

## **“Forged Meaning and Building Identity- A Saga of Branding”**

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### **Abstract**

"Products are made in the factory, but brands are created in the mind". Comfort and Leisure has been substantiated by the Materialism. Goods and service brings about a distinct identity and differentiation in oneself. Brands shape and influence once life and perspective of life. Brands create a deep psychological impact; the pride and ego are resurrected and boosted by brands. Brands have the ability to revolutionize the physiological and psychological framework of human beings. Life is beautified by the creativity of brand. The saga of branding, is all about satisfying, fulfilling and pleasing the customer, how a product can change or bring about a change in one's life? ,how brands transforms the concept of vulnerability into a strong personality. Organizations are struggling to find a proper balance between brand and customer perception. Competition has injected energy into organization to be more authentic a meaningful, to have an advantage over others, to be ahead of other and display an "Unique Selling Proposition". The article states the how branding can create customer delight and satisfaction, furthermore the success and progress of organization through branding.

Keyword: Forged meaning, building Identity, Competitive Advantage.

### **Forged Meaning and Building Identity- A Saga of Branding**

The term "Forged meaning and Building identity" has been very closely associated with Andrew Solomon, a writer, orator and a Human Right Activist for Gay Movement. The meaning behind this term is very significant from psychological and social point of view. 'Forged meaning' ;- "means "Changing about yourself" and the concept behind "building identity";- means " Changing the world".

As far as the human beings are concerned , from the point of "social relevance" these terms are of paramount importance, and furthermore very crucial for social progress and development . But when this concept is deliberately adopted and admitted into the world of business ,its psychological relevance is discerned and dictated , to comprehend the 'consumer purchasing behavior and branding of the product' . Peter Drucker had said "the purpose of the business is to create customers".

Business is synonymous with marketing and again Marketing is its simplest form of definition means the "art of selling and (buying)". Business is marketing and Marketing contains communication, communication is decorated with information, ultimately this Information is converted into money. The old age philosophy, "Survival of the Fittest" had been replaced by "Survival of the best informed" in the later eighties own-wards when IT revolution was gaining momentum. But the contemporary Mantra was quite different from that of the previous philosophies .The contemporary period is the "Age of the Big Data" and undoubtedly it is the "Survival of the Best Informed"

Business is aimed and aspired to maximize profit. The Traditional concept of marketing / business had become outdated and obsolete. The present age marketing is not what it used to be, it has become subtle and delicate. It has become a psychological game for ‘satisfaction of Needs and Wants’

The branding of the product is very much essential to any organization. The purpose, its existence and mission are done in the branding process. Branding does not simply or merely states the benefits and uses of the product but it must redefine the very existence and explore as to why the product has been born? What is the mission of the product? The purpose of its existence is much beyond the money motive .It must serve beyond the expectation of the customer’s and consumer’s physiological or psychological perception .

Walter Landor had meaningfully stated once "Products are made in the factory, but brands are created in the mind", the product is not a mere product unless and until it signifies and symbolizes a greater importance to humanity. And product that entered into the market must serve an ulterior motive and subsequently will double the satisfaction level of the customer. It must awaken their ego, pride or even arrogance or whatever may be .Man is a social being as along he /she is part of the society , there is always benchmarking and comparison. Even though products boast of their uniqueness (Unique Selling Proposition), expressed through promotional tools and salesperson, not much of its authenticity and sincerity is felt by the prospects. Competing for betterment, envy, ego all arises because of comparison. Humans always struggle for identification and differentiation, it can be from their respective individual effort or from something that is within their power to own or purchase , that finally decorates or raises their level of dignity and honor in the society .

A mere exaggeration of products through advertisement ,dramatic presentation of the product; through pleasant videos and appealing picturization may affect our senses , but diverting from the basic question : Does the product serve its purpose?. The product should /ought to be authentic, credible, realistic and ethical and subsequently exhibit the value that has been perceived by the customer.

