

Brand Management
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And now let us see how this gets applied in the field of brand management and how it creates a brand iceberg. I have tried to give you a sample of a brand iceberg and how it will look like. Now let us see what you see above the surface is appearance and what you see below the surface is substance and that which is pushed inside. Now what is really an appearance in the context of brand? The appearance is say brand name. So when you buy say Colgate toothpaste, immediately on the packet you see that Colgate word is written. You also see that there is a picture of a tooth which is white in color which probably also has a sparkle.

So that is an appearance of the brand Colgate. You also remember when we think of Colgate, you remember its advertising. Whatever advertising is currently running in the mass media you might remember. For example, if I think of say Colgate brand, I think of Priyanka Chopra doing advertisement saying that this toothpaste may namak hai.

Similarly, Colgate launched a brand called Total which was also a hit, a big hit and that was in association with a French company. So what I am trying to say is when you think of a brand, you think of its name, you generally are familiar with its appearances and appearances mean brand name, it could be its advertising, it can be the promise. Now if you remember Colgate brand, you always see the picture of a doctor and doctor who is wearing a white coat. So what promise does the brand Colgate make to the consumer? The promise it is making is that it is advised by dentist, it is advised by doctors and if you use Colgate brand of toothpaste, your teeth will remain healthy. You may also remember the people who are associated with the brand.

For example, the dentist which keeps recurring in any communication by Colgate brand and also the brand ambassador. So like for example, just now I have spoken about Priyanka Chopra who was associated with Colgate brand. So these are the general things that we remember when we think of a brand and these are at the appearance level. Now let us see what really happens beneath the surface and what resides beneath the surface in a brand iceberg. In this picture you can see what is residing beneath the surface is values like customer focus, integrity, high quality, cost consciousness, treatment of people, innovation, teamwork, social development, measurement, etc.

Now what are these? Where do they come from? This is something that we have to

understand because what is residing below the surface is skills and values and where do these skills and values come from? They come from people who work in the organization, values come from the organizational culture and the culture of leadership and the organization that dictates that this is how we will run this organization. So under the surface what you have is skills and values, what you also have is the substance. It is the substance that lies below the surface has to find a mirror image in the part of the brand which lies outside the surface and if there is a mismatch between appearance and brand substance then the outcome could be lethal. Which means that if brand stands for something and what it shows is something very different then there will be a dissonance in the minds of the consumer, there will be a dissonance in the minds of the employees and therefore the communication that will go will be confusing and people will not really know what is the brand promise and the actual delivery will not happen as per the promise. So we must explore where do these values, this value system, these skills and the substance which lies beneath the surface, where do they come from? And let us see in the next slide where do they come from.

This is another example of brand iceberg where we say that above the surface we have the name, the trademark, the symbol which means the logo, visual identity which means the packaging, the name, the way it is written, the fonts it is used and so on, the design of the container, design of the packaging and so on so forth. And below the surface what lies is emotional values, added values, unique characteristics, trust, guarantee, promise, define the consumer identity, company's identity, mission, vision, strategy, etc. And at the surface level at the blue line you can see that that is the touch point, that is the moment of truth that we spoke about earlier in various lectures. So we will try and construct the brand iceberg of any one brand that all of us are familiar with and we will try and understand how these events contribute towards forming the value system of a brand and when we actually encounter a brand we realize that we realize why a brand is behaving in a certain manner. Let us look at it and we are going to create a brand iceberg of this brand which is familiar to all of us called Airtel.

All of us know Airtel, a large number of us are user of Airtel brand and we are going to see what is the appearance, what constitutes the appearance of this brand Airtel and what lies beneath the surface. You can see of course there is a picture of an iceberg and in the iceberg there is something above the surface and something below the surface. Now in these words you can see what really lies above the surface when it comes to Airtel brand. So the first thing that strikes us when we think of Airtel is the color red. If you remember and those of you who are not students and who have been seeing the growth of Airtel brand over last 20 years you would remember that the logo of Airtel always had the color red.

