

## *Banking the Brand (With special reference to Customer - Based Brand Equity Model)*

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### Abstract

A brand is an idea or an image with which the consumers connects by recognizing the name, logo, slogan, or design of the company, for a product or a service. It is a vibrant picture held in consumers' minds. The concept of branding changes the minds of the people, where they can proudly say that they belong to the group of users of one such product. Hence brand acts as a source of some sort of information which is going to present itself in the minds of the customers. Branding allows companies to build their reputations and add to the revenue. Brand equity is one of the business concepts developed in past twenty years. Branding is a very powerful component in business. The brand must have a logo to make branding easier and more possible. The consumers decide if they will buy a product or use a service based on how they view the brand. The brand itself tells us or let us imagine how good or bad the product is even if we never tasted it before!

The paper is an attempt to describe that a brand in order to build its brand equity follows specific steps provided by the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model. This CBBE pyramid is discussed in context with the banking sector. It provides an exclusive stance about brand equity, how it is built, measured and managed by different banks. In today's world, where the budding financial market is full of competition, brand becomes a decisive point in choosing a bank for any individual or organization. To acquire a space in customer mind the bank strives to provide quality services, financial power and also the promises guaranteed. It implies that higher customer mind share is possible only when the consumers have a positive experience with the bank, thus the service qualities impacts the bank's brand image.

### Brand and Business Value Creation: Business in Turn Exist to create Value:

In the industrial era the primary source of wealth creation was production of material goods. The capitalist were the sole owners of everything. But a radical change has been observed; the guiding principle is not only tangible, but also intangible processes known as 'Social Purposeful System' of business. Enumerating the concept social purposeful systems, the decisions are made on the grounds of rational, emotional and cultural aspects. The rational choice reflects on the extrinsic tangible values, while the emotional and cultural dimension deals with intrinsic intangible values. Thus everything must have a value proposition, for assessing business practices, such as branding.

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### Review of Literature

N.R.K. Raman (2009) in his article " Building a bank's brand equity through social media" says that banks have a social media strategy and if done properly then it has a significant impact on brand awareness. Kevin Lane Keller (2001) in his report on Building customer-based brand equity; a blueprint for creating a strong brand has outlined the CBBE Model in brand building.

### Research Methodology

The study about banking the brand uses both primary and secondary data; the primary data has been collected by observation and interview from various bank branches and employees.

## **Rudiments of Brand**

Business Today is to build a recognizable and trusted brand: Getting down to the fundamentals and reading the cliché, its according to the American Marketing Association who defines a brand as “a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers.” It is an effective marketing strategy which provides a marketer an edge over the competitor bases on non price plank.

Branding started in Sweden in the middle age (476-1492) during the agrarian economy. A brand was the action of burning a symbol into the flesh of livestock’s in order to signify ownership of the animal. The word “brand” is a degenerate of an old Norse word “Brandr”. The meaning of a brand was later registered in the dictionary in 1552 as “identifying mark made by a hot iron.” Later in 1827, the word brand was broadened and registered in a dictionary as “a particular make of goods”.

## **Scaling the Magnitude of Brand Equity**

A product is said to have brand equity when the consumer are willing to pay more for the same level of quality due to the charisma of the brand name attached to it. But the customers today are becoming demanding; they are not just satisfied by the functional benefits but are also looking for intangible attributes going much beyond the tangible aspects of the product.

Brand awareness is a key element in ensuring usefulness of brand. Brand awareness refers to how aware are the customers and potential customers about the business and its products. It consists of both brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition is the ability of consumer to recognize a brand as having being earlier noticed or heard. While brand recall is when the consumers are given a clue and they correctly recover brand from the memory.

## **Brand Equity in Service Sector**

Screaming out its outward ora for tangible products, yes branding has proved its metal. Nowhere less it’s given a hint of justice when branding is done appropriately towards the service sector. In case of service brands, the tangibles include the customers’

experience while the intangibles include emotional connections with the service. The aim here is to tangibilize the intangible. Because of their intangibility and complexity it is harder for the customer to distinguish between the offers of service companies. Customers’ experience of service products also has a financial impact for brands.

## **Brand Equity in Banking Industry**

In today’s world, where the budding financial market is full of competition, brand becomes a decisive point in choosing a bank for any individual or organization. To acquire a space in customer mind the bank strives to provide quality services, financial power and also the promises guaranteed. It implies that higher customer mind share is possible only when the consumers have a positive experience with the bank, thus the service qualities impacts the bank’s brand image. The Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model helps in building a strong brand and the ultimate aim is to reach the axis i.e. resonance, where a congruent relationship is established between customers and the brand.

