BRAND MANAGEMENT IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT- A STUDY OF SELECT SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

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ABSTRACT

In the post LPG Scenario branding and brand management have grown by leaps and bounds in India. Branding has been long associated with manufactured and physical goods. Branding, plays a special role in service companies because strong brands increase customers trust of invisible purchases. The Indian service organizations have also entered into branding era, where intangible services are being differentiated with help of branding. The concept of Brand Management has been established as a specialized field of study and its application to the field of marketing has been on the rise. Brands create an identity for the services of the companies and are vital in this ever changing dynamic market scenario. Branding establishes the purpose, direction and is a vital link between the Company and its Customers

Service Brand Management in India:

The service sector has emerged as the fastest growing sector of the Indian economy. Brand development is crucial in services, given the inherent difficulty in differentiating products that lack physical differences. The intense competition within services markets, many of which have been deregulated as more and more services have reached a plateau of similarity therefore Brand development has assumed a crucial role.

INTRODUCTION

Two decades of economic liberalization in India has ushered in a rapid change in the service industry. As a result, over the years, India is witnessing a transition from agriculture-based economy to a service -based economy It is a large and most dynamic part of the Indian economy both in terms of employment potential and contribution to national income India's service sector contributes more than 55 per cent of GDP, making it the most formidable component of the country's economy
The service industry forms a backbone of social and economic development of a region. It has emerged as the largest and fastest-growing sectors in the world economy, making higher contributions to the global output and employment. Its growth rate has been higher than that of agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

Service Brand Management in India:

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Branding is particularly important to service firms as a way to address intangibility and variability problems. Brand symbols may also be especially important because they help to make the abstract nature of services more concrete. Brands can help to identify and provide meaning to the different services provided by a firm. Branding a service can also be an effective way to signal to consumers that   the firm has designed a particular service offering that is special and deserving of its name. With the growth of service sector plethora of new issues are surfacing in the brand management of service brands. Branding has clearly become a competitive weapon for services.

Indian service industry has entered the branding era where intangibles services are being differentiated and being branded. Be it branding of services in the air i.e Kingfisher Airlines or branding of services at the ground level i.e Big Bazar.

The Objectives of Study
  1) To study the brand management issues
  2) The significance of branding of services& the role of corporate brand
  3) The role of tag lines& logo
  4) To study the various service innovations being carried out by different service brands.

Methodology
Four service brands have been   selected for the study from the   top fifty service brands off Brand Equity's   "The Most Trusted Brands Survey 2010" ,from sectors which have been deregulated and cater to different consumer demographics i.e organizations, individuals in different segments where dynamic changes are being witnessed in the market place and content analysis has been done for the study

The paper attempts to look at the underlying aspects of brand management i.e the various issues of how intangibles are being tanagibilised by the use of logo & tag lines, the significance of corporate branding, the role of technology and how brand names have surfaced from acronyms along with service innovations for some of the most trusted service brands of India .

Corporate or Individual product   branding for services

While fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands often focus on individual products, services companies must decide whether to build the brand on a specific product or on the corporate identity (Olins, 1995). Corporate identity encapsulates ``a company's ethos, aims and values and presents a sense of individuality that can help to differentiate the organization within its competitive environment'' (Balmer, 1998, p. 985). It is an important corporate asset, which provides both an internal focus for employees and an interrelated and comprehensive network of consumer perceptions (Love and Roberts, 1997). When examining brand names, it is possible to categories them broadly along a spectrum, with a company name at one end to individual brand names which do not have a Corporate marketing and service brands link with the organization

