

Psychology And Positive Brand Awareness: Practical Evidences From The Cement Industry Before Covid-19 In Vietnam

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Abstract

Brand awareness plays an important role in purchasing decisions as consumers tend to buy familiar and well-known products. Therefore, doing research on brand awareness is very necessary in planning the business and crafting the strategies of any business or product. The article has systematized the basic theoretical issues of brand and brand awareness. In which, this paper focuses on clarifying the brand awareness models and brand recognition experiences of some cement domestic enterprises in the same industry. Moreover, the paper has also analyzed the effective status of Vicem Tam Diep brand awareness strategy for cement products in the following aspects: customer analysis, internal analysis and competitor analysis. From there, the topic identifies the current limitations in the company's brand awareness of Vicem Tam Diep. The relationship between the psychology of consumers, business partners and the positive perception of the brand, eventually, determines the success of that brand. The research has explored those things of the cement industry in Vietnam before the Covid-19 epidemic, to come up with the ideas for prolonging the sustainable growth after the disease.

Keywords: Brand awareness, Cement industry, Covid-19, Positive psychology, Vietnam

Introduction

Research Rationale

In this fierce competition nowadays, branding is a vital element of all businesses. A strong brand is a huge competitive advantage for companies that own such intangible assets. With flexible and innovative methods, small brands with a modest market still have a good chance to capture market share for themselves. However, building and promoting a brand is not an easy and immediate thing to do. Rather, it is a work throughout the operation of the business. Brand is one of the most important factors contributing to maintaining, expanding and developing domestic and foreign markets for businesses, improving commercial civilization, contributing to combating unfair competition. Brand is the soul of the business, and it will go deeply into the minds of customers. In that case, it becomes a valuable asset. On the contrary, brand is always an intangible. More importantly, through the brand, consumers trust, feel more secure and want to choose and consume products, goods and services of the enterprises (Tran Viet Dung, 2019). And, afterwards customer psychology also affects whether brand recognition is

positive or not.

Common problems encountered when Vietnamese businesses build their brands such as inconsistent identity system, poor image, no control over brand activities, failure to take advantage of familiar customers, use of materials, outdated Marketing products, unconvincing and unattractive slogans. Therefore, evaluating brand awareness becomes a vital issue for businesses, especially those that are in the market where supply outstrips demand.

The period of the Covid-19 epidemic has halted many manufacturing industries, and brought many regions and countries into the Zero-Covid embargo policy, disrupting the supply chains of many sectors in the world. This is also a special time to be studied separately. Therefore, this study focuses on the story of Vietnam's cement industry before the Covid-19 outbreak, to apply it to the new normal after the most severe period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tam Diep Cement Co.Ltd. Introduction

Vicem Tam Diep Cement Company was established in 1995. The company's headquarters is in Ninh Binh province, Vietnam (more than 100 km south of Hanoi capital). The massive

development of the cement industry has made the supply of cement market far outstrips fierce competition and Tam Diep Vicem Cement is no exception in that storm. Currently, with competition from many domestic cement brands, Vicem Tam Diep brand has encountered many difficulties and has revealed shortcomings and limitations in asserting its brand and position in the market. Importantly, Vicem Tam Diep does not know how to evaluate its brand awareness to promote it much more effectively, nor to find solutions in building its own strong brand to create an advantage over competitors.

Before the Covid-19 start, from 2015 to 2017, the Company's cement consumption tended to decrease from 1.776 million tons to 1.72 million tons. Therefore, sales revenue also decreased from 1,445,780 million VND to 1,302,871 million VND. In 2018, although the output and revenue have been improved, the change was not so significant. Within a geographical location where many cement factories are concentrated, while most of their capacity is much larger than the one of Vicem Tam Diep, the Company has to face many difficulties in consumption in the domestic market when their brand has not yet built a good identity system.

Target towards 2025: Vicem Tam Diep Cement Company may become a pioneer in the field of building materials trading and servicing in the Northern Vietnam market.