At one point of time it also had color black but it always had the color red. Red and white formed an integral part of the logo of Airtel. So red is the color that immediately comes to our mind when we think of Airtel. Now what does red signify? Red signifies passion, red signifies energy and so on. Now whose passion and whose energy if I may ask to begin with it may be the passion and the energy of the owners who launched Airtel.

Subsequently it could be the passion and energy of people who are working in Airtel and taking the brand forward. So it is the passion and the energy of everyone who is associated with this brand that is getting transmitted communicated through the color red. Another point that I would like to emphasize is celebrities. Now moment you think of Airtel you will see that it is endorsed by a large number of celebrities. It was initially endorsed by Shah Rukh Khan, then Karishma Kapoor, then Kareena Kapoor and Sachin Tendulkar and...large number of celebrities have endorsed the brand Airtel.

If you look at the competitive landscape of telecom field you will see that very rarely a telecom operator has used celebrities as brand ambassadors. So in fact early days when Airtel actually launched its services it had Shah Rukh Khan as the brand ambassador. Later on of course Idea Cellular employed Vishek Bachchan as the celebrity brand ambassador but Airtel has been doing it all along. In fact you would remember A R Rahman and his name is below in the last line. A R Rahman also created a tune for Airtel which became very popular among the people.

So one of the very powerful appearance of Airtel is the tune that A R Rahman had created. Another aspect that comes to our mind which is an appearance of Airtel moment we think of Airtel we do think of good network. We do realize that if we want a stable good quality telecom connection, phone connection we would either have Airtel but what I must say is that Airtel definitely stands for a good quality network definitely better than its competitors. So Airtel has invested money in building a good network and if you remember many of its advertisement it shows the speedometer where the data speed is very good in Airtel no matter where you go or it shows wherever you go you can talk clearly and so on. So Airtel has made a lot of effort in making us understand that it invests and it has created a good network and it continues to invest in good network.

Many of us who have been watching development of telecom sector in India most of us would say that Airtel is a fast moving brand. When we say fast moving it means Airtel is just about a 25 year old story and in 25 year old history Airtel is today one of the largest telecom operator in the world. So in just about 25 years it has become a very large company, a very large brand and a big player across the world. It operates large number of circles in Africa, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India of course. So it is a very

fast

one.

Where does this speed come from is something that we have to understand. Another thing that comes to our mind is Sunil Mittal. Moment we think of Airtel we think of Sunil Mittal because he is the founder of this brand. He is the founder of this company called Bharti Enterprises which owns the brand Airtel. It is aggressive, it is global, it is Africa, it is an Indian company, it is everywhere.

So these are the aspects that we immediately come to our mind when we think of Airtel. We also think that Airtel has international ambitions and therefore it is a big player in Africa. There used to be a friend's jingle which was a part of the advertisement campaign of Airtel and it used to say her friend Jairuri Hota. So that jingle also became very popular and these are the aspects for which Airtel is known immediately. Moment you think of Airtel, moment you ask anybody what comes to your mind when you think of Airtel, perhaps these words they will speak.

Now let us see and this part is more interesting what really constitutes that part of the iceberg which is below the surface. Now you can see the first word itself is it is the Punjabi company. Now what does it mean when we say Airtel is a Punjabi company? All of us know that Sunil Mittal is from Punjab, in fact he is from a place called Ludhiana and his father was a Congress MP. We may think that Sunil Mittal may have received benefits because he was politically connected etc.

etc. But that we do not know. What we do know that it is considered a Punjabi company at least it was considered a Punjabi company for quite some time and later on today it perhaps it is deep down below that perhaps it is hidden in the unconscious of the brand that it is actually a Punjabi company. I will give you an example and that perhaps will emphasize the point. I remember I was in the Calcutta office of Airtel and I came to know that the CEO of Calcutta is making a presentation to the top boss of Airtel why in Calcutta Airtel is not doing well. And one of the reasons presented was that in Calcutta Airtel is perceived to be a Punjabi company and because of that Calcutta people are rejecting Airtel because they think that Punjabi culture is loud culture whereas we are refined culture and therefore we will not adopt a brand which is loud and does not resonate with our value system.

