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Assignment No. 2 - Brand Story Audit & Infographic

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Fever-Tree

Brand Story Audit and Infographic

Candidate Number: 2309755

Digital Brand Storytelling (MN5615)

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1.0 Abstract

This report will demonstrate how the world's leading premium drinks accompaniment brand, Fever-Tree, has demonstrated its storytelling across multiple digital platforms and will provide an audit of the success of this storytelling. Factors that will be examined include the demographic of the brand, the key message of the story, digital platforms used, the connection with consumers, the theoretical framework used and finally, a critical analysis of the narrative and structure of the brand story.

2.0 Introduction

Fever-Tree was founded by Charles Rolls and Tim Warrillow in 2003 and since has become one of the largest global brands for mixers such as tonic and soda water distributing to over 70 countries worldwide. Fever-Tree's tagline is '*if $\frac{3}{4}$ of your drink is the mixer, mix with the best*'. The brand started when owners Charles and Tim realised that the demand for spirits in the alcohol industry was increasing and more people were adding mixers to their spirits, for example, in a gin and tonic. However, at the time most mixers on the market were made with artificial preservatives and sweeteners such as saccharin. The market for premium carbonated mixers was extremely niche at the time and most people used low-cost basic versions. This led to the realisation that if people are investing in top quality spirits, why would they then add a mixer which contains chemicals?

Tim and Charles spent their time in the British Library archives researching tonic and where to source its natural ingredients. They decided to travel to Kalashnikov, Democratic Republic of Congo for 18 months to source the finest quinine (Fever-Tree, 2022). Subsequently, in 2004 their first Indian tonic water was released and received recognition from the world's top restaurants, for example El Bulli. The logo features a 'fever-tree' - the tree used in the

production of quinine and highlights the sustainable nature and quality of their ingredients used in their mixers avoiding the artificial and chemical-based mixers.

Fever-Tree aims to target a demographic of affluent customers from all ages who share a passion for spirits and mixers. Their products are priced slightly higher than the basic supermarket mixer at £2.10 per 500ml, so they are targeting consumers who also care about the quality and sustainability of their products.

Effective storytelling will impact the consumer brand experience and influence factors such as “sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of brand’s design and identity, packing, communications, and environment” (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 52) as seen in Lundqvist et al., 2013). With the increase of the internet and social media, digital storytelling can be challenging for brands as they compete for attention against competitors and grabbing the attention of the audience is requiring a more emotional connection.

3.0 Nature of brand story

A brand story can be used in digital marketing as a method of interacting and connecting with the audience. The brand narrative can be displayed across multiple digital mediums such as social media campaigns and advertisements. It is important that businesses create stories to create a sense of authenticity and personality associated to a brand. Humanizing marketing through storytelling is extremely vital for businesses and helps to create emotional responses through connecting on consumers touchpoints (Bonchek, 2016).

In terms of Fever-Tree, their brand values include; high quality, sustainability and authenticity. The brand message highlights the quality and sustainability of the products to match the quality of the finest spirits in an effort to create a more pleasant drink overall, such as a gin and tonic. As the tagline mentions, the majority of a drink is the mixer, therefore quality is extremely

important here too. The brand message emphasises the use of artisan and local ingredients to create a high-quality product that contains no artificial flavours or preservatives.

Persona-driven storytelling can help a brand to connect with their audience on an emotional level and highlight the brand's message and essence (Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010). The brand persona of Fever-Tree according to Jungian archetypes may be described as Everyman, as their drinks aim to bring people together creating a sense of belonging and connection with others (March, 2021). Additionally, the brand may also pursue a Creator archetype as they were one of the first companies to create natural and sustainable mixers, therefore providing structure and innovation to create artisan products in a niche market. Fever-Tree has given tonic water a 'new identity' and taken something ordinary and made it into a premium product with many different botanical flavours. Finally, the brand may also fit into a Lover persona type as they create premium and high-quality products.

The Aaker brand personality model consists of 5 different personality types: sincerity, competence, excitement, sophistication and ruggedness. In this case, Fever-Tree may adopt a sincere personality type as their ethics include being wholesome, honest and true to themselves by creating products that are natural and sustainably sourced. Furthermore, it may be said that the brand is also sophisticated as they sell premium products, use ingredients which are of higher quality and their glass packaging is elegant and charming.

4.0 Use of digital platforms

The use of digital platforms is extremely important for businesses to share their brand narrative and story and so connect with their audience on a more personal level. Fever-Tree operates on several different digital platforms such as YouTube and Instagram.

In 2019, Fever-Tree set up a campaign to help raise money for malaria and asked their consumers to donate £5 to Malaria No More UK. This was carried out by people posting

pictures of their gin and tonic using hashtags such as #malariamustdie and Fever-Tree would then donate £5 per each post to the charity. Not only does this campaign emphasise the brands sense of care and responsibility but also ties in with their brand story as malaria is a disease which used to be treated with the main ingredient used in tonic water, quinine. This is known as social good marketing. It can generate attention and reach as people use their hashtags but also bootstraps on the positive feeling of making a contribution to society.

