



Evolution of Branding in Bangladesh

[November 5, 2015](#) : *Evolution of Branding in Bangladesh – in the perspective of concept, communication, consumer insights*

Members of marketing community have long debated the secret of making successful brand. Different brand building philosophies have been developed world wide accordingly – which also contributed in debates among the experts. However, drawing on learning from thousands of brand equity studies as well as ground breaking pilots on neuro-science & survey data to consumer shopping behavior, Millward Brown established that financial success for brands depends on the power of being Meaningful, Different and Salient of a brand.

Evolution of branding in Bangladesh is not a different story altogether. In this article, we have attempted to capture the evolution of branding in Bangladesh by dividing the brand marketing spectrums in three major epochs – Early, Development & Growth stage.

The Early Stage



Aalo, Aalo, Beshi Aalo... [Olympic Olympic Battery](#) – Can you recollect the TVC? Or *Kapor kachar sera saban Wheel Wheel?* Or the extraordinary and ever remembering – *Maacher raja Ilish, battir raja philips?*

Yes, we are talking about the early stage of advertisement in [Bangladesh](#).

Businesses in Bangladesh truly started getting the leverage of brands during this time (in the early 90's) with the emergence of television particularly BTV as the sole TV channel with the reach of majority people of Bangladesh. Branding at that time was mostly to make the product salient to the consumers across country.

With the ease to create hype by using the sole communication channel BTV – brands like Olympic Battery with its jingle & Aromatic soap – with its halal soap proposition, grabbed the top of mind salience of the consumers & thus grabbed major market share.

However, only salience without constant evolution of being Meaningful & Different, cannot drive the growth of brands which has been observed in the next stage – which we term as the ‘Development Stage’ of brand marketing in Bangladesh.

The Development Stage: (from 2000 to 2009)

As like world-wide, 21st century brought new opportunities in different categories. Resulting in new dimensions in consumers’ life as well as newer challenges for brands in Bangladesh. Some of the key impactful events of this era was:



- The telecom boom.
- Emergence of new TV channels with the challenge of diversified consumers attention.
- Growth of local brands beside their multinational counterparts– RC cola, Keya, Mojo, Apex etc.

The media and communication agencies also felt the fear of commoditization of brands which became enormously popular in 90s’ through their saliency based communication. Leading brands of this era realized the need for strong message started to be crafted along with building brand associations – GP with its ‘omnipresence/ strong network/ emotional’ connect with the distant one & Lux with ‘beauty’.

Spillover effects of Indian adverts also made the way of different thematic communications apart from the saliency based communication of 90s. Strong purpose of brand/ functional & emotional differentiation kept on playing pivotal role.

Telecom & FMCG operators began appearing its faces in every now and then. This industry made the marketing doer think about different routes of communication. By that time viewers have already seen adverts are not only melodious jingles and brands have realized that consumers’ love & trust cannot be earned by solely banking on saliency based communication.

Growth Stage (from 2010 and afterwards)

Yes, those were pleasant to hear again and again but not impressive enough to grab the attention.



Hence, the top brands of this era led the game with meaningfully differentiated proposition like

Horlicks being a great magician for mothers constantly tensed about her child’s physical & mental / Fair & Lovely – confidence & empowering women / Grameen Phone – the omnipresent ruler brand standing beside people when it is about connecting at emergency ... Great brands today are not only functionally differentiated, they create deeper meaning & emotional resonance to consumers’ mind

as well.

So, youthful, fun, dance, drama, emotion in communication messages were mostly began to hit imprinted by the TVCs of telecom operators. By the FMCG brands we began understanding the need for

differentiation to stay ahead of the curve. However, looking back at those years it would sound as a joke to talk about something called Social media, Facebook, WhatsApp, Android. Our digital dictionary of today must have no relevance with relation with that time.

Many eventful happenings during this stage & changed consumers lives which we couldn't even imagine 10 years earlier... thus made brand marketing more complex:

- Emergence of 3G/ smartphone/ android/ facebook & other social media
- Mass consumers' exposure to Indian TV channels
- Millennials/ generation Y – have become the largest consumer segment & spenders in the market who are constantly looking up to the global culture & brands as well.
- Local brands are challenging global brands like Symphony, Sandalina, Chaka, Apex and even some Bangladeshi brands are going global like – Pran
- Emergence of food & fashion brands
- Thrive of online based business (linked with MFS/bKash) with the shorter attention span as well as faster transaction method enabled by Mobile Financial Service (bKash).
- Middle income consumers are highly thriving in Bangladesh (source: BCG report on Bangladesh)

Sitting in 2015 we see, brands are important ever than any other period of time where the entire country & economy is in its high growth trajectory. Consumer segments in each category are getting stronger & successful brands are constantly crafting meaningful differentiation...

So What's Next?



In this hubbub of media & communication channels as well as the emergence of numerous consumer segments few things are to be kept in consideration by brand marketers to constant re-invent the brand... Brands in Bangladesh are at the stage of achieving unprecedented growth & scale up to global stature.

However, few points are essential for brand marketers to keep in mind:

1. Don't get overwhelmed with the vast options of technology & social media. Else, focus on crafting the story of your brand, which becomes integral part of consumers' life.
2. Whatever combination you use: Meaningful, Difference & Salience will always remain the pillars to take your brand forward.
3. Whether your brands objective is to command major market volume or higher price, your brand needs to be 'meaningful'.
4. To drive volume, your brand needs to be first Meaningful > Salient > Different
5. To command price premium, your brand needs to be Meaningful > Different > Salient
6. Don't ever imagine, building your brand leaving your consumers behind...Great brands needs to be co-created by consumers.

Similarly, once highly celebrated brands RC cola, Aromatic Halal Soap, Alam's No. 1 Detergent soap, Buble Up, Pailac Paint, Shinepukur Holdings, Pakija print saree are hardly making presence in our mind. No doubt evolution in Brand Marketing will continue to happen and with the passage of time many known and celebrated brands will become commodities!