E-branding: Context in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Although commercial internet has been around for over a decade, and a vast amount of practitioner and scholarly literature on internet marketing activities of firms has accumulated, relatively little empirical work has been undertaken on the branding strategies of internet companies. From a global branding perspective the international aspects of such e-branding activities have received even less systematic research attention. This study covers the e-branding context in Bangladesh through some statistical evaluation. In our country though the infrastructure of the ICT is not very well, but the growing information technology provides the organization to enroll   e-branding in order to survive in the market The analyses provide that e-branding is cost effective in our country and it is recommended that the ICT infrastructure should be expanded to get actual benefit from e-branding.

Key words: e-branding, branding, digital branding

1.0 Introduction

Bangladesh is a growing ICT country in the world. The ICT revolution in the country poses itself to enter in the e-branding era. The rapid growth of information technology brings the business more digitally enabled. That led the business organization to e-branding their organization through all over the world. Bangladesh is not exception from this trend. The uprising demand of e-branding is very much influential for the organization to survive in the market. The innovative Bangladeshi entrepreneurs and the executives introduces local brand globally through e-branding. Brand experts echo them as they list confidence, professionalism, and strategic efforts of the industry and say the government can turn Bangladesh a high-value brand exporting country. This study is designed to evaluate the e-branding context in Bangladesh.

2.0 Objective of the Study

With the rapid growing changes of organization structure due to the development of information technology leads the organization to bring e-branding for the organization.

The main objectives of this study are given below

- To find out the present situation of e-branding in Bangladesh.

- To find out whether e-branding is cost effective or not in Bangladesh.

- To point out the problem related to e-branding in Bangladesh.

- To recommend some way outs to overcome the challenges

3.0 Methodology of the Study:

The study is an exploratory and comprehensive one, which is administered by collecting data and analyzing this datum.

Study design

Quantitative and qualitative descriptive study

Study population

Study population was targeted different Brand Manager from various Companies in Bangladesh.

Sample size

The sample size was 12

Sampling technique

Random sampling technique was used for sample collection.

Primary data

Primary data were collected randomly from 12 brand and marketing manager from distinctive companies in Bangladesh.

Secondary data

Secondary data were collected from internet, journal and books etc.

Data collection tool

Semi structured questionnaire

Analysis of Data:

Data collected from Questionnaires were analyzed by using various statistical tools. Descriptive as well as statistical analysis was done in this report. Mean, Standard Deviation, Hypothesis and frequency Distribution were used by SPSS software to justify the e-branding context in Bangladesh.

4.0 About Brand & E-branding:

Brand is the proprietary visual, emotional, rational, and cultural image that you associate with a company or a product. A good brand name gives a good first impression, is easy to remember, and evokes positive associations with the brand. The positioning statement tells, in one sentence, what business the company is in, what benefits it provides and why it is better than the competition. On the other hand brand is an identifying symbol, words, or mark that distinguishes a product or company from its competitors. Usually brands are registered (trademarked) with a regulatory authority and so cannot be used freely by other parties. For many products and companies, branding is an essential part of marketing. E-branding is electronically branding the company, mainly branding over internet.[1]

Benefits of e-branding:

In addition to taking advantage of the outstanding growth opportunities, the following drives the increasing interest in taking brands global:

- Economies of scale (production and distribution)

- Lower marketing costs

- Laying the groundwork for future extensions worldwide

- Maintaining consistent brand imagery

- Quicker identification and integration of innovations (discovered worldwide)

- Preempting international competitors from entering domestic markets or locking you out of other geographic markets

- Increasing international media reach (especially with the explosion of the Internet) is an enabler

- Increases in international business and tourism are also enablers.

Expanding role of brand:

When the technique of branding first started, it was meant to make identifying and differentiating a product easier. Over time, brands came to embrace a performance or benefit promise, for the product, certainly, but eventually also for the company behind the brand. Today, brand plays a much bigger role.

Brands have been co-opted as powerful symbols in larger debates about economics, social issues, and politics. The power of brands to communicate a complex message quickly and with emotional impact and the ability of brands to attract media attention, make them ideal tools in the hands of activists--and activists. [2]

Digital Brand engagement:

Due to the way the Internet is fast evolving, especially through the social web and social media, there is now a plethora of digital channels which can be used to hold a dialogue between a Brand and a Consumer, or groups of consumers. Digital brand engagement is brand engagement with a key focus on communication via the web. The Clue train Manifesto written by four visionaries in 1999 (which is now a very long time ago) predicted the Internet would evolve to a point where the consumer holds the "power" and no longer could the corporate world continue to communicate to their markets (the people they wish to interact with) in a push marketing or broadcast manner. How right they were. The Internet has evolved and people/consumers can now be very selective about which brands they choose to interact with; and have the ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings globally. Such mediums on the social web including blogs, micro-blogs, forums, social networks, groups within social networks, bookmarking sites, imagery and video sites can all be utilized by consumers; and they are doing just this in their thousands. Brands can take notice of what is being said about them, their product or service by monitoring website, through "buzz monitoring" tools and there are a number of tools to chose from. The value of the information provided is proportional to the time and expertise dedicated to configuring and analyzing the data provided. This value can be increased further when the buzz monitoring data is correlated with onsite web analytics data. The key elements to consider when listening and observing, before formulating a digital engagement strategy, are:

