



Psycho Branding a Cracking Tool For the Indian Consumerist Mind¹

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Synopsis

Any brand planner is all very concerned with the brand health. A set of parameters, which has to be estimated against a set of constraints to navigate a brand's direction towards the target audience. Till date the emphasis has been to look from the branding perspective and to position the brand well into the perceptual space of the human mind. The drive has been to map the perceptual space and likewise configure the spacing of the brand vis-à-vis other brands. There were attempts to assess the brand's value by Brand Asset Valuator (BAV) technique to gauge the impact of mapping and positioning a brand into the psyche of the target audience. The result arrived were based on impact and not so much of the effectiveness that it had on the human mind. The problem with this was that while there were brands which were highly successful, there were other brands which failed to impress the target audience and numerous attempts have been made to put the brand in the brain and to keep it registered in the mind for a purchase decision. There were questions as to whether a cluster of people would react the way advertisers would want them to behave and the ultimate utility of communication be fulfilled.

These techniques to assess the health of the brand from the branding perspective was all very fine when products and not brands were more important. There were in fact attempts by advertisers to throw pebbles in the dark and the communication was moving towards a hit or miss situation. But as today, brands occupy the foremost run in the human preference; it is indeed becoming a challenging task to understand the psyche of the clustered human profile towards which the communication has been targeted. The need of the hour is to put the spotlight towards the target audience and understand their psyche to comprehend the fact as to where a particular brand would be positioned for the highest effectiveness and retention of the brand.

My paper investigates the phenomenon of human psychology of the clustered population towards which the communication would be targeted. The task of this investigation becomes difficult when we understand that each individual inside a particular cluster would react differently to a given set of communication. The only solution to deal with this problem is to understand the detailed psychoanalysis of the human mind and the reactions that occur when a particular communication is shown to a target audience. It is possible that each of the target audience had liked different aspects of the communication and on totality has liked the brand. As it is important to understand why and which aspect of the communication has been enjoyed by the target audience, it is

equally important to understand why a particular communication has not been able to impact the majority of the target audience. My research will delve deep into the human psychology to understand the different ingredients of the brain, to magnify the properties of the neurons, synapses and the different hormonal reactions in the mind and the body for which specific set of stimulus would be generated. The findings would therefore lead to an understanding of not only feelings and touch points but also the scientific methodology related to hormonal balances which actually react in the human body and mind to generate specific actions in the body for the body to react in a set pattern. So the understanding of hormonal flow in the body due to a set of stimulus would be the first approach of my research.

My paper would then investigate the pre defined set of emotions that occur in the human psychology right from the time of birth and find out the possible stimulus for which the particular emotion has been registered. The reason of this type of research is to decrease the emotional clutter related to different brands and find out the pre-existing emotions and feelings so that a particular communication can just trigger the pre occupied emotion. This known emotion, would then act faster to register the brand in the mind, producing similar reactions and well as retaining inside a similar folder in the brain. So a pre existing folder in the brain has been tapped by a different set of stimulus known to the mind. So another folder would not be opened but another brand would be put in the same folder with a differentiating stimulus. (E.g. Fwd insects among young may stretch to the idea that plastics can do the same).

My research would finally delve into different models, which would act as a tool for the final polish of the branding solution. There would be three types of models: STEP, VASE & SEC model. The STEP model would consist of Social, Technological, Economical and Political aspects. This is the environment under which individuals develop their psychology right from birth. The VASE or Visibility, Availability, Service & Economical model would deal with the brands attributes in the market. Here models regarding brand health can also be incorporated. Finally the SEC or Sensation, Emotion and Consciousness model would deal with the overall feel of the communication for the retention of the brand as a whole. So the models would first inspect the environment then the brands' health and finally the effects of communication to touch the human soul.

Concluding, there are a few things about brands, which I have considered in my research. Firstly, the brands health needs to be considered. Secondly, the actions and reactions of different hormones and the stimulus to which they are sensitive needs to be investigated. Thirdly, the pre-existing basic feeling related stimulus needs to be generated with a search as to why such feelings were registered in the mind and triggering such feelings with the proper stimulus. Finally, the models would provide a finer tuning on the effects of communication on human psychology. This research would then equip the brand with a potential energy of effectiveness which would have the momentum to turn to kinetic energy and drive its way to the human psychology so that the entry, retention and desired action is attained. This holistic research would then become a scientific base of total branding solutions for the brand advocates and brand doctors of the future.

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Introduction

Marketing battles take place in the mind of a consumer or prospect. That's where you win. That's where you lose." Jack Trout, *Big Brands, Big Trouble* "Can we make the human brain to respond to an advertiser's desire?" This was the first thing that came to my mind when we were doing a campaign on Reet coconut oil. The baseline was "The nose knows". All what we were trying to communicate to the target audience was that the human nose would identify the purity of the coconut oil by the smell of Reet coconut oil. But the campaign failed. The consumers were circumspective that the coconut oil would smell once it is applied on the hair. Reet coconut oil is one such campaign of the many campaigns that get bombed when the brain does not respond to the way advertisers want it to respond. This particular problem makes advertisers think about the way they can effectively communicate to the audience so that the desired result is achieved.

