

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Management



Diploma Thesis

Brand Activation as a tool of Public Relations

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DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

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Business Administration

Thesis title

Brand Activation as a tool of Public Relations

Objectives of thesis

The diploma thesis aims to analyze relevant secondary data on Brand Activation and Public Relations. This analyze will be combined with original primary reconnaissance aiming to suggest Brand Activation practical steps within Public Relations to concrete company.

Methodology

“Literature Review” part will be elaborated based on relevant secondary data analysis and synthesis.

“Analysis” part will result from relevant secondary data and original primary reconnaissance combination.

Recommended structure:

1. Introduction
2. Goals and Methodology
3. Literature Review
4. Analysis
5. Results and Discussion
6. Conclusions
7. References
8. Appendices

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- AAKER, D A. – JUNGSMANN, V. *Brand building : budování obchodní značky : vytvoření silné značky a její úspěšné zavedení na trh*. Brno: Computer Press, 2003. ISBN 80-7226-885-6.
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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my diploma thesis titled "Brand Activation as a tool of Public Relations" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the diploma thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break copyrights of any their person.

In Prague on 30th November 2017

Shreetama Bhuban Mohan Dey

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Aktivace značky jako nástroj public relations

Souhrn

Tato studie je prováděna za účelem zhodnocení nástroje aktivizace značky při průzkumu s veřejnými vztahy. Tato studie analyzuje a posuzuje různé strategie a techniky, aby se aktivizace značky stala efektivním nástrojem pro styk s veřejností. Na základě analýzy převládajících praxí studie doporučuje, aby aktivace značky byla úspěšným nástrojem v oblasti vztahů s veřejností.

K určení účinnosti aktivace značky byla v této studii použita analýza dat, která zahrnuje dvě témata s interními srovnávacími údaji a jejich zdroji z diskusí, trendů a efektivnosti užitečných zdrojů. Tato studie použila strukturovaný dotazník zaměřený na požadovaný počet lidí z firem pro vztahy s veřejností. Bylo zjištěno, že efektivní strategie firem mohou omezit nepořádek na vzduchu, který může klást větší důraz na informace tím, že přiměje zúčastněné strany k vytvoření pozitivního obrazu firem. Organizace nyní uvítají inovace v aktivizaci značky ve prospěch podniků v oblasti vztahů s veřejností, kde mohou být značky omlazovány a získávají základnu pro stabilní dlouhodobé vztahy. Aktivace značky je také spojena s marketingem události, známým jako vybudování vztahů a řízení, který je základem pro vztahy s veřejností, a je účinným nástrojem pro vztahy s veřejností.

Studie doporučuje, aby srdce aktivace bylo spotřebitelskou zkušeností se značkou. Aktivace značky je klíčem k tomu, protože zákazník chtěl cítit, dotýkat nebo zažít značku nebo službu, než investuje svůj čas a peníze. Manažeři značky by měli zajistit, aby pozitivní zkušenosti ovlivnily jejich postoje k značce, jejich budoucímu chování značky a způsobu, jakým ostatní mluví o značce. Morálka je: Aktivace značky je marketingový proces přinášení značky k životu prostřednictvím vytváření zkušeností značky.

Klíčová slova: Aktivace Značek, Značky, Vztahy s veřejností, Marketingový, Reklamní, Média, Polohování, Průzkum trhu, Sdělení, Experimentální marketingový.

Brand Activation as a tool of Public Relations

Summary

This study is conducted to evaluate the tool of brand activation in reconnaissance with public relations. This study analyses and assess different strategies and techniques to make the brand activation an effective tool for public relations. Based on an analysis of prevailing practices the study recommends Brand Activation proved to be a successful tool of Public Relations.

To determine the effectiveness of brand activation, this study has used data analysis comprising of two topics with internal comparisons of the data and its resources from the discussions, trends and efficiencies of the useful sources. This study has used structured questionnaire surveying required number of people from Public Relations corporations. It was found out that effective strategies of corporates can cut the clutter on air which can put greater emphasis on the information by moving the stakeholders towards forming a positive image of the corporations. The organizations are now welcoming the innovations in the brand activation for the benefit of the corporations into the public relations where brands can be rejuvenated and gets its base to stable long-term relations. Brand activation is also linked with Experiential marketing, better known as Relationship Building and management, which forms the crux of Public relations and has been found to be effective as a tool of Public Relations.

The study recommends that the heart of Activation is a consumer experience with a brand. Brand Activation is the key to do so, because customer like to feel, touch or experience a brand or service before investing their time and money. Brand Managers should ensure that positive experience will influence their attitudes towards a brand, their future brand behaviour and the way they talk to others about the brand. Morale is: Brand Activation is the marketing process of bringing a brand to life through creating brand experience.

Keywords: Brand Activation, Brands, Public Relations, Marketing, Advertising, Media, Positioning, Market Research, Sales, Communication, Return on investment, Experiential marketing.

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1 Introduction

Brand activation is a relatively new term. It is strategic, it is creative, it is vital to your brand and central to value creation. It is the process of bringing the brands alive, thus meaning building a personal relationship with its various stakeholders. It would involve interacting with the target audience and bringing the brand close to them so that they can feel the physical presence of it as well as experience it. It has originated from the concept called Experiential marketing, better known as Relationship Building and management, which forms the crux of Public relations. It is the art of creating an experience where the result is an emotional connection to a person, brand, product or idea. For decades activity such as field marketing, customer service, special events, product promotions, PR stunts and the like have engaged consumers and the public emotionally. However, what has happened recently is the specialization of taking the fundamental concept of creating connection through a designed emotive experience. (Bhuvanesh Babu, 2009)

Appealing to a variety of senses, Public Relations seeks to tap into that special place within consumers that has to do with inspiring thoughts about comfort and pleasure, as well as inspiring a sense of practicality. This means that the marketer needs to have a firm grasp on the mindset of the target audience, or the stakeholders it intends to communicate the message to. By understanding what the stakeholder is likely to think and feel, it is possible to get an idea of how to steer his/her in a direction that will relate with the product, and entice individuals to act on that impulse to encourage desired action with respect to the communication objective.

Public Relations is about making and exemplifying commitments and brand activation about delivering on those promises. The battle of brands happens in the “D-Zone” (Decision-Zone), which we define as any place where brand selection can be activated.

Brand activation requires a platform for creative focus and strategic consistency. In developing such a robust brand activation platform, which is the brand guardian, bringing in an intense process the brand and trade marketing teams together.

This holistic approach is bridging the gap between traditional ATL and recently coined term BTL as the new media, connecting brands through customers with consumers aligned with brand and overall business strategy. It's brand building that fully utilizes the synergistic power of through-the-line communications from the inside out – a process that hinges on full alignment of brand and trade marketing strategies.

The days of tactical one-offs, in terms of a positive image story done offhand, are gone. Or at least they should be. When we are caring for the health of a brand, every engagement makes either a deposit in or withdrawal from its value. We need to apply the same level of strategic thinking to our local activation plans as we do in general market planning, but with a bit of a twist. We need to focus on people's typical days, and how we can build programs that will influence actions.

We need to take the time to understand brand relationships. There are three dynamics to consider:

- The brand and the stakeholder
- The brand and the medium
- The medium and its stakeholder

These relationships will vary by circumstances, nature of company, regulatory standards used by industry, communication occasion, channel, consumer and culture. Understanding how consumers interact with brands and then influencing them along the path to interact is how we turn various audiences into advocates and advocates into ambassadors.

Having the right media planners and publicity experts — people who understand consumer journeys, touch-points and media-neutral engagement — can make all the difference determining the impact of one's work. Regardless of the media mix used, the message receiver is more barraged with messages than ever before, more empowered and more fickle. Our retail and trade customer have more control today, and we can count on him holding more of the cards over time. The brand he cares about most is his own. This is happening everywhere.

Brand marketers must find new ways to connect, to interrupt and to engage. Few things can replace a physical connection, and this is fundamentally why activation and experiential programs are becoming so much more critical in brand marketing today. Not long ago, marketing folks celebrated “integration” as the ultimate goal. If we could take a TV idea and replicate it out-of-home or in-store, that was a home run. Not anymore. Replication is redundancy. The corporate audiences need and deserve more if we expect to hold their attention. And this thinking applies around the world.

It rarely makes sense to send the same exact program to every market and expect it to work. It's not enough simply to ship translated adaptations. Instead, we should look for ways to magnify the idea so it's particularly relevant at a local level. When we do this right, we get the consumer to engage and the trade to advocate for our brand.

Here is an example that demonstrates the power of magnifying a big idea.

We are all familiar with Dove's award-winning *Real Beauty Campaign* and how it captivated millions with a simple brilliant film taken digitally around the world. It empowers women everywhere to appreciate who they are and their natural beauty.

The Dove campaign was supported with television, outdoor, print, etc. But certain markets magnified the idea locally in ways that made big impressions, had great local relevance and drove business further. In Tokyo, hundreds of Japanese women gathered near a rail station, all wearing blond wigs. Then, all at once, they tossed their wigs into the air to celebrate their own unique beauty. That's a magnified idea that made a big impression. That's an activation concept that can travel. It has to drive local business. The work has to be smart, the idea has to be magnified and the cash register has to ring.

At its core, a project takes a strong brand activation strategy and brings it to life throughout the organization. To accomplish this, a brand activation initiative assesses the alignment between the company's behavior, its communications, and the brand platform, and then creates programs across levels and functions to improve the delivery on that platform's promise. It is a formalized effort with a programmatic approach. It's dynamic and ongoing. It requires executive buy in, and in many ways, impacts the overall culture of the company

when done well. Aligning behaviors throughout the customer experience requires leading a cross functional effort and changing organizational behaviors, which are demanding tasks in even the most agile and customer-focused of organizations.

While activating the brand is indeed challenging, doing so will reap many rewards if executed well. Internally, it helps employees with decision-making and often creates a sense of pride and camaraderie. Externally, it will engage audiences and engender loyalty. Brand activation is not some fuzzy concept with soft measurement; ultimately, brand activation means running the business more effectively and profitably. Over time well-aligned brands outperform those that are misaligned or rely on communications.

The airline industry is a great example. Southwest and JetBlue are well aligned brands, albeit with different positioning. Everything from the marketing communications to the online booking, to the customer service and in-flight experience on both airlines are well aligned. Contrast that experience with the other major US carriers, where so often premium pricing and premium messaging is misaligned, or at best inconsistent, across the customer experience. For JetBlue and Southwest, the business benefits from brand alignment accrue in terms of superior customer satisfaction, lower operating costs per passenger, and their ability to be more efficient with their sales and marketing dollars. Other frequently cited examples of well aligned brands which have led to business success include Starbucks, Lexus and Apple. We would add to the list smaller brands like beauty brands like Burt's Bees and Trader Joe's. All of these brands are well aligned to their brand promises and have reaped business results based on a compelling and consistent consumer experience. (CMG, n.d.)