People/ Consumer	Who are they?	What are their values?	What motivates them?	How do they behave?
Location	Where are they?	Are they just an Observer?	Are they a Participant?	Or are they Active Contributor?
Influence	Reach of conversation?	Authority of dialogue and site?	Volume and amount of buzz?	Sentiment - (positive, negative, neutral)?
Brand Association	Are they inquisitive and looking for info?	Are they about to commit to the Brand?	Are they loyal brand advocates?	Are they brand opponents?

Once you have an overview of what the current brand/consumer situation is online, you are far better informed to create an engagement strategy. The information above will provide a "Factual" position as it is based upon what people are actually doing and saying. There is another level of research that can be carried out which adds a "Predictive" element. i.e. undertake some consumer testing prior to implementing and engagement approach. Typically, and traditionally this is carried out in a conscious level manner of research, such as focus groups, surveys and interviews. However, it is becoming recognized that conscious level research on its own can be flawed, as it is based upon the assumption that people are prepared to and are able to articulate what they are think on all levels.

Therefore a combination of research at the conscious and unconscious level is recommended.

Having obtained meaningful and valuable information from all the research and analysis, the time should now be right to start formulating the digital engagement strategy. In order to put some structure and process around this, the following approach is recommended, although there may be other methods which can be used.

People/ Consumer	Create virtual representative consumer groups	Understand why they need your brand	Outline what aspects of the brand appeal to them	Create content that has a value to each group
Location	Where are they?	Are they just an Observer?	Are they a Participant?	Or are they Active Contributor?
Influence	Reach of conversation?	Authority of dialogue and site?	Volume and amount of buzz?	Sentiment - (positive, negative, neutral)?
Brand Association	Are they inquisitive and looking for info?	Are they about to commit to the Brand?	Are they loyal brand advocates?	Are they brand opponents?

The other key area to consider is full integration with "offline" brand engagement/marketing strategy. To maximize the returns, these need to be full synchronized and complimentary. Typically, offline marketing can be used to drive online interaction for encouraging people to communicate with the brand.[3]

Branding and e-brand building strategies:

Few would dispute the view that the internet has had varying degrees of transformational impact on businesses, from traditional companies to online start-ups. New opportunities of efficiency and coordination are emerging, competition is intensifying and barriers to entry are eroding. New technologies and emerging market trends are converging to shift power from companies to customers. Organizations have to redefine their business strategies with regard to marketing and branding due to the unique characteristics of the internet and its capacity to overturn the old rules of the game.

To enhance prospects of achieving successful e-branding, companies have been urged to embrace a number of strategies. These include:

➢ establishing an online brand as quickly as possible to gain first-mover advantages;
➢ undergoing a systematic process of understanding, attracting, engaging, retaining and learning about target customers;
➢ going beyond generating awareness for their sites to a greater focus on developing trust and relationships through an improved 'click-to-order' ratio and repurchase rates;
➢ building stronger relationships through targeting customers with unique messages, unique functionality and unique personalization techniques;
➢ delivering a quality product/service experience;
➢ Having a unique positioning concept and strong communication programmer;

- ➢ ensuring consistent delivery of the brand promise enhancing the total brand experience;
- ➢ Surrounding customers with superior market presence. [4]

5.0 E-branding in Bangladesh

Made in Bangladesh battery Volta is now a popular brand name in India and Thailand, and in Djibouti and Ghana, many admire Pran, a Bangladeshi brand for juice and snacks. Harrods sells Kazi and Kazi, organic tea, and it is being served at Tokyo's prestigious Sheraton Hotel while furniture designed by Otobi stuns the brand-conscious western shoppers in Kolkata. Establishment and operation of brands require long-time and rigorous process but once these are done, business gets sustainability Battery manufacturing and marketing is the major source of income of the Tk 1,400-crore plus Rahimafrooz Group. Last year it exported nearly half of its productions or 3 lakh automotive batteries to more than 25 countries. With a 35 per cent annual growth, Otobi enjoys more than half of the country's Tk 500-crore market of brand furniture. Difference in designs and quality products at affordable and competitive prices keep them ahead of others.

Without having sustainable brands, sales at any business may grow for a time being but hard to sustain. Juice, pickles, cookies and confectionaries in AMCL's brand name Pran are now being shipped to more than 50 countries and sold in villages in north-east India to cities in many Middle Eastern and western countries. Pran's in the year 2008 exports amounted at around $15 million which was more than half of Bangladesh's total processed food export earnings. The company employs 60 plus Bangladeshis abroad to operate its overseas business. Also it has a plan to set up a plant in India. 'Pran's plants in Africa or middle-east are not impossible projects in the future,' [5]

6.0 Findings and Analysis:

E-branding context were judged through questionnaires which were surveyed on some brand manager of various companies in Bangladesh. The analysis was based on some hypothesis testing. The hypotheses are as follows-

H_1	E-branding in Bangladesh is very much striking.
H_2	E-branding in Bangladesh is not cost effective.
H_3	E-branding requires digitally enabled Bangladesh.
H_4	The ICT infrastructure is very well for e-branding in Bangladesh.
H_5	E-branding provides more benefit for both organization & customer.