Furthermore, in 2022 Fever-Tree announced a giveaway on Instagram which included a prize of 4 tickets to the Smoked & Uncut Festival in Bath and free cases of Fever-Tree drinks. The festival focused on artisan street food, drinks and music and was a good way of bringing people together to enjoy food and drink that is natural and sustainably sourced, which can also be linked to the Everyman persona. This illustrates the brand message of responsibility and care that Fever-Tree highlight.

Additionally, on YouTube, Fever-Tree have several videos showing their audience how Charles and Tim discovered the key ingredients for their products. Some examples include the *Spanish Clementine Ingredient Hunting Story* and the *Passionfruit and Lime Ingredient Hunting Story*. These videos show the audience how each ingredient is sourced and farmed including interviews with the local famers as well as footage of the crops and environment of the ingredients. This evokes a sense of sincerity, truth and humanness because consumers can experience the product life cycle story and gain a better understanding of the brand ethos.

Finally, there are video tutorials on YouTube and on Instagram showing how to make various cocktails and mixed drinks using their products. This emphasises their efforts to engage consumers who have a passion for making their own drinks and are keen to try out all their different flavours and combinations. Furthermore, Fever-Tree has a virtual real time mixing class where a mixologist guides the audience on how to make several different types of drinks,

therefore engaging the audience with an experience and bringing their communities together. This is an example of transmedia content storytelling in which brands use several different digital platforms to unfold the brand narrative and story (Granitz and Forman, 2015).

5.0 Theoretical framework underpinning story

The brand uses a 'hero's journey' framework created by Joseph Campbell which can be divided into 3 main stages: - departure, initiation and return (Brown, 2022). This framework attracts the audience through sense of adventure, overcoming struggle and fulfilling a greater purpose. Tim and Charles set out on a challenging 18-month adventure to source the finest ingredients for their premium drinks. They experienced new environments, were put out of their comfort zone and met people from all over the world. In Fever-Tree's brand story, the heroes are founders Tim and Charles as they returned with a one-of-a-kind product which was not available on the market at the time. Fever-Tree strives to be innovative providing consumers with products that are new and exciting.

The call to adventure was the gap in the market for premium, sustainable and natural tonic water; Schweppes was the only mainstream tonic water brand available in 2004. Furthermore, Charles and Tim had experience and passion in the premium food and drink industry which drove their interest. Along the journey, the founders interacted with local farmers who educated them into the harvesting of premium ingredients such as quinine and acted as their mentors. The obstacles that the founders encountered included, leaving their jobs, family and entering the world of the unknown. Eventually after many months of travelling, the pair returned to the UK with their final formula and sustainable premium ingredients. This is known as the gift of the goddess in the hero's journey framework.

Finally, their formula was bottled and distributed around the world and became a global success. One of the main messages of the brand is of creating natural and sustainable premium

products that are made with ingredients from across the world, which the brand narrative emphasises in their storytelling. The hero's journey framework is incredibly inspiring and provides a compelling narrative. Moreover, consumers can witness Charles and Tim's journey on the website and view pictures of the founders inspecting local ingredients, creating a sense of transparency and trust.

6.0 Critical assessment of structure and narrative

In order to assess the success of Fever-Tree's storytelling techniques, it is vital to critically analyse how well their storytelling and brand narrative has enabled the brand to connect to their consumers. Fever-Tree has depicted a human and simple brand story of two friends who were passionate about making a change in the niche mixer market. Research and travelling enabled them to create a formula for one of the first mainstream Indian tonic waters made using natural ingredients. This is a very compelling narrative because it is a simple success story that the audience can connect with and humanise and emphasises innovation and the need for creating a new product.

However, perhaps the audience could have witnessed more about the struggles and obstacles that were present when Tim and Charles set out on their journey. The brand story online does not mention any difficulties. Exposing a more vulnerable side to the story will help to humanise and build a connection with the audience.

Furthermore, Fever-Tree uses multiple storytelling tools to connect with their audience. For example, offering chances to win tickets to a festival, therefore bringing people together to socialise over their products, and offering virtual mixing classes where the audience can have a hands-on experience while testing out different drink combinations. These interactive experiences allow the consumers to connect with the brand directly.

Moreover, donating to charity can lead to neuropsychological effects where people feel a sense of pleasure, euphoria and connection to others. The malaria campaign in 2019 emphasised the caring archetype that the brand narrative possesses and allowed the audience to make a difference and feel a sense of achievement when purchasing a product.

Additionally, the storytelling framework of the 'hero's journey' is extremely compelling and as seen on the website, the audience can witness footage in the form of videos and pictures of the adventure that Tim and Charles embarked on. The sense of transparency and authenticity resonates with the audience.

7.0 Summary of audit

To summarise, Fever-Tree has successfully managed to connect with their audience on many different digital platforms and share their brand story and narrative through transmedia content. Although, the brand should aim to be more open and transparent with their audience to enable a deeper connection.

8.0 Infographic



9.0 References

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