

Dr Vipul Jain

Associate Professor (Marketing), Specialization (Services marketing & Branding)

Department of Management

SGRRITS

Dehradun, Uttarakhand, INDIA

248001

vipulleoss@gmail.com

9412900055

A paper from the upcoming book of Dr Vipul Jain-‘God: The mantra of branding’ (The Indian Context)

BRANDING- NOTHING BUT AN EXPERIENCE

Have you ever experienced god, have you ever seen God. Plenty of answers will shoot out. The fact is that most of you might say that you have experienced God. God gives us a soothing effect; it gives us the attitude, courage, valour and the sustainability. In the same manner brand is nothing but an experience. An experience that makes you feel good. It is your conviction and for me a ‘brand is something you love and admire’. It is a delivery of promise.

KARNA



What do you make out of this picture? He is MRITYUANJAYA KARNA (The central character of Epic Mahabharata) the only example of born brand. He was born with 'KAVACH' and 'KUNDAL'. Those were his attributes that made him distinct from others. However he was a great friend, a great donor, a great husband, a great father and he became all this with time. He evolved from a SUTA PUTRA TO SURYA PUTRA BUT ENTIRE LIFE REMAINED A SUTA AND THEN ALSO BECAME A BRAND. Therefore Brands are made and not born. Other qualities of his came from his virtues and hence he is the greatest brand ever existed.

HOW IS BRAND FORMED

Consumers who buy Calvin Klein underwear, Ford cars or Coca-Cola without looking at competitive products are loyal to a brand. But what does this mean. This means that consumers have internalized their purchasing to the point where it is no longer a conscious decision. A brand always speaks to its audience in some way. It represents a lifestyle, culture and belongingness. Branding is the process by which a company a product name or an image becomes synonymous with a set of values, aspirations or states, such as youth, independence, trustworthiness, quality or performance.

'KARNA' WAS A BORN BRAND (A CENTRAL CHARACTER OF THE BEST EPIC EVER-MAHABHARATA) BUT THAT WAS NOT ENOUGH. HE HAS TO ACHIEVE ONE THING, WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTIC OF ALL BRANDS AND THAT IS 'EMOTIONAL BONDING WITH THE TARGET AUDIENCE'. HE WAS THE GREATEST ARCHER (AFTER LORD SHIVA, LORD PARASHURAM, AND BHISHMA), GREATEST DONOR, GREATEST FRIEND, GREATEST LOVER, A GREAT HUSBAND, A GREAT FATHER AND ABOVE ALL A CATALYST WHO BROUGHT CHANGE IN SOCIETY.

In the same manner a journey from a product to a brand involves the following.

1) NAME

This is a very vital characteristic of Brand formation. Do you know what your name is? Oh sorry, we all know our name. Now please tell me the meaning of your name. I guarantee some of you still don't know the meaning of your name. 'NAAM KARAN' IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN INDIA. IT'S A CELEBRATION, NAME MEANS A LOT. 'SHAKESPEARE SAID-WHATS IN A NAME', SORRY SHAKESPEARE, IN BRANDING

EVERYTHING IS IN A NAME, BECAUSE IT GIVES YOU THE INSIGHT INTO THE SOUL OF THE BRAND.

COKE

Have you ever heard about 'coke'? I m sure you have. What is the meaning of coke? Well it is the residue of leftover after burning the coal. So are you drinking coal? certainly not? There is a history behind the name and it is an interesting one. Want to check it then find out.

“Coca-Cola was first served on May 8, 1886 at Jacobs’ Pharmacy”



Jacobs' Pharmacy, later renamed Jacobs Drug Store, at the corner of Peachtree and Marietta streets in downtown Atlanta, circa 1920

SONY

The original name was SONNY. This name has no meaning but company wanted something rhythmic so that it could match with its image of a musical company. Something which is soothing to ear. SONNY IN JAPANESE MEANS TO LOSE MONEY SO THE COMPANY DROPPED ONE 'N' AND HENCE THE NAME SONY.

2) EMOTIONAL CONNECTIVITY

This is by far the most important thing that makes a brand. A brand emotes and connects with its audience. According to Marc Gobei, in his book EMOTIONAL

BRANDING, 'THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION IN BRANDING STRATEGIES IS THE BELIEF THAT BRANDING IS ABOUT MARKET SHARE, WHEN IT IS REALLY ALWAYS ABOUT MINDSHARE AND EMOTIONS SHARE. Madonna's value as a brand is massive. Every time a Madonna CD is released, there is an expectation that is associated not only with music, but also the look and feel of the CD, the accompanying videos and merchandise. At the heart of the Madonna brand is a strong, independent woman with a commitment to excellence and a flirtation with a cutting edge.

3) LOGOS

They are the most powerful visuals. They communicate through their letters, words or signs.

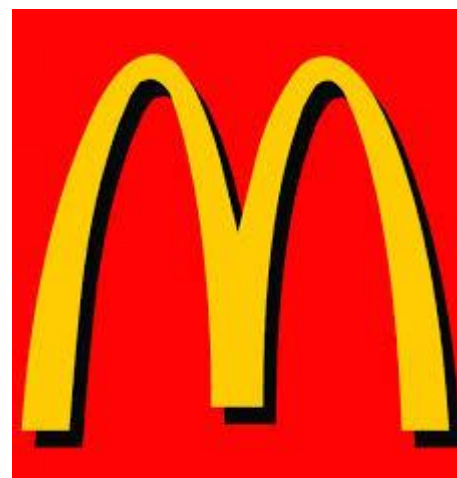
The H of Honda and the H of Hyundai are not just different but they are enough to suggest the differentiation. The circles of Audi and the Thumb of Thumps up immediately tell you about the product. The S of Suzuki is absolutely distinct and the M of Mahindra separates it from the M of McDonalds.



HONDA



McDonalds



Steve Jobs Apple



Mahindra



4) Packaging

How you pack the products is important because it is another very effective visual. Packing has changed over times. As a kid when i use to purchase a shoe, it was taken out from a shabby box. Look at the change, from a shabby box to to the most stylized boxes ever. You don't want to part with your boxes; rather you want to keep it with yourself. The classic example is the bottle of coca-cola. It has passed the test of time for years.

Coka-cola bottle



5) Functional capabilities

Some brands use their functionalities to win consumers trust. Many brands appeal to consumers because they have a very clear purpose. That purpose makes the brand not only unique, but also easier to position, maintain and design for. Consumers buy these products because they know that they will get what the company is claiming to give.

The classic example is VOLVO. In 1982, Volvo introduced the 760, the first of the 700 series that would become a favourite family car of the 'yuppie' (young, upwardly mobile) set in the 1980s. In 1985, Volvo became the best-selling European import. Volvo maintained its core value of safety and reliability. A clever example of this was its 'safe sex' campaign (it's safe to have sex in a Volvo)



This is just an attempt to take an insight into the brand formation. For me just going through the EPIC MAHABHARATA AND MRITYUNJAYA (A BOOK ON KARNA) IS A GREAT EXERCISE TO LEARN BRANDING. Karna transformed into a great Brand The detail insight is given in my upcoming book.

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