FIGURE 1 BRAND NAME S PECTRUM

| Company as brand name | Strong company endorsement | Weak company endorsement | Individual brand name |
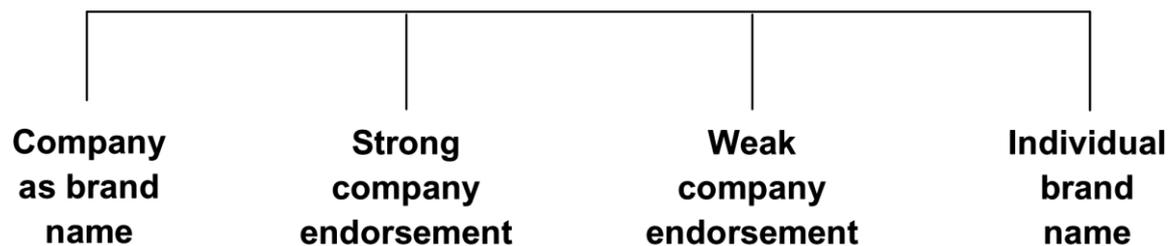
Source McDonald,Chennatory&Harris

There are many advantages to be gained from tying the brand name in with the firm's name
 (Onkvisit and Shaw, 1989). With the goodwill that has been built up over the years from continuous advertising and a commitment to consistency, new brand additions can gain instant acceptance by being linked with the heritage. Consumers feel more confident trying a brand which draws upon the name of a well established firm. In the financial services sector, corporate brands tend to predominate (Denby-Jones, 1995). Corporate branding provides the strategic focus for a brand's positioning, enables greater consistency across communication programmes (Siegel, 1994) and facilitates staff's understanding of the service organization, helping to unify their behavior in presenting the brand to consumers (Smythe et al., 1992).

BRANDING TO MAKE INTANGIBLES TANGIBLES
One of the most problematic aspects associated with service brands is that consumers have to deal with intangible offerings (McDougall and Snetsinger, 1990). In an

attempt to overcome this problem, marketers put a lot of emphasis on the company as a brand, especially in sectors such as financial services, as one way of making the service more tangible. Because of their intangible nature, service brands run the risk of being perceived as commodities. To overcome this problem, strong corporate brands with a clear set of values which result in positive perceptions amongst consumers are essential.

Services branding

In the services sector it is common to see firms following a monolithic branding strategy (Free, 1996). Products are easily copied by competitors; service is not. Since service depends on the culture of the organization and the training and attitudes of its employees, it is more difficult to build and sustain successfully, but is more difficult to copy (Albrecht and Zemke, 1985; Doyle, 1989). Indeed, Doyle (1989, p. 87) stated that "service is perhaps the most sustainable differential advantage" in building successful brands. A holistic brand image integrates entities such as values, colors, name, symbols, words and slogans. Berry et al. (1988) argued that once an organization establishes a favorable brand image its main task is to ensure consistency They further argued that since service companies often follow a monolithic branding strategy, consumers mentally group all the corporation's portfolio together, expecting uniformity, thus management of brand consistency is even more important.

Apart from the vary many other difference between services and product brands is that there are far more points of contact between services brands and stakeholders, necessitating more attention to a coherent communication strategy internally and externally. Part of the reason for services brands failing is that staff do not communicate a consistent message about their firm's brand as they interact with a variety of stakeholders. Well-designed induction and training programmes do
help create greater staff commitment, which is an important component in strong services brands (Farnfield, 1999). Successful services brands therefore depend on good internal communication programmes (Cleaver, 1999) to support greater consistency in delivering the service experience, at whatever point the customer's contact with the organization occurs (Camp, 1996).

A STUDY OF SELECT SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

STATE BANK OF INDIA

The State Bank of India,(SBI) the country's oldest Bank and a premier in terms of balance sheet size, number of branches, market capitalization and profits is today going through a momentous phase of Change and Transformation – the two hundred year old Public sector behemoth is today stirring out of its Public Sector legacy and moving with an agility to give the Private and Foreign Banks a run for their money.

The bank is entering into many new businesses with strategic tie ups – Pension Funds, General Insurance, Custodial Services, Private Equity, Mobile Banking, Point of Sale

Merchant Acquisition, Advisory Services, structured products etc – each one of these initiatives having a huge potential for growth.The Bank is forging ahead with cutting edge technology and innovative new banking models, to expand its Rural Banking base.