The fight for market share is utmost in the minds of the marketing managers. But for advertisers it is the mind share that they want to occupy. They want to occupy as much mind space as possible and give their brand the monopoly status. This implies that the millions of brands that are bombarded in the mind have their effectiveness under threat. There are some basic processes that should work effectively: one is to introduce the brand in the mind, make a permanent effect on the mind and the neurons should give the response to the body as desired by the advertiser.

From the time of our birth, there are numerous external stimuli that shape our mind. Every day we work with the permutation and combination of different such stimuli that we internalize as well as from the responses that we get from the external environment. There are positive and negative responses. If we get a positive response, we move ahead with it; if the response is negative, we either change our trail of thought or analyse the negative thought. On the contrary, we also react either positively or negatively to the external environment, So every stimuli gets registered in our mind either as a positive or negative stimuli, Such stimuli are basically the result of numerous trends present in a particular society.

Brands: Warriors on tight ropes

Let me site a few examples of brands, which have failed to create an impression in the Indian consumerist mind and then site a few other

brands which have created a strong impression in the Indian minds. First of all, let me start with some brands, which have reached the rural market and how the consumers reacted to such brands. Henkel Spic, a German detergent major, came up with a brand called Henko detergent. They thought it would be a huge success. When the brand was introduced, it went well in all over the country except in the villages of Maharashtra. The reason for this was Henko in Marathi means "I don't want it". Hence the brand failed in the Maharashtra villages. IFB launched their washing machine and tried to go into the rural market. But their campaign remained unsuccessful in the villages of Punjab. The rural consumers took it to be the churning machines for their lassi which the communication and mechanism was not meant for. When Asian Paints came into the rural market with their tractor-enamelled paint, it was again misunderstood. It was thought that as cattle are their property and it has to be distinguished. So they painted the horns of their cattle to identify one from the other. When the Iodex brand came into being, it was tested in the rural market. It was thought as a relief for pain of all purposes. So the rural consumers thought that when their cattle were suffering from pain, they started rubbing Iodex on their hind. Although their usage increased and the sales but the communication for sustainable brand equity decreased.

Although there were campaigns, which were interpreted in negative directions, there were certain good campaigns, which really touched the Indian consumers. Bajaj came up with a scooter and it came up with a line "Hamara Bajaj". Lot of consumers liked the campaign. Hero Honda came up with another successful campaign, which was a passport programme and the communication says "Rishta dil ka". Vicks Vaporub came up with a nice campaign of "Rub against cold for child". It was a general problem that a child's cold kept parents awake throughout night. Vicks Vaporub was a solution to this problem. Titan was another brand, which came up with a campaign saying "whenever your husband wants to gift you a saree, ask him for a Titan watch". Within an Iodex dominated market, Moov came up with a campaign for backache saying "Garmahat laye, araam dilay". Among the soft drink companies, Sprite came up with a nice campaign, which became highly popular. It said "Siddhi Baath, No Bakwas" kyuki yeah hai "Hindustan meri jaan". The brand Dettol was again more appealing in comparison to the Savlon brand because the communication should that only



tingling sensation of Dettol proved that it was having an effect on the wound, In the petrol pump category, HP has developed "Club H P where the communication says "Achcha lagta hai" which had been very popular. All these and much more are the success stories of brands, which had really stamped its name in the minds of the consumers. But the pertinent question here is: why are some brands successful and others unsuccessful? How is it that even after years of brand launch, it is perceived that the communication has failed to achieve what it was meant for? Why brands fail to provide an impressive solution? Such questions of how and why can only be answered if we delve deep into the human mind and find out the possible mechanisms that could be tinkled so that an effective chemical reaction can take place in the body for it to action what is required by the communication. After all, the human mind is the final decider, a market space where brands are bought and rejected. So an understanding needs to be done as to how brands can be positioned in the brain so that its effectiveness is at its maximum. Let us do an open surgery *of* the brain to find out how a brain works and what kind of reactions takes place when a communication of the brand enters the brain.

The Black Box

It is often seen that when an advertisement comes as a break between an exciting movie or a music program, it is often irritating than not. Consequently we surf through other channels and the basic intention of advertising to promote a brand during mega serials, films or events get lost. We have to find a solution to this and the pandora's box lies in the brain. So let us first *study* the brain and see whether we can find some cues to our investigation.

The brain is basically composed of two parts: the left brain and the right brain Experimentation has shown that the *two* different sides, or hemispheres, of the brain are responsible for different manners of thinking. The following table illustrates the differences between left-brain and right-brain thinking:

Left Brain	Right Brain
Logical	Random
Sequential	Intuitive
Rational	Holistic
Analytical	Synthesizing
Objective	Subjective
Looks at parts	Looks at wholes