2 Aim of the Thesis / Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The diploma thesis aims to analyze relevant secondary data on Brand Activation and Public Relations. This analyze will be combined with original primary reconnaissance aiming to suggest Brand Activation within Public Relations.

The objective of this research study is to address 3 main objectives:

- Study, Analyze and Assess the potential of both Public Relation and Brand Activation
- Relation between Public Relation and Brand Activation
- Whether Brand Activation is can be considered as an effective tool for Public Relations.
- Finding various methods to implement a process for Brand Activation

Research and analysis will be done with secondary and primary research methods.

2.2 Methodology

“Literature Review” part will be elaborated based on relevant secondary data analysis and synthesis and will be used for the making of theoretical part.

Secondary data, published books and articles and results from:

- Internet searches,
- Observations,
- General discussions,
- Journals,
- Books and publications,
- Articles

Primary analytical research methods will be used to writing the thesis. Primary data will be collected through:

- Questionnaires.

The “Analysis” part which consists of two sections will result from relevant secondary data and original primary reconnaissance combination. Two main topics: Brand Activation and Public Relations have been explained and evaluated. The review is based on information gained from study and comparison of relevant resources.

The first section of this study comprises of the theoretical part which was done to evaluate brand activation, public relations, opportunities, expectations, trends, industry, effectiveness, efficiency, etc.

The second section of this study comprise of the practical part and its evaluation such as case studies, research using primary research tool and finding the most effective medium for brand activation. Questionnaire is used as a tool for the methodology of the practical part to collect and analyse the primary data.

3 Literature Review/ Theory Part

3.1 About Brand Activation

“When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully” - Dr. Samuel Johnson

This quote although sounds extremely ominous but nothing sums up better the role of brand activation as a PR tool in today’s downturn than this opening line-though used in a different context in the book *Commonsense Direct & Digital Marketing- by Drayton Bird*. (Bird, 2007)

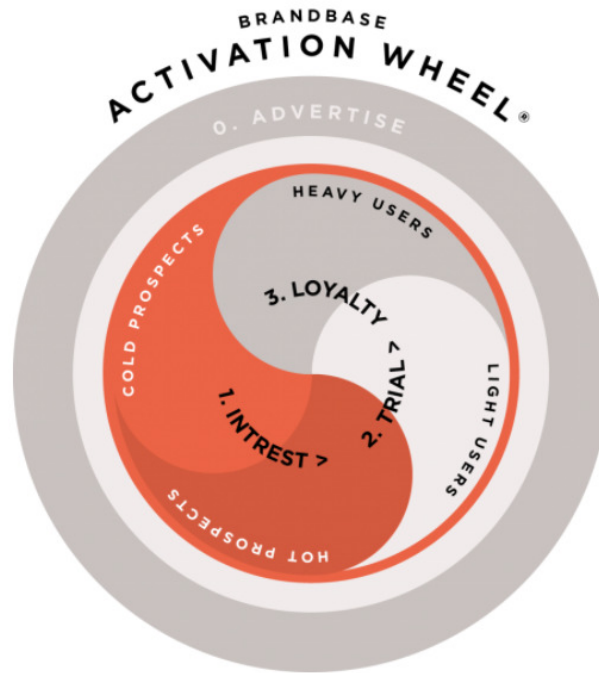
Imagine a man has earned his annual bonus and decides to go on a fishing trip. He buys the best fishing rod and bait, packs his folding chair and spends the entire day sipping beer by a lovely stream and at the end of the day is happy with the catch. Now think of the same person to catch fish for his daily bread. He looks for the most effective hook and bait which will get him the best value in the market. He will go to a place where there would be maximum fish (not necessarily scenic) and will use the bait carefully to ensure there is least wastage. He will also ensure that no valuable fish slips out of the net inadvertently.

Public Relations, as we know, is all about softly waging a war against competitive forces to win market share. For this purpose, marketers create warriors which win the perceptual battle for them, and these warriors are called brands. Brands have proved their worth by earning premiums, decimating competitions and even beating time factors (as many brands are still leader as they were a century ago). Owing to this, marketers have stepped up their efforts to build their brands. They are building their marketing programs around their brands. (Seo, 2009)

Today, marketplace is replete with competition. Opening up of the economy has led to the entry of foreign brands into the marketplace. These brands are also adding to the chorus. Public Relations has always been seen as one of the main weapons to build brands by the brand managers. Excessive reliance on this form of communication has resulted in “over communication”. Clutter has been increasing gradually and the future shows no sign of

relief. Not only has this, advertising also lost its credibility if we compare it to what it used to be decade back. Reasons are many: More knowledgeable customer, comparative advertising, internet etc. Therefore, marketers are exploring new ways of supporting their brand. (Seo, 2009)

Figure 3.1 Brand-base Activation Wheel



Source: (Alberts, n.d.)

Brand activation can be defined as a live communication process of bringing a brand to life through creating brand experience. Brand Activation is the seamless integration of all available communication means in a creative platform in order to activate consumers. Activation means stimulating:

- a. Interest
- b. Trust
- c. Loyalty

The focus of the framework for successful Brand activation should be stimulation.

Getting the “attention” (interest) of our target is the first thing that’s needed to be done for an effective activation. That would help generate cold leads, through new communication

means, adding to the noise and communication clutter. An additional step need to be added to the stimulation process and that is to “engage” the customer to generate hot leads. According to a study conducted by Microsoft Canada, the average attention span of an average human being is 8 secs, which is even lower than a gold fish of 9 secs. So, in this era of digital intelligent it has become even more important to keep our customer engaged and this can be done through activation using visibility. The next step is to give trials such as free samples, for businesses selling products which appeal to the human senses such as perfumes, chocolates, cosmetics and toiletries, etc., giving out samples have proven to drive sales.

According to a study conducted by Knowledge Networks PDI named R.I.S.E. (Report on in-store sampling effectiveness), whether it’s a new product to be launched or new addition to an existing product line or an already established product line of a brand, across multiple categories in-store sampling saw an average 475% increase in sales on the day of the sampling compared to non-sampled brands. For new products, sampling saw 85% growth in first-time buyers of the product, and, perhaps most importantly, a 23% increase in sales over a 20-week period. For an already well-established product line, sales were boosted 177% for the day of sampling, and 57% after a 20-week period. While samples for a new addition to an existing product line saw sales jump an incredible 919% the day of sampling and rise 109% over a 20-week period. (Garrant, 2014)

The next is Loyalty in the brand activation wheel which keeps the heavy user always flowing in. Performance or guaranteed delivery of quality & service beyond your average customer’s expectations leads to the tendency of consumers to continuously purchase one brand’s products over another. It can be something as little as giving away free coupons or could be granting an unexpected experience. The loyalty and faith of the customer in your brand remains intact and can create brand advocates.

3.1.1 The Opportunity

Power to the People - This is the best way to describe the turnaround in marketing communication during the last 40 years. People have more choice than ever. They can get the products anywhere and can compare products and services down to the minute details.

This requires a more intelligent manner of communication by companies. Simply advertising can be used to defend a market position in many cases, however, this creates no leeway for growth. And that is the aim after all.

The successful marketer then must leave the safe haven of advertising and start activating. The means are available, the cases are there, the opportunities are there, and the chances are there. And the good news is: more than 80% of the marketers is rigid and resistant to change, therefore there are plenty of opportunities to beat the competitors.

Next question now is what to activate?

Generally, the core features or brand values of a brand are used for activation. That's what every brand manager strives to achieve i.e. communicating their brand values to their target customers. But a word of caution here: select only one or two features or brand values to activate. Don't try to communicate each and every detail of your brand. One has to appreciate the fact that branding is based on the concept of singularity. This concept assumes a greater significance in case of services which are intangible in nature.

Since branding in most cases is driven from a communication perspective, branding and competence about branding is still owned and guarded by marketing directors and advertising agencies. Today a person meets in general 30 000 messages per day, of which 3000 are branded in some way. Brand strategies have evolved into complex theories predominantly driven by the communication environment. create accessibility (when services are accessible 24/7). Marketers have been eager and successful in developing and exploring the brand as an asset for communication during the 80's and 90's. Other organizational competencies have much to learn from marketers when it comes to adapting and exploring the brand for their specific purposes. (Tinderbox, 2017)

3.1.2 The Expectations

Activation shifts the focus to the core of marketing: stimulating the buying process. There are various reasons why this focus is so important and why advertisers opt for Brand activation instead of the traditional campaigns. Brand activation addresses the key issues in marketing.

Information selection

People filter the communication means they are confronted with. They simply ignore the majority of it.

Relevance

Informing becomes communicating as soon as the message is relevant to the recipient. Because the complete irrelevance of many advertisements, the Dutch people claim that they are more annoyed about advertising than pointless violence.

Experiences

Experiences are convincing. Also, the experiences of others. Active reference on account of a positive experience with the brand is the most powerful instrument to activate people. (Alberts, n.d.)

Other critical benefits of employing Brand Activation are:

- You can convey your positioning using brand activation.
- It supports your ad claim if used carefully.
- Distortion is minimum in this case.
- It increases your brand salience.
- Helps in revitalizing a brand. McDonald's is doing it through its campaign which is trying to change its image to an exciting brand among children "*Healthier Happy Meals for children*". Their Junior kids club, Happy Meals, McDonald's Storytelling Contest is the perfect example of brand activation.
- Brand activation can elicit customer insights as people interact with the brand.

Before embarking on a brand activation initiative, it is very important to ensure the following key elements are in place:

- A well-articulated brand platform
- Research-based insights into experiential aspects of the brand
- Top executive buy-in on the need and related benefits of activating the brand

Before step of bringing the brand alive, there are two key aspects to be kept in mind. These would enable the PR manager to implement the strategy to be formulated in the most effective manner in terms of performance, cost, and result measurement. These being:

1) Deeper understanding of the receiver

Implementing a brand activation approach means a two-way interaction with the audience and not just not a dreary one-way communication. The recording, tracking and analysis of these interactions over a period of time can provide powerful insights into the customers mind. These insights can then be used to build new campaigns and hooks or to optimize the current campaign and hooks or to optimize the current campaign, for instance, by looking at the past transaction data of a large IT company, one is identified the next most likely purchase for each of its customers or a large apparel company arrives at the optimum discount offer for maximizing realization during the off-season sale period.

2) Focused Approach

Activation ensures that a company focuses on audience that bring true value to its bottom line, for instance, a large petroleum company decided to focus its marketing effort on only on 50% of the retailers since they formed over 95% of the market potential and through a transnational mobile handset, the company managed to increase its counter share by 5% through a focused relationship program for its key channel partners. Similarly, a pizza chain was able to target 60% of its loss delivery business by reaching out to just top 100 customers in each store.

