

Model: Brand Alliance

Type of model: Brand model (process model)
 Author(s): Michel Jansen
 Domain: Brand stretching (brand alliances)

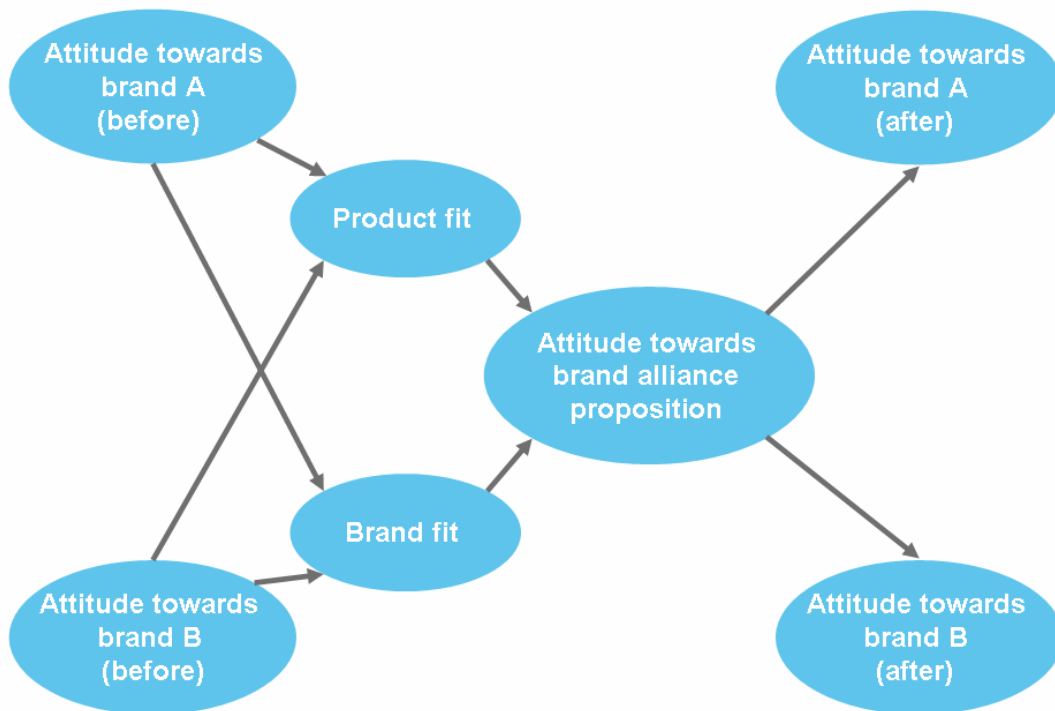


Figure 1: Evaluation process of brand alliances according to Jansen.

In his Brand Alliance Model, Michel Jansen presents two evaluation processes with relevance to brand alliances. The first process relates to the assessment of the brand alliance itself, and the second to the consequences of the alliances for the brands participating in the alliance. Consumers judge the proposition of a brand alliance on the basis of the initial attitudes they have towards the participating brands separately, and on the basis of the two so-called mediating variables: product fit and brand fit. The second process revolves around the question how the brand alliance influences the perception of the individual brands that make up the alliance.

In the following we will describe four essential components from this model in greater detail: (1) the attitude towards the proposition of the brand alliance; (2)

the product fit concept; (3) the brand fit concept and (4) the impact of the brand alliance on the attitude towards the brands participating in the alliance:

1. The attitude towards the proposition of the brand alliance: a brand alliance consists of two brands working together, with consumer valuation of the brand alliance proposition being driven by the attitude consumers have towards the different brands involved. Research has shown that consumers mainly judge brand alliances by the logic of the collaboration. In other words: does the consumer consider it logical that two brands have joined forces, and does that joint venture provide for a (better) brand product that the consumer really needs? The evaluation of two concepts – product fit and brand fit - plays a key role here, and largely determines the success of a brand alliance.
2. Product fit: this concept relates to the extent to which the consumer considers the contributed (product) competencies of the two brands to be matching. In other words: what form of expertise do the parties contribute to the brand alliance, and to what extent do they complement each other? Is the collaboration a logical one, and relevant to the consumer? Research has shown that high product fit leads to higher valuation of the brand alliance. A fine example is provided by the collaboration between Pearle opticians and VVN/ Veilig Verkeer Nederland (a road safety lobby), which led to the development of Roadview and Nightview glasses. This brand alliance enables VVN to assume a more active role in realizing its objective (increasing road safety), while Pearle taps a new market segment with new, relevant product innovations.
3. Brand fit: where product fit relates to the competencies that both brands put into the brand alliance, brand fit comprises the extent to which consumers consider the perceptions of both brands to match. Research has shown that high brand fit leads to higher valuation of the brand alliance. A good example is the collaboration between Saab and (winter) sports brand Salomon. Both these brands target sporty, active and individualistic consumers with an interest in challenging events. The collaboration led to the organisation of the Saab Salomon Crossmax series, made up of three international ski events.
4. The effect of the brand alliance on attitudes towards the participating brands: except for the strengthening of the existing brand image, a brand alliance can also be used to add new values to a brand, or to change certain associations. A classic example is the Philips – Alessi product line, which saw Philips use Alessi's design credentials to shed its own dull image in the category of kitchen appliances. Brand alliances not always yield equal benefits for both brands. Brands with a low brand value stand to gain more

than brands with an already high brand value. Particularly when a low-value brand is tied to a high-value brand, the former can benefit from having the strong brand's associations rub off on it.

Reference(s)

Jansen, M. (2004), Brand alliances (building strong brands together). Kluwer, Amsterdam. *

* : available in the EURIB library.