Most individuals have a distinct preference for one of these styles of thinking. Some, however, are more whole-brained and equally adept at both modes. In general, schools tend to favour left-brain modes of thinking, while downplaying the right-brain ones. Left-brain scholastic subjects focus on logical thinking, analysis, and accuracy. Right-brained subjects, on the other hand, focus on aesthetics, feeling, and creativity. The wet web of the brain has two different parts: neurons and synapses. The main function of the neuron is to carry information from one part of the body to another through two basic processes- *the* electrical and the chemical process. Although the dendrites of some neurons receive information from the axioms of other neurons, they are not physically in contact with each other. There is a very small gap within the two known as synapse. Neurons fire information by sending chemicals called neuro-transmitters across the synapse. Thew neurotransmitters either excite the receiving neuron to send out a signal or they inhibit from sending out a signal. So the passing of signals depends on the stimulus that makes the synapse more sensitive to response, Thus our memory is not stored as electrical setting of the neurons. It is embodied chemically in the greater likelihood of a particular set of neurons reacting to a new sensory input. The power of this system lies in its high degree of interrelation with many neutrons able to transmit messages to many other neutrons, So probably there are no specific neutron that is associated with a brand say "Tata Shaktee" but there is a specific pattern of neuronal activity, which might spread widely across the brain that is associated with "Tata Shaktee" and which in turn triggers other associations; the blue, yellow and red colour, the shield logo and so on. The neuron networks are programmed to be brilliant classifiers as it is very essential to classify things that surround quickly so that it is easier to generalise from previous experiences with similar things or situations and react appropriately. Obviously this has a lot to do with haw advertising is interpreted and how a memory of an emotion can be invoked with the communication.

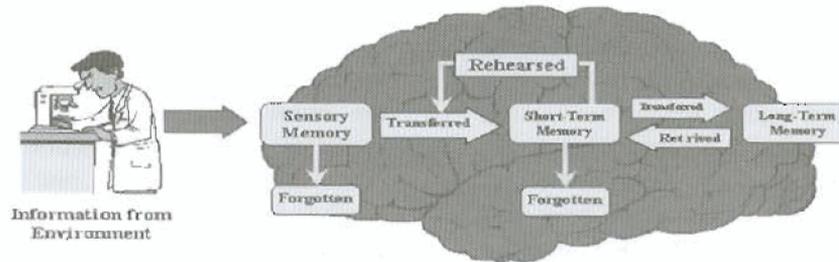
It is now clear that haw a brain works and what components trigger stimulations so that the appropriate reactions are possible. Let us now delve deep into the memory part of the brain, which is the storage house of all information. The Three Memory Storage Systems

In cognitive psychology, memory is usually divided into three *stores*: the sensory, the *art-*

term, and the long-term. The progress of information through these stores is often referred to

as:

The Information Processing Model



Sensory Memory: The sensory memory retains an exact copy of what is seen or heard (visual and auditory). It only lasts for a few seconds, while some theorize it last only 380 milliseconds. It has unlimited capacity. Selective attention determines what information moves from sensory memory to short-term memory.

Short-term memory: Short-term memory (STM) is most often stored as sounds, especially in recalling words, but may be stored as images. It works like RAM memory in computers; provides a working space, is thought to be 7 bits in length, that is, we normally only remember 7 items. STM is vulnerable to interruption or interference. STM is characterized by:

A limited capacity of up to seven pieces of independent information, the brief duration of these items last from 3 to 20 seconds and decay appears to be the primary mechanism of memory loss.

After entering sensory memory, a limited amount of information is transferred into short-term memory. Within STM, there are three basic operations:

- **Iconic memory** - The ability to hold visual images.
- **Acoustic memory** - The ability to hold sounds. Acoustic memory can be held longer than iconic memory.
- **Working memory** - An active process to keep it until it is put to use (think, of a phone number you'll repeat to yourself until you can dial it on the phone). Note that the goal is not really to move the information from STM to LTM, but merely put the information to immediate use.

Long-term memory: This is relatively permanent storage. Information is stored on the basis of meaning and importance. The knowledge we store in LTM affects our perceptions of the world, and influences what information in the environment we attend to. LTM provides the framework to which we attach new knowledge. It contrasts with short-term and perceptual memory in that information can be stored for extended periods of time and the limits of its capacity are not known. *Schemas* are mental models of the world. Information in LTM is stored in interrelated networks of these schemas. These, in turn, form intricate knowledge structures. Related schemas are linked together, and information that activates one schema also activates others that are closely linked. This is how we recall relevant knowledge when similar information is presented. These schemas guide us by diverting our attention to relevant information and allow us to disregard what is not important. Since LTM storage is organized into schemas, instructional designers should activate existing schemas before presenting new information. This can be done in a variety of ways, including graphic organizers, curiosity arousing questions, movies and so on. LTM also has a strong influence on perception through top-down processing - our prior knowledge affects how we perceive sensory information. Our expectations regarding a particular sensory experience influence how we interpret it. This is how we develop bias. Also, most optical illusions take advantage of this fact. We can now find a direction as to what could be done to arrest attention during a commercial break. There is a very common experience that during such commercial breaks, audience tends to do something else till, their favourite is back. If they are enquired



whether they are watching television, they may say they don't watch the advertisements during breaks.

But if they are asked if they had noticed the Airtel advertisement during that break, they may be honest enough to say that they have heard the jingle or has just peeped at that moment for the advertisement, What made them do so? This system of the brain is known as the "Supervisory Attentioning System" which monitors the ambient influences even when a person is not giving proper attention to it. As soon as it finds something relevant to create stimulus, it puts the neurons to action and the person gets the feel of it and diverts his attention towards it. For advertisers, it is very necessary to find out which kind of communications can be made so that the supervisory attentioning system can be influenced. Then only even during a commercial break, a person's attention can be diverted to view the particular advertisement. Hence we have answered one question as to where advertisers need to influence to draw the audience to their communication during commercial breaks. But the question of how to achieve it still remains obscure.