Literature Review

Brand

Brand is a name, symbol, sign, design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods or services of one manufacturer or and differentiate it from competitor brands (Kevin Lane Keller, 2020). Meanwhile, Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong have argued that brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of the above for the purpose of identifying a product/service services of one seller/group of sellers and differentiate them from the competition (Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong, 2017). Or according to the view of the World Integral Property Organization (WIPO), a brand is a distinctive sign (tangible and intangible) to identify a product, good or service that is produced or supplied in the market. issued by an individual or an organization (WIPO, 2010).

From the traditional point of view, the elements of a brand include only tangible components such as name, design, and symbol, without considering intangible components such as

reputation, prestige of the product, and the brand manufacturer. However, the world economy has moved to a globalized one, while competition is getting fiercer, the traditional view has been no longer relevant.

According to Tim Ambler and Chris Styles, brand is a set of attributes that provide target customers with the values they demand. Brand, in this view, conveys the idea that a product is just one part of it that primarily provides a functional benefit to the customers. Thus, the traditional Marketing mix components (4P: product, price, place, promotion) are just the parts of a brand (Tim Ambler, Chris Styles, 1996).

Karen Leland (2016) defines that: "Brand is the set of physical, aesthetic, logical and emotional elements of a product, or a product line, including the product itself, its name, logos, symbols and all visual representations, which over time are clearly constructed to establish a place in the mind of the customers."

According to the Marketing strategist Al Ries, a brand is a unique idea or concept that comes to the customers' mind when they hear some company name (Al Ries, 2014). Brand is the synthesis of the personality that builds the essence of the product. Simply, we can understand that brand is anything that customers think of when they hear the name of the company. "Whatever customers think of" means that they may think good or bad about your product or service. Whether a brand is rated as a strong brand or not does not depend on the business's point of view, but completely depends on the mind and perception of consumers. And, a meaning brand effectiveness measurement is the one which has been done from the consumer side.

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), a brand is a distinctive (tangible and intangible) sign to identify a product, good or service, produced or provided by an individual or organization. For businesses, a brand is a concept inside the consumers' mind of a product or service with the business's mark attached to the surface of the product or service to affirm its quality and origin. Brand is an important intangible asset; and for large enterprises, the brand value of the enterprise makes up a significant part of the total value of the business (WIPO, 2010).

Brand Equity

David A. Aaker (1991) argues that brand equity is the set of assets and liabilities related to its name and symbol, which add to or subtract from the value created by a good product or service of that company. Within this frame, brand value

consists of 5 components which are: Brand awareness; Brand loyalty; Perceived quality; Brand associations and other Brand assets.

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), brand equity includes: brand awareness (consumers will recognize and recall what is related to the brand), brand image (the associated features and image), response to the brand (brand sentiments and evaluations such as warmth, fun, excitement, safety, social acceptance and self-esteem), relationship with brand or brand resonance (behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community, and community commitment).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the strength of a brand's presence in the minds of customers (Philip Kotler et al., 2017). Brand awareness includes: Brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition is the ability to recognize a brand name among other brand names (George E Belch, Michael A Belch, 2017), whereas brand recall happens in the mind of the consumer who immediately remembers the brand when asked about the corresponding product line (Karen Leland, 2016).

Brand awareness means the ability of consumers in recognizing and recalling a brand in different situations (Lintong Jiao, 2018). Brand awareness includes brand recall and brand recognition. Brand recall means that when consumers see a product category, they can remember the brand name correctly, and brand recognition means that consumers are likely to identify a brand when there is a brand element. That is, consumers can say a brand correctly if they have ever seen or heard it.

Furthermore, Zhuolin Xiao and Zhensong Cai (2019) have shown that brand awareness can be distinguished by depth and breadth. Depth means how to make the consumer recall or identify the brand easily and breadth represents the penetration when the consumer buys the product, the brand name will come to the mind of the consumer. them at the same time. If a product possesses brand depth and brand breadth at the same time, consumers will think of a particular brand when they want to buy that kind of certain product. In that case, the product has a higher brand awareness than the others in the same group. Furthermore, the brand name is the most important factor in brand awareness (Sotiris T. Lalaounis, 2020). Therefore, brand awareness will influence purchasing decision through brand association. And when the product possesses a positive brand image, it helps very much in Marketing activities (Philip

Kotler, Kevin Lane Keller, 2016). A brand name provides a symbol that can assist consumers in identifying service providers and predicting service outcomes (Wen Li et al., 2016).

