

Repositioning of DAWNNEWS Channel to Mass Market

Kamran Siddiqui
 HOD, Department of Management Sciences
 DHA Suffa University
 Phase VII (Ext), Karachi.
 E-mail: Kamran_Siddiqui@hotmail.com

Syed Muhammad Fahim*
 Assistant Professor
 DHA Suffa University
 Phase VII (Ext), Karachi.
 E-mail: fahimsyedmuhammad1@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is based on the positioning and later strategy of repositioning of DAWNNEWS channel. It was July the 21st, 2007 when this channel got a kick off. Its initial positioning strategy was of a top notch English (language) News channel in Pakistan. Later it went into a repositioning strategy of Urdu (language) news channel catering to the mass market. Reasons behind the repositioning include adaptation of brand extension strategy, non-existence of appropriate human resource, preoccupation of market by leading foreign channels like CNN and BBC and bottom line revenues in the initial phase due to poor media ratings. Major overhaul was done in logo, substance, impact of graphics and taglines. As a result brand image was shifted to a positive tone and strategy proved successful and brought the expected results.

Key words: Positioning, Repositioning, DAWNNEWS channel

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present the concepts of Positioning and Re-positioning by virtue of a real-life case study from a media giant DAWN group. It starts with contemporary conceptual framework of initial positioning as exclusive English (foreign language) news channel. and then re-positioning to a blend of Urdu (local language) and English. At the end this paper provides useful insights into the repositioning strategy followed by DAWN media group.

Literature Review

The phrase *positioning* was coined by Al Ries and Jack Trout in their research titled as “Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind” (Ries & Trout, 1982). Product positioning refers to the image of the product in the mind of the customer in relation to competitors. Re-positioning is a deliberate attempt from marketers to change perceptions towards their products/services or more importantly towards their brands. This is normally achieved by changing appropriate marketing mix variables. There are many examples from the top brands to exercise re-positioning strategy; likewise Apple repositioned their distribution strategy by including third party retailers; P&G went for revamping their pricing strategy to opt for value based pricing (Ailawadi, Lehmann, and

Neslin, 2002). Repositioning is a basic purposeful change in the company's value proposition in terms changing environment (Turner, 2003). For the purpose of corporate transformation repositioning is much required (Dunphy and Stace, 1993). Moreover repositioning is considered as a response strategic in nature to a constantly changing environment (Eisenhardt and Brown, 1999). Repositioning is term which is used synonymously with corporate turnaround (Williamson, 1999). Positioning statements play a very important in directing the company's efforts in the market place (Kalafatis, Tsogas, Blankson, 2000). Creating a very different and favorable image in target customer's mind is the purpose of positioning (Bhat, 1998).

Positioning is much more than pinpointing benefits of product to the customer rather is something that has impact upon all stages of marketing (Berkman and Gilson, 1987). Pondering over all possible differential advantages is the first step in positioning strategy. Second step is to select the appropriate advantages for the brand and deciding upon a detailed positioning strategy and finally working in terms of communication and distribution in line with positioning strategy (Kotler & Armstrong 2006).

In Pakistan whenever the name of Suzuki car comes in the mind of a customer he thinks of it as fuel economical, averagely priced not so luxury oriented brand which is definitely different than the image of other two competitors namely Honda and Toyota. When colorful watches affordable by everyone were introduced by Swatch of Switzerland, the company positioned it as fashion accessory. Marketers must understand the element of sustainability while designing positioning strategy, that is, would marketer be in a position to resonate the same image in customer's mind in future too. Finally the element of credibility would add character and would win customers confidence.

