

1-1-2012

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Recommended Citation

Vel, Prakash and Suhail, Laila: The branding framework behind Modhesh 2012, 181-197.
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THE BRANDING FRAMEWORK BEHIND MODHESH

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ABSTRACT

Branding and Brand management strategies have been dynamic spheres of discussion in modern day marketing since they act as a major differentiator in the minds of consumers. Existing literature sheds more light on developing and managing brands and not much on leveraging and sustenance. Using a case study methodology, this study aims to track and analyse the stages of development taken by an iconic and indigenously developed brand at Dubai, 'Modhesh'. A stage by stage analysis is made comparing with existing academic models on brand development., including the models of De Chernatony, Logman and Kapferer and has proposed a revised model referred to as the CNS (Conception, Nurturing and Sustenance) model which aims to fill the void in the existing models by proposing three additional elements, based on the analysis of the evolutionary stages of Modhesh. This model could be useful in understanding brand leveraging and the stages of brand development that could be helpful in such leveraging. The analysis has been made based only on one brand. However, this study paves way for future researchers to analyse brand development stages across different brands and further reinforce the model.

Keywords: *Brand Equity, Managing Brands and Leveraging.*

INTRODUCTION

Mickey Mouse is without a doubt one of the universally recognized icon. Launched in the year 1928, this lovable rodent was a brain child of a 26 year old Walt Disney who developed Mickey's initial sketches during a train ride back from New York. On the 18th of November 1928, the characters ticket to success was the break through animation venture 'Steamboat Willie' - the first animation to feature synchronized sound effects ever. The character single handedly over took the silent movie business which was peaking at that time. Never had people seen such an endearing character that provided wholesome entertainment for families and appealed to kids and adults alike. By the end of the year 1928, Mickey Mouse was a national fad. Walt Disney created another series of cartoon animations for Mickey that focused on his adorable and his humorous escapades. In the same decade, Walt Disney decided to cash in on the Mickey craze and launched Mickey merchandise. Within five years of its first debut feature, Mickey Mouse had become a cult figure and Disney had become a household name. Many other characters were added to the Disney line up but Mickey Mouse remained the most important sub brand of Disney. Mickey's immense popularity was leveraged for the brand 'Disney', as Mickey was elected as the first official brand ambassador of Disney. Walt also modified Disney's logo to feature Mickey Mouse's ears. The global viewership and visitorship enjoyed by Disney today would never have been possible without their integral sub brand Mickey. Mickey's success story is the quintessential example of how a sub brand (Mickey) magnified the equity of the parent brand (Disney). It displays the journey of a sub brand rose to such great heights that the effects trickled down to help the parent brand grow and succeed toot. This paper talks about the development of a major sub brand in the United Arab Emirates – 'Modhesh' that has witnessed unparalleled and unprecedented success in just 11 years of its launch. Modhesh has proven to be an immensely profitable and popular brand that has helped leverage its parent brand – 'Dubai Summer Surprises' and helped it achieve new heights. A lot of credit goes to its creators who developed and managed such a commercial sub brand. However, after analyzing the relevant literature, one may find that

most brand development frameworks designed so far, focus on the development and management of core brands (Macrae and Uncles, 1997; Ghodeswar, 2008). Hence, the need to develop a model for illustrating the leveraging of brands exists. This paper builds on an initial concept of this work (Vel, Suhail, Satyanarayan, and Easo, 2011) and describes the model that will help brand managers with suitable suggestions for leveraging a brand.

BRANDING, BRAND EQUITY AND LEVERAGING BRANDS

Based on the customer's point of view, a brand can be defined as the total accumulation of all his/her experiences, and is built at all points of contact with the customer (Kapferer, 2004). A brand is no longer just the interface between the company and its customer; it is in fact the face of the company (Fan, 2005). Brand equity is defined as a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand and that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers (Aaker, 1997). The components of the set (that may pose as assets or liabilities for the firm's brand) are: brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary trademarks or patents (Aaker, 1997). This definition and the set of 5 components have been pivotal in many brand equity related studies (Yoo and Donthu, 1997; Yoo, Donthu, and Lee, 2000; Baldauf, Cravens and Binder, 2003; Kim and Kim, 2004) and holds strong till date. Each consumer perceives a brand subjectively. Therefore, for a consumer, the brand's equity lies in the ability of the brand to influence his/her behaviour by evoking a specific set of reactions and responses. (Keller, 2003) defined the brand leveraging process as linking the brand to some other entity that creates a new set of associations from the brand to the entity as well as affect existing brand associations. Over the years, many different brand leveraging strategies have developed that have led many firms to success. Some of the well-known ones include brand extension, line extensions and ingredient branding. For a brand equity leveraging strategy to be successful, the brand on the receiving end should share certain values or characteristics that are similar to the brand that is leveraging its equity. In other words 'they should play in the same sand pit'. For example Apple Inc witnessed immense success with the iPod, iPhone, iPad and Mac Books, as these Apple brand names in their generic form, were all innovative modern day gadgets that made day to day life easier.