3.2 Global trends in Brand Activation

While corporations have traditionally turned to BTL activities and activation to increase brand awareness, there has been a sharpening focus on the role of activation in educating both internal and external audience and the delivery of measurable results.

In an era where products and services are pouring into the marketplace more rapidly, and media space is expanding with diminishing loyalty and ever-increasing clutter, all the stakeholders need an unprecedented level of knowledge to sort out the confusing array of offerings that compete for their attention.

The hailstorm of new software, hardware, networks and peripherals that pelt the marketplace make educating stakeholders a business and a social responsibility and necessity. New products, new regulations and newly available communication channels have generated new requirements for education of public and training of the employees.

This need for better understanding and more information has reinforced the value that corporations place on brand activation. Increasing media fragmentation combined with the need for consumer education to sort through the myriad of product options seems to be driving the increased interest in brand activation.

3.3 Industry in India

Brand Activation is not merely about events. “It is in fact a battle for the space in the audience’s mind and heart.” says Raj Jain, Managing Director of consumer durables major Whirlpool (India). Along with the rising competition- transparency, credibility and bonafide visibility has become tremendously difficult and vied for, this fact is being recognized by the Indian companies very fast.

Another very important aspect is the region specific and urban spurt of media, along with a major population of the country although being potent customers, are either illiterate or media-deprived. Due to this, reaching out and convincing them that the company wishes their well-being and at the same time, educate them about a better living in some or the other way involving their offering. As the famous Brand Gurus, Pradeep Kashyap and Siddhartha Raut mentioned in their book “*The Rural Marketing Book*” “*Jo dikhta hai wo bikta hai*”, which means “What is seen is sold” with a stress on access, awareness, availability and affordability, which is something very applicable in case of Brand Activation. It gives the company an opportunity to interact with its direct audience, encourage trial, reward them with an informative and entertaining experience, receive valuable feedback and create a sense of belonging of the consumer with the product/service.

According to the report in ‘#Experience_Next’ - The events and activations industry in India, which is at Rs 5,631 crore (56 Billion) in 2016-17 overall, has been growing at a 16% CAGR, even overtaking the Indian media and entertainment (M&E) industry, which is growing at 11-13% CAGR. The industry is expected to cross Rs 10,000 crore (100 Billion) mark by 2020-21, as per an EY-EEMA (Event and Entertainment Management Association) report. (Laghate, 2017)

An indication of the industry’s growth in India is the increasing number of specialty activation firms, particularly at the regional level. Moreover, a very popular, yet, having more of a subliminal impact on audience, Radio has been creating major waves all across

by doing massive activation programs at regional levels for national/local brands, with respect to the nature of the message that is to be communicated.

At the Asian Promotional Marketing awards, Indian marketers won 13 awards. Some of these include, Premier Futsal, Ek Kadam Unnati Ki Aur, Whisper #LikeAGirl and Proud, Sehat Ki Chusk, Surf excel matic liquid – PoRubPo, Boost Your Business (Facebook), #AmazonConnect (Amazon), Half Autobiographies, Tata Guru Loyalty Program, 'Artist Aloud' App, #Educatethegirlchild, Adidas UltraBoostX Launch, Lux Golden Rose Awards 2016. Meanwhile, apart from the traditional industries growth for brand activation is driven by new, upcoming sectors. Though, FMCG have remained the largest users for this medium, insurance, financial services, healthcare and telecom are driving it higher.

The cost of acquiring mind space of stakeholder has also gone higher, awareness and loyalty are of supreme importance, particularly the service industry. Virgin Atlantic airways has used activation in a major way, using high attention incidents like SARS outbreak, post 9/11, which had almost thrown the Airline industry almost in a downturn.

At that time, there programs like “I love NY” in which we gave away free tickets to New York as a confidence building measures, in which they gave away free flying tickets to New York as a confidence building measure.

This shows that activation can be a cost effective medium for new brands to test the market without really going in for an advertising blitzkrieg. Further, as a PR professional rightly points out, that when the communication message is more specific message, activation is the best option to go for. This may include product/ campaign launch.

3.4 Brand Activation in Products and Services

3.4.1 Brand Activation in Products:

Consider a hypothetical shaver brand “X”. Further assume that there are six other brands in this category. All brands are touting themselves as provider of smooth shave in their respective ads. But you are the smoothest one but how do you make your Target Audience believe of the same. Brand Activation comes handy in case scenario. Create such a platform, where you can meet your target audience and give them free shave so that they can feel the “smoothness”. Allow them to interact with your brands as much as possible. You can do so with the help of road shows and exhibitions etc. Once you have done that, customers will be able to validate your claim. Also, they will relate to your ads.

3.4.2 Brand Activation in Services:

It’s the people in services which actually activate your brand. Consider the case of insurance company which claims to be most caring company. But the problem is that every company is saying that. The company (let’s say) which reaches the place of accident, will be considered as most caring.

3.5 Where Brand Activation empowers Public Relations.

Here's what we're up against. Our consumer is more barraged with messages than ever before, more empowered and more fickle. Our retail and trade customer have more control today, and we can count on him holding more of the cards over time. The brand he cares about most is his own. This is happening everywhere.

Brand marketers must find new ways to connect, to interrupt and to engage. Few things can replace a physical connection, and this is fundamentally why activation and experiential programs are becoming so much more critical in brand marketing today.

In a move to engage the consumer with the product and the brand more actively, brand marketers tend to innovate with selective opportunities. As lives of consumers have become much diverse, the number of consumer touch points too has increased, it has become imperative for the marketer to have a composite marketing strategy to make sure that maximum touch points are covered.

And perhaps this is what makes below-the-line (BTL) as important for the marketer as above-the-line (ATL). Over the last couple of months, a whole lot of marketers have resorted to BTL activities to create awareness about their products and services edibility and more importantly generate a positive image about it. It could make a big idea even more impactful. Or it could undermine the idea's effectiveness with off-brand activities, inconsistent brand voice, all in the supposed pursuit of local business.

This dynamic has been a fundamental issue for marketers over the years. Many have found ways to drive smarter, more consistent programs from one region, one channel, one neighborhood to the next. And this came by applying local wisdom and creativity to central initiatives.

Today, our planet gets smaller and smaller. The Internet connects everyone everywhere. Everything can be seen. Everything can be heard. For the global brand marketer, this

creates a real challenge on the one hand. But it can be leveraged into a big opportunity across markets.

Historically, folks managing global brands would send “above-the-line materials” (I do hate that phrase) to local markets with very specific instructions. Everything was clear for the “above-the-line” work. But the local marketer would have the right to create programs he believed would drive his business at a street and retail level. We would all too often cringe when we saw how our efforts ultimately got translated.

Marketers of global brands are learning they have a choice. Yes, they must absolutely drive business at a local level. But they don't need to leave things to chance, and they don't need to be reinventing work from one market to the next. Yes, they need local wisdom. But just as marketers have sought big brand ideas that can travel, they are searching for big activation concepts that worked elsewhere and can be adapted.

Local brand activation and shopper marketing is taking on growing importance around the world. Global marketers want their brands to travel with one voice across traditional media. But they know they won't win if they don't connect where it matters most in what OgilvyAction calls “The Last Mile.” When the consumer makes a purchase decision, that's the ultimate moment of truth for driving business and mandatory for delivering ROI.

The Win-Win Relationship:

Figure 3.2 Smart Diamond



Source: (Alberts, n.d.)

Brand activation Program: Smart Diamond

The creative platform or The Big Idea is the basis of a BA program. This idea is coupled to an activity or activities that confirm the message. Media is used to create awareness of these activities. Interaction with the target group is stimulated via media like e-mail and internet. The sole aim here is: to stimulate: Interest, Engage Trial, Loyalty. Each program shall be primarily based on one of these target groups.

Media fragmentation onto various devices has not only helped BTL agencies to get more accurate results, but also to ensure that brands have more touch points with the target group. Tata Tea (India), in a campaign for encouraging people to vote, centered its communication round a website www.jaagore.com. The site was used to get voter registrations through a campaign that comprised a TV commercial, Out-of-home (OOH) and on-ground activation in colleges and offices.

GM's Chevrolet Spark organized a brand activation program 'Jeevan mein umang, Spark ke sang' to promote the newly priced Spark in small towns & cities. CavinKare's Chic Shampoo too launched a school campaign 'Choo Lo Sitharon Ko' to educate school going girls.

Brand activation: deliver the proof

The claims 'washes whiter than white', 'always at hand', etc. are all really well-known, but it is still advertising. People think advertising is implausible, so these claims remain implausible. Until proven. A Brand activation program supplies proof of the claim. Brand activation proves the claims that are made. Consider Red Bull and Extreme Sports, Amstel and the BallenBar, Unox and the New Year Swim. Getting attention for a brand message is becoming increasingly difficult. The new way is to prove the message. This does not only make the message credible, it also makes it distinctive.

In the retail space, RPG-owned Spencer's retail also created two campaigns to target children & women. Frito Lay's Kurkure, Maruti Suzuki, Nokia, Nivea, Honda Motorcycles, et al, have also invested heavily in BTL in the last few years. But the similarity ends here. For in all the above-mentioned instances the objective of undertaking a BTL activity was different.

In the media space, Sab TV, the comedy channel from MSM India, devised an interesting route to reach media planners and buyers during the launch of Bhootwala Serial, India's first horror comedy. Breaking the clutter, promoters dressed in scary ghostly costumes went across all agencies like Zenith Optimedia, Lodestar, Lintas Media Group, Starcom, Madison, Maxus, Mindshare and Mindshare Fulcrum.

And this is precisely what makes BTL so important these days. Deepti Dang Head of Channel Business development and Trade Marketing, personal systems group, Hewlett-Packard India avers, "Advantage of using BTL is that you get an opportunity to have a face-to-face interaction with the customer, who gets to feel and experience the product."

BTL works because it's an active media rather than passive, you can engage one-on-one with the customer and take the process of communication forward through awareness. Vineet Trakroo, vice-president, marketing, CavinKare, said, "The activity helped us to introduce the brand to school girls and to associate Chik Shampoo with power of confidence."

Another critical advantage of resorting to BTL is that effectiveness of each penny spent can be easily monitored and evaluated. Says Dang, " A BTL activity is far easier to measure since a 'close look management' is followed."

RC&M's Monga adds, "ROI can be easily calculated and this adds greater accountability." The marketer exactly knows how many consumers were reached and compare that with real sales figures to substantiate whether the BTL campaign was successful or not.

On the contrary, a mass media campaign like a TVC may cost ten times more than a BTL exercise, but to substantiate it with actual sales is cumbersome. On the face of it, while ATL is more of a brand awareness and recognition exercise, BTL is generally more sales driven.

