reliable distribution channel. It is very important for customers to ensure the reliability of the distribution channel.
**Brand resonance**

Beaster could be in danger of disconnecting with its customers because they are not supporting and engaging the target group. Just producing good clothing is not enough for customers to feel related with and benefited from Beaster. As time passes, the brand name will soon fade away since the streetwear market is very competitive.

Beaster should define a more specific target group, and gather these people who share the same ‘glue values’ and passion. Referring to the research report, Chinese millennials are the main customers of Chinese streetwear brands. Narrowing this down to Chinese 90 Hou, we can say that in comparison with previous generation, many of them grew up in a relatively affluent urban environment. They are confident and open-minded. They live with the passion of being different from others. They like to go aboard either for travelling or studying, and this provides them with more opportunities to explore other cultures globally. They are highly active on social media and many of them are influenced by celebrities and online influencers.

They have become more conscious of the identity that they convey through their buying behavior. They like to display the individuality through their consumption. Most of them are willing to spend more money on Western high-end brands because they care about the emotional values rather than just the product. They believe that luxury or designer labels have the ability to prove their individuality and social status.

My proposed approach at this stage is to meet its goal as having a sophisticated image so that Beaster could reach its target group. A ‘Beaster family’ will be launched on the social media platform Wechat where people can easily procure information such as brand news, and coming events. It also includes streetwear-related articles that might serve as an inspiration to customers, as demonstrated in the figure 2. Customers of ‘Beaster family’ can also directly comment on and communicate with the company by joining the Wechat account as a friend. In this case, Beaster is able to effectively receive the feedback from its customers, which strengthens the relationship between the brand and customers. From long-term perspective, this will help Beaster establish brand loyalty.
Figure 2 Envisioned Beaster Family Wechat account
To clarify each step as described in the proposed branding approach, a Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is devised. This helps to improve internal and external business performances and indicates the strategic directions and actions. The BSC is divided into four sections: financial, customer, internal process, and learning & growth. Each section is assigned with goals followed by the key performance indicators (KPIs) used to measure the progress towards that goal. Against each goals how to achieve them are explained in more detailed below along with the specific initiatives. A summary of this explanation is presented in table 1.

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<th>KPI</th>
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<td>• Revenue Growth Rate</td>
<td>• Utilization of the marketing capacity</td>
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<td>• Percentage of sales relative to the size of the market growth</td>
<td>• Market Share</td>
<td>• Enhance the competitiveness (brand performance) with Western streetwear brands in China</td>
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<td>Customer</td>
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<td>• Redefine the target customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Brand loyalty</td>
<td>• Customer awareness</td>
<td>• Build up strong relationship with target customers (glue values)</td>
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<td>• Increase customers involvement</td>
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<td>• Expand and strengthen e-commerce, improve the social media approach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Customer online engagement</td>
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<td>Internal Process</td>
<td>• Establish revised brand values</td>
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<td>Learning &amp; Growth</td>
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Table 1 Summary of Suggested Goals, KPIs, and Initiatives for Beaster
As discussed earlier, the product range and clothing collection of Beaster relies too much on its representative unique logo (a grimace face). Because their product is not strong enough, it fails to convey the right message for promoting a strong brand identity. Technically, in the Beaster's collection lookbook, it only shows very plain images about the clothing. That is why, along establishing the revised brand values, they should translate the values across all their display platforms. It is very important to communicate with their consumers by creating a more high-end visual presentation.

Thus, this branding approach is focused on developing a strong brand identity, the main costs will be incurred through marketing. This would include new and editorial-oriented campaigns that will be adopted into all social media platforms, online shops and the Wechat community. To accomplish these changes, the marketing team needs extra manpower and an increased budget to accommodate. The improved visual presentation of Beaster need higher level of professional employees such as art directors, photographers, and stylists for the campaign development. Besides, a wider distribution for online customer services, which includes social media manager, copywriter, and online sales.

Yet they do not have physical stores, it would be a good idea to expand the digital version into a more tangible world for customers to experience. For now, a pop-up store could help Beaster to reinforce the brand identity.
CONCLUSION

Following the four steps in the Keller’s brand equity model, we have developed a new strategy for upgrading the Beaster brand. The revised value propositions allows Beaster to build a solid base and for further growth. By creating original and authentic brand values, Beaster can achieve more positive brand associations and strengthen its strong brand identity. Some practical suggested examples are designed in a way to add symbolic values to its products and thereby, foster a more sophisticated brand image. After redefining the target group, a Beaster community will be created to build closer relationships with customers and achieve strong brand loyalty.

Beaster was perceived as a very conscientious Chinese streetwear brand with high-quality clothing. With this branding approach, we are confident that the company Beaster will reach a higher level and become more able to compete with Western streetwear brands in China.
Bibliography


