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<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor's thesis

Subject	International Business	Date	4.9.2005
Author	Anna Ekdahl	Student number	
		Number of pages	99
Title	The Brand Management Of Functional Foods Aimed At Global Markets		
Supervisors	Ph. D. Sten-Olof Hansén and M. Sc. Harri Nieminen		

Abstract

There are many different definitions of global brands. Usually global brands are said to be consistent in their brand proposition and product formulation. They have also been defined as brands which have succeeded in creating a similar positioning, advertising strategy, personality, and look and feel from one country to another. The question many brand and marketing managers nowadays face is weather to standardize or adapt the product and its brand.

The research problem of this study is: How was the brand management carried out in a Finnish functional foods company? The problem can be divided in four sub-questions:

1. What are the features of functional foods and beverages markets?
2. What are the effects of globalization on branding?
3. What are the different brand management strategies?
4. How to implement the global brand management strategy?

The study is a qualitative case study. The empirical part of the thesis deals with Raisio Ltd and its margarine Benecol. The goal of this study was to find out what could be learned from the past of Raisio's Benecol by investigating the problems the company faced. The brand was meant to succeed internationally or globally, thus it was reasonable to compare Benecol's brand management actions to the global brand management approach. Therefore, the brand management actions concerning Benecol were evaluated.

The conclusions of this study reveal that specific guidelines and definitions of the concept functional foods would ease the work of the companies in the functional food business. Because the legislation varies, many of the new markets have to be considered separately, one at a time. The total standardization of procedures is thus not possible. It is also recommended that foods are modified according to local tastes, although products with high positioning goals, like Benecol, need less localization. The fact that many markets are in different phases in their knowledge of cholesterol and Benecol should also be acknowledged. Too scientific consumer communication should be avoided. In the functional food business, food and beverage companies tend to succeed, not medical companies. This is due to the fact that consumers see functional foods as a part of their everyday nutrition, not as medicine.

Key words	international trade, globalization, brands, brand management, food and beverage, functional food
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