Brand activation = Interaction

New media has caused a revolution in communication: the simplicity of interaction. Almost everyone has access to internet. Stimulate people to interact. A Brand Activation platform often has a site at the basis. The consumer accesses the site of his/her own accord and therefore wants contact. A wonderful opportunity to offer an experience that influences the buying process.

Many take BTL as a more cost-effective tool to reach out to their target audience as compared to mass media since BTL activities are carried out in specific areas keeping in mind the demands of the demographics. However, some argue that, it's a myth that BTL is cheaper than ATL, as mass media is still far more effective in terms of cost per contact.

Be that as it may, the reasons why BTL has picked up as a concept recently are manifold. Growth of retail has provided with a favorable environment for marketers to capture their audience.

Various companies also club BTL activities with their CSR initiatives. A case in point being Nokia's Take Back campaign, an e-waste recycling program. As part of this initiative, Nokia encouraged people to dispose of mobile handsets in an ecologically friendly manner. For this Nokia has set up recycling bins across its priority dealers & care centers. BTL also makes for a viable proposition especially when the Indian economy is heading towards a slowdown and companies are extra-cautious of the money they spend on marketing their products.

Rise of integrated campaigns encompassing all mediums of advertising has also raised the usage of BTL. The fact that BTL is fast emerging as an effective tool to reach out to the target audience cannot be denied. However, marketers need to be cautious of few of key critical elements. (Alberts, n.d.)

3.5.1 The Critical Elements

Segmentation of the target audience is very critical for the success of the campaign. As mentioned earlier, each campaign is devised with a distinct objective, which has to be reiterated throughout the course of the campaign. And here the ground staff plays a very important role.

Operation & implementation becomes very important since the on-ground activity is done manually, and it is imperative that the planning has been replicated exactly on ground."

Environment too is very critical for transaction to happen, where the customer is in a frame of mind to evaluate the product. Choice of activity, duration, location, et al are other factors that determine the success of a BTL activity.

Activation may prove to be beneficial to marketers to enhance their sales and generate consumer interest toward their brand. For long-term gain, BTL should not be a one-time exercise but an annual effort."

And perhaps, this is why companies are allocating almost half of their advertising budgets to non-traditional media including BTL. While the non-traditional media may never be able to replace the effectiveness of mass media, nevertheless the strategy of engaging the customer with the product is definitely a well thought of strategy especially during the current times when each penny counts.

We are all familiar with Dove's award-winning Real Beauty Campaign and how it captivated millions with a simple brilliant film taken digitally around the world. It empowers women everywhere to appreciate who they are and their natural beauty.

The Dove campaign was supported with television, outdoor, print, etc. But certain markets magnified the idea locally in ways that made big impressions, had great local relevance and drove business further. In Tokyo, hundreds of Japanese women gathered near a rail station, all wearing blond wigs. Then, all at once, they tossed their wigs into the air to celebrate their own unique beauty. That's a magnified idea that made a big impression. That's an activation concept that can travel.

3.5.2 Various type of Activation

Mall Activation

Malls provide a platform that enables us to communicate with consumers without making them feel that we are there to sell them something. As a result, consumers are willing to come onto the stand to get further information on the product or brand that is being promoted. This curiosity is converted into a desire to own, which leads to sales and reason to acquire knowledge about the brand.

A mall activation program is most likely to attain the following objectives:

- Clean, up-market environments

- High-conversion of economically-active shoppers
- Close proximity to large retailers
- High-impact activation platform
- Reach your target market by matching demographics of each mall

In-store Activation

The closer one - is able to communicate with consumers to the point of purchase, the greater the chance of securing the sale. Increasing pressure to deliver short-term sales results has prompted, Provantage to create a national In-store promotional infrastructure. All interventions are developed taking the trade realities and brand requirements into consideration.

Mobile Brand Clinics

To promote brand health in the difficult areas, to reach the thousands of informal traders, stores, general dealers, outlets nationally, activation agencies have developed unique route-to-market distribution and visibility platforms.

Provantage Brand “Vans” provide clients with highly focused and visible sales and distribution resource that are able to dominate a pre-defined base of traders within a selected geographical area. This service includes a total turnkey solution, including:

- Staffing
- Vehicle sourcing, branding and maintenance
- Trader loyalty programs
- Data collection and capture
- Stock purchase and stock sale management

Taskforce and Special Projects

The ability to conceptualize, plan and execute large-scale activation projects must rest with a trustworthy brand promotion or event management agency. The team works in close-partnership with clients to ensure that these large-scale, unique activations are properly

planned, costed and successfully implemented. These activations are often once-off projects that require substantial manpower, infrastructure and project management resource. The benefits are as follows:

- Maximize brand distribution and availability
- Ensure brand visibility in township environments
- Drive trader relationship and loyalty towards brands

In-school & College Activation

The school environment provides advertisers with the ideal platform for marketing, advertising and promoting their products and services whilst contributing to the upliftment and enhancement of educational facilities, or developing the children's capacity and creativity. In school, media opportunities include educational, promotional, sampling and distribution, sponsorship and competition opportunities. The advantage includes:

- Reach information-carriers and their household
- Reach highly influential parts of the SA population
- Uncluttered environments

Intersection Activation

Intersection events is when an activation program is inserted in another event to gain a better advantage in terms of visibility, and lower expenses. It includes sampling and distribution activities which are designed to meet clients' exact specifications, for which we guarantee and implement the necessary controls, logistics and security measures.

Benefits

- Exact target audience selection is possible
- Exceptional security and controls

Product activation

The key in brand activation is to show customers that promises made in advertising are true. Sometimes this is easy; a business that is selling a massage chair can set up the chair

so that customers can use it and find out how well it works. Other activation schemes are more involved. A company that sells razors can offer free shaves to customers to prove how well the razors work compared to the shaver the customer currently is using. Mobilo is the guide for the Belgian motorist. They launched this new product with a teasing action, before you put it in your glove compartment. They placed gold colored promo teams at various exits on the Brussels ring motorway on weekdays. Drivers were approached, given information flyers and thanked with a Mobilo car air freshener. Yellow VW beetles, with the Mobilo logo, in which the teams travel, are a real visibility boost. This year we are showing up with a different car, and undertaking different activities.

Youth activation

With the start of the new academic year, Truvo, a Belgian company specializing in local search and advertising, gave the go-ahead for activation actions targeting students. For example, they welcomed the students with posters. 'Welcome to Louvain-La-Neuve!'. In this way, Golden Pages® permeates the city and gets into the heads of all the students. Promo teams later walk around distributing Golden Pages®. They penetrated further into the student habitat: our Golden Angels appeared at parties. Dressed in trendy yellow suits, they got the party going and proclaimed why Golden Pages® is such a good search tool. They finish with an Open Book Exam, the first quiz you don't have to study for but for which you can win fantastic prizes.

Client activation

Unless a client is activated NOTHING else matters. 6 steps need to be followed in order to activate a client:

1. Get to know your customers
2. Begin buyer persona (Target Customers) creation
3. Identify digital behaviors
4. Map customer journeys
5. Take the reins: Move consumers through their lifecycle faster
6. Identify customer stage and speed

Truvo show their support for a number of professional federations by once again participating in various projects and events. This enables them to demonstrate their goodwill, and keeps their products and services in the mind of independent entrepreneurs and professionals.

They supported the Association of Independent Entrepreneurs (UNIZO), the Builders' Association (Bouwunie), the Flemish Architects' Organization (NAV), the Belgian Chamber of Removal Companies (BKV), the National Professional Association of Furniture Retailers (NAVEM), De Slaapraad and the Middle class association (UCM).

Their communications and brand activation strategy also cover all channels through which their data is available. That's why they also advertise actively on the internet, with banners to support their online products. Various banner formats appear regularly on both high traffic -skynet.be, msn.be - and more specialized websites.

The banner campaign is not their only way of supporting the online products. Some of their TV spots have been created with a specific online "If only I had..." by-line that refers to goldenpages.be or whitepages.be.

3.6 Measuring ROI in Brand Activation- A PR perspective

In these challenging economic times, effectiveness is crucial, and measurement is critical. In a tight economy, there is pressure on marketers to deliver more out of their budget and prove that it's being spent wisely, producing maximum ROI. As the credit crunch continues to impact organizations on a global plane, marketing budgets are either remaining on the same level or being decreased but there is a definite pressure to deliver more value out of them. And expenditure is being closely scrutinized with marketers being asked to use their resources wisely, closely monitor the effectiveness of their marketing activities and deliver extra value.

Pre-requisites for Success

There are several pre-requisites for success, as well as several useful implementation tenets that address the common hurdles of a brand activation project.

1) The Platform

An obvious but sometimes overlooked pre-requisite for success with an initiative is a well-articulated, research-based brand platform that ties to customer needs and business drivers. Many PR managers focus on the communications aspects of brand, but don't articulate the values and related behaviors associated with a brand to guide the total experience. Failure to research and incorporate experiential components often leaves employees with the task of translating brand personality adjectives like "friendly" or "fun" into critical operational decisions and practices. Instead, the brand platform should encompass both the communications aspects (tone, personality, positioning) as well as the behavioral aspects of the brand which is well rooted in research based insights. (CMG, n.d.)

2) The Buy-in

Top executive buy-in for the brand activation initiative. If the initiative does not have broad support from above, it is unlikely to succeed. Recommendations which raise costs or

that require changes in behavior will likely be met with resistance, so it's critical to have support from the management team on the benefits of the overall program and have benefited from similar initiatives can help with garnering the support needed. Even more powerful is research that ties customer desires and behavior (e.g. purchase decisions, satisfaction, loyalty and recommendations) to the implementation of brand values throughout the organization. Once a strong brand platform and overall management buy-in are in place, the brand activation process can begin. (CMG, n.d.)