MANAGING BRANDS

Brand management is defined as the process of increasing the product's perceived value to the customer and thereby increasing the brand franchise and brand equity. For decades, companies have aimed at creating brands that are a flagship of their communication by using countless techniques such as identity and image development, positioning and differentiation. Firms have constantly aimed to "push" their benefits to their targeted segments. However rapid developments have compelled consumers to challenge this company centric model of brand management (Keller, 1993). The increasing power in the hand of the customer and high level of interaction has led to decline in trust especially when the usages of intangible consumer products are concerned. In order to overcome this problem firm's today aim to build brand relationships with their customers that in turn would result in lifetime loyalty, lower costs and a high amount of profitability. Few of the ideal ways of establishing a brand relationship is to offer customers consistency of experience and reassurance. The wealth of literature review analyzed revealed a whole lot of information on system process models and their analysis of the core brand, however very little data analyzed on the conception and management of a sub brand, thereby leaving space for more valuable research to be conducted.

MODULAR APPROACHES FOR DEVELOPING BRANDS

Models that explain the process of developing and managing brands can be found in abundance in the academic arena. As the importance of developing gestalt brands amplifies, the amount of significance attributed to brand development and management has also escalated. Well developed and well-structured models provide realistic and reliable approaches towards building, maintaining and monitoring a brand. However, a deep seated analysis is needed when trying to analyze brand leveraging strategies closely. And a case analysis methodology sounds a relevant methodology to get a close introspection.

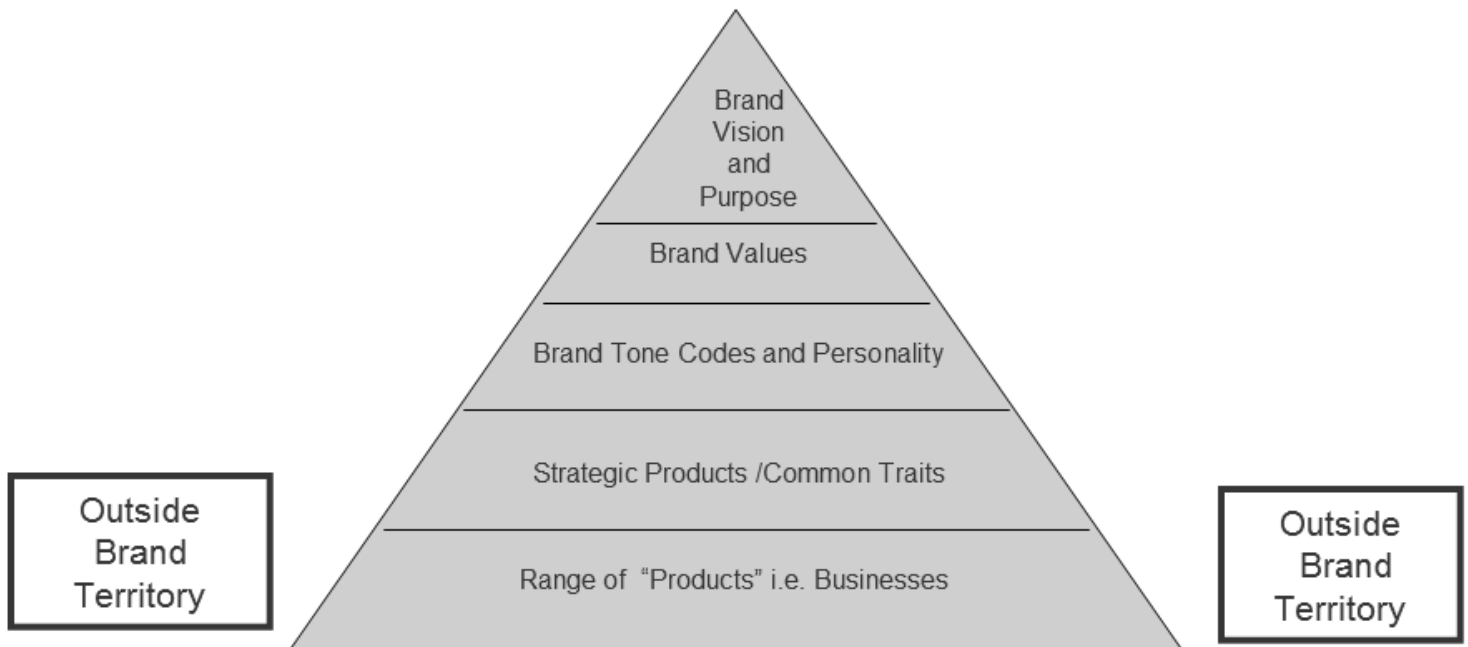
A live case on stages involved in the development, sustenance of a successful brand in Dubai, 'Modhesh' has been taken for analysis. Established brand development and management models were screened and used for studying the prescribed stages to compare with the stages followed for the development and sustenance of 'Modhesh' and relevant insights have been presented.

