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FLYING DUTCHMAN VS. FLYING CHEF: HOW NATIONAL CULTURES SHAPE THE BRAND POSITIONING OF FLAGSHIP CARRIERS? THE CASES OF ROYAL DUTCH AIRLINES AND TURKISH AIRLINES

Abstract:

A flagship carrier company is important for the country's prestige and it is a channel to communicate about the national culture. Companies use the elements of the culture to create "the story" of their marketing communication plan. Today Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM) is positioning the brand on the concept "surprising", while Turkish Airlines (THY) prefers "the perfect gastronomic experience" with the celebrity endorsement format. This study is trying to identify the reasons of these choices. Case study method is used to understand the logic behind the brand positioning of two companies. Documents, archival records and marketing communication efforts of the two brands are analyzed retrospectively.

Results show that national cultures are dominating the marketing communication strategies and brand positioning of KLM and THY. The clichés and stereotypes of national cultures are used in marketing communication messages. On the other hand, both companies' current brand positionings are shaped after some air crashes. KLM's Tenerife and THY's Schiphol accidents are dramatically affected the marketing communication strategies' of this two flagship carriers.

Keywords:

Brand Positioning, Marketing Communication Strategy, Turkish Airlines, Royal Dutch Airlines.