3.5.3 Objective Framework

Sales

- Generate sales leads
- Make direct sales
- Build a contact database

Customer Relationships

- Build relationships with current customers
- Educate customers
- Upsell and cross-sell customers
- Collect customer testimonials
- Re-sell lapsed customers

Market Research

- Market test a new product
- Research your marketing campaign
- Test market awareness and perceptions

Brand building

- Create or raise market awareness

- Position or re-position your brand
- Educate by demonstrating
- Boost financial analyst/ investor perceptions
- Develop new markets

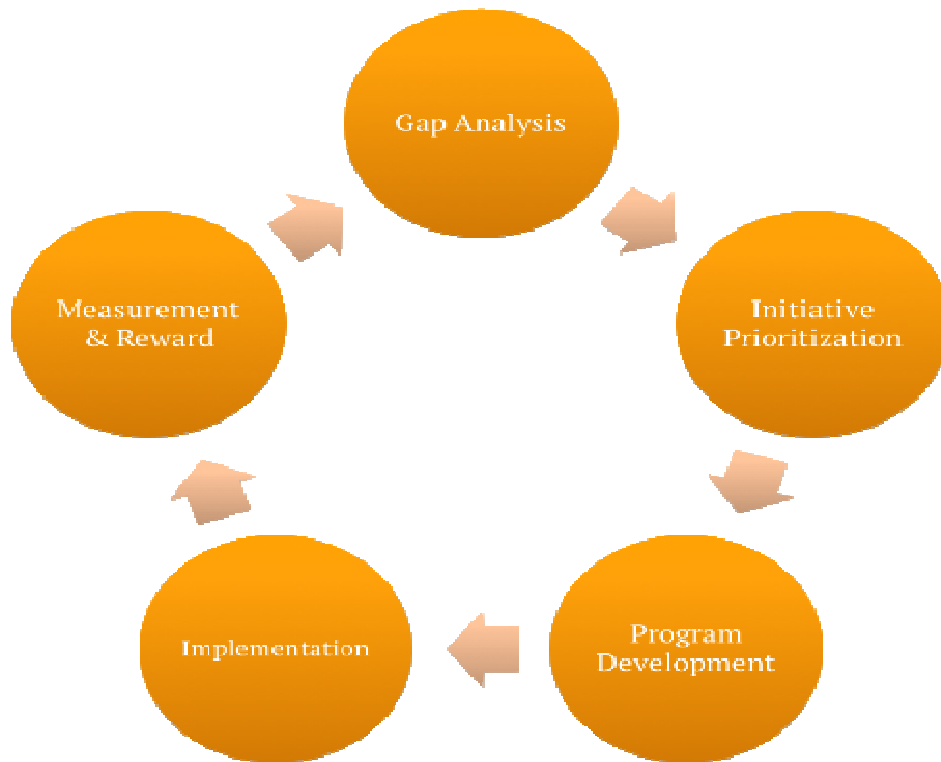
Channel Support

- Identify and recruit new distributors or partners
- Support your current sales channel
- Build your reputation as a partner Media Relations
- Get on the 'media radar'/ generate coverage
- Build relationships with key editors and journalist

3.5.4 Iterative Process for Brand Activation

Just as every brand is unique, no two brand activation programs are exactly the same. However, the most successful brand activation initiatives do share common elements such as gap analysis, initiative prioritization, program development and implementation, and measurement and reward.

Figure 3.3 Activating the Brand



Source: (CMG, n.d.)

Although often portrayed as a linear series of steps, the best brand activation initiatives are iterative in nature and require a continual refreshment and re-prioritization based on measurement, new research and analysis. If such an initiative sounds daunting, it can be. But it also can be incredibly powerful and beneficial. Well activated brands surprise and delight the customer in their integration and consistency. (CMG, n.d.)

3.5.5 Common Tenets of Success

Though customization is required, there are six tenets that hold true across plans which we have found common to success.

1. Creating an “All Hands-on Deck” Attitude

Successful companies employ an overarching mantra, supported by management teams,

emphasizing that everyone’s job is to deliver against the brand platform. This doesn’t negate the need for a dedicated lead to champion the process and measure success, but it is an overarching tenet of the program. They have also found creating brand ambassadorships within the key functional organizations as partners for the lead manager on the initiative can help shape the specific recommendations and implementation programs, as well as help smooth the way for possible turf-war challenges.

2. Prioritizing a Staged Project Rollout

While looking at the holistic needs of an organization, it’s easy for critics to complain that a brand activation initiative is like trying to “boil the ocean.” The key to overcoming this criticism is prioritization and quick wins. When deciding which brand delivery gaps to attack first, consider attacking one or two areas that are fairly easy to implement and measure, thereby showing brands and developing momentum for the initiative early on.

3. Facilitate with a Strong Training Program

Often when the brand team comes knocking on other departments’ doors as part of the brand activation initiative, they are received as the “logo police” or “the folks who do the fun ads”.

Getting buy-in and cooperation requires clarifying the initiative’s purpose and explaining the differences between what we call *little b* and *big B* branding. *Little b* is concerned with the logo and identity alignment, where *big B* drives the overall experience and is tied to business value.

As part of your program, you need a training and communication initiative that clarifies the *big B* brand activation approach and accomplishes the following objectives:

- Buy-in and understanding of the overall initiative and expectations

- Confirmation for how it will drive business value for the company
- Delivery of a simple way to assess brand actions
- Explanation of what's in it for "them" (tied to rewards)

4. Simplifying with Tools

An important component to the overall project is to simplify the brand information so it can be understood across many different types of functional areas. While these tools often include creative communications surrounding the brand platform on everything from company ID holders to posters in the hallways, we have found a more informative and useful component to be a brand assessment tool. The tool we have developed and implemented is used to evaluate any existing program or new initiative to confirm it complies with the brand experience and behaviors. The tool can come in many forms and ranges from an easy MS Word survey to a sophisticated interactive online tool. For example, when helping a telecom company, we created a simple Y/N questionnaire that assessed activities or initiatives against the brand behaviors. By completing the questionnaire, the user could see how the idea performed against the key brand attributes and determine if there were areas that needed improvement to better align to the brand. These tools may be customized for specific departments or kept broad across the organization. However, the objective is to keep it simple, so it will be used to guide brand alignment across programs or initiatives.

5. Measure, Report and Share

As with any change management project, you must show people how business will be improved by this effort before you can motivate them to make changes. You will need to outline your key measurements based on researched value-drivers for the initiatives across the program and track them to report success. Publicizing the results is also critical. Once you have results, you should share success stories with other departments to further smooth the path and expand the program.

6. Over-Emphasize Rewards and Recognition

While there are many motivators for such a program that are tied to overall business results, when your goal is changing behaviors, the best way to ensure success is to link it to monetary or other individually relevant rewards. You need to tie brand activation to a group's goals and compensation. For some companies, they ask each senior management team member to always have a brand activation initiative underway and include it in the groups' quarterly goals.

Another tack is implementing company-wide awards for the best brand activation initiative based on business results achieved. Public recognition is also highly motivating for most people. You can recognize, as well as educate the broader team, by partnering with your internal communications group to showcase efforts on your intranet or company newsletter.

In summary, you don't need a lot of money or huge department to *walk the walk* ... what you do need is the right program in place and right approach to avoid a "*boil the ocean*" situation and organizational alignment challenges. A successful program starts with a well-articulated, research-based brand platform and executive buy-in. It leverages supplemental research (customer and employee) and analysis tools such as touch point analysis to deepen understanding of the opportunities to improve the total brand experience. And then it prioritizes initiatives, looking for powerful, easy to implement (and measure) wins that demonstrate the value of the initiative before proceeding to a wider rollout. Finally, it includes an overarching rewards system and mantra that everyone's job entails delivering on the underlying components. The best brands have incorporated these ideas into the regular pattern of business and their successes are evident in their brand experiences, and more importantly, their business results. (CMG, n.d.)

3.5.6 Measurement of Activation's Effectiveness

There are four major reasons for measuring the results of every activation program:

To justify your investment - Every item in your marketing budget needs to show a return on investment. Measuring gives you the facts you need to get the marketing mix right.

To help choose the best PR means for you - Not all shows are alike. Measuring helps identify your winners.

To improve your own activities - What you do before, during and after each show can matter as much as which shows you choose. Measuring lets you improve your own team's performance and results.

To encourage goal-driven activities - What gets measured gets done. If you want to see your team focused on results, tell them what results you mean - and show them you're measuring! Put this way, it's easy to see why measuring your exhibition results is not just important, it's essential.

Marketing may be a science, but it's rarely a perfect science. Every time you evaluate an exhibition, you're actually measuring many things at the same time, including the show itself, the market climate, your own activities and your competitors' activities. It's dangerous to jump to a conclusion about an event based on only one experience.

You might conclude that an event was wrong for your company when actually it was a competitor's special promotion that rained on your parade. Similarly, you might think your pre-show mailing was a major success when it may have been due to the show audience doubling. (Facetime, n.d.)

Quantifying the impact

As traditional media channels get more crowded and cluttered, companies must find new ways to attain stakeholders' attention, in the best possible way. Activation is the best possible way to communicate a brand through sight, sound and experience. Agencies like Chadwick Martin Baily provide a way to quantify the impact that investments in activation will have on long term revenue. The activation ROI approach quantifies the entire impact of event marketing by measuring these investments drive brand equity, advocacy and in due course, the sales.

Immediate impact

Event ROI quantifies the sales generated directly from the event, comparing those with the event cost to calculate the short-term ROI. The time frame and measurement strategy can be adjusted depending on the type of event and brand/ service/product involved.

Market Movement

When it comes to the value of brand activation, immediate sales are only a part of the equation. The creation of interest, consideration and brand loyalty are equally important. The activation ROI model quantifies the impact on all intermediate behaviors that lead to revenue and attained-awareness, so that the PR manager knows the impact of it at all stage of the purchase process.

Market Perception

Companies choose BTL activities to foster a brand identity with a specific target audience. The activation ROI quantifies how effectively an event conveys that identity. This allows the PR manager to compare events on an apple to apple basis with other elements of the organization's brand strategy.

Word of mouth referrals

Activations and sponsorships create a "brand experience" that gets people talking- whether they relate to the company, buy its products or even its shares for that matter, and/or recommend it to someone else. It's no secret that creation of advocates is one of the most powerful benefits of brand activation. A ROI enables organizations to quantify the amount of advocacy created, and sales driven by those referrals, tracking immediate sales and

changes in purchase likelihood gives PR managers a picture of the true return on investment in event marketing.

4 Practical Part

4.1 Case Studies

4.1.1 Lifebuoy (Unilever)

Campaign- *Encouraging good hygiene*

Developing markets such as India are an important source of growth for Unilever. The company is adopting unique marketing approaches to increase consumption of its products in these regions, positioning itself as an ethical brand that benefits wider society.

Unilever's Lifebuoy '*Swasthya Chetna*' ('Health Awakening') campaign is one example. This educates people on the importance of health and hygiene in preventing diarrhea and encourages them to adopt a simple hand-washing regime using soap. Swasthya Chetna is India's largest ever rural health and hygiene education program.

Diarrhea is the world's leading preventable cause of death, killing 2.2 million people every year including 600,000 Indian children under the age of five. According to a study by the London School of Tropical Hygiene, washing hands with soap and water can reduce instances of diarrhea by 47%.

Many potential Lifebuoy customers live in remote, rural areas which can be hard to reach through conventional media. Ogilvy worked with Lifebuoy to create a direct communication campaign specially designed to raise awareness among India's largely rural and often illiterate population.

Lifebuoy health officers visited 43,000 Indian villages and schools over five years where they used product demonstrations, interactive visuals, competitions and drama workshops to spread the health and hygiene message.