KAPFERER MODEL

The Kapferer's brand system pyramid was pioneered by Jean-Noel Kapferer who is an internationally recognized expert in the field of brands and brand management. Kapferer describes the brand system in great depth in his model and personifies a brand to have its own perceptions and point of views on the product category it is in (Figure 1). Due to the cut throat competition in the market today, most brands try to keep revitalizing themselves constantly to please consumers. In this effort the brand may lose its inherent uniqueness. In Kapferer's words, companies try to create chameleon brands. Over time, the only unifying feature on most products is just the organizations logo and a few similarities in the designs, failing to view the overall plan guiding the creative and productive forces of the company. The first component under the Kapferer brand system pyramid is brand vision and purpose. The brands vision should clearly highlight the number and types of products and services that are to be featured under the brand's name. This allows the brand manager to think and plan the position of the brand in the market in advance. The second most important component of brand vision is the 'purpose' of the brand. The purpose of a brand answers the simple question of 'how does the introduction of this brand improve the status quo in the world?' A brand's purpose must look beyond the bottom line of the company and should find a purpose more meaningful than inflated financial statements. A brand's core value is a value that is inherent to the brand and if that value were to disappear, the brand would cease to exist (Coupland et al., 2005). The next level of Kapferer's model is to do with Brand Personality. One of the most well-known definitions of 'brand personality' contributed by Aaker (1997), described brand personality as a set of human characteristics associated with the brand. Brand personality can be derived from three different sources, firstly the associations that consumers have with the brand, i.e., a congruence of human personality with brand personality. Secondly by the image a company tries to create for the brand. A successful brand knows how to build its distinct brand personality, which allows customers to perceive its uniqueness and then develop a strong binding relationship with the brand (Doyle, 1990). And finally, the third source of deriving brand personality is the product attributes such as the product categories and distribution channels (Lin, 2010). The fourth level of the Kapferer's model illustrates the importance of the positioning the brand clearly, among the target group of consumers. Kapferer advises that the attributes be limited to not more than four to five. The fifth phase analyses the uniformity in the resemblance of all the products and services under the umbrella of the main brand. More often than not, physical elements like a unique structural design or even logos are considered to be the easiest unifying factors for various products under the same brand. Finally the last level of the model applies itself exceptionally well to those brands that have a large number of target segments and therefore a wide range of products catering to each. In the last stage of the model, the positioning of each of these products is analysed with respect to the segment that they were aimed at. The Kapferer model does a remarkable job of analysing the various stages of brand development by providing valuable insight in each and every

stage however Kapferer is a system development model and fails to relate to the needs of developing sub brands like Modhesh.

Figure 1: Kapferer Model (Source: Kapferer, J.N.Strategic Brand Management, 2nd ed, Kogan Page, Denver, 1997, P50

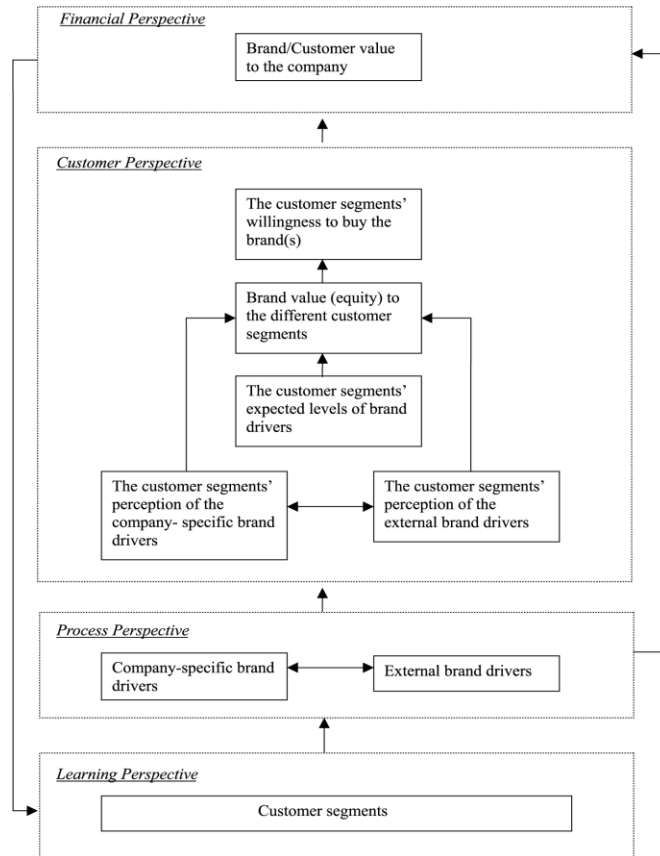


LOGMAN MODEL

The high amount of customer involvement in the production process has resulted in a highly sophisticated market. This sophistication comes at a price as the driving forces of brands become highly complex. Logman (2004) proposed a model that combines insights from proactive and reactive nature of brand managements (Figure 2). The Logman model used the above insights and generated means that would enable managers to make a distinction between the objective levels of the company as brand drivers and perceived level by customers. The first perspective of the Logman's model is influencing customer perception. However the levels of influence of each of these drivers varies from one company to another. Hence conducting a gap analysis would reveal the gaps in between the object level of the brand and the customer perceived level influencing the consumer perception of external brand drivers. When developing a brand strategy, managers should ensure how their brand drivers are perceived by different customer segments. Customer equity has mainly 3 main drivers they are '*Value Equity*' which is a customer associated value and is calculated by the equation, $\text{Customer value} = \text{perceived benefits} / \text{cost}$, '*Brand Equity*' which refers to the customer's assessment of the brand and '*Retention Equity*' which involves the firms efforts to retain their target base. The learning component portrays the proactive nature of the model. One of the most important activities at this stage is segmentation of the desired market. Segmentation enables an organization to target those prospective customers who are most likely to purchase your product. The Logman's Model provides a holistic view of the various stages and provides one with a good perspective by including various tools of analysis. However the model provides insights

on the customer's perspective in various stages and deals only with the core brand hence fails to relate to sub-brands like Modhesh. Hence another highly well-known model was further analyzed.