THE MIND:

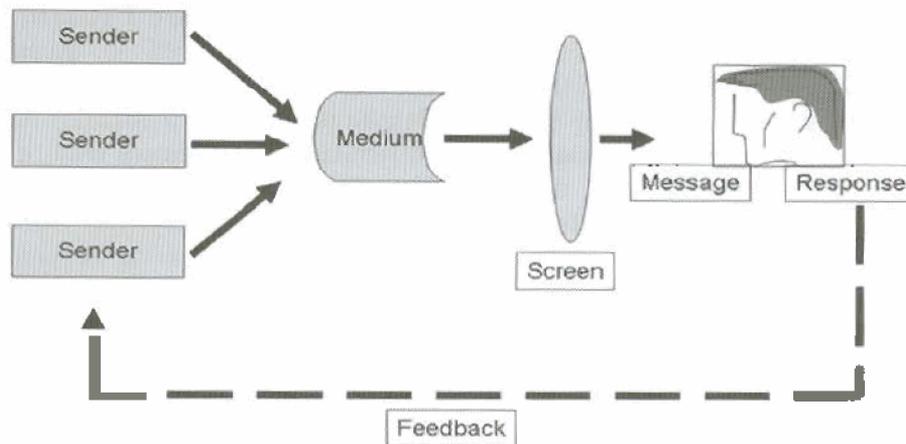
Some of the salient features of the minds are that they are limited, their perceptions are selective, there is a physiological limitation to processing stimuli, a dramatic difference is needed for the brands to establish themselves in crowded categories. So the difficulty remains as how much of the message gets through the clutter. The mind, by nature, is very insecure. The mind is both emotional and rational, purchasing decisions are really not known and for recall there are times when the mind remembers things that no longer exist. What conclusions can we draw from these theories? During a recent study it was asked to the audience if they knew the current tag line for United Airlines. They resoundingly responded with "Fly the

Friendly Skies!" When I pointed out that United changed its tag in 1997 to "Rising" and again in 2004 to "Its Time to Fly," they were astonished. Despite the millions of dollars United spent on this ad campaign, the audience only recalled something that didn't exist. When drafting your brand positioning strategy, you may want to consider your previous message layering activities and determine if your new value proposition enhances or conflicts in the minds of your intended audience. Wow let's turn to a technique to analyse brand perceptions.

Due to the sheer volume of messages we encounter on a daily basis, the human mind can't begin to cope with interpreting them all. Trout notes some statistics: Humans tolerate constant daily electronic bombardment, printed knowledge doubles every four to five years, 4,000 books are published around the world every day. The World Wide Web grows by 1,000,000 pages each day. You've watched 140,000 TV commercial 4 the age 18.

Human radar: The communication model

To better understand the process of preference, let's first look at a basic communications model. The five components of this model are sender, medium, filter, receiver, and feedback. On a daily basis, we are exposed to messages (sender/medium) via our radio, television, billboards, Internet, mail, and word-of-mouth. Although these messages are pervasive, we continually screen out (perceptual screen) or ignore content that has little or no relevance to us. All messages are coded patterns and sensations – colours, sounds, odours, shapes, etc. Those messages deemed recognizable, or a basis for a relationship, are decoded and stored in our memory (filter/screen). A successful convergence between sender and receiver will result in some type of response to a brand's compelling message feedback.



Source: IBC, Shultz, Simonson

Stored experiences in our long-term memory are connected through a series of nodes and networks. An example could be all the associations you might have with the word Starbucks—including coffee, rich aroma, relaxing, sofa, earth tones, etc. As presented by Shultz and

"This node and connection process, called spreading activation, makes every person different" (Strategic Brand Communications Campaigns, 1999). Since we all have different experiences, connections, and relationships, this supports a theory that the consumer, not the organization, owns the brand.

From brain to branding:

It is well established that the journey of a product through its brand depends on the taste buds of the brain. The chemicals that create arousal are serotonin, acetylcholine, dopamine, norepinephrine, and histamine. The amygdala, ventromedial prefrontal cortex give rise to lower order and higher order emotions respectively in the brains and the brands need to choose which one to affect to trigger the desired reaction. Whether a communication is powerful enough to stimulate the neurons and the

whether the brain stores the communication in its primary or secondary memory, short-term or long-term memory is a matter of concern. Now advertisers know where to put their communication and what to influence. Their major challenging job is now to understand how to influence a chemical reaction in the mind so that a desired response is arrived at. In order to understand this, let us now investigate as to what are the ways in which a brand gets positioned in the minds of the consumers. A brand is a cluster of strategic cultural ideas, which has to be used as a tool to shape the human mind. So whenever a brand has to be launched, there are several basic questions

have to be answered. First of all, what is the utility of the product for which the brand has to be launched? Secondly who are its profile consumers and what is the level of their understanding? Thirdly what sort of segment do they fall into? Fourthly what would be the USP or the unique positioning strategy of the brand? Fifthly, who are the competitors and what are their positions? Sixthly, what is the marketing strategy undergone by the company to launch the product so that the branding campaigns can be developed accordingly? Finally, what would be the brand vision to vis-a-vis other brands in the same category? Underlying these basic questions, there would be an attempt to find out what would be the driving force of the brand and to forecast possible obstacles that may arise in its journey. When we talk of the driving forces of a brand, we tend to estimate certain parameters, which are the driving elements. These include choice of the target audience where brands like MTV, Elle 18 had an upper hand; choice of the product or services where brands like Moov, Dettol prospered; choice of pricing where brands like Nirma and Videocon made a name; and finally choice of distribution network where brands like Standard Chartered Bank, Hindustan Petroleum created a niche market.