The program is based on the simple insight that 'visible clean is not actual clean' which was brought alive through a special 'Glowgerm' UV demo. When held under ultra-violet lamps, glowgerm powder glows on hands washed only with water, symbolizing germs on those hands, and does not glow on hands washed with soap.

The program has reached 110 million rural Indians since it began in 2002. Awareness of germs has increased by 30% and soap use has increased among 79% of parents and among 93% of children in the areas targeted. Soap consumption has increased by 15%.

The campaign received recognition for its innovation and effectiveness, winning Silver in the Rural Marketing Advertisers Association of India awards in 2006, and the grand prize at the Asian CSR awards 2007. It was also recognized by the Indian government who created a special edition postal cover dedicated to the campaign. (Unilever, 2010)

4.1.2 Coca-Cola

Objective

Coca-Cola has been promoting health issues throughout the Philippines through activities like basketball clinics and dietary programs. However, most consumers still view Coca-Cola as a major contributor to the youth's poor health.

Using its ongoing Healthy & Active Lifestyle Program (HAL), we needed to establish Coca-Cola's *commitment to promoting a healthier lifestyle*.

Action

We created the "LOSE GAIN" fitness event, with the slogan "*You LOSE, Charities GAIN.*" Coca-Cola donated a peso to health and welfare charities for every calorie burned by people taking part in the event.

The event was promoted with flyers distributed in key touch points, including train stations, campuses and other areas near the venue. Invitations were aired on the radio and television. Print ads also appeared in major newspapers and as posters.

Reaction

A total of 1,935 participants took part in the workout session.

A further 50,000 people watched the event, and many inquired as to when the next workout event would be.

Most importantly, the normally critical media responded very favorably – a crucial factor in changing perceptions of Coca-Cola’s health credentials. (141 Worldwide, n.d.)

Figure 4.4 Lose Gain: Calorie for a Cause

YOU LOSE CHARITIES GAIN

CALORIES FOR A CAUSE
BURN CALORIES. HELP CHARITIES.

BRIEF:
Generate public awareness and support for the Coca Cola Company's corporate social responsibility programs, specifically its efforts to promote physical fitness via an active lifestyle.

IDEA:
A day-long fitness event, wherein the Company will donate a peso to charity for every calorie burned by volunteer participants. The event was held at the indoor plaza of a popular mall.

RESULTS:

- Estimated audience at venue: 50,000
- Total number of participants: 1,935
- Total calories burned: 518,666
- Total amount donated: 1.2 million pesos*
- *Coca-Cola gave bonus donations for workouts which exceeded 50,000 calories burned.

Total project budget: 3.2 million pesos
Estimated free media value: 6.2 million pesos

The Coca-Cola Company

Source: (141 Worldwide, n.d.)

4.1.3 Heineken

Objective

In the extremely competitive Romanian premium beer category, Heineken introduced a new beer experience: Heineken served at zero degrees.

The objective was to drive sales and strengthen brand image.

Action

They created the “Heineken fights local warming” campaign. Consumers were invited to the Local Warming “Command Center” and given the opportunity to enter a photo-video contest, giving their view on Local Warming. Winners won a trip to Amsterdam’s SubZero

Bar. Heineken database members were also invited to the exclusive SubZero event – featuring a specially designed fashion collection.

We promoted the campaign with posters, print ads in cutting-edge magazines, internet banners and a blog for consumers to express their opinions, post pictures and upload movies. Bars were supplied with POS, including a unique Heineken glove.

Reaction

Bartenders and bar owners have already expressed their enthusiasm and confidence that the campaign will significantly increase sales.

Within one month of launch, the local warming blog had over 12,500 unique visitors. The campaign also created a buzz on local blogs and in lifestyle magazines. (Global Lifestyle, 2014)

4.1.4 Motorola

Objective

We targeted young, tech-savvy consumers in North America in order to position Motorola as a leading provider of unique mobile music experiences

They also wanted to highlight its partnership with Pepsi by driving purchases and participation in the Pepsi Smash/Motorola promotion, The Ultimate Ringtone Sweepstakes.

Action

They created STUDIOMOTO, a double-decker 30-foot mobile experience that showcased Motorola products and music. It appeared at concerts, beaches, festivals, and retail and employee events.

STUDIOMOTO enabled consumers to handle Motorola products and get free ringtones, create unique graffiti wallpaper, compete in text message-based games, and have their pictures taken with a camera phone.

Reaction

Over 1.2 million consumers were reached with over 900,000 impressions, 100,000 intercepts and over 47,000 interactions via 10 lifestyle events, 2 retail events, and 2 employee events totaling 32 days.

From the STUDIOMOTO experience alone, 66% of non-Motorola users were willing to try another brand. Of those consumers, 45% said they would consider purchasing a Motorola phone. (FinanzNachrichten.de, 2006)

4.1.5 Remy-Martin

Objective

As a brand that is growing rapidly in the Asian marketplace, Rémy Martin is being attacked by many direct and indirect competitors. To protect Rémy Martin's position and drive sales, they needed to renew consumer and retailer interest over the critical Chinese New Year sales period.

We focused on the brand's core Fine Champagne Cognac credentials to communicate the superiority of its cognacs and reinforce trade support in airport Duty Free stores.

Action

Targeting Asian Business travelers, we created the "Heart of Cognac Experience," a spectacular, interactive promotional event that transported consumers to the world of fine cognac.

They brought the brand's unique product qualities to life with multi-sensory touch points, expert ambassadors, tastings, limited-edition packaging and promotions.

Reaction

The “Heart of Cognac Experience” engaged all 5 senses and immersed consumers in the Rémy Martin brand. It recruited younger drinkers and had a huge impact on brand awareness and image. It also sold more Rémy Martin than ever before – resulting in an average year-on-year sales increase of 77.5% across the 5 key market countries. (Briodagh, 2013)

4.1.6 Sunsilk

Objective

In the cluttered North American market, Sunsilk couldn’t outspend its competitors. They needed breakthrough creativity to gain major market share among 25-year-old girls. (We called them Katies).

Action

Sunsilk created “Hairapy”. Hairapy Guys gave advice on hair and life dramas, online 24/7. They were featured in TV ads, on TV shows and in fashion magazines. They also gave Katies one-on-one Hairapy in 50 cities.

Katies received store-style gift cards via their favorite magazines, online, by direct mail, at their door and through sampling. Promotional material made bar nights even more fun – for example, on martini glasses we told them, “*Drink responsibly, put it on his tab*”.

Reaction

Sales goals were exceeded by 98% in the first month. Gift card redemption was 96% above industry standards. 1,714,471 Katies were sampled, of which over 85% responded “highly favorable” or “favorable.” “Hairapy” language appeared on blogs within the first 2 weeks of launch. It created a buzz throughout the industry and won the Silver Reggie Award.

The campaign was truly 360. With a great creative idea executed everywhere, Hairapy launched Sunsilk into popular culture. (Macleod, 2007)

4.2 Radio Activation

The reason activation is gaining ground within FM radio stations is because they provide a 'single window' approach to clients. Radio being an immediate medium allows clients to measure the strength or effectiveness of any brand immediately. With below-the-line (BTL) activation, radio can create awareness on air and immediately make a consumer feel the product on the ground on the same day itself. Similarly, it helps the station get feedback and views instantaneously. It becomes easier to build contests to generate awareness which is far more effective than other advertising media and which is more involved and relevant to the consumer.

By focusing on BTL spends, radio is able to capture a larger pie of client spends given that Radio is perceived as a personal medium, radio can bring brands closer and speak to the consumer at their level. Radio has a culture of response where listeners frequently interact with their station which they see as accessible. Couple that with the fact that a brand activation event would promote both the client's brand and the radio station connect with its audience and we have a win-win situation. No wonder then that radio stations are adapting to the expanding market by providing add on services to their advertisers in the form of 'activations' or nontraditional revenue (NTR).

While print and television still attract the advertiser, the emphasis is shifting towards activation and non-traditional media, since the clutter level in the television space is very high. Also, ad avoidance by listeners in radio is almost nil in comparison with 68 per cent in newspaper and 44 per cent in TV, and local reach makes radio a very effective medium of advertisement.

Besides, radio offers for tighter targeting which means reducing wastage or spill over. Radio brings brands closer, as listeners identify with their radio station and see it as aimed at people like them; radio is better able to communicate the tone or character of a brand.

Radio also offers tighter timing - within a particular time band, day of week or even week of month. This time specific character of radio is helpful since listening is highest when shops are open. So, one can target a Pizza Hut ad in the afternoon and follow it up with a

below the line creative activity around the product and have the consumer reaching over for a pizza takeaway immediately.

Activation units offer a synergy between below the line and above the line advertising. It allows access to multiple touch points through multiple creatives in a focused area. It allows immediacy, and so promoting an event can be in real time. More importantly radio can monitor responses to a particular activity almost instantly and fix it whether it's the lack of footfalls at an event or a change in the pitch, creative or running a contest.

Perhaps the greatest strength of a below the line activity created by radio is its understanding and relationship with a geographical area, its people and its culture. For example, Pune is a booming real estate sector, so we approach clients like real estate developers or builders. We would do that in Kolkata as well as we see a demand there. But in a Bangalore, one would target the BPO or IT sector since that's where the client and audience both connect. Similarly, corporate and we have properties that showcase different cities in a month long cultural extravaganza. ATL advertising is more strategic and planned while BTL can be more tactical and with the kind of reach we have within the A and B category towns, our activation can be converted to a pan India initiative."

Most radio advertisers include FMCG, durables, auto, telecom, retail, BFI's etc. There are activation solutions for multiple brands through a single event as long as they are non-competing brands. The other approach is the single-client driven ground activation. So, we will have the FM station drive where we partner with several brands. At the same time an auto client like Ford who approaches us, and we put a spin on that campaign through car displays at a shopping mall and integrated programming around it.

As stations become more targeted they would also evolve into strong and distinctive brands, and they would deliberately cultivate their brand values in all their on-air and off-air activities - events, contests, helplines, etc. Once the brand values are established, advertisers could leverage them to give a positive effect to their own messages. Not all activations are related to advertising alone or so say radio heads. Big FM India organized a

New Year's party for the Indian army and Red FM also ties up with the Tata Cancer Research institute for spreading awareness of breast cancer.

In a country size like India, it is not necessary to touch every market but everybody in a certain market. What radio activation manages to do is amplify the effect of advertising. The advantage of radio is that any ground level activity or below the line marketing becomes amplified.

Mirchi Fm India Activations has, for the last four years, been creating and rolling out unique, high engagement properties targeted at specific demographic target groups. The principal criteria that we subject a property to before rollout are (a) possible listener and participant interest and (b) potential for sponsor brand customization.

