Evolution of Fanaticism: Apple Inc

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Abstract: This research paper cynosures at studying the company Apple Inc and understand the possible reasons behind a huge fanatic followers they have. Since the brand is blooming since past two decades, explicating high levels of fanaticism amongst customers, understanding the reasons behind it and studying the brand overall would enrich the readers with new possible ways of Advertising strategies and how to create a “Bubble” which would appeal to maximum consumers out in the market. This paper thus has covered maximum possible aspects of Fanaticism and how it works with the brand Apple. Certain conclusions has been derived based on the observations and secondary data set obtained.

I. INTRODUCTION

A fanatic is a person who can’t change his mind and won’t change the subject: By Winston Churchill

Research has shown that some products and brands have ‘fanatical’ followers who remain highly enthusiastic, devoted, and whose loyalty remains unwavering despite counter supportive facts/information, or persuasive arguments to switch. While many organisations would benefit from having such devoted ‘fans’ within its customer base, some authors have pointed to the detriments associated with such rigidity, inflexibility, and dogmatism.

The terms fanaticism and fanatic come from the Latin adverb fƗnƗticƝ (frenziedly, ragingly) and the adjective fƗnƗticus (enthusiastic, ecstatic; raging, fanatical, furious). From explanatory dictionaries we can take for example WebSterm which describes a fanatic as a person with an extreme and uncritical enthusiasm or zeal, as in religion or politics.

Fanatics, ideologues and absolutists are humanity’s greatest scourge. Whether they’re the leaders or the followers, fanatics are people who indulge in a heady, intoxicating and toxic concoction of self-affirming, know-it-all confidence that they have unique access to absolute truths, truths so perfect that they have to impose them on everyone.

This research paper thus highlights how fanaticism has evolved in case of Apple Inc.

Here we would try to understand how Apple Inc has created a fanatic world of its own and have revolutionized the electronic gadgets industry.

There are certain arguments which needs to be answered in order to understand how the company Apple Inc has been going around creating their own world of fanaticism?

• Are Apple consumers irrationally loyal to their brand?
• Have iPhone consumers taken the brand too seriously to the extent of iReligion?
• From 3.4% global market share in 2007 to 15.3 percent in 2016 is accredited only to the Fanatic environment created by the company?

II. APPLE AT A GLIMPSE

Apple Inc., formerly Apple Computer, Inc., is a multinational corporation that creates consumer electronics, personal computers, servers, and computer software, and is a digital distributor of media content. The company also has a chain of retail stores known as Apple Stores. Apple’s core product lines are the iPhone smartphone, iPad tablet computer, iPod portable media players, and Macintosh computer line. Founders Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak created Apple Computer on April 1, 1976, and incorporated the company on January 3, 1977, in Cupertino, California.

For more than three decades, Apple Computer was predominantly a manufacturer of personal computers, including the Apple II, Macintosh, and Power Mac lines, but it faced rocky sales and low market share during the 1990s. Jobs, who had been ousted from the company in 1985, returned to Apple in 1996 after his company NeXT was bought by Apple. The following year he became the company’s interim CEO, which later became permanent. Jobs subsequently instilled a new corporate philosophy of recognizable products and simple design, starting with the original iMac in 1998.

With the introduction of the successful iPod music player in 2001 and iTunes Music Store in 2003, Apple established itself as a leader in the consumer electronics and media sales industries, leading it to drop “Computer” from the company’s name in 2007. The company is now also known for its iOS range of smartphone, media player, and tablet computer products that began with the iPhone, followed by the iPod Touch and then iPad.

Apple Product Sales - Additional Information

Since the introduction of the iPhone in June 2007, sales of the iPod have dramatically decreased from over 10 million units per quarter on average to less than 3 million units in the third quarter of 2014. In contrast, sales of the iPhone have increased rapidly, with over 150 million units sold...
worldwide in 2013 and over 50 million units sold in the first quarter of 2014 alone. In March 2014, sales of the iPhone brand reached 500 million devices and as of September 2014 there are eight generations of iPhone models, each accompanied by one of the eight major releases of Apple’s operating system, iOS. This operating system had a global market share of 15.2 percent in the first quarter of 2014, making it the second most popular operating system in the world behind only the Android OS.