Brand awareness plays an important role in purchasing intention because consumers tend to buy familiar and well-known products. Brand awareness can help consumers recognize a brand from a product category and make a purchase decision (Eda Atilgan et al., 2005). Brand awareness has a large influence on choices and can be the basis of prior consideration in product portfolios (Steve Hoeffler, Kevin Lane Keller, 2002). Brand awareness also plays an important role in consumer purchase intention, and certain brands will accumulate in the consumer's mind, influencing the consumer's purchasing decision. Thus, a product with a high level of brand awareness will receive higher consumer preference because it has a higher market share and quality rating (Xi Zhang, 2019).

In Vietnam, brand awareness is all that can be seen through the establishment of associations about the brand that the businesses want to build and keep in the minds of their target customers. Brand awareness is the first stage in the buying process and an important criterion for measuring the value of a brand. The more recognizable a brand is, the more famous it is and the more likely it is to be chosen by customers. Thus, the brand awareness of a business is how that business wants customers to feel about it. The components of the brand awareness (name, logo, colors, tagline, typography) are created to reflect the value the company brings to their customers and the market (An Thi Thanh Nhan and Luc Thi Thu Huong, 2010).

It is necessary to distinguish Brand awareness and Brand Image, regarding how customers actually perceive the brand. Businesses often confuse these two concepts: Cognitive Desire and Perception. What they say and what the listener understands may be different.

In business and branding, a business's brand awareness is what they say about themselves: Provided products/services, quality, competitive advantage. Brand image is what the public perceives as the brand. Businesses will face the challenge of building their brand awareness and ensuring that it matches the brand image as much as possible.

Brand awareness must be built on the basis of brand attributes: Products, Events, People and Symbols that represent the brand. Brand awareness is not simply an image to be correctly understood, it is truly a way of positioning a brand with images, expressing the soul of the

brand, and what businesses want consumers to do and feel about the brand.

Thus, brand awareness is a collection of associations that the company wants to build and preserve in the minds of customers through products (types, characteristics, quality and value of products, how to use them), users and product origins), company (cultural values or business philosophy), people (employee image, internal and external relationships) and symbol (name, logo, slogan, slogan, image, design, model) (Nguyen Quoc Think and Nguyen Thanh Trung, 2009).

Brand Awareness Models

In 1991, David Aaker published a study on the Brand awareness model. The goal of the model is to: help brand experts, and business owners understand the different elements of a brand, thereby create a difference in brand awareness between different brands. The model is divided into three parts respectively: Brand strategy analysis (1) ; Brand awareness system (2); and Brand awareness enforcement system (3). The three stages are operated consecutively, continuously and clearly connected.

Unlike David A. Aaker, Keller, in his book of “Strategic Brand Management”, considers the brand as an asset of the business (Brand equity). When a business owns a strong brand, customers will buy more, they will refer to others. Brand loyalty increases and the business will not lose customers to competitors. The branding process, therefore, focuses on building a strong connection between the customer and the brand, thereby minimizing the vulnerability of competitors' marketing activities (Kevin Lane Keller, 2020). Keller's Brand Resonance Model views the branding process as a sequence of steps from low to high in a pyramid that gradually increases the level of awareness and connection between customers and the brand.

When studying the different factors that contribute to the success of brands, Thomas Gad (2001) found that brand awareness in the minds of consumers always falls into four different categories (four dimensions). He calls these 4 “Dimensions” as the basis for the 4D branding model. These four categories include: Mental, functional, social and spiritual, combined into Brand MindSpace. Instead of trying to define the brand, Thomas Gad (2001) proposes a brand code to build and position the brand in the future. This encoder is modeled as a six-legged spider with questions related to the present moment (product/benefits, positioning and style) and the future (mission, vision and values). Answering all these related questions, the Encoder will

create the future direction of the brand.