Figure 2 : The Logman Model (Source: Logman.M, (2004), 'The LOGMAN model: a logical brand management model', Journal of Product and Brand Management, Vol No.13 (2), pp. 94-104

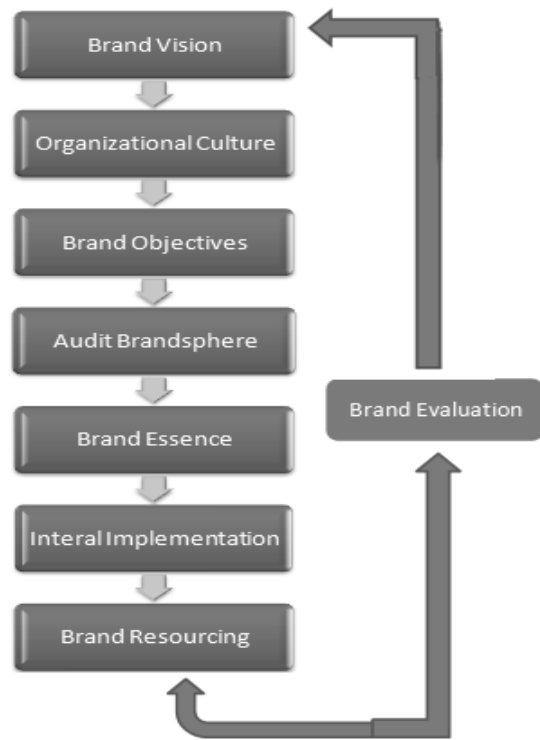


De Chernatony Model

The model designed by De Chenatony provides brand managers with a framework that allows them to develop and sustain their brands strategically (Figure 3). A striking feature of this model is the fact that the model is able to balance the traditional approach of focusing on the external environment while still appreciating the strength and importance of the organizational culture. A brand's vision, mostly devised by the brand manager along with the inputs from the organizational staff, describes the long term and stretching intent of the brand. This vision should clearly highlight the number and types of products and services that are to be featured under the brand's name. The 'envisioned future' coerces the brand manager to envision the type of brand environment that he wishes to develop for the brand in the coming years. The purpose and the values of the brand are also developed during this stage. A well-developed set of brand objectives provide a sense of direction to the brand vision. A long term brand objective is designed and is then broken down into smaller and more easily quantifiable objectives. The systematic completion of these smaller subsets leads to the completion of the overall brand objective. When analyzing the 'corporation' itself as a factor, managers should ensure that the internal customers/staff are well versed with the brand promises. Any ambiguity in the staff could lead to customer dissatisfaction in later stages.

Alignment of goals with distributors is important since it enable appropriate actions to encourage greater brand consistency. By understanding the customers in depth, the brand may be able to devise more effective approaches to please them through the medium of the brand. It is important to monitor the competitors as it helps in making comparisons, benchmarking and monitoring growth. Finally, the macro-environment should be monitored to appreciate how future political, economic, social and technological changes may impact the brand. The essence of a brand can be developed from the promises made by the brand in its initial launch phase and the satisfaction it gave to the consumers upon their completion. However, past experience (e.g. satisfaction with the brand) is not an exact barometer of brand essence (Ballester and Aleman, 2005). A brand essence that is based on emotional and self expressive benefits provides a higher-order basis for relationships which can be less vulnerable to product-related changes or easily applied to new contexts (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). Core identity is the central, timeless essence of the brand that remains constant as the brand moves to new markets and new products (Ghodeswar, 2008). To implement the brand essence, a suitable value delivery system is needed to support both the functional and the emotional aspects of a brand. For a manufacturing organisation, the focus on the functional aspect can be met by a value chain analysis and by a service blueprint for a service based brand. The emotional values of a brand can be supported by recruiting staff according to the extent to which their personal values align with the brand's values (Chernatony, 2001). Brands are complex multidimensional entities. Hence, evaluating brands based on one measure such as sales or revenue would result in a superficial evaluation. Brand metrics, specific to the brand being evaluated should be created. Evaluations of the brand should be done on a periodic basis to judge whether or not the brand is living up to the vision drafted for it in its initial stages and to implement corrective actions if any deviations are noticed. De Chenatony model while analyzing the stages of a brand development well has not done much to analyze the stages of development of a brand. Research has revealed that there is very little academic insight provided in this area.

Figure 3: The De Chenatony's Model (Source: Chernatony, L. (2001), 'A model for strategically building brands', *Journal of Brand Management*, p. 32



INTRODUCING ‘MODHESH’

Before introducing Modhesh, one should be informed about the Dubai Summer Surprises (DSS). The Dubai Summer Surprises is an annual summer festival aimed at providing children with entertainment and education during their summer break. It was launched in the summer of 1998 by the Government of Dubai to promote Dubai as a family holiday destination. Running during the months of June to August, DSS promises families weeks of fun filled activities. Modhesh, the Arabic translation for ‘amazing’, is the ever smiling mascot of the Dubai Summer Surprises festival. Launched in the year 2000, Modhesh is a fictional character that has been conceived and created in the United Arab Emirates. Due to its local roots and traditional mannerisms, Modhesh has successfully won the hearts of thousands of children in the UAE. Today Modhesh embodies fun, enjoyment and educational opportunities for children as well as shopping and leisure surprises for adults.