Apple released its first iPad in April 2010, with the two most recent models, the iPad Air 2 and the iPad Mini, announced in October 2014. There have been five versions of the iPad to date and as of June 2014, there have been over 200 million iPads sold worldwide since its release. In the United States there are forecast to be 85 million iPad users in 2016, an increase from the 11.5 million in 2010. At the beginning of 2012, the iPad was the dominant force in the global tablet market with a market share of 58.1 percent. This share decreased to 26.9 percent in the second quarter of 2014 as Apple faced competition from Google and Samsung. The iPad nevertheless remains a major product for Apple withunit sales of 13 million in the third quarter of 2014, generating revenue of almost 6 billion U.S. dollars.

**Apple product line:**

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Why apple has grown beyond everyone’s imagination fanatically?

1. For any product that Apple creates, the people who create it have to want it themselves.
2. The products have to be easy to use
3. Keep things simple
4. Offer great customer service and in-store experiences
5. Apple only makes a product if Apple can do it better
6. Apple stays at least two years ahead of its competitors

**III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Apple Inc. is an American multinational corporation that designs and markets consumer electronics, computer software, and personal computers. The company’s best-known hardware products include the Macintosh line of computers, the iPod, the iPhone and the iPad. Apple software includes the Mac OS X operating system; the iTunes media browser; the iLife suite of multimedia and creativity software; the iWork suite of productivity software; Aperture, a professional photography package; Final Cut Studio, a suite of professional audio and film-industry software products; Logic Studio, a suite of music production tools; and iOS, a mobile operating system. As of August 2010, the company operates 301 retail stores in ten countries, and an online store where hardware and software products are sold. Apple Inc. started with producing only personal computers (first market). Later on, it expanded to producing its own revolutionary operating system (Mac OS X), which left an Apple’s footprint, in the OS industry (second market). It also produced creativity, productivity, and multimedia programs, such as the iTunes (a worldwide known/online music player and store). The company kept on expanding until it came up with the iPad in 2001, to enter the portable music players market and become the leader of it (third market). In 2007, Apple Inc. entered its fourth market by launching its new invention, the iPhone.

Apple’s 1997 “Think Different” marketing campaign was one of its most memorable ever. Billboards and banners featured huge black-and-white portraits of performers, artists, scientists, and political leaders whose outsider ideas eventually became mainstream. The implicit message was that Apple’s “insanely great” products were for quirky rebels who would one day dominate the world. The photo of Steve Jobs on the cover of his posthumous biography would have fit right in.

The Apple of today is turning its back on that creative class. Apple no longer designs for creators of digital media, who tend to be very demanding about product quality. Instead, Apple builds for consumers—in both senses of the word: people who spend their own money, rather than their companies’, and people who consume digital media, as opposed to people who produce it. Focusing on digital consumption has made Apple wildly profitable, but the company’s products have trended downwards in quality, flexibility, and even reliability.

Apple appears to be suffering from growing pains. The company—which declined to comment for this article—seems increasingly overwhelmed by the wide range of products and services that it has created, and is responding (quite logically) by spending significantly less effort on items that appeal to a shrinking percentage of its customer base—a group that unfortunately includes digital creators. The danger is that by focusing on consumption, rather than production, Apple will jeopardize the very essence that first made its products insanely great.
The Good Apple

From one perspective, Apple's world could not be rosier and its future shinier. Rising from the rubble of a disintegrating company in 1997, Apple has reached the pinnacle of success in 15 short years. With a market capitalization of over $500 billion, Apple is amongst the most valuable and highly profitable companies in the world.