4.2.1 Case Study - Radio Mirchi - Get Active Expo

A consumer expo targeted at the health conscious acted as a prelude to the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2017 (SCMM). A one-stop destination for runners, was organized at Bandra Kurla Complex, from Jan 8 to 10, 2016. The three-day consumer expo held at World Trade Centre, Mumbai, took place on 16th January 2016. It addressed the health, fitness and lifestyle verticals. SCMM attracted more than 40, 285 marathon runners from different corners of the world took center-stage at the 13th edition of SCMM, marathon runners collected their running bibs at the expo. The expo gave participants an entire weekend to study the race day instructions in detail, and familiarize themselves with security arrangements, traffic restrictions, road closures, and other provisions that would come into force.

Special features are introduced at the Expo every year, including a 'Children's Special'. This is to ensure that children are also part of the spirit of the marathon, and the activity continued through the three days of the Expo.

Another new feature was added in 2009 ‘MINI Consumex’, an exhibition divided in four broad categories: Food and Beverage, Health and Lifestyle, Gaming and Recreation, and Tourism. Every zone at the Consumex, which is part of the Get-Active Expo, had unique entertainment and special features, informed organizers. Promotional activities for the contest were executed through Radio Mirchi, and supported by posters at Cafe Coffee Day outlets and 100 colleges. Five shortlisted bands will play on air on Radio Mirchi, and listeners from the city voted to choose the band that would eventually play at the Marathon.

The Get Active Expo also saw a host of activities like the finale of the Cigna TTK Treadmillion Challenge, running tips from the experts etc. Cigna TTK Treadmillion Challenge, SCMM’s biggest activation, also concluded at the Mirchi Get Active Expo. Also, there were interactive stalls of partners and other leading brands for the benefit of the runners.

Search for the Marathon Band’ was another feature that has been added to SCMM. Through the initiative, an anthem for the marathon was created, and performed on the day of the marathon when the marathon is en-route at Marine Drive. (Rakhi Jerly, 2016)

4.2.2 Case Study - Flavor Radio: Dunkin’ Donuts

(Cannes Lions Award Winner)

Korea’s capital Seoul loves coffee thus it’s called the “City of coffee”. There are over 200 Starbucks Coffee shops and even more local coffee shops even, so the coffee industry is still growing and competition between cafes are becoming even more intense. Dunkin’ Donuts projects the image of a donut shop more than a coffee shop, and as such other places other than Dunkin’ most often come to mind when people are looking for a place to have coffee.

Dunkin’ Donut went on a mission to “Encourage people to choose coffee at Dunkin’ Donuts.

The terrible traffic congestion in Seoul results in people commuting to work primarily via public transportation on buses and subways, these people are busy and, so they stop by cafes on their way to work. The **question** was how do they approach these people?

Idea: Release the aroma of coffee along with radio advertisements! After analyzing the Dunkin' Donuts Jingle they created a machine that releases a coffee aroma. The machine is triggered only by the sound of Dunkin' Donut jingle. This Jingle was inserted at the top of the Dunkin' Donut radio ad. When a Dunkin' Donut ad plays on the radio, a coffee aroma is simultaneously released. Those who noticed the aroma while listening to the ad exhibited some surprising responses. Through positioning, when they exit at their bus stop, they see the Dunkin' Donut shop in front. They were much more inclined to make their stop at Dunkin's.

Result: More than 350,000 people experienced the ad during the campaign. Visitors increased 16% and sale of Dunkin' Donut located by bus stops increased by an impressive 29%. The ideal result is People are now starting to think of Dunkin' Donut as coffee 'expert' and when they think of their morning coffee. (Campaign Asia, n.d.)

Figure 4.5 Flavor Radio



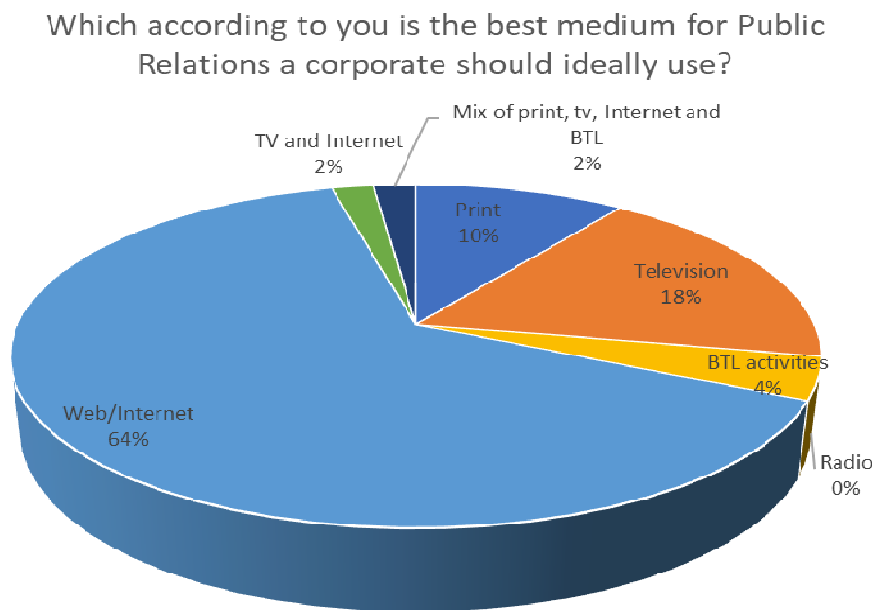
Source: (Campaign Asia, n.d.)

4.3 Research Results & Discussion

The survey was conducted through the internet using google forms. Questionnaire were send out to different PR firms & Agencies in India and their employees were asked to fill out the form. 50 people participated in the survey.

4.3.1 Best Tool for Public Relations

Figure 4.6 Best tool of Public Relations



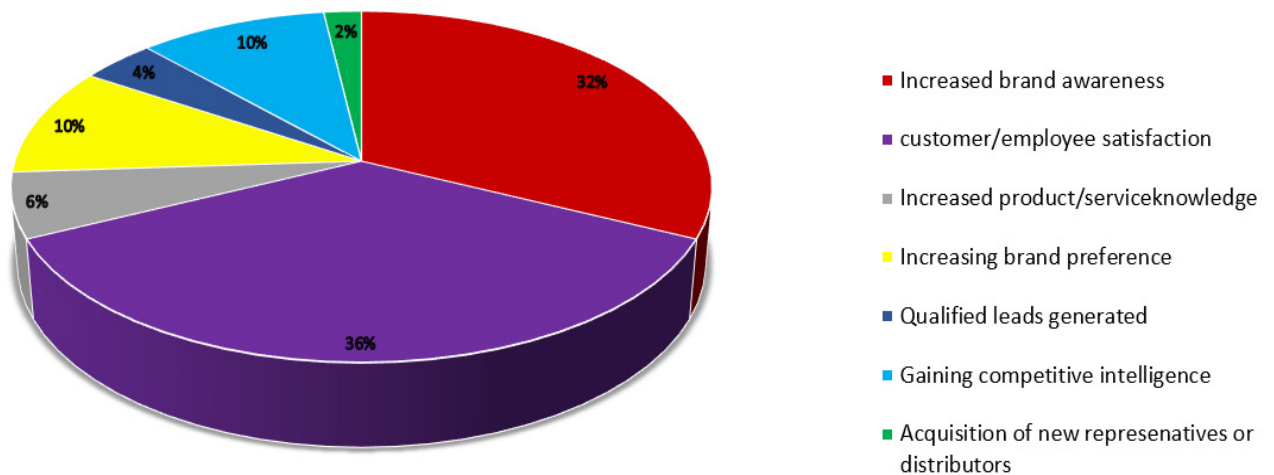
It was observed that 64% of the respondents believed that the best medium for public relations is the World Wide Web or the Internet, whereas 18% believed that Television to be the best, and 10% & 4% consider that Print and BTL activities are the best medium respectively. While about 4% were of mixed opinion with television, print internet and BTL activities work as the best medium. The respondents were asked as to which is the best means to reach out to the various stakeholders, the highest number of people agreed to Web / Internet medium* 64%, which was reasoned as the most credible source along with having a third party (i.e. media) testimony. Moreover, the cost would be much lesser than the other sources and the capacity to reach out to a huge segment of population would be possible.

This is followed by television, which was reasoned by highest reach and giving information in a more exciting manner. The surprise was when Brand Activation was given a preference over established media like radio. Brand Activation would leave back a mark about the company as the message given by the activity. Even if it has to be done in area or audience specific areas, it will have an action oriented results.

4.3.2 Importance of Events in Education and Awareness Creation

Figure 4.7 Success criteria for Brand Activation

Which according to you is the most important criteria for success for brand activation.



As corporations look for strategies to cut through clutter on air, shelf space and online, they are putting greater emphasis on events that offer information and move the stakeholder towards forming and framing a positive image of the corporate.

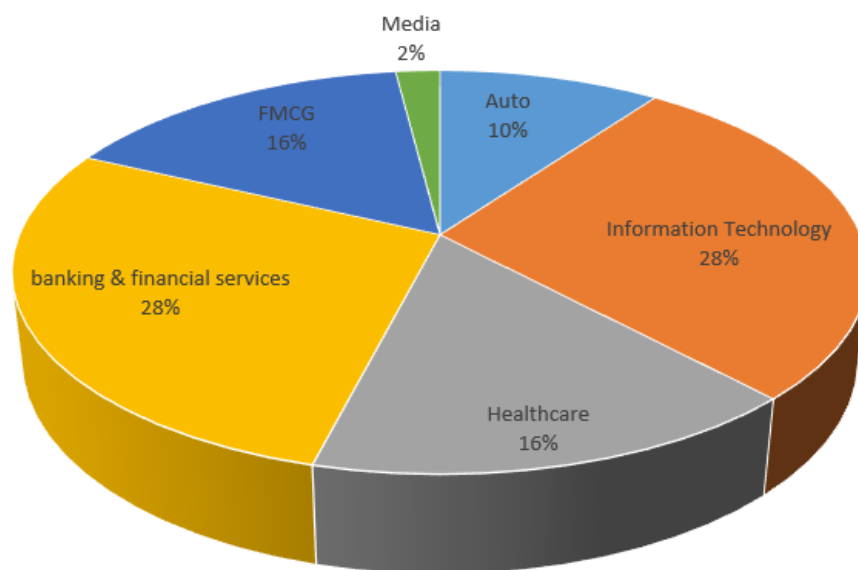
Respondents in the survey were asked to rate the importance of a set of objectives for brand activation on the level of their importance, objectives they considered in determining the success of an activation program. The most rated criteria were customer/employee satisfaction 32% and improving brand awareness 36%. The usage of activation to increase product knowledge 6%, increasing brand preference 10%, the ratings for these two factors are lower than that for improving brand awareness – 36%. These objectives ranked well in

front of other factors such as qualified leads generated 4%, gaining competitive intelligence 10% and acquisition of new reps or distributors 2%. The recognition of the need for knowledge based events is reflected in the makeup of event types as well.