History of ‘Modhesh’

Modhesh is the brainchild of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai. Modhesh was his dream and DEPE helped in bringing this dream to reality. It was two years after the introduction of Dubai Summer Surprises that Modhesh was launched. Not only was Modhesh a never seen before character but it was the first time that the GCC region saw a dedicated mascot being designed for a retail festival. The reasons for the introduction of Modhesh were threefold. It is believed that the DSS in the year 1999 lacked cohesiveness and lacked a unifying factor. The launch of a mascot (derived from the DSS logo) brought uniformity and integration into the festival. Also, DEPE had long sensed that there was a void in the market for an Arab spirited character in the region. Modhesh came in as the perfect answer. Finally, Modhesh brought the emotional aspect that was eluding DSS by entertaining the kids with his jovial and adventurous mannerisms. He made the then slogan of Dubai Summer Surprises, ‘big fun for little ones’, enlighten with meaning.

MODHESH: STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

The below mentioned three stages analyse Modhesh from the period between 2000 (the year of Modhesh’s birth) to 2011 (present year). For the better understanding, the four stages of Modhesh development have been compared with the analogy of the development of a child. Therefore, the first stage has been termed the birth stage, the second stage is the crawling stage, the third stage is termed the walking stage and the fourth and last stage would be referred to as the running stage.

1. THE BIRTH STAGE

Target Audience Analysis

In the birth stage, i.e., the stage in which Modhesh was being developed as a character and the brand vision was being formulated, DEPE settled on the major audiences that the brand would be targeted to. Utmost priority and attention was showered on three target groups. The first group being the financial investors, who would be willing to invest in brand Modhesh by assisting in funding major Modhesh associated projects. A quintessential example of such a project would be Modhesh World (earlier known as Modhesh Fun City) described in the later stages of the development process. The second important group comprised of business firms who were willing to pay rights for the esteemed Modhesh brand. The aim was to develop new products branded as Modhesh. For example the Modhesh SuperStar drinks, launched in four different flavors, in the year 2006. Finally and most importantly, the third target group was that of the end users which comprised of parents and children. This was the section that Modhesh was designed and styled to impress and entertain during the months of DSS.

Styling Modhesh

Modhesh initially aimed at appealing children aged between 2 to 12 and hence had to be styled to capture a child's attention. The colours used in fashioning the character were yellow and blue. Modhesh spring like body is justified as Modhesh resembles a 'jack in the box' character and was promoted as one too. In the first advertisements of Modhesh that hit the air, a father brings home a gift box for his children. As soon as the children open the blue box, Modhesh springs out and enthrals and amazes the children. Some other ways in which children distinguish Modhesh is through his unique sun ray like hair which is seven strands that stick upwards from his head. Modhesh always wears white gloves with four fingers in each hand and has an egg shaped head. However the most important feature of Modhesh is his ever present smile.

Positioning Modhesh- Personality and Attributes

The positioning of Modhesh was done keeping the interests of children in mind. Children have the ability to make friends with anyone very easily and hence Modhesh is positioned as a character that is very congenial and amiable. An eternal optimist he sees the good side in every one. Modhesh is also an adventurer who has a burning need to explore new things, places, people and experiences. He imbibes in him the brand values of fun, friendly, playful, inspiring and full of surprises. Modhesh was designed to communicate all the fun and joy that occurs during the Dubai Summer Surprises to the little ones. Being positioned as a 'living toy' in the minds of people gives Modhesh a childlike charm which helps in easily associating him with fun and games.

2. THE CRAWLING STAGE

The beginning of the new millennium proved to be a new start for Modhesh too. In 2000 Modhesh Fun City (MFC), the region's largest indoor theme park back then, was launched. Both Modhesh and MFC were promoted heavily using Dubai Summer Surprises as its launch pad. Children developed an instant liking to the character and eventually the brand. Many strategically developed sub brands were launched consequently during the years 2000 to 2009.

Creating the 'Modhesh Experience'

One of the Key success Factors of Modhesh was the launch of Modhesh Fun City. The MFC, now referred to as Modhesh World is an indoor theme park promising fun and entertainment during the hot summer in Dubai. It facilitated learning through various activities organized such as Arts and Crafts, Sports, Fun Fair, Heritage, etc. It was a successful touch point that enabled Modhesh to connect with his "Friends" and vice versa. Modhesh, considered as the bubbly mascot and face of the Modhesh World and DSS launched many programs to connect with its audiences which included Modhesh Friends Club, Modhesh School Visits, Modhesh CSR program and Modhesh GCC tour etc. In order to cater to all the needs of all the diverse entertainment needs of the citizens belonging to diverse cultures, stage shows featuring a wide array of characters were organised as well. Ideally these brought merriment into the lives of children and their families during the dreary holidays.