Brand Positioning

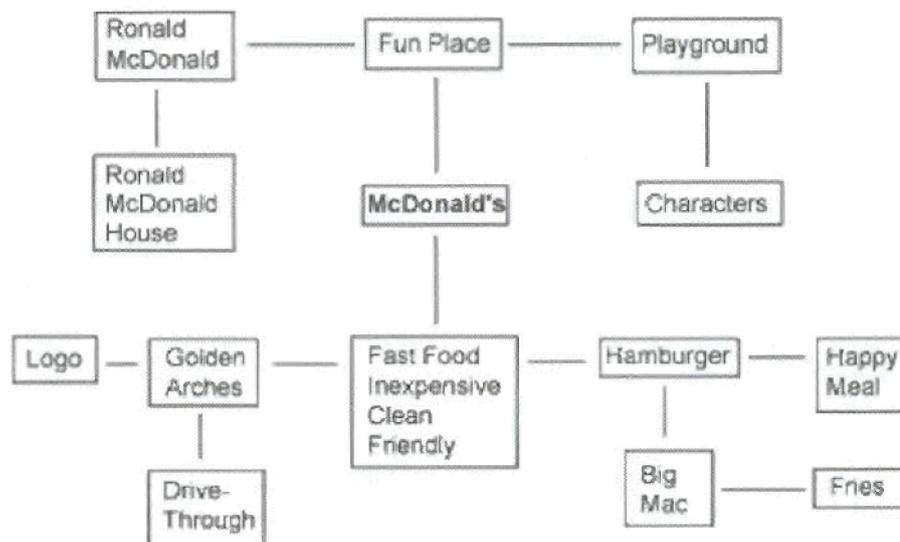
A strong brand position means the brand has a unique, credible, sustainable, and valued place in the customer's mind. It revolves around a benefit that helps your product or service stand apart from the competition." Scott Davis, *Brand Asset Management*.

Organizations seek to develop and project brand perceptions based on internally driven needs and goals. In Jack Trout's book "Differentiate or Die," he presents evidence that supports his theories



on consumer behavior and interpretation. Although these concepts seem self-evident on the surface, organizations tend to ignore these immutable laws in their daily branding activities.

During the product lifecycle of the brand, different stages are encountered: the infant stage, the growth stage, the maturity stage and finally the decline stage. Depending on the stage at which the brand is positioned, it would be decided whether the brand would go for a brand extension, line extension, sub branding, range branding, umbrella branding and endorsed branding. Apart from these strategies, the advertiser has to keep in mind the market share of his brand and find out whether brand cannibalisation is taking place. Whenever a brand has to be developed, it has to gradually escalate from its core formula to know how, interest and finally the brand philosophy. Every advertiser tries to plan its brand through the marketing mix, the 4 Ps: product, price, place, and promotion so that the brand can be enriched. The brand asset evaluator has to be measured to find out how much the target audience value the particular brand. Likewise, brand input multiplier would evaluate the ratio of the market share of the brand with respect to the amount that has been spent on advertising. These instruments would also suggest as to what is the position of the brand, the future strategies, where to spend how much and ultimately where to draw the line.



Source: Infinite Asset, Hill/Lederer

Brand Molecule

"The functional, emotional, and social dimensions of the jobs that customers need to get done constitute the circumstances in which they buy." Dr. Clayton Christensen, *The Innovator's Solution*

A brand molecule, according to Hill and Lederer, is the process of identifying all associations connected to your brand. In addition to understanding the type of connections, you need to evaluate the importance of each association and how much weight it carries independently.

By unfolding a brand molecule, the organization is able to view all possible connections, either positive or negative, in its current state. By virtue of this analysis, you can achieve greater clarity and insight into your positioning or re-branding process.

The McDonalds brand molecule, as portrayed in this pictorial, illuminates the basic constructs of this process. Key elements of this model include: linking all brand associations, the importance of each, and how they relate to each other. Once accomplished, you can begin the process of removing those associations that no longer "fit" and adding new identifiers in their place. This process provides the manager with an opportunity to view the entire brand and affect change in a strategic manner.

A real-world example of this process was the recent transformation of Cadillac. In the late 80s and early 90s, sales for this brand were declining due to European and Japanese penetration into the luxury car market. To reverse this erosion, the

Cadillac group invested in the brand molecule analysis to reinvent both the design and market preference. This brand was meticulously assessed, disassembled, reassembled, and re-positid in the late 1990s from something grandpa drove into a

fast, my, and desirable product. Today, you know when a Caddy commercial is playing when you hear Led Zeppelin's "been a long time" blaring through the speakers.

Brand equity

Underlying all the nitty-gritty of brand evaluation is the search for finding the brand equity of a brand. Brand equity has the totality of brand perception including the total quality of the product services, financial performance, customer loyalty, satisfaction and overall esteem towards the brand. Brand Equity is influenced by all non-image factors as well as the market value of the brand. This value is ascertained by the cost based, price based and consumer based methods. Once the brand equity is developed, half the mind battle is won. So it is necessary to find out how brand equity can be developed by stimulating the neurons. So all questions trigger to one direction: What triggers the neurons and how can it be triggered?

