

# **A STUDY OF CORPORATE BRANDING IN INDIAN SERVICE ORGANISATIONS**

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## ***Abstract***

Branding has long been associated with manufactured and physical goods. It is only in the last two decades that services sector has embarked on the branded journey. Brand development is crucial in services, given the inherent difficulty in differentiating products that lack physical differences.

The opening of the economy complemented by the increased competition in service sector has made many companies realize that a strong corporate brand is an essential part of their competitive advantage(Kell,1998, Sharp,1995) .What is very significant of Indian service brands is the extensive use of corporate branding. The paper is an attempt to explore the various aspects of corporate branding in select few Indian service organizations.

**Key Words: Corporate Branding, Services, logo, core values**

## **Introduction**

The Indian service sector has grown by leaps and bounds post liberalization. Branding & brand management and its relevance have come to the forefront in the competitive global scenario. The growth of services sector has witnessed the complementary growth of corporate branding in the Indian Services sector. In the present era when companies can no longer base their strategy on a predictable market or a stable preferential product range, the ground rules for competition change. Differentiation requires positioning, not products, but the whole corporation. Accordingly, the values and emotions symbolized by the organization become key elements of differentiation strategies, and the corporation itself moves center stage. Branding is considered to be one of the most important assets of any institution.

Corporate brand management plays a critical role in forming positive attitudes towards the institution. The foundation of corporate branding includes strategic vision, organizational culture and corporate images (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). Therefore, in conveying the corporate brand values it is important to develop a framework for consistent communication that ensures the continuity of the brand (Bickerton, 2000). Undoubtedly the development of a successful corporate brand differentiates the company and transmits an emotional appeal to the target market, although (Hatch & Schultz, 2003) suggest that corporate branding is about belonging to an organization.

The benefits of corporate branding include the ability of the company to differentiate itself (Gylling and Lindberg-Repo, 2006), a positive image from its stakeholders resulting in

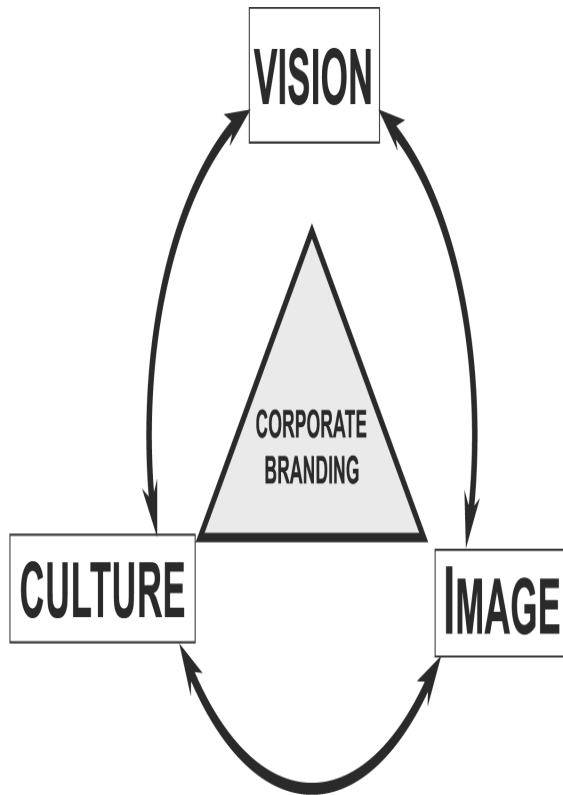
profitability or other favorable outcomes (Gylling and Lindberg-Repo, 2006), sustainable competitive advantage as per the resource based theory, and the fact that corporate brands cannot be substituted with other brands (Balmer and Gray, 2003). Other benefits include corporate credibility (Keller and Aaker 1998) where brand extensions and product innovation (or brand architecture) receive improved evaluations Balmer (2001) remarked that the corporate brand proposition should be derived from the organizational identity. He further defined the 'corporate brand mix' as consisting of '...cultural, intricate, tangible and ethereal elements' as well as commitment from staff and senior management (Balmer, 2001: 253). Hence, the concept of the corporate brand embodies the notion of communicating the values of the

organization to a network of stakeholders, both internal and external to the organization, through corporate rather than just marketing communication vehicles.