Creating a Social Identity for Modhesh

In 2004 the Modhesh Friends club was launched. The club commences during the summer vacations of children in Dubai and is considered an ideal place for children from diverse nationalities to join together for a time of fun and education. It also enables them to develop friends and build stronger bonds with one

another while learning under constant adult supervision. The main activities of the club involve Entertainment Programs such as Art and crafts, Fun Fair etc. and educational field trips to various factories such as ‘The Biscuit Factory’ and ‘The Chocolate Factory’ and also a number of Social Programs that involve participation in various DSS events there providing them an opportunity to socialize with the visitors. This aspect of Modhesh relates back to the second aspect of Core Brand Values of the Kapferer model mentioned above. Modhesh had been designed as a character that is friendly, fun, bouncy, youthful etc. These ground values are evident in the activities undertaken by Modhesh Friends Club wherein they encourage one and all to make friends and to love one another. Modhesh aims to personify an “ideal” brand ambassador of DSS. Hence he is constantly involved in various CSR and goodwill tour programs. CSR refers to ‘corporate social responsibility’ that are actions that display a company’s concern for the environment, various public interest issues etc. Modhesh first ventured into the local market in the year 2006 with his visit to the Al Wasl Hospital and bought a smile on the faces of all the children there. In the year 2008 Modhesh went regional by visiting a hospital in Oman and a special need’s center in Bahrain. This aspect of Modhesh relates back to Kapferer’s third concept of Brand Personality. Modhesh as a brand through his CSR programs portrays human characteristics of ‘kindness’, ‘friendliness’, ‘positivity’ and ‘A motivator’. Modhesh’s impeccable ability to match the ethical standards of the society and consequently fulfilling his social responsibility make the brand stand out. Not only does Modhesh cater to its target audiences, it also fulfils its duty to the environment and the society.

3. THE WALKING STAGE

From the year 2000, the year of its launch, Modhesh experienced phenomenal success. However, the origin of this character was very humbling. It was created to add charm to the children-oriented Dubai Summer Surprises and was a part of all its advertising campaigns. In many ways, Dubai Summer Surprises can be credited to have acted as an excellent launch pad for Modhesh. Since the launch of the sub-brand the number of visitors to the theme park tripled in the next three years. The average number of daily visitors to Modhesh Fun City increased from 1500 per day to a staggering 4500 per day as Modhesh moved from its birth stage to crawling stage (Al Ghanim, 2011). Over time DEPE realized the huge phenomenon that Modhesh had turned into. They suddenly found themselves to be bestowed with a hugely popular and profitable fictitious toy brand that appealed to kids and parents, hailing from a wide gamut of nations, yet remaining very faithful to its Middle Eastern roots. The brand had amassed enough fame that it was now capable to leverage its equity to DSS, the platform that had launched brand Modhesh to begin with.

Brand Leveraging: Modhesh as a one shot representation of DSS

After working on building a strong positioning for brand Modhesh and witnessing the exemplary response, DEPE decided to leverage Modhesh’s popularity for the favor of DSS; hence reversing the process that had been used to promote Modhesh so far. Modhesh became a permanent feature in almost every DSS activity executed in Dubai. Modhesh World was promoted as the hub of all the fun filled activities that took place during the span of the event and Modhesh featured prominently in most. From the years 2000 to 2006, Modhesh merchandise materials were launched in the market. However, it was only in the year 2006 that Modhesh’s use as a brand mascot was expanded and full retail line of merchandise was developed targeting both tourists and residents. A decision was made to make this merchandise available in the market all year round (as opposed to only the 2 months of the event which gave the brand a seasonal outlook). Due to the immense popularity of Modhesh, this range of merchandise proved to be extremely profitable and funds a major part of the expenditures incurred during the DSS event.

Character Licensing

During this stage of its development, Modhesh's popularity grew by leaps and bounds, giving a platform for its producers to promote it on a much higher scale through various licensing programs. In order to imprint Modhesh in the minds of the tiny tots DEPE has negotiated successful collaborations with Magic Planet, an arena that promises fun and entertainment for one and all. The values and principles attributed to the character of Modhesh during its conception have been encompassed in their promotional strategies and character licensing policies today. For example, Modhesh had a line of mini soft toys that aimed at spreading awareness towards saving endangered animals. All products have to be 'Modheshized' or have to bear the essence of the character, only then are the products approved. Modhesh's license is also made available for CSR initiatives. Today Modhesh proudly possesses over 1000 different merchandize and each and every product has been highly "Modheshized". Their growing sales figures are proof of Modhesh's ever growing success. In the year 2008 they earned revenues of AED 10 million. Today they have overdone themselves and have earned revenue of AED 25 million crossing the sales earned by the Disney products in the UAE (Al Ghanim, 2011).

4. THE RUNNING STAGE

In the years 2008-2009, a decision to promote Modhesh as a stand-alone brand, separate from DSS was taken after realizing the growth potential of brand Modhesh. For the purposes of establishing Modhesh as a separate brand, distinct from DSS, DEPE undertook a comprehensive research program to understand the children's character market in detail and to know how Modhesh was perceived amongst the competing brands. Analysis of the interviews reveals that all the respondents interviewed had heard of brand Modhesh. The brand is able to cater to the needs of both parents and children by being inspiring and providing good values while being jolly and exciting. However, there are some areas of concern too. Children interviewed during the research recognized and related to Modhesh but at the same time had a blurry perception of Modhesh as a character. They did not know what he is or what world he inhabits. This meant that in terms of becoming a brand in its own right, Modhesh was not able to develop beyond being a DSS mascot. In light of this, many changes were proposed to position Modhesh as a character with a distinct personality.

Target market changes

Initially Modhesh was targeted at children aged 2 to 12. However, during the research it was discovered that younger children, between the ages of 2 to 6 prefer more simplistic looking characters. They like their characters to have big eyes, big faces, bold bright colors and gentle and friendly expressions whereas children aged 8 to 12 liked their characters to have more complex expressions, more color gradation and more evenly proportioned. It was apparent from these descriptions that Modhesh would appeal more to ages 8 and below. Hence, the decision was taken to focus Modhesh centric activities and merchandise to children aged 4 to 8.