Combining 4D modeling and six aspects in the encoder, Thomas Gad came up with a framework for branding, which he called the Brand Envelope. According to this Brand Envelope model, when building a new product or service, businesses will perform the following steps: (1) Build product brand code from six aspects; (2) From that determine the functional, social, mental and spiritual categories for the new product; (3) Make a brand-coding statement for the new product, through positioning, style, mission, vision; (4) Harmonize the company's brand code with the new product's brand code, ensuring that the product remains in the "envelope".

Research methodology

Research framework

The analytical framework for brand awareness of "Vicem Tam Diep" product is built based on the brand awareness model of David A. Aaker (Brand awareness Planning Model). Brand equity is a multidimensional concept and a complex phenomenon. Several authors have proposed different brand equity models. Among which, as in the study of Eda Atilgan et al. (2005), the resonance model, customers who have real brand resonance have a high level of loyalty and actively seek means to interact with the brand and share their experiences with others.

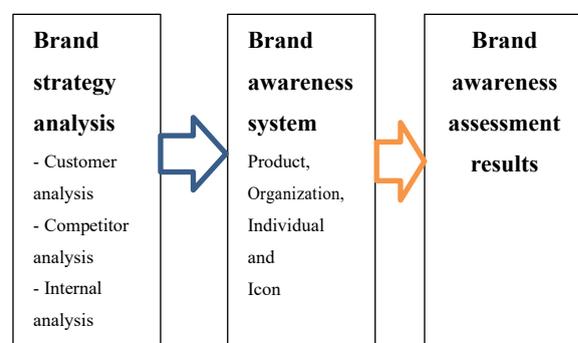


Figure 1. Research framework

Data Collection

- Secondary data collection method:

Secondary data is characterized by only providing information, describing the situation, indicating the scale of the phenomenon, but not showing the nature or internal relationships of the research phenomenon. Because the secondary data, whether collected from inside or outside the enterprise, are all published information, so they can be not so up-to-date, and sometimes inaccurate and incomplete (Giampietro Gobo, 2015).

Through reports, textbooks, journals, the Internet

on related articles, the authors find answers to the research problems of the topic, inheriting the theoretical basis and previous research models to carry out the research topic. These data provide the authors with the following information:

- Research materials on brand and brand awareness, brand awareness models of enterprises.
- Information, data and issues related to the cement industry, consumption markets, and tastes of customers.
- Using business results reports of Vicem Tam Diep Cement Company to evaluate internal factors of the Company.
- Development orientation and branding orientation of Vicem Tam Diep Company in the coming time.
- Secondary data are collected, selected and used for inheritance, including experiences in building brands of cement companies in the same industry previously.

- Primary data collection method:

Primary data is collected through survey method of major customers of Vicem Tam Diep Cement Company (Distributors: Duc Hung, Nam Phuong, Xuan Truong - Ninh Binh area; Distributor: Truong Hai, Tung Phu Son Can, Thanh Son, Thang Long Vietnam, Son Ma - Hanoi area). At the same time, the authors will choose to survey the building material stores with an average volume of 200 tons/ months for each market area) to collect information, assess customer needs, target customers, and evaluate the strengths of Vicem Tam Diep brand. In addition, the survey is expected to design questions about personal information with closed types.

The authors design survey questions on a 5-level Likert scale (Dwivedi, R., Pandey, N., 2021), based on the specific customer rating on each question, and on the average score of all customers, and on the meaning of each mean value for the Interval Scale to evaluate the factors affecting the building of an achievement strategy. After collecting survey data, the authors calculate the average value and compares it with the interval scale. The authors send questionnaires to customers via email. After sending the letter, the author also made a phone call to notify and asked the surveyed customers to cooperate in order to get the highest number of feedback votes. Receiving the answered questionnaires, where the meaning of

the answers is not clear enough, the team will conduct a direct call to survey more opinions of higher clarity.

