Model: Dyson, Farr and Hollis' Brand Dynamics Pyramid

Type of model: Brand model (process model)
Author(s): Nigel Dyson, Andy Farr & Paul Hollis
Domain: Brand loyalty

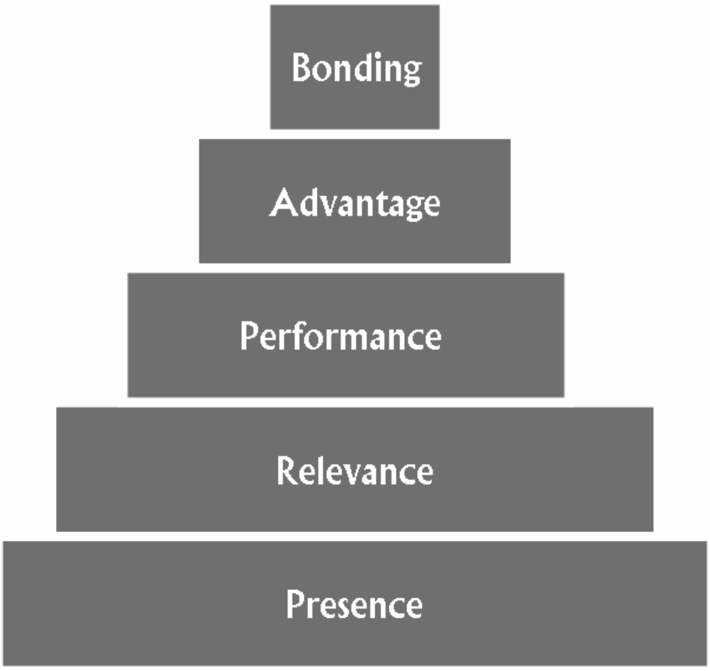


Figure 1: Dyson, Farr and Hollis' *Brand Dynamics Pyramid*

The Brand Dynamics Pyramid is a model providing insight into different levels of brand loyalty. This process model consists of five steps (presence, relevance, performance, advantage and bonding) (explanation: see below), with each step up on the pyramid denoting a greater level of brand loyalty. The width of a slice represents the number of consumers that are loyal to the brand when it has reached that level. Research results usually also list a percentage for the width of the slices. A slice, in theory, has a maximum width of 100%. The lowest slice is always the widest, but will in practice never exceed 90% to 95% in width.

The pyramid in Figure 1 is a stylized figure; in reality, the difference in width between the slices is far more irregular than in the above figure. Research data shows that the number of consumers drops per level. And research data has also shown that the width of the pyramid depends on the type of product. For much-sold brands, such as coffee brands, the slices will generally be wider than for a mortgage brand. If the pyramid for one specific brand is relatively wide up top, we are dealing with a strong brand. The model refers to such a situation as brand voltage. The five steps to the top of the pyramid are, in upward direction:

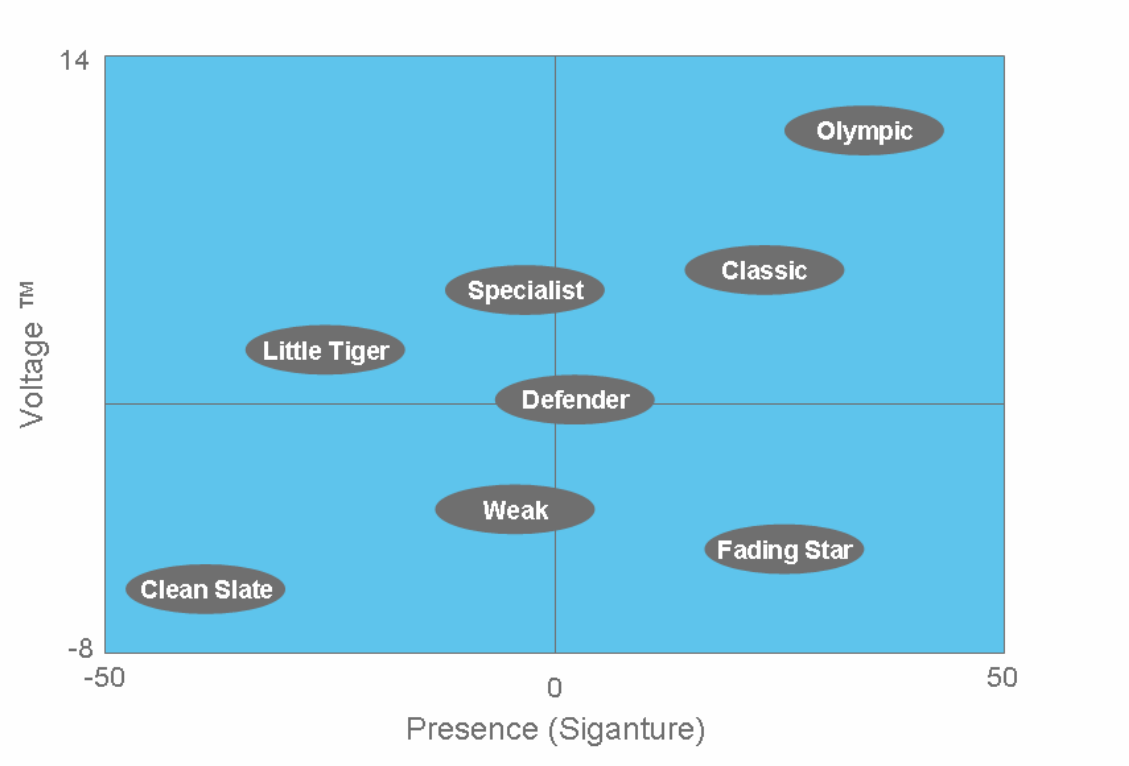
1. Presence: this stage refers to having carved out a position in the consumer's mind, although it should be noted that presence is not the same as familiarity. Presence is a kind of familiarity that also yields brand loyalty; only active and dynamic brands will turn in good scores at this level. This level can be attained by heavy advertising, a presence at the greatest possible number of sales outlets, or by creating a buzz in the market. The authors also refer to this as instating active familiarity based on trial, salience, or knowledge of the brand promise.
2. Relevance: at this stage, the brand promise has to be relevant to the customer/ consumer. After all, a product will only be sold if it at least meets a need. If a consumer does not feel a brand will at least meet a need, he/ she will not even consider buying it. So apart from familiarity, added value will have to be offered in terms of functionality or image.
3. Performance: this concerns the performance of the brand, and whether it offers benefits in relation to the market standard. In this phase, the consumer offsets the delivered quality against the accompanying brand promise ('does the brand deliver what it professes?' and: 'how does it compare to competing products?'). At this stage, the brand will at least have to attain the generally accepted quality benchmark for its market.
4. Advantage: this is where a brand's competitive edge over other brands comes in. This can be deduced from the uniqueness of the brand's proposition, which the customer/ consumer can derive certain emotional or rational benefits from. In other words, this is when the brand has to (handsomely) outperform the average quality standard of the market. Customers/ consumers are at this point convinced of this advantage, making them highly loyal to the brand in question.
5. Bonding: the closest bond between brand and customer/ consumer is achieved when the customer/ consumer will always buy the brand product on the basis of strong rational or emotional belief in its superiority. Competing brands are hardly considered, it at all; the consumer's evoked set is therefore only made up of one brand at this stage. Consumers in this phase tend to be brand ambassadors.