### **Strategic vision and Organizational culture**

Collins and Porras (1994) defined vision as what the organization aspires to be in the future. However, the research conducted by these authors demonstrated that successful companies build their visions from redefinitions and reinventions of core values rather than revolutionary shifts from one value set to another. This suggests that although vision can stretch the company toward new goals and levels of achievement, it must also connect authentically with the heritage of the company. Successful corporate branding rests on a foundation of inter play between strategic vision,

organizational culture and corporate image



Source: Hatch, M.J. and Schultz, M  
**Corporate Culture**

There is a universal view that culture represents core values and beliefs within an organization, defining the core organizational values encourages and endorses preferred forms of staff behavior that will allow them to become 'brand builders' Similarly, Hatch & Scultz (2003) define culture as:-the

internal values and beliefs and basic assumptions that embody the heritage of the company and communicate its meanings to its member.

### **Corporate Image**

Ind (1997) emphasizes the uncontrollable nature of the company/stakeholder relationship and states that the aim for any organization is to exert as much credible influence over the relationship as possible, so that the corporate image is clear and consistent, appropriate to the company, supported by corporate culture and relevant to the corporate strategy. Similar to many concepts surrounding the corporate brand construct.

The objectives of the study are

- 1) To study how services are being Branded
- 2) To study the various aspects of Corporate Branding

- 3) To study the core values of Service Brands

- 4) To study the challenges

in Branding of Services.

### **Methodology**

Three corporate brands have been selected for the study from the top fifty service brands of Brand Equity's, "The Most Trusted Brands Survey 2010", from sectors such as telecom, aviation & information technology since the pace of change in these sectors has been great and Qualitative content analysis has been used for the study

### **Branding at Select Service**

#### **Organizations**

Branding is particularly important to service firms as a way to address intangibility and variability problems. Brand symbols may also be especially important because they help to make the abstract nature of services more concrete. Brands can help to identify and provide meaning to the different services

provided by a firm. Branding a service can also be an effective way to signal to consumers that the firm has designed a particular service offering that is special and deserving of its name. With the growth of service sector plethora of new issues are surfacing in the brand management of service brands. Branding has clearly become a competitive weapon for services.

Indian service industry has entered the branding era where intangibles services are being differentiated and being branded.

### **Bharti Airtel Limited**

Bharti Airtel Limited is a leading global telecommunications company with operations in 19 countries across Asia and Africa. The company offers mobile voice & data services, fixed line, high speed broadband, IPTV, DTH, turnkey telecom solutions for enterprises national & international long distance

services to carriers. Today, Airtel is a monolithic brand name across all markets it is the largest cellular service provider in India and fifth largest in the world

### **Branding at Bharti Airtel**

The company offers its telecom services under the brand **Airtel** which has become the corporate brand for all its telecom services across 19 countries. After the re-branding exercise it is now repositioned as single, powerful and unified face to its customers, stakeholders and partners around the world. It reinforces their promise to deliver innovative services and a superior brand experience across Asia and Africa.

**Airtel Logo:** last year Airtel changed its logo where 'airtel' was written in lower case.

**Vision:** The Company's vision is to be the most loved brand, enriching the lives

of millions by 2015. According to the company's vision "Enriching lives means putting the customer at the heart of everything we do. We will meet their needs based on our deep understanding of their ambitions, wherever they are. By having this focus we will enrich our own lives and those of our other key stakeholders. Only then will we be thought of as exciting, innovative, on their side and a truly world class company".

### **Brand Philosophy**

Earlier the brand philosophy focused on celebrating the idea of people and relationships. Then it had a thematic campaign on "Together Good Things Happen". The concept then acknowledged each individual as an accumulation of people, relationships and experiences. The face of the brand airtel today is youthful, international, inclusive and dynamic – representing the

journey of the first Indian brand to go truly global. The red color, which is an integral part of the brand, continues to represent the energy and dynamism. The signature tune of Airtel is composed by Indian musician A.R Rahman. The tune became hugely popular and is the world's most downloaded mobile music with over 150 million downloads.

### **Wipro IT Business**

Wipro IT Business, a division of Wipro Limited, is amongst the largest global IT services, BPO and Product Engineering companies. Wipro was formed as a vegetable oil refining company in 1947 the dramatic change in the company's industry dynamics could only have been predicted considering the fact that it was always reinventing itself. Today after three decades in the IT industry, backed with unmatched technical expertise and insights, it has maintained the highest levels of compliance and quality that go

with the changing times and technologies.