Sampling

The authors use the method of random sampling from this group of customers of the Company, after having applied Felly David's formula (Nguyen Thi Canh, 2004) to calculate the minimum sample size as follows:

$$n = \frac{NZ^2 p(1-p)}{Nd^2 + Z^2 p(1-p)}$$

- n = Minimum desired sample size;
- N = Sample population
- Z = Standard Deviation, level 1.96, corresponding to 95% confidence level
- p = The target population is assessed as having specific common characteristics, usually 50% (0.5)
- d = Expected accuracy, usually set at 0.05

With the group of distributors: currently, the Company has had about 30 distributors, so the minimum number of research samples is: 10.

With the customer group of agents selling building materials, and the investors of large construction projects: currently, the Company has employed about 800 agents, so the minimum number of research samples is: 260.

Data analysis

The authors also use qualitative methods to analyze, the methods used in the implementation of the paper are descriptive statistics, meta-analysis, comparative methods.

- Synthetic analysis method: used to collect a lot of information about the theoretical basis in domestic and foreign published researches; Select documents suitable to the research problems, thereby inheriting the research works that are suitable for the set research object regarding brand awareness of the enterprise.

- Descriptive statistical method: To accomplish the goal of building brand strategy of Vicem Tam Diep. The topic uses statistical methods to describe data, collect and systematize in the form of diagrams and tables. Processing secondary data sources from business results reports, production reports, distribution channels, product consumption and primary data collected.
- Method of analysis and comparison: This method is used to compare the indicators of the analysis period with the original targets to draw conclusions and the level of completion or the ratio of the absolute difference to the original target to shows the growth rate of secondary data collected from the summary report of Tam Diep Cement Company in the period of 2016-2019. Comparison results are presented in relative numbers to see the fluctuations of these indicators over time.

The collected questionnaires were arranged and analyzed by the authors, based on Microsoft Office Excel software. The authors screened, checked, coded, entered and cleaned the data, then used the numerical average method to calculate the average scores of the statements in the analysis.

Research findings and discussion

Performance results of Vicem Tam Diep Cement Company in the period of 2016-2019

Table 1. Business results in 2016 – 2018

Year	Clinker production output (million tons)	Production of cement (million tons)	Consumption volume (million tons)	Net revenue (billion VND)	Profit (billion VND)	Submit budget (billion dong)	Employee income (VND/person)
2016	1.37	1.56	1.86	1,529.191	6,21	64.179	8,800,000
2017	1.42	1.36	1.72	1,302.871	7,046	47.833	9,062,500
2018	1.44	1.59	1.89	1,485.549	14,244	52.494	9,912,800

With the situation of Vietnam's increasingly high development, and according to the policy on industrialization and modernization of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Vicem Tam Diep Cement Company has got more advantages in its growth. After more than 15 years since the first day of production and business, especially from 2005 to 2018, Vicem Tam Diep Cement Company has gradually operated effectively. We can see the development progress over the years in Table 1.

From 2016 to 2018, the company's clinker output continuously increased. Clinker

production increased from 1.37 million tons in 2016 to 1.44 million tons in 2018. Cement production in 2016 was 1.56 million tons, up to 2017 although it decreased to 1.43 million tons, but by 2018 it increased to 1.59 tons. However, the consumption volume of the Company over the years increased and decreased unevenly, although not too volatile. Consumption volume in 2016 was 1.86 million tons, downed to 1.72 million tons in 2017, and reverted to 1.89 million tons in 2018. In general, the Company's consumption volume has not fluctuated too much.

Because the sales volume has fluctuated, the Company's net revenue in recent years has not remained stable. If the net revenue in 2016 was VND 1,529,191 billion, in 2017 it decreased to mere VND 1,302,871 billion, in 2018 increased to VND 1,485,549 billion, but still lower than the net revenue of 2016.