Neutralizing the market position of the brand

The current perception of Modhesh is slightly masculine but without alienating girls. This maybe attributed to his simple looks, usage of the color blue, adventurous attitude or even that his name is the male word for amazing in Arabic. Modhesh is benchmarked against classic gender neutral characters such as Mickey Mouse, Tom and Jerry and Scooby Doo. These characters are able to appeal to both the genders due to their balanced color palettes, balance of action, humor and cuteness and characterization which does not allow them to be recognized as either a girl or a boy. One of the easiest ways for children to get closer to Modhesh is through purchasing Modhesh merchandise. A conscious effort was made by

the licensing manager of the brand, Mr. Ghanim Al Ghanim, to ensure that all the products under the brand are liked by girls and boys equally.

Removing vagueness from the brand

Most Asian expats and westerners, during the research process, expressed their opinions on how they perceived Modhesh to be an Arabic character that they could not completely relate to. Even the name 'Modhesh' is Arabic for amazing. As a stand-alone brand Modhesh would be engaging the non-Arabic speaking population too as they form a large proportion of Modhesh's potential audience. According to Ghanim Al Ghanim (2011), 52 episodes of a Modhesh based animation series is under production and once complete will be aired in both English and Arabic to bridge such a gap. Also, there are many questions raised time and again about why Modhesh doesn't have a family or for that matter even a set of friends. It was understood from the interviews with Ghanim that Modhesh has been positioned as a toy in the character market and not as a human being. Giving it a family would seem groundless. However, DEPE is currently working on this issue.

Instilling a Sense of status

During the research it was also found that children are easily attracted to characters that give them a sense of status or allow them to match up to their peers. Many characters have succeeded using this driver. For example, 'Hello Kitty' is a popular trend at schools due to the school oriented merchandise; Barbie is a brand that gets its status from its well-developed range of dolls; Mickey Mouse is constantly seen and heard of by children in their day to day life and Buzz Light-year is a hero in the famous Toy Story trilogy. In order for Modhesh to attain such status, DEPE is working towards targeting Modhesh's PR very carefully and selecting its merchandise range with due consideration.

International plans

DEPE receives the numerous offers from international companies to obtain the license of the famous character. However, he does not collaborate with most because of very simple fact – Brand Modhesh is still in its growth stage in the UAE. In order for the brand to be successful internationally, it would first have to acquire a firm foothold in the domestic market. Only then would DEPE allow international franchises to obtain Modhesh's licenses. Apart from that the brand also has certain policies that it lives by (such as being inspiring and educative to children) and hence the license of Modhesh would not be granted to any organization that sells products that are unhealthy or immoral for children.

PROPOSED MODULAR FRAMEWORK - The CNS (CONCEIVING, NURTURING and SUSTAINING a Brand) MODEL

On the basis of the literature reviewed during the duration of drafting this paper, the need for a development model that analyzes the various stages of a sub brand was felt. After the analysis of the Modhesh case study, three important dimensions were noted and the need to propose a conception, nurturing and sustenance framework was realized. This model, referred hereafter as the CNS model (Figure 4), includes brand leveraging, brand policies and brand resource management and control adding on to the De Chernatony's model (Figure 3).

Formulating a Brand Policy

A brand policy has been denoted as a set of guidelines, policy, rules and procedures on how a brand would be represented in the market. The brand policy not only describes and supports the brand, they also

enable the brand to develop a unique positioning in the minds of the customer attracting and retaining their attention. Policies give the company a scope and direction providing them guidelines that reflect their personality and brand image. It is imperative that the policies developed are coherent with the values formulated during the conception stages of the brand. These policies also govern the company's decisions to co-brand with other products as well as various collaboration decisions (Logman, 2004). The policies generated contribute extensively during the brand evaluation stage, which is estimating if the brand has lived up to consumer expectations. In the case of Modhesh, the sub-brand was aimed to promote happiness, cheer among the kids while inspiring and educating them. It also supports various social causes through a number of CSR programs such as the need for education.