A long history celebrates Wipro's journey as one of the most trusted global brands. This trust extends to a series of products, services and solutions that cover diverse businesses - from consumer care to cutting-edge information technology innovations.

### **Branding at Wipro**

The name 'Wipro', derived from Western India Products. In the 1990s Wipro built a reputation across domains for a series of products and services including consumer care (Wipro Shikakai, Wipro Baby Soft), branded hydraulic cylinders, products (Wipro branded PCs, laptops, peripherals), and IT (Wipro Technologies and Wipro Infotech), while forging strategic partnerships globally. Wipro's identity was rearticulated in 1998. The new

identity represents the diverse businesses of Wipro Limited and its Values. It consists of three elements which have to be used together always. Rainbow Flower, 'Wipro' (written in black) 'Applying Thought' (written in black). These three elements together form the Brand Identity. It enjoys the trust of its customers & other stakeholders, who believe that Wipro stands for quality, reliability & superior value.

**Vision:** Having already achieved the pinnacles of process and quality credentials (through ISO 9000, SEI CMM, PCMM and Six Sigma), Wipro's Vision is focused on attaining leadership in the areas of business, customer and people Wipro to be among the 5 most admired brand in India.

**Logo**

**Rainbow Flower:** Symbolizes the energy of there diversity, the dynamism of

Team Wipro and the Yin-Yang balance they strive for. It connotes Youthful & Energetic, Multifaceted, Innovative & Vibrant “applying thought” to uphold the Wipro values in our quest to deliver Innovation, Quality and Superior Value to all its stakeholders. It Connotes Powerful, Intellectual, Futuristic, Maturity & Commitment to Innovations i.e thinking for the Customer, Application of Thinking& Continuous Application.

**IndiGo:** Indigo Airlines was established in 2006 as a venture of InterGlobe technology group based out in Gurgaon, is a private, low-cost airline has established itself as one of India's leading airlines using its model of efficient, low-cost operations and by attracting customers with low fares. IndiGo has the second largest share in India's domestic air travel market and presently it is the only airline in India making profit.



**Branding at IndiGo:** couched within the name is a play on 'India' and 'Go' -- smart shorthand for a nation where, according to data on domestic air travel grew 19 percent in 2010 to 52.02 million passengers on the go. Indigo emphasized three factors on-time performance, a hassle-free experience while booking and constant low fares without gimmicks. However, the brand, showcased all the elements that go behind Indigo's timely performance, from its engineers, pilots, even chefs and ground staff, everything comes together in a synchronized way to deliver the 'clockwork' situation IndiGo is a very quality conscious airline and passenger safety is paramount to the company's mission and value.

## **Conclusions**

Indian service industry has entered the branding era where intangibles services are being differentiated and being branded as a way to address intangibility and variability problems. The process of corporate brand building has assumed a greater strategic significance in the 21st

century marketplace, across the happening sectors of Indian .Characterized by the proliferation of Corporate Branded services offerings as in case of Telecom, IT or Aviation Brand symbols are especially important because they help to make the abstract nature of services more concrete. Brands can help to identify and provide meaning to the different services provided by a firm.

The corporate brands have a strategic vision which is the guiding factor in corporate branding which influences the way the organizations and its services are branded These Indian corporates can be labeled as the Indian MNC's that have made it big in the global arena, there by entering "Global Player" league. Logos have helped the corporate Brands in creating and maintaining the corporate brand.

### Corporate Branding Elements of Indian Service Brands

Sl No	Name of the Company	Area of Business	Corporate Brand	Vision	Image	Culture	Core Values	Logo
1	Bharti Airtel	Telecom	Airtel	To be, loved brand& enriching lives	Youthful, Dynamic	Indian	innovative services	
2	IndiGo Airlines	Aviation	IndiGO Airlines		Low cost carrier	On-time Airline	Safety, No-frills Teamwork Relationship	
3	Wipro IT Business	Information Technologies	Wipro	To be among the Top 10 Global IT & Business Process Outsourcing Services	Innovative	Innovation & Integrity	Intensity to Win, Act with sensitivity, & Unyielding Integrity	

Source: compiled by the author

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Web Resources

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[www.airtel.in](http://www.airtel.in)

[www.wiprocorporate.com/Brand](http://www.wiprocorporate.com/Brand)

[www.goindigo.in](http://www.goindigo.in).