However, one of the successes of the Company is that although the revenue has decreased, due to the continuous saving of costs in production, the reduction of product costs as well as the structure of products sold, priority is given to the products that bring higher profits. This, the profits in recent years have continuously increased, especially in 2018. In 2016, the Company's profit was 6.21 billion VND, then in 2018 it increased to the level of 14.244 billion VND.

Customer survey results

Although the product has been on the market for more than 15 years, in its existence, Vicem Tam

Diep Cement Company has not conducted research and investigation on specific customer needs, so the relevant data have not been determined. The target customer segments have been adjusted many times in the past, based on the subjective judgments and evaluation criteria of managers as well as on the parent company, VICEM.

Table 2. Target customers of the Company

Criteria	Households	Cement-using organizations	Suppliers

Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of decision maker: 30-50 years old • Men, with good income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building contractors • Concrete structure manufacturing company • Concrete batching plant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Distributor • Store of building materials
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ninh Binh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ninh Binh • Thai Binh • Nam Dinh • Thanh Hoa • Ha Noi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ninh Binh • Thai Binh • Nam Dinh • Ha Noi
Incentives for Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trademark • Quality • Price 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price: Deferred payment • Quality • Stable supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cement's business performance • Trademark • Stability quality • Reasonable and competitive selling price

Survey results about the total time customers have used Vicem Tam Diep products show that most of the customers have used Vicem Tam Diep products for a certain period of time, from 1 to 5 years. Of these, 85 customers, accounting for 33%, have used the product for 1-3 years; 55 customers (21%) have used the product between 3 and 5 years. Here, most of the customers use the product for their building projects. Among these, there are also 12 customers using the product for the first time, most of these are retail customers who do not have the need to use the product regularly. Although the proportion is not too high, it is also an important customer group that cannot be ignored.

The sales characteristics of customers using Vicem Tam Diep products show that customers using Vicem Tam Diep products have brought about quite high sales. Most of them use more than 500 million VND/year. This is a group of customers who often use products for investment and construction projects.

In evaluation of the purposes of using Vicem

Tam Diep products, most customers use this to conduct their investment projects, which focus on the construction of high-rise buildings, commercial centers and headquarters or working offices. A small part of customers has used for resort construction and residential construction purposes.

In terms of purchasing motivation, the Company's existing customers evaluate Vicem Tam Diep cement products to be good in the following criteria: The price of the product is very competitive with the score of 3.9; The product has been used for a long time, score of 3.6; The distribution stores are convenient and widespread, so it's easy to buy, with a score of 3.9; Product quality is good, at a normal level – acceptable to be promoted, with a score of 3.4; The distribution stores are convenient and widespread, so it's easy to buy, then the score is 3.7.

However, the existing customers of the Company evaluate Vicem Tam Diep cement products not to be good in the following criteria: The company always has a reasonable discount policy, a score of 2.8; Get advice from friends, partners, score 2.9; There are many preferential programs for traditional customers, with a score of 2.9; Appropriate payment policy, many incentives, score of 2.9.

According to the survey results, the reason for not buying the company's products is "rarely receive promotions like other brands" with a consensus score of 4.1 points. This shows that the Company has not focused on implementing promotional policies with customers, especially new customers to attract them. The second reason for customers not to buy the product is because "Product price is high, so it is impossible to buy", at the score of 3.7 points. Although the price policy has been built, in general, the price of Vicem Tam Diep is higher than some products on the market. The third, equally important reason is due to "don't know, rarely heard of this brand" with a consensus score of 3.7 points. This shows that the Company's brand is not strong enough for customers. In addition, the reason for customers not to use the product is also because the payment method is less attractive, the average score is 3.4 points. The two factors of distribution channel and product quality are not the main factors determining the purchase intention of customers.

The identification of market trends of Vicem Tam Diep cement is synthesized by the authors from a survey of 168 existing customers. Survey results show that customers' tendency to continue to believe in using Vicem Tam Diep products is quite positive. The average score of selected

customers is 3.3 points. However, the level of attachment or loyalty of existing customers to the Company is not really high. The criterion "I will recommend to my partners and friends to use" is only rated at 3.0 points a normal score. In particular, the criterion "The works require high quality, I still believe in using the company's products" has not been well appreciated by customers. The average score of this is only at 2.9 points.