## **Brand Identity-Salience**

Talking about the basic connect with consumer, the first thing that hits their mind is their experience, brand name, symbol, logo, slogan, including advertising, event marketing, publicity, public relations and outdoor advertising. An implied example wherein INDUSIND BANK running in a line of being almost invisible from the market turned out to be a hit again thanks to their marketing head MOHIT GANJU implementing a change in color of their branch signage to get more visibility by putting up ATMs in high traffic areas and airports., The bank branded it all; from establishing first solar-powered automated teller machine (ATM) as part of its Green Office Project campaign “Hum Aur Hariyali”. It also unveiled a “Green Office Manual- A Guide to Sustainable Practices.”

Thus making a mark in establishing a picture perfect brand salience.

## **Brand Meaning – Performance and Imagery**

Once the meaning is established, hence further the marketers assort and communicate the brand image

and performance. Brand meaning is established by linking tangible and intangible brand associations. It is therefore characterized in either functional (brand performance) or abstract (image related) associations.

#### **Brand Imagery:**

A perspective of a consumer, more than what the brand actually does for them. It is an abstract image, more inclined to non product features. To create a strong brand identity ICICI bank has used vibrant colours, attractive fonts, and smart images. ICICI had also explored the option of changing its name which felt to be a tongue-twister but it was retained due to the goodwill attached to the name.

#### **HSBC Glocalizing Itself as “The World’s Local Bank”**

In an endeavor to established, a brand image of being “The World’s Local Bank”, HSBC has set itself apart as a bank. It has preferred to take care for the needs of local customers while having many global connections. Image established differently around the world can be best personified by HSBC’s commercial.

#### **Brand Performance-Brand a Facilitator that you can Flaunt:**

Major initiatives to create a brand image may range from creating unique customer ambience, cross selling, linkages with service providers, payments of utility bills and value added service example can be cited of INDUSIND BANK wherein in the commercial director by IMTIAZ ALI featuring OMI VAIDYA, and SHRUTI SETH, meant to push the bank’s various services such as mobile alerts, online payments and ready to use savings accounts kit turned out to be a hit in altering image of the brand.

- Co branding-majorly seen in credit card business of the banks. Many banks have co-branded their cards with airlines (Indian/Jet) oil companies (HP/IOCL) and major retail outlets.
- Brand extensions-use of existing brand name to establish new product, like IDBI Mutual

Fund, IDBI Gold Fund, Agri Loans, IDBI Federal. Thus banking on existing brand.

- Multi brand-facility catering to different buying motives and distinguishes different features. Eg. RTGS and NEFT are new brands in remittance category.

#### **Brand Responses-Judgments and Feelings**

Benchmark of brand responses are quality, credibility, customer satisfaction, how likable the brand is, do the customer even contemplate on brand, and how do brand holds an edge. This response is yielded from performance and imagery: Outlining the six headlines, warmth, fun, excitement, security, social approval, self respect, banks need to intricately comply with all.

Warmth, fun and excitement: creating a sense of euphoria in customer’s mind is the underline objective. Making consumer feel amused, sentimental, and compassionate.

A classic case is of IDBI Bank, wherein organizing an IN-HOUSE customer delight campaign has led to an effective mechanism to strike the chord. The last campaign being WOMEN’S DAY CELEBRATION clubbed with a HOLI splash. A huge hit wherein the campaign was run all over INDIA, in all branches of IDBI . The female customers were called on a warm gesture of sharing different experiences of life was given space. Games were played, prize distribution further. This campaign was further followed up by a presentation on women mediclaim policy. Thus sufficing the overall purpose of brand dropping.

Security and social approval: The first name that strikes the mind when once said security- it’s got to be “State Bank of India”. They bank on the massy and not classy appeal. Though suffering from government bank attitude still we do have at least one family account in SBI. This is what we call as brand response-brand loyalty.

Self-respect: Customers gains feelings of self-satisfaction, achievement or sense of pride about themselves. The perfect example is the aired commercial of HDFC “Sar Utha Kae Jiyo” personifying the state of self respect.

### Brand Relationships- Resonance

The final step of the CBBE model "Resonance" focuses on intensity or depth of psychological bond that the customer has with the brand as well as the level of activity engendered by this loyalty. This resonance can be seen in light of behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community, active engagement. Thus, when the customer is ready to invest time and money beyond the purchase or consumption the brand resonance is established.

Another case of IDBI Bank, Ajmer (091) branch in association with IDBI FEDERAL LIFE INSURANCE medical checkup campaign was aired. Wherein, the bank gave free health check up and medical advice to the customer base of the branch. Large media house publicity was laid up for the same.

A success story in itself, as a major resonance was observed with large chunk of customer turning up and registering for the co-brand, FEDERAL LIFE INSURANCE.

### Conclusion

Outweighing the basic advantage of conveying the message wherein, the product and service meets basic functional needs it has proved. Balancing the basic advantage of suggesting only the message it has further instigated in enhancing an unbeatable brand image. Our paper touched a very pertinent aspect of

service sector, branding of banking through CBBE mode. An attempt to challenge the conventional method and decode branding strategies of different banks in light of CBBE model.

Branding thus is the only tool to capture the top of the mind awareness in customer's mind.

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