Its remarkable success lies in the company's ability to create truly innovative products with vast customer appeal. Apple flouts the conventional wisdom of the consumer electronics industry, which emphasizes low cost, "me-too" products, and a continuously shortened product life. Instead, Apple has opted for constant and discrete product innovation, resulting in fanatic consumer loyalty and a high level of profitability.

The Bad Apple

So why does Apple treat its customers and workers by two different standards? When it comes to customers, Apple is a bold innovator that leads the industry into new directions and forces others to follow. However, when it comes to the management of its supply chain and treatment of workers in the Chinese factories that make its products, it hides behind the constraints of prevailing industry practices. What is even more disconcerting is the fact that these practices are in violation of not only local and national laws, but also of Apple's own voluntary self-imposed code of conduct. It is important to note that this voluntary code of conduct breaks no new ground. It is at best a modest attempt to ensure that workers will be treated fairly and provided with a safe work environment.

Rozanski, Baum, and Wolfsen (1999) warn that "fanatical followers" can be so attached to the existing brand or product(s) and can be so highly 'resistant TO change' that they can retaliate against new product launches and/or brand repositioning.

In particular, the downside for consumers is worth researching, especially with calls for transformative consumer research (Mick, 2006), and current concerns about materialism and issues of over-consumption negatively impacting on consumers' quality of life (Shankar, Cherrier, and Canniford, 2006; Shankar, Whittaker, and Fitchett, 2006).

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper has undertaken all the facts, figures and data from secondary sources. Hence several periodicals, articles and textbooks have been referred in order to understand the subject "Fanaticism" and get the right facts about it with respect to Apple Inc. It encloses the probable factors which has caused the fanatic following of the company which can be studied and reviewed in order to get the insights as to how the selling techniques of the products have been changing.

Objectives of the study:

1. This research paper aims to study the company Apple Inc and how it has risen over the years to become one of the most “drooled over” brands.
2. To scrutinize the fanaticism theories and its evolution in the brand Apple.
3. To examine and study how Apple has used the “Theory of fanaticism” to be in the mainstream.

In a 2008 survey, Apple topped the list of brands that consumers can’t live without (Sanderson, 2008). The survey of 2,000 respondents in 107 countries demonstrates Apple’s global reach, its “inspiring” brand qualities and the degree to which it has become inextricably woven into contemporary culture. The perception of being hip had a huge impact on this success, and many of Apple’s advertising campaigns identify and crossover well with a large and diverse number of consumers. Through innovative marketing campaigns, Apple created an iconic brand that is perceived as hip, whose consumers are technologically savvy and a loyal customer base (Jenkins, 2008). Bartholomew (2010) affirms that advertising, such as Apple’s energetic silhouette ads for the iPod or famous “1984” commercial, plays an active role in shaping our identity and pulling us in a particular direction through symbols that represent who we are or embody the definition of who we would like to become.

Perhaps Apple’s most useful tactic for building buzz is understanding its audience. In recent years, advertisers have honed in on target audiences so closely that they are able to customize messages to resonate with unique groups and sub-groups (Bartholomew, 2010). Apple, however, does not generate buzz by attacking a segregated target market; in fact, it doesn’t have a target market. Scott (2011) says that Apple is not successful because of its products, per se; he believes that the company is a game changer because it solves problems, e.g., a need for simplicity, less viruses and feeling more hip (Scott, 2011)

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data obtained, it has been observed that-

- The brand has huge Fanatic followers. This Fanaticism is a bubble created by the brand Apple in the smartest ways possible.
- Undoubtedly the quality of the products are unmatchable, but the ways through which the brand has fixed themselves in the Global market has set records to follow by new-bees.
- The advertising strategies and the ways through which they have placed themselves in the market is incomparable.
- New brands and upcoming followers can learn a lot from this World-class Leaders.
• Many newly set brands can use this strategy of Fanaticism for gaining more popularity amongst customers and creating fanatic followers.

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