It is also focusing at the top end of the market, on whole sale banking capabilities to provide India's growing mid / large Corporate with a complete array of products and services. It is consolidating its global treasury operations and entering into structured products and derivative instruments. Today, the Bank is the largest provider of infrastructure debt and the largest arranger of external commercial borrowings in the country. It is the only Indian bank to feature in the Fortune 500 list.

Brand name: The   name of the bank i.e STATE BANK OF INDIA,(SBI) acronym itself has become the corporate brand name.

Logo

SBI uses corporate branding   SBI's present logo was introduced in October 1971. Its circular shape has ancient associations with unity, the fullness of man's being and his growing consciousness. It also represents SBI's extension of banking needs to 'unbanked' areas of the entire country. The small circle in the centre connotes that despite its size it is the small man who holds centre stage for the bank. It positioned itself during the 1990s with the theme 'The Nation Banks on us', which has given way to 'With you - all the way', reflecting its basket of financial products to suit all needs

Slogans
- o   With you all the way
- o   Pure banking nothing else
- o   The Banker to every Indian
- o   **The Nation banks on us** sums up the essence of its existence and the legacy of trust the bank has with its customers

Use of Technology

The bank is changing outdated front and back end processes to modern customer friendly processes to help improve the total customer experience. With about 8500 of its own 10000 branches and another 5100 branches of its Associate banks already networked, today it offers the largest banking network to the Indian customer. The Bank is also in the process of providing complete payment solution to its clientele with its over 21000 ATMs, and other electronic channels such as Internet banking, debit cards, mobile banking, etc

Brand extension

The bank is also looking at opportunities to grow in size in India as well as internationally. It presently has 82 foreign offices in 32 countries across the globe. It has also 7 Subsidiaries in India – SBI Capital Markets, SBICAP Securities, SBI DFHI, SBI Factors, SBI Life and SBI Cards - forming a formidable group in the Indian Banking scenario.

Internal Branding

Throughout its journey of change, the Bank is also attempting to change old mindsets, attitudes and take all employees together on this exciting road to Transformation. In a recently concluded mass internal communication programme termed 'Parivartan' the Bank rolled out over 3300 two day workshops across the country and covered over 130,000 employees in a period of 100 days using about 400 Trainers, to drive home the message of " Change and inclusiveness". The workshops fired the imagination of the employees with some other banks in India as well as other Public Sector Organizations seeking to emulate the programme. With four national level Apex Training Colleges and 54 learning centers spread all over the country the Bank is continuously engaged in skill enhancement of its employees. Some of the training programes are attended by bankers from banks in other countries.

Brand Management at SBI
State Bank of India (SBI), the largest Public Sector Bank of the country has been the biggest spender on brand building and advertising. Last financial year, the bank and its subsidiaries spent nearly Rs 700 crore on advertising and communication, the amount equally split between the two. SBI has continued to strengthen its position and is on its way to transform into a brand-led business with focus on innovation to become the best customer-oriented bank in the country SBI is increasingly interested in reaching to the masses not only through physical presence but also by creating a brand new 'savvy' imageBuilding on its strengths The State Bank of India, which became the first Indian bank to break into the top 50 club in 2010, at 36th spot moved up two rungs, with its brand value is $5.67 billion it has consolidated its position on the Brand Finance's Top 500 Global Financial Brands 2011, Commenting on the study, Brand Finance CEO David Haigh pointed out: "SBI has continued to strengthen its position and is on its way to transform into a brand-led business with focus on innovation to become the best customer-oriented bank in the country." Brand value:

Service innovations

SBI recently launched the world's first floating ATM located on a barge on the backwaters of Kerala. An ATM at the Leh Branch in Ladakh is at an altitude of 12,000 feet above sea levels. Among its innovative value add-ons are e-rail purchase of rail tickets online, e-pay for payment of utility bills, recharging mobile phone cards through ATMs, employee salary payment for corporate internet banking customers and payment of fees to colleges and universities through ATMs at some centers. SBI proposes to position many of its branches as 'Super Shoppes' for distributing a whole range of financial products .The elephant has indeed started to dance

Kingfisher Airlines   Limited
Kingfisher Airlines is a part of The UB Group – one of India's largest conglomerates with diverse interests and a global presence. The UB Group is also the largest Indian alcoholic beverages (beer and spirits company and the third largest drinks group in the world) Kingfisher Airlines, in a short span of time Kingfisher Airline has carved a niche for itself. It is India's largest airline operating more than 400 flights a day and having a wide network of destinations, with regional and long-haul international services.