The results of the analysis of internal factors of the enterprise

- Brand image/identity:

Vicem Tam Diep Cement Company Limited is a member of Vietnam Cement Industry Corporation (Vicem) and 100% of charter capital is held by Vietnam Cement Industry Corporation. Therefore, the image and brand of the Company depends largely on the image of the Corporation. The Company's brand image has been used synchronously on the packaging of cement products for domestic consumption. Particularly for export products, according to regulations, the Company uses the general packaging and trademark of the Corporation.

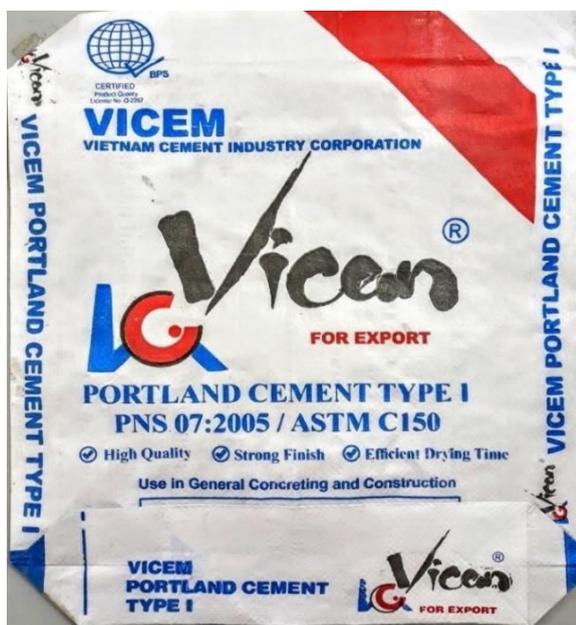


Figure 2. The export product of the Company

With the building of brand image since 2005, Vicem Tam Diep's brand image has been used uniformly. Therefore, the assessment of the management staff on the criterion of "The company has built a specific and consistent brand image" received a positive rating with an average of 3.5 points. The evaluation of the criterion "The company has built a specific slogan, goal and mission of the brand" also received a positive score, with 3.6 points.

- Marketing and sales strategy:

The company has analyzed internal conditions such as brand, scale, production and business capabilities, product prices, etc. to build a business strategy for Vicem Tam Diep cement products. The principle of setting up the product structure of Vicem Tam Diep is to diversify cement products with high and stable quality to meet the trend of using many types of cement in a project of households and houses. contractor. The selling points of this brand are in the following characteristics that the Company's products bring:

- High and stable quality
- Trusted brand
- Reasonable selling price and discount
- The best consulting and support service

Based on the brand awareness strategy, the Company conducts multi-channel communication campaigns to target customer groups:

- Online (Facebook, Website, video clips with technical instructions): the segment is aimed at organizations using cement such as construction contractors, project investors, concrete batching plants. The goal of this communication channel is to increase the prestige of the Company's cement brand, affirm product quality, etc. to reach more customers who regularly use cement with high technical requirements.
- Selling point: target customers are households and distribution channels to enhance the Company's cement brand awareness. The company does this through investing in a synchronous brand awareness system at the point of sale such as banners, slogans, and slogans.
- Re-documenting of user manuals: targeting groups of household and institutional customers who use cement. The company publishes user manuals and distributes them to customers.
- On-site advertising: targeting household and distribution channels and institutional customers. The company cooperates with project investors that use its cement in a certain amount to apply for permission to install billboards at construction sites.
- Event sponsorship: Aiming at all customer groups, especially customers

who use cement. The Company can participate in construction industry events such as fairs, seminars, or sponsoring charity programs, events that attract the organizations to use Company's product.