Studies related to measuring positioning, re-positioning or de-positioning are absolutely absent in Pakistan (Siddiqui, 2011). However advertising being an integral part of promotion mix strategy is having significant influence in shaping/re-shaping brand's image in consumer's mind. A recent study has revealed that re-positioning can be more effective with appropriate use of advertising media in Pakistan (Fahim, Siddiqui, Anjam & Aziz, 2013). They argued about the affirmative response from general public towards advertising in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

Whenever real world entwined illustrations are analyzed, case study method is used in academia worldwide. So in those instances where in-depth analysis and fusion is required case studies prove adequate, but definitely due care is essentially required in using case methodology (Denis and Sarin, 1997). Undoubtedly case study should not be degraded by identification with single group design relying on post test. All experiential studies include research design as an essential part. Four basic questions are answered by way of case research design and these include extent, pertinence, anthology and examination. Logical problems are generally answered in case research design. Case research designs are of four types a) sole case holistic b) Sole case entrenched c) Several cases holistic d) Several case s entrenched (Yin, 2009). In this paper DAWNNEWS channel has been portrayed as sole case holistic research design. For testing a pre formulated theory sole case methodology is considered as longitudinal in nature and character. This strategy has been proved fruitful (Siddiqui, 2011; Husain, & Siddiqui, 2011; Mangi, & Siddiqui, 2011; Salman, & Siddiqui, 2011).

1.1 Case Study- DAWNNEWS Channel

This has been reasonably believed that DAWN is the most prestigious and pioneering English (language) news paper in Pakistan. This newspaper is having the honor that, founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah inaugurated the newspaper in Pakistan. This newspaper was in print as the flagship brand of the group since 1941 from Delhi as a sole voice of Muslim community in India. Right after independence the group shifted its operations to Karachi and subsequently added number of other brands in their product line. Now the DAWN group has its offices in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi with a circulation of over 200,000 copies a day. DAWN Group has captured different market segments by offering diversified products matchable with the needs of those segments (Exhibit 1)

Exhibit - 1

Product Portfolio	Product Sketch
AURORA	Fashion magazine published monthly
STAR	Daily newspaper in English printed as evening newspaper
DAWN	Daily newspaper in English Language- Star brand in the portfolio
SPIDER	IT magazine published monthly
HERALD	Magazine related with public affairs published monthly
CityFM89	FM Radio station launched in 2004

1.1.1 DAWNNEWS Channel - Commencement

News in English language and current affairs in print media are the core strengths of DAWN group of newspapers since its operations in Pakistan. DAWN group took its entry in the electronic media with the start of DAWNNEWS- the first English news channel in Pakistan. The initial positioning was of leading and prestigious news, current affairs and lifestyles channel in English language.

Reliability, trust and credibility were the three core values with which the channel officially started on July 21, 2007. Founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the source of inspiration for these core values. In major cities of Pakistan bureaus were established with around 500 employees in the first phase. DAWNNEWS channel can be seen operational in Pakistan, Europe and Middle East with the plan of global expansion of the brand and more specifically as the popular channel among for Muslims residing in foreign countries

1.1.2 Vision Statement

“In this world of chaos and confusion, DAWNNEWS will provide viewers news and information with clarity, accuracy and informed debate so that they may become agents of change”.

1.3 Positioning and Values

DAWNNEWS aimed to be self-regulating, convincing, accountable, yet ardent carriers of a legacy of trust with a current practical receptivity, spokesperson of the complete cultural montage of Pakistan and the pluralistic texture of its natives. In the opinion of Group Chairman, readers are the number one concern and center of all acts. DAWN will frequently strive to offer

them with amazing receptiveness to their valued opinions, wants and concerns. Our business is moral, truthful and clear-cut, and with a widespread wish to attain our viewer's hopes of service, worth, cost, excellence and deliverance. Mr. Shakeel Masood, CEO –DAWNNEWS, predicted DAWNNEWS TV channel as one immaculate star. According to him, the reliability felt by audience of DAWNNEWS TV will be identical as that of DAWN newspaper. He further proclaimed that DAWN is well conscious of the nucleus values addressees expect but to him coming up with market domination is never effortless. He recognized the standard and asserted that this was the most excellent time to start First English News TV channel as DAWN is previously having notion of being the most steadfast news paper of Pakistan.