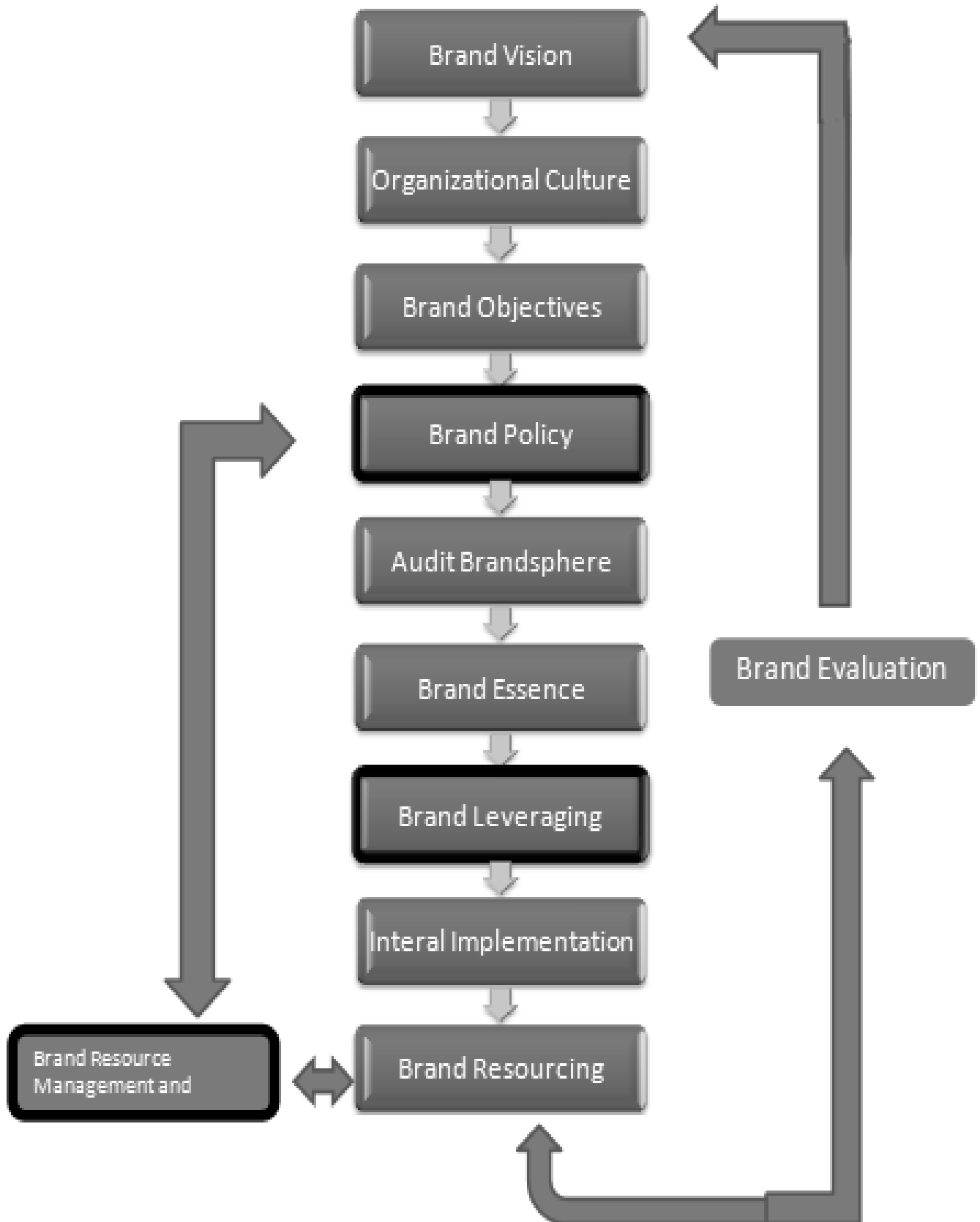
Leveraging a Brand

Another important aspect of the CNS model is leveraging of the sub-brand. After analyzing the essence of the brand, the worth of the brand in the market becomes visible to the parent organization. It is important to verify the equity of the sub brand and its position in the market. If the sub brand has not yet carved its niche in the market, the parent brand should continue working on building an identity for it i.e. creating its essence. However, if the sub brand has amassed substantial reputation in the market, it is time for the brand to be leveraged. The brand can be leveraged in many ways – it can be extended, co-branded or franchised - but at every point it should refer back to the policies of the sub and the parent brand. As mentioned in the case of Modhesh, the sub brand was first used to leverage the parent brand. This was a safe exercise as the parent brand would be the closest match in terms of brand policies and values.

Managing and controlling Brand Resource

Brand resource management is defined as the process of maintaining, improving and upholding a brand so that the name, value and its attributes are associated positively. Brand managers plan long term strategies and watch over their brand profits and ensuring brand loyalty. A brand resource and management control evaluates the growth of the brand right from its conception to its present stage. Important aspects and processes of managing a brand's resources includes analyzing revenue figures of the sub brand, monitoring its image and perception, corporate citizenship and gauging the sub-brand loyalty. Brand managers, during the products control stages, need to be in close contact with the customers ensuring that the product or service being developed satisfies all needs. However increasing competition has resulted in organizations conducting not only an internal analysis but also the competitor's brand control analysis; aiming to neutralize the difference in the offering. In case of Modhesh regular audits are conducted that enable the DEPE to assess its popularity and profitability as a brand.

Figure 4: The CNS model



IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major implications of this study rest on the insistence to monitor evolution and growth of brands. Brands have to be constantly monitored and due strategies taken, when changes in market place perceptions are noticed. Additionally, brand owners also need to scan the environment for finding out suitable opportunities and avenues to leverage their brands. The need for formulating a brand policy and continuously trying to adjust them to changes in the market conditions is another area of concern that is to be given importance by brand managers.

CONCLUSION

Successful brands are not created over night. They require a long and hard process of conception, nurturing, leveraging and sustenance. The success of Modhesh can be attributed to the efforts of the DEPE team that promoted Modhesh efficiently right from its conception to its nurture stages. This case, analyzed using the De Chenatony's model, helped to fill the void in the existing literature. Hence it proposes a new model referred to as the Conception, Nurturing and Sustenance Model (Figure 4) which includes three new elements. Despite the proposed model and the analysis of a unique UAE based brand, this paper has also discovered gaping holes in the literature related to sub-brands. Sub-brands, which as in the case of Modhesh can be tremendously successful and profitable, have been overlooked so far. This paper reveals the need for extensive research in the field of sub brands and hopes to pave way for further research.

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