

# DON ABEYESEKERA

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## 15 years FMCG experience. Specialise in Brand Marketing, Commercial Strategy and Strategic Project Delivery

I'm a naturally curious individual. A curiosity that has led me to join a FTSE top 10 MNC which has taken my professional journey over 5 geographies in 15 years. This includes UK, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Russia, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. This in hindsight isn't an easy task, as every move would determine the need to learn, unlearn and relearn; from new cultural norms to circles of influence. But one thing remains constant, my passion to build great brands and deliver exponential business growth driven by innovation. I believe my success to be attributed to three key elements. My curiosity to learn, unlearn and continuously relearn. My supportive family who is there by my side. Being a father of two amazing children, the lessons learnt which are transferable to leading my people towards greater heights. My resilience and attitude towards excellence in execution. *Ivenium viam aut faciam* - I shall find a way or make one.

## KEY EXPERIENCES

### 2019 TO PRESENT

#### GLOBAL MARKETING DIRECTOR | CATEGORY LEAD MODERN ORAL BAT, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM



Global FMCG company with operations over 180 markets with a market capitalisation of GBP 58 Bn, Net Revenue of GBP 26Bn and FTSE top 10. Aligned to BAT's building A Better Tomorrow agenda, the Modern Oral category was introduced in 2019 accentuating the reduced health impact portfolio of the business.

- Leading P&L delivery through development of marketing strategies and deployment of VELO in 23 markets geographically resulting in 62% volume growth and 57% revenue growth within the financial year ending March 2021
- In Europe establishing clear market leadership with 71% volume share of Modern Oral in the key markets and revenue growth of 59% - five times larger than in 2018
- Consolidating Modern Oral category leadership in Scandinavia and growing share of total oral market
- Drove a growth through innovation agenda for the portfolio, whilst ensuring corporate governance and ESG requirements as a FTSE10
- Build a holistic market research approach to ensure consumer resonance of marketing mix globally, supporting the brand consolidation to one global brand migrating from LYFT, EPOK to VELO
- Directed strategic support to Management Board, providing detailed analysis for new business opportunities, resulting in the M&A of DRYFT brand in USA amongst other strategic initiatives
- Implementing a digital consumer marketing model, strengthened with social media combining global brand partnerships such as McLaren and Tomorrowland driving global awareness for VELO
- Continuous engagement with senior stakeholders (e.g. end market CEOs, regulators) to drive end market strategy for the category through a participative approach

### 2016 – 2018

#### SENIOR BRAND PORTFOLIO MANAGER (GLOBAL TRAVEL RETAIL) BAT, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM



- Drive P&L delivery of the brand group to over GBP 100Mn profitability, a 12% growth in revenue through innovative mix combinations across the global brand portfolio including Kent, Lucky Strike, Pall Mall, Prince, Parisienne and Other Tobacco Products

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- Combining travel retail specific consumer insights to leverage marketing mix deployment, especially carving out the opportunity of the Chinese Traveller globally. This also resulted in seasonal travel retail editions being deployed yielding higher gross margins and creating a brand halo effect across the premium portfolio
- Upgrading branded trade furniture across 55 key locations in line with global Shopper Marketing principles, ensuring a clutter breaking environment coined 'Flight of Light' ensuring consumer resonance to brand activations which were further accentuated by technology such as NFC and Augmented Reality
- Deployed Brand Code upgrades to Marketing Mix across 55 geographies in a span of 12 months resulting in positive commercial results. Key achievement was to launch simultaneously across these geographies for the first time in BAT GTR history, which was not possible earlier due to the various challenges existing within the travel retail environment
- Managing global marketing with 28 different nationalities across geographically dispersed locations in driving the P&L results of the business

**2014 – 2015**

## **HEAD, CORPORATE STRATEGY AND ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME PLANNING**



### **BAT, HONG KONG**

- Driving BAT's Asia Pacific strategic business priorities into actionable, structured plans, resulting in positive P&L impact. Double digit growth in NTO and Volume reported during this period.
- Driving organisational restructuring to ensure agility and speed to market
- Driving the planning and insights process resulting in a rhythm of strategic marketing planning across geographies

**2013 - 2014**

## **HEAD, SHOPPER MARKETING, SOUTH ASIA AREA**



### **BAT, PAKISTAN**

- Turning around commercial results delivery of the entity in a highly competitive business context resulting in record sales volume. Awarded BAT's Tier 3 award in 2014 (highest form of recognition awarded by BAT)
- Leading direct and indirect staff of 1250 employees in geographically dispersed locations whilst ensuring a motivated and performance driven team culture
- Combining Shopper insights with actionable mix deployment, resulting in increased market share and revenue to business
- Setup up 121 consumer engagement platforms to suit the rough terrain of Pakistan to delivery key messages and brand experiences, using technology such as NFC and Augmented Reality
- Restructuring the field operations with minimal dissonance to business resulting in over GBP 100 million annualised savings

**2010 - 2012**

## **HEAD OF BRANDS**



### **BAT SRI LANKA AND MALDIVES**

- Lead the Brand Marketing function of the largest FMCG company in Sri Lanka, delivering record volume and revenue growth to the business.
- Lead the transformation of the **brand portfolio valued at over GBP 1Bn** in Sri Lanka resulting in increased delivery of value to business through growth in premium segment through the product innovation launch. Awarded the Chairman's Award in recognition of the performance.
- Designed, developed, and deployed the brand portfolio strategy over a 5year horizon supported by a new product innovation strategy. This resulted in the launch of DUNHILL Switch, resulting in double digit growth and global launch benchmark status

## **OTHER KEY ROLES**

**INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGER | BAT RUSSIA**

**REGIONAL SALES AND TRADE MARKETING MANAGER | BAT SRI LANKA**



## **AWARDS**

- BAT High Potential status - presented by BAT Global Headquarters
- Award for Corporate Leaders - presented by the Japanese government
- BAT Tier 3 Award - highest recognition to be awarded for business turn around in Pakistan
- CIMA Business Leaders award - presented for outstanding professionalism and service to society
- BAT Chairman's award - presented for the best brand launch in the history of BAT Sri Lanka of 100 years

## **ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

- MBA, Cambridge University, Downing College, United Kingdom
- Master's in International Marketing - University of Leicester, United Kingdom
- First class in BSc (Hons) - University of Manchester MU, United Kingdom (Gold medal and top of class)
- Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, United Kingdom
- Chartered Marketer of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, United Kingdom

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