1.4 Repositioning- Sensed

A research company conducted survey before the launch of DAWNNEWS channel and the company identified a significant gap between the demand and supply of such a product line. According to the description of report English language fans were gluttonous to witness, an indigenous channel where they could witness the most genuine news without much of stir and juvenile amplification as is done by most of the Urdu channels. This finding instilled the top brass at DAWN group, to swell their kin business and augment their brand reflection by launching up the lone English news TV channel in Pakistan. Each step was cautiously taken, but within a period of only two years administration concluded it is not precious enough to run the business cost effectively. There were number of reasons other than the finances fall-out that compelled the organization to take the step of repositioning.

Initially, DAWN newspaper had completed its finest and shaped a brand persona of an elegant and prestigious news paper in the minds of its audience and the same was anticipated from DAWNNEWS TV channel; this opinion was formed on the hypothesis that both the brands were foremost in their own product class. Firstly, the commencement of DAWNNEWS was deemed as expansion of brand and execution was thought of as plain ball game, since the two variants were news oriented. But subsequently, management concluded it was a case of “diversification” rather than ‘brand extension’ and actually more practiced media players were required to run the affairs of news channel.

Moreover, human resource knowledge was certainly missing. It was in fact the HR staff of DAWN newspaper that did the initial hiring. Initial unfortunately the criteria for selection were not very correct as per requirements of the industry and they included fluency over English language coupled with experience of newspapers. Spirited electronic media industry knowledge was considered as added plus. Consequently properly skilled writers were selected at handsome remuneration packages for the argument that only expertise in written English is as much as necessary for the job. This resulted in the emergence of two distinct groups within organization with a difference in terms of social class. Dominant cluster prevalently known as “English Speaking Club” retained the major pressure over majority of the managerial decisions. Succeeding group was named as “Urdu Speaking Club”. Irony of the fate was both the groups had different mindsets about the company matters. In the initial phase, the approach went out well but soon it was realized that lined up contents with mass attraction were missing. It was also concluded that that development of program substance in English language is a hard-hitting job and “English speaking club” at DAWNNEWS is not the best fit for the aggressive media business. In a year of voyage the selection of new personnel was entirely clogged and

approximately after two years a time came when administration had none other alternative but to say good bye to about 80 recruits from “English speaking club”.

Additionally, a niche market was focused by DAWN Newspaper, comprised of inhabitants, educated enough to comprehend English with its real milieu. DAWNNEWS TV channel stuff in the pre-repositioning period was in fact good but just for those who have yearned for English program substance. In the beginning phase it was figured out that the English news content fans had CNN and BBC as their apex choices to look at, than a local English TV channel. However executive was unmindful about the truth or over motivated as Mr. Shakeel Masood, CEO –DAWNNEWS, contemplated that his news channel will be superior to Cable News Network or even British Broadcasting Corporation.

Finally, greater part of populace in metropolitan areas enjoys twofold language program substance. Masses were not attracted by program contents entirely in English language and lead the way for continuous loss incurred by DAWNNEWS. Such a situation compelled management to strive something else, as the grave situation was resulting in both loss of viewership and revenues.

Most prominently, DAWNNEWS was not able to hit high on media rating lists. Regrettably, “Peoples Meter” is the only way in Pakistan to carry out such ratings exercise. Approximately 3000 homes are being installed with “Peoples Meter”, and based over the support of responses from this audience the assessments are carried out. The truth that merely 3000 public of the whole populace is the culminating factor, which decides about channels performances as first-rated or low rated is the sad part of the story. In fact it was a blow for English news TV channel, since only 100 out of 3000 homes were representative of cream of the crop English vocalization set. Almost all TV channels toil on the rating, elevated ratings enhance the probability of receiving more ads and more ads mean added income. At the same time, poor or below average ratings result in no ad agency showing enthusiasm to give advertisements to such a channel where audience appears to be that much small.