Brand Management at Kingfisher Airlines
The company uses corporate branding and the same logo for its group companies. The brand image of the parent Kingfisher brand gave further credibility to its marketing The airline ushered in a new era of luxury in India's domestic aviation sector with its brand new aircraft with stylish red interiors, and smartly dressed crew and ground staff Kingfisher airlines sold the concept of lifestyle through its glamorous airhostesses, red-the color of vibrancy, and added hospitality which made every passenger feel like a guest on board. Branding of Kingfisher Airlines is achieved through multiple touch points like; logo, customer service, treatment and training of employees, advertising, stationery, and quality of services. Kingfisher Airlines is India's only Five Star Airline rated by Skytrax and the only one to offer a premium first class service on domestic rout

Logo
The airline uses a colorful logo of a Kingfisher (bird) in flight with spectacular colors of red, blue and green. Kingfisher bird emblazoned on the tails of all the aircrafts. The tag line is "Fly the good times" which reinforces luxury & rich hospitality and the class apart experience of flight

Service innovations
Kingfisher is the first airline in India to offer in-flight entertainment; it offers LIVE TV with 16 channels of live and exciting content. In a short span of time Kingfisher Airline has carved a niche for itself. The airline offers several unique services to its customers. These include personal valet at the airport to assist in baggage handling and boarding, exclusive lounges with private space, accompanied with refreshments and music at the airport, audio and video on-demand, with extra-wide personalized screens in the aircraft, separate seats with extendable footrests, and three-course gourmet cuisine.The airline has won an impressive line-up of prestigious international awards from Aviation Experts, Travel and Tourism Writers for innovation and customer responsiveness.. Kingfisher Airlines treats its passengers as valued guests .At Kingfisher, a flight is not a journey between two airports but an experience of a lifetime. The very many touch points with customers communicates the brand effectively.

Technology
The brand-new fleet incorporates the latest technology and each aircraft is fitted with a personalized in-flight entertainment system and top quality programming content from around the world creating an environment to cherish

Internal Branding

Kingfisher experience rests entirely on the able shoulders of its team they are constantly looking for the right mix of experience and attitude whether it is in-flight, on ground, or behind the scenes and the brand is internalized as "Soar to new heights"

Infosys Technologies

Infosys started its journey in 1981 and went public in 1993. With very sound planning and strategic decisions , Infosys has achieved a place in world IT services companies .During first 30 years of business, company worked on Infosys 1.0 and 2.0 model and

now working towards 3.0 as per Sujith John,ToI to be world's number 1 IT services and consultancy company with employee strength of 120000 plus headcount.

Brand Management at Infosys

Infosys Technologies recently has introduced a new brand positioning and vision statement for itself, and said it's stepping into a whole new phase that it describes as Infosys 3.0.**T**he brand is rarely seen in the mass media, makes do with minimal advertising budgets, operates in a sector that runs the risk of turning into a commodity and is still worth almost Rs 37,000 crore. Infosys is a powerful brand in the world of information. The company differentiated itself from its competitors in a way that was relevant, credible, unique, and defensible All in all, the flat-world campaign has enabled Infosys to differentiate itself from both other Indian outsourcing firms as well as the global consulting companies, and it is beginning to neutralize the legacy advantage that traditional IT consulting firms have long enjoyed. Infosys is now seen—by customers and influencers alike—as a trusted business transformation partner rather than just another outsourcing firm. Behind the scenes, there works a dedicated team that regularly monitors Infosys' brand health and makes sure that it grows from strength to strength. The tools employed are soft in nature and seek to create a halo around the brand. No big bucks spent below the line, no media blitzkrieg — the whole effort is to work on the conscience of stakeholders like customers, partners, shareholders, employees and the society aware that it still needed to step up its branding efforts, the company launched a global branding campaign built around the idea of winning in the "flat world." Instead of being seen as simply another offshore services provider, the company's goal was to build a reputation as a trusted transformation partner that can help businesses compete in a global market. Infosys is now seen—by customers and influencers alike—as a trusted business transformation partner rather than just another outsourcing firm. Its tag line is" Building tomorrows Enterprises"