- Brand positioning and some inherent disadvantages:

Repositioning the Vicem Tam Diep cement brand in line with the new strategy in Ninh Binh and neighboring markets. Strengthening the brand strength of Vicem Tam Diep. Each type of cement should emphasize the outstanding attributes and be appreciated by the target customers. However, this positioning is also facing certain obstacles.

With a geographical location located in an area where many cement factories are concentrated with most capacity much larger than Vicem Tam Diep's one, the logistical conditions bringing products to the North market are the same. But if put ourselves into the Central and Southern markets, Vicem Tam Diep is not convenient in water transportation. The source of transportation is unstable, transportation costs increase, product packaging is affected by the impact of the loading and unloading process.

Meanwhile, in recent years, the Company has not focused on organizing specific and regular customer needs assessment activities. Therefore, the assessment of this criterion only reached 2.6 points - not good.

Besides, the criterion "The company conducts specific customer segments and has appropriate policies for each customer segment" was also rated 3.1 points - the normal level. In particular, the corporate values that are regularly communicated by the Company are not well organized, so they are only rated 2.6 points.

- Correlation with competing brands in the market:

Northern Vietnam market has over 30 brands of cement, divided into groups:

Group 1: Branded and high-priced cement group: Cement of Vicem, Nghi Son cement.

Group 2: Cement joint venture with brand name but reasonable price: Chinfon Cement, Phuc Son, Thang Long, Cam Pha.

Group 3: Group of private cement with low selling price: Duyen Ha, Visai, Long Son, Xuan Thanh, Loc Son, Thanh Thang.

Group 4: Group of local cement with very low

selling price: Vinh Son, Trung Son, Quang Son, Hoang Long, Cong Thanh, Sai Son, Mai Son, Lam Son, La Hien, Quan Trieu.

Survey results show that Vicem Tam Diep brand is rated better or equal to competitors in customer care, brand image and product quality. Evaluation of Vicem Tam Diep brand in terms of price is higher than that of Long Son brand, however, because of the different target market positioning of different brands, Vicem Tam Diep's pricing policy is still considered appropriate. However, the factors: Distribution channel; Discount policy; Payment policy; Promotion and support policy; Vicem Tam Diep's is not high, even lower than competitors.

Due to the specificity of the cement industry, factories must be located near the limestone and clay mines, which are concentrated in the North and Central regions, so the cement factories also focus mainly on the cement industry in these two regions. Therefore, the supply of cement in the North and the Central regions is extremely abundant. While the South mainly concentrates on cement grinding stations, the source of raw materials of limestone and clay for cement production is limited.

CONCLUSION

In general, the Company has identified the target customers, the Company also segmented the target market by geographical location, corresponding to business strategies suitable to each market segment. The company's target customer group is relatively suitable. The Company's target customer segment through the stages is well recognized and has appropriate changes. As a result, the Company's product structure is no longer suitable for the new period.

Because there is no demand investigation and customer characteristics analysis, the current target customer group of the Company is still not specific and not suitable with the movement of the market.

Existing customers of the Company are evaluating not good Vicem Tam Diep cement products in the following criteria: The company does not have a reasonable discount policy, has not been introduced by friends or consulting partners, has not many incentive programs for traditional customers, the payment policy is not suitable, not many incentives and still rigid.

Currently, the Company has absolutely no activities to research customer satisfaction as well as learn about customers who have not used its products. The company has not focused on

implementing promotional policies with customers, especially new customers to attract customers. Although the price policy has been built, in general, the price of Vicem Tam Diep is higher than some products on the market.

In the current period, consumer trends in construction also have many changes, while customer loyalty is not high. Meanwhile, the Company's brand awareness system also needs to be repositioned to suit the target market to strengthen appropriate communication measures.

The company's brand communication is still not good. It can be seen that, although the Company's communication channels are quite diverse, the effectiveness is not high. In some markets, the cement brand of Vicem Tam Diep has not been appreciated, although the quality of the product is at a good level. Therefore, in order to enhance the ability of the business to be more positively recognized by customers and partners, Tam Diep Cement Company also has to implement a lot of appropriate marketing measures in the post-Covid-19 period.

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