E-branding in Bangladesh is very much striking.

One sample T test.

H_o: E-branding in Bangladesh is very much striking.

H_1: E-branding in Bangladesh is not very much striking.

As the calculated statistics t value is 1.676 which is inside the acceptance region. So the null hypothesis should be accepted. And it may assume at 0.05 significance level, E-branding in Bangladesh is very much striking.

E-branding in Bangladesh is not cost effective.

One sample T test.

> H_o: E-branding in Bangladesh is not cost effective.

> H_1: E-branding in Bangladesh is cost effective.

As the calculated statistics t value is -4.36 which is outside the acceptance region. So, the null hypothesis should be rejected. And it may assume at 0.05 significance level E-branding in Bangladesh is cost effective.

E-branding requires digitally enabled Bangladesh.

One sample T test.

> H_o: E-branding requires digitally enabled Bangladesh.

> H_1: E-branding not requires digitally enabled Bangladesh.

As the calculated statistics t value is -0.8124 which is inside the acceptance region. So, the null hypothesis should be accepted and it may assume at 0.05 significance level, E-branding requires digitally enabled Bangladesh.

The ICT infrastructure is very well for e-branding in Bangladesh.

H_o: The ICT infrastructure is very well for e-branding in Bangladesh.

H_1: The ICT infrastructure is not very well for e-branding in Bangladesh.

As the calculated statistics t value is 2.499 which are outside the acceptance region. So the null hypothesis should be rejected and it may assume at 0.05 significance level, The ICT infrastructure is not very well for e-branding in Bangladesh.

E-branding provides more benefit for both organization & customer.

One sample T test.

> H_o: E-branding provides more benefit for both organization & customer.

> H_1: E-branding provides less benefit for both organization & customer.

As the calculated statistics t value is 1.676 which is inside the acceptance region. So the null hypothesis should be accepted and it may assume at 0.05 significance level, E-branding provides more benefit for both organization & customer.

7.0 Recommendations

 As the analyses shows that the ICT infrastructure of Bangladesh is not well that is the hypothesis of the ICT infrastructure is very well for e-branding in Bangladesh is rejected so it is quite justified to expand the ICT infrastructure in order to get the benefit from e-branding. Another hypothesis shows e-branding requires digitally enabled Bangladesh. The government should concentrate on digitalize every sector in business which will brings the business to achieve more profit and more competent by using electronic base branding.

8.0 Conclusion

Organizations, in today's competitive environment, continue in their struggle to carve out their competitive niche in the marketplace. In many cases, this struggle has manifested itself in the provision of exceptional service, regardless of whether the organization ' s core product is a physical good or a service in its own right. Thus, we see a shift in thinking towards the new dominant logic for marketing,

one in which the service, as opposed to the provision of physical goods, is the basis for economic exchange. Consistent with the provision of exceptional service, investment in the organization's brand is considered to be a strategic weapon in the quest for an edge over competitors.

The creation of a strong brand and the deliverance of perceived service quality are premised by employees' ability to deliver on customer expectations. Brand is the most influential sector of the business. To survive in the market an organization should create a brand loyalty for its own. E-branding provides the organization more easy to formulate the brand through internet. The growing information technology provides the organization to enroll e-branding in order to survive in the market. The analyses provide that e-branding is cost effective in our country and it is recommended that the ICT infrastructure should be expanded to get actual benefit from e-branding.

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Appendix:

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
E-branding is attractive	12	3.5833	.79296	.22891
Do you think E-branding in Bangladesh is not cost effective?	12	2.0000	.95346	.27524
Do you think E-branding requires digitally enabled Bangladesh?	12	3.0000	.85280	.24618
Do you think The ICT infrastructure is very well for e-branding in Bangladesh?	12	3.6667	.65134	.18803
Do you think E-branding provides more benefit for both organization & customer?	12	3.5833	.79296	.22891

Source: Field Survey

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3.2					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
E-branding is attractive	1.675	11	.122	.38333	-.1205	.8872
Do you think E-branding in Bangladesh is not cost effective?	-4.360	11	.001	-1.20000	-1.8058	-.5942
Do you think E-branding requires digitally enabled Bangladesh?	-.812	11	.434	-.20000	-.7418	.3418
Do you think The ICT infrastructure is very well for e-branding in Bangladesh?	2.482	11	.030	.46667	.0528	.8805
Do you think E-branding provides more benefit for both organization & customer?	1.675	11	.122	.38333	-.1205	.8872

Source: Field Survey

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