Brand loyalty

"You learn that creating customer loyalty is neither strategic nor tactic; rather, it is the ultimate objective and meaning of brand equity, Brand loyalty is brand equity." Daryl Travis, *Emotional Branding*.

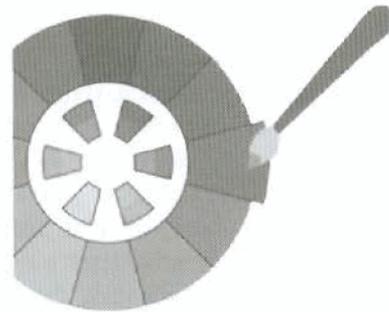
So, what constitutes brand loyalty? According to Bloemer and Kasper, brand loyalty implies that consumers bind themselves to products or services as a result of a deep-seated commitment. To exemplify this point, they rendered a distinction between repeat purchases and actual brand loyalty. In their published research, they assert that a repeat purchase behaviour "is the actual re-buying of a brand" whereas loyalty includes "antecedents" or a reason/fact occurring before the behaviour.

Bloemer and Kasper further delineate brand loyalty into "spurious" and "true" loyalty. Spurious loyalty exhibits the following attributes:

Biased, behavioural response, which is expressed over time by some decision-making unit, with respect to one or more alternate brands as a function of inertia. True brand loyalty includes the above, but replaces inertia with a psychological process resulting in brand commitment (Ref: Journal of Economic Psychology, Volume 16, Issue 2, July 1995). What drives brand loyalty? The psychology behind human behaviour as it pertains to brand selection can be both rudimentary and complicated at the same time. We will explore this conundrum by investigating noted authors' insight into the

realm of brand preference, By unveiling current research and opinions of experts, a convergence of ideologies will advocate techniques in order to deepen current and potential relationships. Methods will be introduced which evoke the use of our five senses to evaluate, develop, and drive a deeply rooted brand preference.

Colour psychology affecting brands



Colour Psychology

Colour psychology studies the affects of colours on how we feel (yellow=happy), and what we associate with certain colours (black=death) depending on our culture. The science behind the psychology of colour is still new, but is starting to define how colour impacts our bodies, affecting our appetites, confidence and energy levels.

Colour = light = energy

How can a colour actually affect us? First we have to look at what a colour is made of: light. A colour is a lightwave which travels to your eye, then sends an electrical message to your brain which interpret them as "blue" or "yellow". Since light is just energy, and colour is light, colour is a form of energy, a wave that hits you right between the eyes. It stimulates your brain and affects your mind and your body. In one study, some subjects were able to distinguish a particular colour blindfolded, just by touching a colour with their fingertips. We use colours to designate our leaders: the red "power ties" of Prime Ministers and Presidents, black robes of judges. We use colour to show allegiance. In West Bengal, India, football club East Bengal is known by their distinctive red and yellow colour while Mohon Bagan is known by their maroon and green colour. A pediatric surgeon in bright blue scrubs with yellow polkadots says "friendly", and puts her young patients at ease. A politician's black suit, white shirt and navy tie sends "conservative" and "powerful". Using colour to affect mood. Interior designers affect people's moods through the colours chosen for walls and furnishings. Advertisers are



masters of colour. Red for sex appeal in things like cars, lipstick, soda. Black for manly things like watches, aftershave, cars again. Pink for girls' toys. Colour and communicating your brand

The psychology of colour branding is utilised to communicate a business personality and approach, create a mood, appeal to the target audience, distinguish the website from its competitors and draw attention. Colours to promote a business brand, to get the right message across to its target market.

Branding in the brain

From our above investigation first into the brain and then into the brand, we can easily derive certain cues that would enhance us to attempt to find the secret password of the human mind, which is the utmost destination of the research. From the brain, we know that the neurons synapses are the major influencers of human action. We also know that supervisory attentionary system needs to be tapped to induce the communication when if the mind is out of focus. From the branding point of view, the brand equity needs to be developed and a unique positioning strategy needs to be coined so that it meets to solution to some complex human problems. Every product and thus every brand is a solution to one or the other human problems. This is why all products and brandings are existent and will continue to exist. The fight is to establish who would provide the best possible solution. For this endeavour, we need find out the cognitive psychology that brand planners use to map the perceptual space in the mind. The cognitive map of the individual is the idea that each brand occupies a particular point or space in the individual consumer's mind, a point that is determined by that consumer's perception of the brand in question and in its relation to other brands. The spatial distance between the points in that consumer's mind reflects the subject's perception of similarity or dissimilarity between product and brands. For example when Maggi noodles were launched in Delhi, it became an overnight success. The reason being that it found a strong vacant position and communicated as "good to eat, fast to cook" anytime snack. But the real challenge lies as to how we can gain the space of the mind. To buy the mind space there are millions of communication and killer competitions where the marketers are creating more brand clutter to the already cluttered categories. The advertising need now is to create a unique space among the consumers and to make them comfortable. So the challenge has drifted from

visibility to comfortability. One *'thing* is absolutely clear that the unique positioning strategy needs to be undertaken and differentiation is a branding DNA.

Solutions: the psycho-branding models

Let us now put the thoughts into some models to get some channelised solutions and ultimately derive at the cracking tool that would have an impact on the Indian consumerist mind.