1.5 Exercising the Repositioning strategy

It was February the 8th, 2010 when DAWNNEWS went into repositioning as a voluminous souk (Urdu) news TV channel. At first the changeover from English to Urdu was for three hours and lastly it was an entire 24 hours Urdu news TV channel. New challenges were bitter than even before, as now they have gigantic competitors like GEO, ARY, AAJ, EXPRESS, but now they started earning a tiny distinctiveness in the marketplace.

1.5.1 Post-Repositioning Period- Restructured Mission and Vision Statements

In compliance to the hopes of interest holders, DAWNNEWS TV channel maintained the previous core values unaltered as they were in pre-repositioning period. The difference was although of target customers from a niche to mass market strategy. The lone difference is that now their intended market was entire marketplace of Pakistan and not only the privileged urbanized set of viewers. This is what is termed as differential strategy or cost leadership strategy.

CEO of DAWNNEWS mentioned that this was the just the way to stay alive in a marketplace. According to him, originally the goals were very small, those were only to be documented by mass market and for that DAWNNEWS focused more on above the line and below the line brand

activation exercises. He further admitted that he learned from missteps, but he insisted on the retention of core values. Further he proudly held that moral values and validity are immobile center of standards and nobody can obstruct them. He regrettably pointed out that the present time exaggeration and sensationalism is required to be shown to have spectators' attention. Given the reality that DAWN had applied law of change, that is, from an English language news channel to Urdu language news channel, but the boundaries were same. He proclaimed with a sense of pride that DAWNNEWS channel doesn't make much money but it does not provide a false news substance to weigh viewership.

1.6 Brand Elements Repositioning

All elements including contents, graphics, programs, slogans and emblem (logo), were rehashed as was required by repositioning concept. The most imperative spot was logo change, as the new logo reflected both English and Urdu languages. Equally, while designing the new catchphrase; it was kept in mind that it must be alluring to the mass populace.

1.6.1 Changes in Program Mix: Larger domination of Urdu programs along with an indoctrination mix of both English and Urdu program contents were in effect the comfort level of the biggest chunk of the target audience. Keeping in view the trendy fashion audience wanted natural environment in programs without any particular language dominance. Instead they wanted to see language change over in programs of the channel. Therefore an appropriate programming mix was the area where most concerted effort was required. As part of repositioning work out, few programs were changed to the language of Urdu and some were halted. (Exhibit 2)

Exhibit 2 – DAWNNEWS Program Mix

Programs before Repositioning

- Breakfast at Dawn - News and discussion.
- Centre Point - Political debate show.
- NewsEye - Interviews and analyses from experts on daily news and events.
- TalkBack - One-on-one interview show inviting celebrities, politicians, and entertainers.
- Wide Angle - Pakistani politics.
- Take Stock - Local and international investments and stocks.
- The Alternative - Current problems & possible solutions.
- Principle Talk - Current affairs debates and discussions
- At Liberty - Magazine show that explores the rich cultural heritage of the Punjab

Exhibit 2 – DAWNNEWS Program Mix (Cont...)

- The First Blast - daily life issues with women.
- The Late Swing – Sports News and Analyses
- Articulation - Arts and culture scene in Pakistan.
- The Big Digit - story behind every number and relevant implications.
- 30:30: Standard Pakistani talk show
- Open Frequency: Controversial social issues from the perspective of the youth
- Equinox: Hidden stories from the fringes of Pakistani society.
- Urban Sketches: series of insightful portraits that reveal the character of 'the city'.
- Heritage of Pakistan: Landmarks across the major urban areas of Pakistan

- The Final Whistle: Sports news.
- +92 ID: theme based documentary show focuses on local cultural and diversity issues.
- Kaleidoscope documentaries showing social and cultural issues in light-hearted matters.
- Cutting It: Film review show in Pakistan.
- 5 for 5: top five countdowns of intriguing subjects ranging from movies to civil wars.
- No Reservations: candid interviews with celebrities and prominent personalities.
- Closeted: Dressing habits and different personalities in the fashion industry.
- For the love of food: Food show