So he gave this reason as one of the reason why people in Calcutta are not adopting Airtel brand. This reason can be extended further if Airtel is not doing well which brand is doing well and you would be surprised to know that the brand that was doing well at that time was Hutch and now Vodafone. Now what is the origin of Vodafone? Origin is British company. Vodafone is a British company and all of us know that Calcutta was

the capital of British Empire and therefore there is a great fascination for anything British in Calcutta and no wonder Vodafone was doing well in Calcutta. So that was the reason given by the CEO of Calcutta for Airtel not doing very well in Calcutta.

Let us move forward and look at what does this political benefits mean. Now you know while the association and the charge may be made that Mr. Sunil Mittal's father was a politician and he may have been benefited. Reality we do not know but it is true that Airtel was one of the few unknown entities which received the license for operating telecom circle in Delhi something as important a circle as important as Delhi. So we do not know the real picture but these charges are made in the business circles but of course this is very old story because Airtel started in around 95-96 and today after 28 years Airtel is a large internationally recognized brand and these issues are brushed deep under the carpet.

Another part that we must understand is that Mr. Sunil Mittal is from Rudhyana. Now at that time when Airtel was still very young and it needed professionalization of its organization, it needed reputed employees, reputed professionals to join the organization, it was not able to attract good quality talent and at that time I remember one of the greatest professionals in HR fraternity Mr. Jagdeep Kanpur was recruited in Airtel as director HR. Everybody in the HR fraternity and in industry was surprised that someone of the stature of Mr.

Jagdeep Kanpur is actually joining Airtel. When we dig deep and we try and understand how why did he agree to join Airtel because at that time Airtel was not a very big company nor it was a big name. It was not even a very respectable name at that time but if we dig deep we come to know that Mr. Kanpur is also from Rudhyana and perhaps Mr.

Sunil Mittal and Mr. Kanpur may have had close friends together and that Rudhyana connection may have helped Mr. Sunil Mittal in attracting someone as talented and as reputed as Mr. Kanpur to Airtel. Mr. Jagdeep Kanpur did wonders to Airtel organization Bharti organization and within 3 years of his joining Airtel was ranked among the top 20 employers in the country and because in fact Airtel was ranked 14th in India and because Airtel was ranked 14th in India it suddenly started attracting top talent from across the world to its fold and because of that Airtel suddenly started growing very fast because it became very quickly a professional organization.

The same reason can be given for speed and being an upstart. See many companies at least at earlier do not consider Airtel as a respected company. It considered Airtel as an upstart. It considered Airtel as a brash organization. It considered Airtel as a street smart

organization.

So something that is not considered to be very respected for example if you pit it against a Tata or against Birla which are old world companies and they have a long history of managing labor, labor unrest and taking care of employees and history of ethical behavior and so on so forth. So in that way Airtel at earlier point of time was not considered a very respectable organization. It was in fact considered an upstart. It was considered a street smart organization which perhaps is true because I remember Mr. Sunil Mittal recounting to us the stories of his struggle how he will sit in the scooter with his brother and both of them will go from shop to shop to sell what we today know as beetle phones.

So these beetle phones were also a product of Airtel and both the brothers will go from shop to shop and sell. So you can imagine the kind of struggle Mr. Sunil Mittal has undergone while he has built this company from scratch to today where it is a multi-billion dollar organization. Similar ideas like new money, changing organization etc.

So because Mr. Sunil Mittal had a vision and he wanted to create a professional large telecom organization he drove it very aggressively and he invested enormously in good talent, in top talent. So at one point of time I remember we had people working in Airtel who came from all the respected organizations of the world whether it is Gillette, whether it is Unilever, whether it is Colgate, whether it is Cadburys and so on so forth. So Mr. Sunil Mittal had that vision that only good people, only top talent will be able to create a good respected organization and he was able to do that.