The STEP model

In order to develop the comfort zone that we have discussed earlier, the profile consumers have to be stratified and have to be passed through the STEP model. The STEP model includes, **Social, Technological, Economical and Political**. These are the external influences that the profile consumers have been conditioned with in their years of mental development. So this model would first give an idea regarding the liking factor of the target consumers. The reason being that as the brain has developed, there were such strong external influences that have been a part of the gene of the consumers. Positioning the brand into the comfort zone of the consumers is to *make* a match between the consumer DNA with the brand DNA. Once this is achieved, the consumer does not need to remember the brand separately. It becomes a part of his life and hence he lives with the brand.

The VASE model

For the smooth recognition and recall of a brand it is not only necessary to make the brand more visible by constantly bombarding it with communications and promotions. Rather I would propose a VASE model, which should be followed for any brand. The VASE model says: **Visible, Available, Service and Economical**, all are the essential segments for the *smooth* journey of the brand. If visibility is absent, then consumers do not have a clear understanding of the brand. If availability is absent, then consumers may demand and seek but ultimately get to the most available brand. If the service is not good, then consumers would not go for repeat purchase. Finally, if the product is not economical then the consumers may fail to find the value price ratio positive. So all the four aspects are equally important for consumers to have a constant reference to a particular brand and thus increase the brand equity.



The SEC model

The SEC model, according to me, is the most effective model for any psycho branding solutions. This model, I believe, would try to unlock the branding problems faced by advertisers relating to brand clutter, effective branding reactions and other such related problems as this model would give an in-depth analysis as to how brands can stimulate the neurons of the brain and according produce the desired result. The SEC model can be divided into three parts: Sensation, Emotion and Consciousness. Any communication input that passes satisfactorily through these three stages will most likely emerge with the best result, Let us now derive the model and find out how it works as a panacea for all branding solutions

Sensation

"Almost our entire understanding of the world is experienced through our senses." Martin Lindstrom, *Brand Sense*

The most innovative brand research I've encountered recently was derived from Lindstrom and his "Brand Sense" concept. A precursor to his theory lies in three components, and when combined, builds both loyalty and what he terms "mash ability." The constructs of his theory reside in the following:

- Sensory branding stimulates your relationship with the brand
Allows emotional response to dominate our rationale thinking
- Offers different dimensions of a single brand

Visual	Unique logo on building, cups, and bags
Visual/Auditory	Uniform and customer approach
Visual/Auditory/Touch	Interior aesthetics (sofa, colours, wall paper, music)
Smell/Taste	Distinct aroma of freshly ground coffee

When analyzing your brand, how strong are the links between each of your sensory touch points? How interdependent are they? In the beginning of this article we mentioned Lindstrom's term "smashability." This simply means how independent each sensory aspect is and what is its ability to stand on its own? If you removed the Starbucks logo from the building, would you still know the brand?

- Goal: Strong, positive, loyal bond between brand and consumer so the consumer will turn to brand repeatedly
- Ultimate Goal: Emotional engagement, match between perception/reality

The essence of Lindstrom's work lies in what he terms the "Six Sensory Steps." These include (1) sensory audit, (2) brand staging, (3) brand drama, (4) brand signature, (5) implementation, and (6) evaluation. Through this discovery method, an organization can unveil aspects of its current offering or new avenues to exploit. This process, according to the author, will enhance brand loyalty and deepen existing relationships.

Since this article can't possibly delve into all six steps, a cursory view of a few elements of this process is provided next, Lindstrom's approach to brand loyalty stems from the use of our five senses. In order to understand any brand, a sensory audit must be conducted to assess the brand's leveraging of sensory touch points. This involves examining a brand's stimuli, enhancement, and bonding capabilities. Lindstrom's point is simply the more sensory components, the stronger the foundation of your brand.

Another area discussed is the synergy across sensory touch points, Lindstrom suggests we use many senses when evaluating our surroundings, including brands. Returning to the Starbucks example, one could view an encounter with this retailer in this manner:

Let us now concentrate on the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch. Apart from this, there are Kinesthesia and Synesthesia.

Sight: The eye is the organ of vision. It has a complex structure consisting of a transparent lens that focuses light on the retina. The brain combines the input of our two eyes into a single three-dimensional image. In addition, even though the image on the retina is upside-down because of the



focusing action of the lens, the brain compensates and provides the right-side-up perception. So the visual image is created in the mind. Every attractive image creates a folder in the brain.

Hearing: The ear is the organ of hearing. The outer ear transmits vibrations to the inner ear through a series of small bones. The inner ear, react to the vibrations and transmit impulses to the brain via the auditory nerve. The brain combines the input of our two ears to determine the direction and distance of sounds.

Taste: The receptors for taste, called taste buds, are situated chiefly in the tongue. At the base of each taste bud there is a nerve that sends the sensations to the brain. The sense of taste functions in coordination with the sense of smell. The number of taste buds varies substantially from individual to individual, but greater numbers increase sensitivity.

Smell: The nose is the organ responsible for the sense of smell. The cavity of the nose is lined with mucous membranes that have smell receptors connected to the olfactory nerve. The small receptors interact with the molecules of these vapors and transmit the sensations to the brain. The sense of touch is distributed throughout the body. Nerve endings in the skin and other parts of the body transmit sensations to the brain.