Programs after Repositioning

- Max Masala
- Mast Morning
- Sport Zone
- Bolna Zaroori Hai
- Sawal
- Reporter
- NewsNite with Talat
- Chaudhry Ki Baithak
- Bila Jhijak
- Page 3 and Ring a Star (outsourced)
- The First Blast (from English to Urdu)
- The other Story became Doosri Kahani
- Equinox voice over in Urdu

1.6.2 Changes in Logo: The logo for DANNEWS was changed four times within a time span of just two years. Fonts were rented from DAWN Newspaper which were written in white with sky blue backdrop, having a base line in grey saying dawnnews.tv (logo a). In a month's time, the base line was removed and re-prepared with white border (logo b). Shortly the color was changed to corporate blue with DAWNNEWS printed in white alphabets in the similar mature font size. The letter DAWN was retained in English language while the word NEWS was written in Urdu language format, although color combination and design was not disturbed as a major exercise in repositioning (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3: DAWNNEWS Logo

Before Repositioning

After Repositioning



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

1.6.3 Changes in Slogan: “Understand the Difference” was the tagline before repositioning which was phrased for DAWN Media Group. When repositioning exercise went into action, the old slogan was not translated into Urdu, instead a new and more appropriate slogan was crafted which was “Aap Ka Aitbaar” (Exhibit 4).

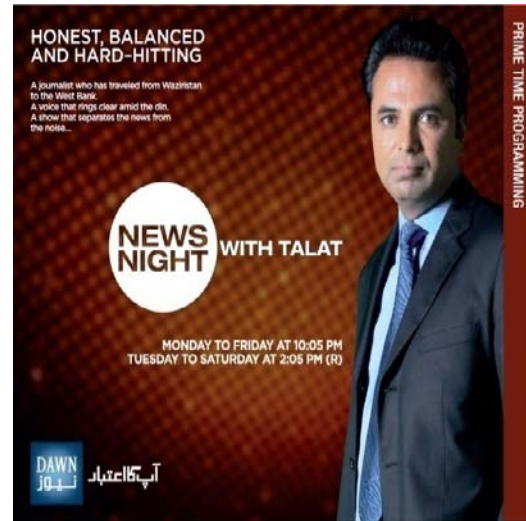
Exhibit 4: DAWNNEWS Slogan

Post-Repositioning

Post-Repositioning



(a)



(b)

1.6.4 Changes in Promotion Mix: Profound advertising by means of sister organizations like CityFM89, DAWN Newspaper, and other DAWN Publications (Aurora, Herald, and Spider) were major above the line activities before repositioning. While below the line activities were constrained to media collaborations, e-marketing, and truck-art. To achieve the desired results of repositioning, a number of activities were premeditated. Not only group companies were engaged in advertising but hoardings and billboards were also used to draw attention to the alteration. Auxiliary out-of-doors media included flex ads fixed on public transports, which had voluminous pull for the intended marketplace. Additional above the line actions included voice media advertisements on FM 89 and other Radio stations, localized TV channels, Magazines (Urdu digests, women magazines, neighborhood magazines), DAWN newspaper Paper, Dawn’s Publications (Aurora, Herald, Spider). Below the line tricks through repositioning period

included e-marketing, Telemarketing, street shows, rickshaw adhesive labels, media collaboration and bulk SMS etc.

1.6.5 Conclusion

The vigilantly intended repositioning implementation proved healthy ensuing in improved wakefulness to the majority of souk. The performance assessment reached to most favorable level (Exhibit 4), leading from their nearby competitors. DAWNNEWS got an optimal position and got the lost identity reverence as of a brand image. Fallout was ahead of hopes and newest advertisers posed their trust on the DAWN group with their as judged by the business given to DAWNNEWS by them. Several larger ad givers with DAWNNEWS in the post re-repositioning period included Tapal, Garnier, Pantene, Mobilink Jazz, Dalda, Ariel, Ufone, Warid, Brighto Paints, Vaseline, Bonanza garments, Sufi cooking oil etc.