Apart from measuring the individual strength of a brand, the *Brand Dynamics Pyramid* also lends itself for the making of comparisons with other brands. This involves the use of two dimensions derived from the pyramid:

1. Brand presence: the level of active familiarity (salience) of a brand in the market (values: low vs. high).

2. Brand Voltage: the brand's ability to draw consumers away from other brands (this can be measured by comparing each pyramid level of a brand to the market average for that level; if the sum of these differences is negative, brand voltage will be low; and if the sum of these differences is positive, brand voltage will be high).

When offsetting presence against brand voltage in a matrix, you will acquire greater insight into a brand's relative strength/ weakness. Based on these two dimensions, Dyson, Farr and Hollis identified eight brand types: (1) Clean Slate, (2) Little Tiger, (3) Weak, (4) Specialist, (5) Classic, (6) Olympic, (7) Defender and (8) Fading Stars. Any brand's objective will be to get out of the bottom-left quadrant (low brand voltage and low presence) and end up in the top-right quadrant (high brand voltage and high presence). You will generally find top brands in the top-right sector, brands such as Coca-Cola, Nike and Gillette.



We will provide brief outlines of each of these brand types in the following:

1. Clean Slate: brands that the customer/ consumer will not be very familiar with. The relevance and benefits of the brand are also not visible (yet). Corporate brands are a good example of this. These brands are often little known among customers/ consumers (although they have not been marketed). Start-up brands also fall into this category.

2. Little Tiger: brands that are relatively unknown to the general public, but which do have a small group of loyal customers. A little tiger has the potential to grow into a so-called olympic brand (see number 6), for which it would have to boost brand awareness and relevance among a broader target group (without diluting the brand). Another option would be to further expand its uptake with the loyal customer base, and grow into a strong group brand. Examples are Starbucks and Yahoo.
3. Weak Brand: these brands have little to offer when compared to competing brands, due to their low profile in the market. It can even occur that customers/ consumers end up rejecting such brands.
4. Specialist: these are successful brands that appeal to a specific group of buyers (and not the masses). These brands will be too expensive for many customers/ consumers (Clinique), or offer something that not everyone needs (such as in the case of Apple computers). However: anyone for whom a specialist brand is indeed relevant will have a strong bond with the brand.
5. Classic Brand: this is a brand that is well-known (and loved) among the general public, and therefore has a large group of loyal customers. One characteristic of such brands is that customers/ consumers rate their quality highly, but without that leading to the largest possible market share. Classic brands can hold on to their position/ market share by continuous investment in their product and image. Examples are brands like IBM, Sony, Pepsi and Citibank.
6. Olympic: this type of brand is marked by a great presence in the market. Customers/ consumers love them, and they have a large group of loyal customers. Olympic brands play a major part in many of their customers'/ consumers' day-to-day existence, and are therefore often seen as a part of a country's heritage. Examples of olympic brands are Coca-Cola, Apple and Microsoft.
7. Defenders: the defining feature of this kind of brand is the balance it has struck. Defender brands score equally highly on both axes (presence and voltage). This means these are brands that have achieved the right fit between product performance and pricing, but provide customers/ consumers with hardly any added value, such as supermarkets' own brands.
8. Fading Stars: this brand type can best be defined as 'lost glory', 'has-beens'. These are brands that used to be well-known and loved, but have lost their appeal or emotional added value. Fading stars continue to do well in terms of presence, due to years of advertising and past ads. These brands still have, in other words, a strong position in customers' minds, but have ceased to be innovating. This has caused the product advantage and the emotional added value to fade with time.

Reference(s)

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* : available in the EURIB library.