**Forged meaning;** changing the very meaning of the product, redefining the very purpose of the product itself; its role in creating value and generating income. Product must be an entity in itself , a comprehensive entity , though artificially /man-made , but still has its restricted and controlled independence ,like a kite attached to the bottom , yet soars into the blue sky . The very growth of the product must over shadow the origin and source of its control and developing into a separate entity itself. For instance when , one buy something delicious , one is so grossed into its consumption , the consumer rarely thinks about the people or organization who manufactured it . Has anyone heard asking (maybe very rarely), “where can I get an Apple Iphone”? But instead once must have frequently heard , “ Where can I get an Iphone ? . **The organization has been overshadowed by the own product, it has begotten.**

**Building Identity** ;Abraham Maslow in his ‘hierarchy of needs’ pyramid ,has clearly stated various needs of human beings ,arranged in an order ,where ones need is satisfied , man(woman) shifts its focus onto the next level of needs. But in reality the various level of needs can be overlapped .It’s not necessary that man must the satisfy the ‘safety needs’ first and then get on to the next level of needs. He or she can skip safety needs and may opt for social or esteem needs to be

satisfied. The fact of the matter here is not about Abraham Maslow and his 'hierarchy of need', but a supplementary data to substantiate and show its relevance in

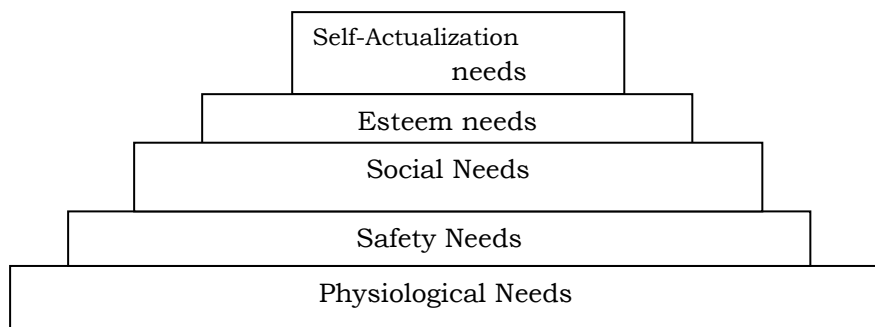


Fig: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

“Building identity” The needs are satisfied through finite paraphernalia of products and services. Though the market treats Customer as “The King or The Queen”, yet very obviously must respect and honor their sheer ignorance and pathetic-poor knowledge .Sometimes it is intolerable when customer exhibits sheer hollowness and impotency of knowledge .But clever manipulation from the part of salesperson ,must acknowledge and confirm to the customers stupidity without hurting the customers ego. On the other hand, the product must change the expectation of the customer or prospect. The product must exhibit the beyond then expected benefits/needs of the customer; the product must surprise and surpass the customer's expectations. The product must provoke the Ego, tickle and appeal the senses; it must wake up the pride or arrogance .All this possible by creating a “forged meaning’ for the product. The change in the customer comes thorough the product exhibited in front of them. The product is like an ornament for them. They use or consume it maintain their identity in the personal and social life. Both are equally relevant from the psychological and sociological point of view.

Define the product well and change the very perception of the world through this product. The very need of selling the product is absolutely indispensable from the business point of view. A product must shatter the belief and expectation and positively go beyond the anticipation of the customer. The value and the worth of the product are then felt, realized, and experienced. Building identity is simply changing the very concept and belief of the customer, regarding the product .Life will move on even in the absence of the respective products, but unquestionably products enhances the life-style. There is a much deeper and subtle significance pertaining to the psychological and sociological mainframe of human life and furthermore driven by the great ‘ego’ in human. Materialism do play a deep significance in balancing ones individual and social life. As the needs of customers became diversified, conventional promotions became less efficient and drove up costs. According to the well-known empirical “Pareto principle,” it is assumed that 20 percent of a company's customers generate 80 percent of its profits. In other words, retention of customer base is a major issue for any organization

To conclude the art of selling never stops and very apparently there is no end to human wants and needs .Organization thrives on marketing. The foremost drive of business is not to make profit but to create customer. Human nature has the natural habit of changing their taste and behavior like an unpredictable climate.

“Familiarity breeds contempt”, change is inevitable and human behavior is vulnerable to change, the organizations have to find new avenues and possibilities to retain the customer and furthermore to have an undisputed competitive advantage through by “Forged Meaning and Building Identity” .

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