Internal Branding

Infosys 3.0.For employees, it means developing their talents in these new directions to ensure progress in their careers

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (**LIC**)
It is the largest state-owned life insurance company in India, and also the country's largest investor. It is fully owned by the Government of India . In India, the LIC has been successful in creating a strong brand. In rural India, the LIC is especially synonymous with insurance. But in the wake of competition it had to do a considerable brand building exercise in urban India. The brand must not only be believed but lived by management and employees   While its performance in Brand Equity's Most Trusted Brands survey has been stellar (LIC has been the Most Trusted Service Brand in India for five consecutive years

Brand Name The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) acronym itself has become the brand name with various other sub brands under it. Known for its deep rooted ethics and customer service. **logo.** For decades now, 'the two hands gently circling the lamp' has been the most enduring image of the life insurance business in

India. The tag line "Zindagi ke saath bhi, zindagi ke baad bhi**"** emphasis the trust and emotional connect with the services of the company

Brand Extension The brand has also been able to leverage its positive aura beyond life insurance to its other group businesses like housing finance, asset management and so on. With 250 million Indians insured under the LIC shelter, the brand is doubtlessly one of the most trusted one in India today.

Brand Management at LIC

LIC has been able to leverage two of the more crucial attributes — trust and its generic brand image to its advantage. Brand LIC is able to to connect with the customer base. The more you change, the more you remain the same. By reinventing itself, LIC showed maturity and responsibility which has helped the brand to go to the next level. The strong element of availability and accessibility, on the other hand, ensured that it continues to enjoy proximity to the customers LIC has tried various ways of giving itself a facelift, including increased spending in branding and advertising plus thoroughly revamping its web portal.

TABLE 1: SERVICE BRAND MANAGEMENT OF SELECT INDIAN COMPANIES

Serial no.	Name of the company	Area of Business	Corporate Brand name	Tag line	Use of Technology	Innovations
1.	State Bank of India	Banking	S.B.I.	"The nation banks on us"	High	High
2.	Kingfisher Airlines	Aviation	Kingfisher Airlines	"Fly the good times"	High	High
3.	Life Insurance Corporation of India	Insurance	L.I.C.	"Zindagi ke saath bhi zindagi ke baad bhi"	Low	Medium
4.	Infosys Technologies	Information Technology	Infosys	" Building tomorrows Enterprises"	High	high

Source: Compiled by
the authors

CONCLUSIONS

Indian service organizations have become brand savy they are mostly indulging in corporate branding to offer the very many services be it aviation, banking, insurance, and Information technology. Brand building has happened through   acronyms as in the case of SBI& LIC. The brands are undergoing renovation though the logos of the service brands remain unchanged Therefore, corporate brand images also start, develop, and change over time (Rindell, 2007).Strong brand service companies consciously pursue distinctiveness in performing and communicating the service and

are being complemented extensively using taglines which help in tangiblising the intangible services they offer like in the case of SBI tagline "**The Nation banks on us",** Kingfisher Airlines "Fly the good times" **LIC-**"Zindagi ke saath bhi zindagi ke baad bhi" **,** and these tag lines have been changing keeping in mind the dynamic requirement of the end users as in the case of SBI& Infosys. All the service organizations rely on innovations to strengthen the brand be it SBI, LIC, Kingfisher Airlines or Inyosys which is complemented by high use of technology. The brand is also being internalized by the service companies to bring the consistency factor as in the case on SBI, Kingfisher Airlines and Infosys

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