Exhibit 4 TV Channel Ratings

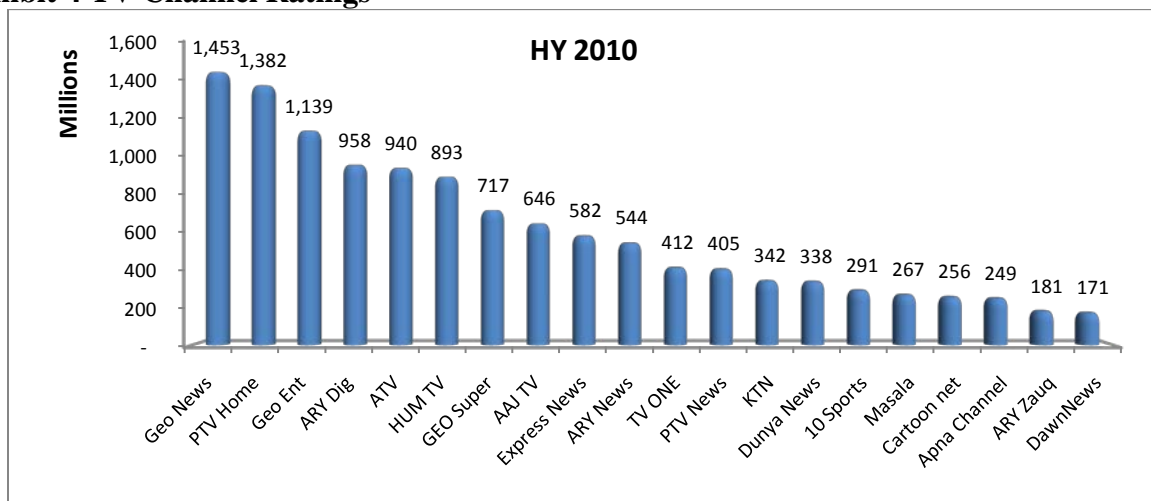
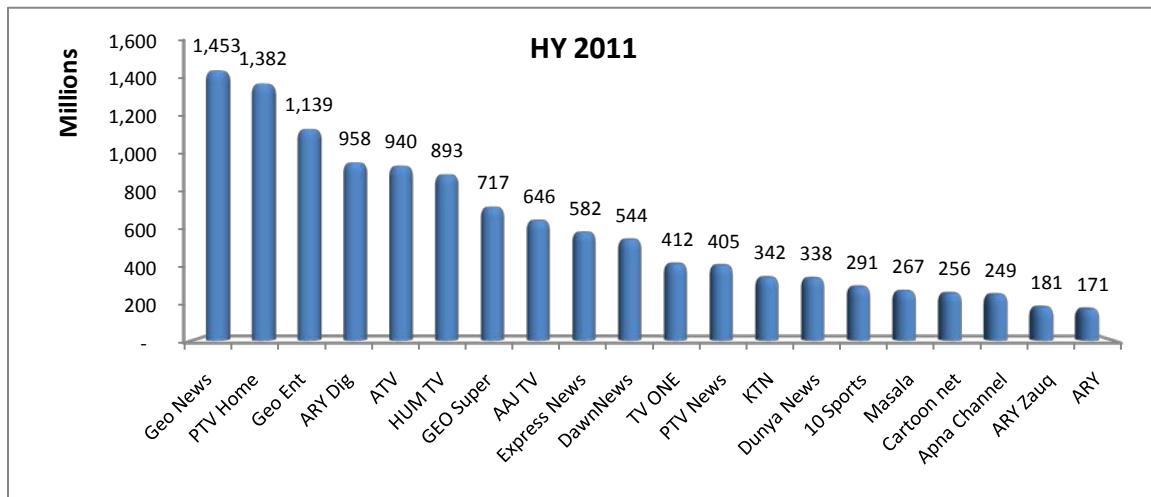


Exhibit 3



(Source: MindShare)

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