Kinesthesia: precise awareness of muscle and joint movement that allows us to coordinate our muscles when we walk, talk, and use our hands. It is the sense of kinesthesia that enables us to touch the tip of our nose with our eyes closed or to know which part of the body we should scratch when we itch.

Synesthesia: Some people experience a phenomenon called synesthesia in which one type of stimulation evokes the sensation of another. For example, the hearing of a sound may result in the sensation of the visualization of a color, or a shape may be sensed as a smell.

All these senses register themselves as a folder in the brain through a series of stimulating neurons. The first positioning method of advertisers should be to differentiate the brand among any of these senses. These senses create a natural stimulus among neurons and if the brand researchers can understand the reactions of such senses from the profile consumers then communication can be positioned in line with the sensation that has created the most pleasurable experience. Enforcing a natural reaction with communication would be

nothing less than another good experience with the brand and to the human psychology, good experience are always welcome. So the perceptual space already had the folder, no new space to search. The communication just created a link between the sensory folder in the brain and the brand, thereby exciting the neurons in the same way as the previously created pleasurable experience.

Emotion:

One of the prime influencers to any kind of reactions in the brain is the emotion. It is that touch in the mind which can make or break things. Scientist Wundt spoke about the three different dimensions of emotions; pleasant/unpleasant, relaxation/tension, calm/excitement. Ekman and Freisen identified six basic types of emotions: fear, sadness, anger, happiness, disgust, surprise. But modern researchers have found a lot of emotions like humour, love, disgust, hate, pain, lust, hope and pride. Such emotions create stimulus in the mind and the body reacts accordingly. So great communications have been positioned to catch one emotion and capitalise on it. For example the brand Boroline is shown to have a granddaughter giving her grandmother Boroline because her feet have cuts with wrinkles. This emotional connect of granddaughter-grandmother touches the heart. The brand Vicks Vaporub came as a solution to those small children who could not sleep at night because of cold and kept their parents awake as well. Vicks Vaporub came to relieve those children suffering from cold as well as their waking parents. The brand Fevicol has always been known for its humorous communication. It portrays a crowded bus where people hanging outside the bus are not falling off because they are stuck with fevicol. The brand Pepsodent showed mother scolding the child for not brushing with pepsodent. So the fear factor is created and the mother child emotion is showcased. Thus every communication tends to touch the soft spot of the human mind. But humans greatly differ in their emotions and it becomes a daunting task to find out the emotional cluster. The only way to find it is to understand the relationships of the clustered population with themselves and their surroundings, their reactions to different situations and ultimately touching emotions which strike them heavily. If such a communication can be linked with the striking emotions of the consumers, then the brand equity will be enhanced.



Consciousness:

It has been defined loosely as a constellation of attributes of mind such as subjectivity, self-awareness, sentience, and the ability to perceive a relationship between oneself and one's environment. It has been defined from a more biological and causal perspective as the act of autonomously modulating attentional and computational effort, usually with the goal of obtaining, retaining, or maximizing specific parameters (food, a safe environment, family, mates). Consciousness may involve thoughts, sensations, perceptions, moods, emotions, dreams, and an awareness of self, although not necessarily any particular one or combination of these. So the basic premise of consciousness is the "touching SOUL" effect where what we think happens, what we want and cannot do happens. It is the epicentre of mental activities that goes on in the brain and when a communication touches it, there is no question about the fact that the brand will evade all clutters to emerge as a predominant brand for a long time. For example the brand Vodaphone when it was called Hutch had launched with a dog running after a child. The communication said, "wherever you go, our network follows you". Its an immediate connection with the fact that a dog is man's best friend and very loyal.

Conclusion

In order to understand the psychology of brand preference and ultimate brand choice, we undertook this journey by examining the brands that have failed and succeeded and tried to find an answer as to what led to one brand's success and the other to fail. To understand this problem we delved deep into the human brain to find out its mechanism and its organs of influence. Then we portrayed a basic communication model and the process of receiving/filtering messages to present

the fact how a particular communication enters the brain and is comprehended by the brain. Here we found out the action stimulisers of the brain. Our next job was to understand the branding concept and to review research that suggested a distinction between spurious and true brand loyalty. Several truisms concerning how a brand is positioned in the marketplace, revealed the challenges with marketing to the human mind. Here we found out where exactly the brand needs to reach, for the Indian consumerist mind to welcome and retain it. At this crossroad, we have the stimulants and the destination. All we needed was a transport to carry the stimulants to its destination. This was possible through three major models that ultimately became the cracking tool for the Indian consumerist mindset. Firstly, we surveyed research that submits the essence of brands being connected through our five senses. Secondly, we studied the external factors for a smooth brand journey. Finally, we grasped the internal mechanisms that action a human being to make an ultimate brand choice and to live with the brand. The three core tools, STEP, VASE and SEC spells three distinctive areas: STEP model would make a human mind to recognise its natural comfortable environment, VASE model would make the human mind feel at ease and in equity with the brand, ultimately SEC model would make the human mind create a specific desire and stimulate action specific to a particular clutter free brand choice. Thus, these three tools of psycho branding, if judiciously maintained, would I believe in the coming years, not only be the code cracking tools for the Indian consumerist mind but also would aid immensely in the genre of international branding.

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