Airtel is always considered a good paymaster. It pays well, it pays its employees a salary which is slightly higher sometimes much higher than what its competitors pay. So that is also a reason why good quality people are attracted towards the organization and they contribute to building the model. Another example that I must give is Airtel in its early days followed the FMCG model of distributing telephone connections. Now if today you want to buy a soap lux, you can walk into the nearby shop, the nearest mom and pop store and you can buy a cake of soap, a cake of lux. You can if you want to buy shampoo, you want to buy toothpaste, you want to buy anything which is FMCG, you can go to the nearest shop and buy it immediately.

Airtel thought at that time when you remember it was 16 rupees per minute as the rate of call, both incoming and outgoing. At that time, Mr. Sunil Mittal had the vision that Airtel or telecom industry should follow the FMCG model which means that the prepaid card that we use today and we are now used to everything online, but at that time you actually had to go to a shop and get that prepaid card and which you insert into your phone and then you start operating the mobile phone. So he worked on the premise that

telecom will also become like an FMCG industry and this prepaid card, the SIM card should be available at the nearest shop from any house. So today there are 5 lakh villages in India, roughly 5 lakh villages and in every village you have FMCG products available.

In almost every village you have shops where you can buy FMCG products. Same thing has happened in telecom industry also. You can today go to any shop. Now of course it is online, but at that time it was possible for you because Airtel started this revolution, this movement that telecom products will be available at the nearest shop and everybody else followed that model and that is why today when we say very proudly that India's telecom is the most mature telecom market, the cheapest telecom market in the world one reason is Mr. Sunil Mittal's vision that telecom industry should follow the FMCG model.

One more point I would say and then we will close this is Mr. Akhil Gupta. Mr.

Akhil Gupta is a close friend of Mr. Sunil Mittal. He is not a family person, but he is a close friend and I remember at that time Airtel had come up with its IPO. You know IPO when Airtel launched its shares for public and it was a big success and I also remember that after the IPO was over there was a celebration in the office and in that office I remember Mr. Akhil Gupta was presented a gift and that gift was a Mercedes car and I remember the way Mr. Sunil Mittal praised the effort of Mr. Akhil Gupta how he has managed the IPO and how he has ensured the success of not only IPO, but also the organization and paved way for its success.

So Airtel because of Mr. Sunil Mittal's vision and the processes that he had put in place Airtel values its people enormously. I mean I have given you one or two examples, but you will see if you come in contact with anyone who is working in Airtel you will know that Airtel values its people and values its people in many ways not only in terms of being a good paymaster, but it also values in terms of their training, in terms of their growth and development, their success and their success in their growth and development by giving them new roles, by giving them promotions and so on so forth. So it is genuinely interested in their development. So these are the reasons why Airtel is what it is today.

Think big. So finally we must understand that Mr. Sunil Mittal who started this organization he always had this idea that we must think big. And at that time when he was traveling along with his brother on a scooter think big may have sounded not very grand, but today when we look at his idea of thinking big we realize that Airtel has become big not for nothing. It was because he had that audacity of vision, he had that great desire to create an organization which is large, which is big, which is respected and

which is at the edge of the development in that industry. So today Airtel is launching 5G services in so many cities in India.

Airtel is today ahead of all its competitors. It has launched 5G services in the highest number of cities in India and soon it will launch in other countries also. So what I am trying to say is look at the brand iceberg of Airtel and see what lies beneath all these events that I have recounted. These events have contributed towards determining the value system of the brand. Let us go back to the slide and see that emotional values, added values, unique characteristics, trust, guarantee, promise, where do all these things come from in a brand iceberg. Here also if you see integrity, customer focus, cost consciousness, treatment of people, where do all these come, all these value systems come from in an organization in a brand and let me give you the example which we have seen so far that when we try and construct the brand iceberg of Airtel, you see these events, you see the personality of Mr.

Sunil Mittal, you see personality of various other top management professionals whose names we do not know but it is they who have contributed towards making Airtel what it is and giving it the value system that of valuing people, that of doing whatever you do, you do very fast, you always think big, do not think small and you anticipate what is going to happen in the industry. So, the way Mr. Sunil Mittal anticipated that Airtel will become something like FMCG industry was a very prescient task, very prescient activity, he could envision future and that is why he was able to make Airtel what it is today. Thank you very much.