4.3.3 Sectors to Benefit from Activation

Figure 4.8 Sectors to benefit from Brand Activation

Which sector according to you, should BTL (Below the line) activities be focused to meet their communication objectives?



Varying from being a B2B or a B2C company, the PR tools are most likely to vary. When the respondents were asked as to which sector should employ activation to reach out. Information technology (28%) & Banking and financial services (28%) sector ruled the roost for the bouquet of products. It was followed by FMCG (16%) & Health care (16%).

With the advent of various options ranging from tractors and cycles who are extremely popular in rural markets in India, companies like Mahindra and Mahindra are organizing creative contests to educate customers about taking care of their tractors etc. Hero Honda has been doing a series of college activities to encourage safe driving. (Hero MotoCorp Ltd, n.d.) Surprisingly, a lot of interesting responses about sectors came in the form of foods, clothing and apparels, jewelry and lifestyle products. Healthcare industry organizes

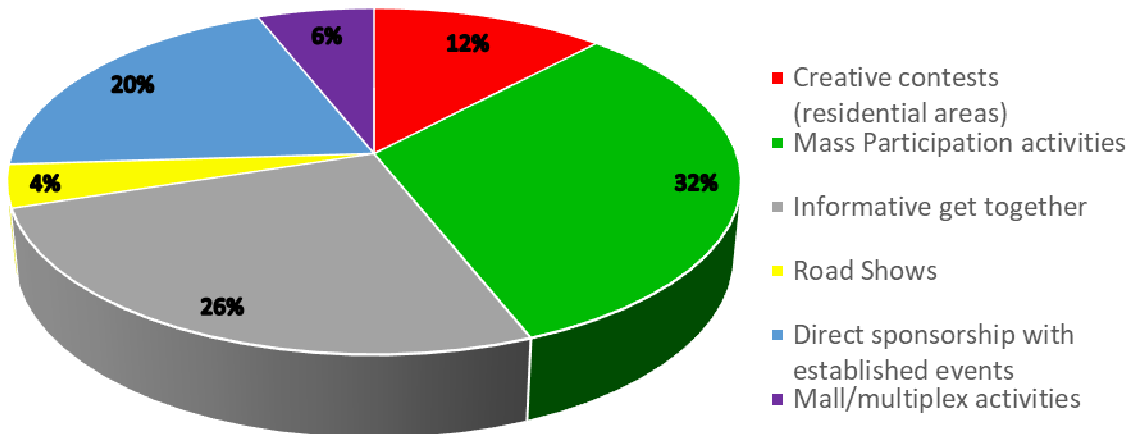
medical camps, walkathons and even creative concepts like a get together of people who weigh 90 kilos or more. Auto (10%) and Media (2%) needs to encourage trials and enter not only customers minds but also their home space.

Banking and Financial Services meets the need of testament of the family participation ranging from home loans to retirement solutions. However, most expressed the need to inculcate the concept of simplicity in the system, which should be communicated through activation. Information Technology gets too intellectual and technical for which it should ideally stick to seminars and conference. However, Infosys and Converageys has gone out of the way to do activities like taking youngsters on board and making them spend a day in IT company.

4.3.4 Best Return on Investment (ROI)

Figure 4.9 Best Return on Investment

According to you, keeping the communication intention and objective as constant, which is the Brand Activation technique with highest return on Investment?



Even in a diverse field like PR and Activation, ROI is kept in mind. A lot of factors such as nature of industry, budget, communication objectives, target audience and the expected amount of word of mouth to be generated. The respondents felt that Mass participation Activities (32%) captures the maximum attention. In a crowded and competitive market,

understanding trends and which technique can help perform best is more important than ever.

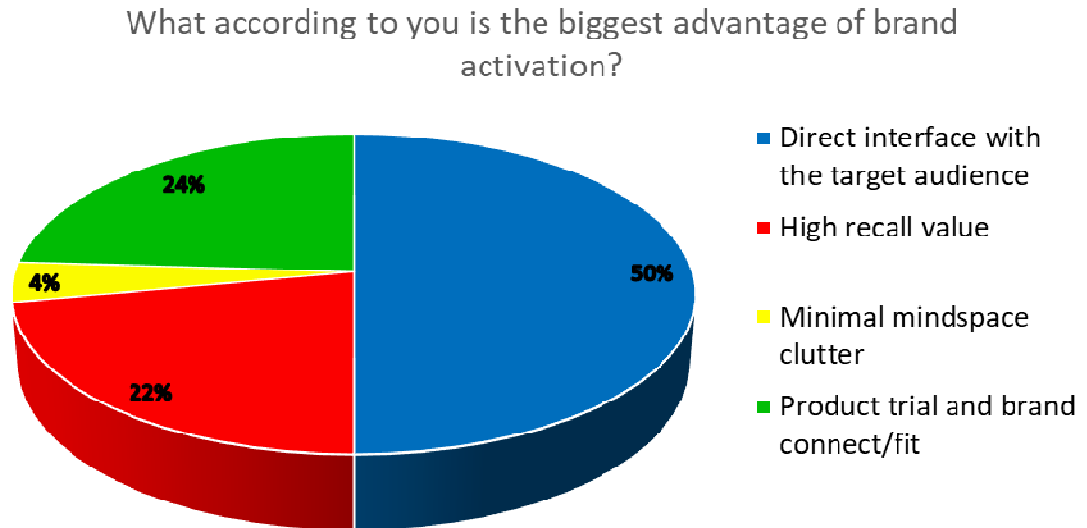
Informative get-togethers (26%) would involve group discussions, seminars, workshops etc. However, most felt that the interest value will be a little dimmed by its informative for the younger audience and FMCG category. Roadshows (4%) are a good hype generator, however, in most cases, all products which would want immediate trial as well as feedback on the spot would go for this method.

Direct Sponsorship (20%) is extremely convenient, less times consuming and highly effective. This does not come exactly in the ambit of brand activation; however, it has generated quite a hype and word of mouth. This would include the fight between various liquor companies to be the title sponsor for the Eurocup, and in India the battle gets more expensive and fiercer to associate with cricket. However, sharing space with other sponsors somewhere is seen as a setback for by most respondents.

Mall/multiplex activities (6%) can prove to be one of the most successful activation programs since, it's the place where most people come with the mindset of having fun and with the intention of buying. Hence, if relevant activities are done there, the participation would be very productive. While a very few (12%) felt that organizing Creative contests in the residential area and going all the way to the target audience's doorstep would capture more attention, in the time convenient to them when they would be in a readily acceptable mindset. This would also mean a crayons brand organizing an exhibition in school premises.

4.3.5 Biggest Advantage of Brand Activation

Figure 4.10 Biggest Advantage of Brand Activation



The first and the biggest advantage that the respondents came up “50%” was having the opportunity to interact with the audience on a personal basis. The various advantages of direct interface have been mentioned earlier. Next was the product trails and brand connect/fit associated with the activity, which covered as much as 24%. After the 26/11 terrorist attacks, there was a mass vigil organized in which forming a Human Chain all around the city was planned. This meant it was an initiative to *connect people*, which immediately brought in Nokia as a brand to participate and do an activity. This remained in the minds of the people of Mumbai as well as national and international media for a long time.

Followed by High recall value which stood at 22%. The brand recall does not simply necessitate the customer remembering the brand, it is them relating to the brand while hearing about the product. If someone says cold drink or carbonated beverages, it transmits to Coca-Cola or Pepsi in our heads or Toothpaste is equivalent to Pepsodent or Colgate. Brand recall can even be secured through an ambassador, for example, Baba Ramdev has now become synonymous to Yoga in India. Fairness cream is always equated to Fair and lovely and energy drink to Red Bull etc. The least was minimum mindspace clutter, this

meant that the pros of print, internet and web media are to be used as a part of the ATL promotion of the activity and the cons of the same media can be eliminated by leading to a physical form. Brand visibility and awareness are the keys to higher brand recall. (Ascent Brand Communications Pvt Ltd, 2017)

5 Conclusion

Branding is much more than advertising. The time has come for companies to leverage the brand asset within the entire organization. The postmodern individual demands that brands live up to their promises in every interaction whether it is through products and services, employees, identity or communication. A coherent brand in these four areas will gain trust and loyalty with its customer enabling profitable relationships between brands and people. (Shahzad, 2011)

In today's complex scenario of 360-degree communications, brand promotion and public relations is taking on a new meaning. To communicate corporate messages or to address niche audiences which are otherwise non-reachable by mass media are one of the main reason why activation is being used. Some of them are listed as below:

Cost efficiency

Since activation doesn't require hiring or renting of airtime or commercial space on any traditional mass media, it proves to be cost effective in comparison to main line advertising.

Measurable ROI

The retailer Henry Wanamaker long ago made the famous observation that half of his advertising was being wasted, but he didn't know which half. This was when the term Public Relations was new. However, measuring PR is even more difficult. However, when it comes to brand activation, newly developed techniques and models can tell PR professionals the most efficient use of resources. The success of any marketing activity is generated by the Return on Investment generated by it. Today's PR managers would want a precise method by which they can forecast the ROI of their marketing communication activities. Methods like DOR (Day after Recall) etc. are to be used along with the mathematical concepts of Rate of Conversion, cost per contact etc.

Support system

Brand activation is no longer used only as a support to mainline advertising and public relations, but it is being used as a primary medium with the support from conventional mass media.

The day the first snake-oil merchant parked his wagon and began espousing his tonic's dazzling array of curative powers, Brand Activation was born. Not only did he inform his potential consumers of his product's qualities, but he allowed sampling and even dragged out the odd compelling testimony from the back of his wagon. Word spread like wildfire of the benefits of Brand X. It would even make the local news. All the traders would want to stock it. All the consumers would want to buy it. Of course, if the product didn't work, it would be universally decried, and he would be run out of town.

That, in its simplest form, is Brand Activation. It is about driving brand growth (both brand equity and sales) from the grassroots up, rather than being sent from the company down to the consumer. Activation invites consumer interaction with the brand, allowing them to experience and form their own perceptions themselves. A positive experience will influence their attitudes towards a brand, their future brand behaviour and the way they talk to others about the brand.

So, at the heart of Activation is a consumer experience with a brand. This is often in the form of an event - a party, a roadshow, a carnival or even a sampling activity. More and more clients are embracing Activation - not as a complete replacement from traditional above-the-line advertising or brand PR, but as a strong compliment to it.

So where do Brand Activation agencies fit in?

PR plays a key role throughout an Activation program. Positive media publicity about an upcoming event provides a credible, independent driver of participation in the brand experience. Similarly, positive media publicity after an event amplifies the experience

beyond just those who were fortunate enough to attend and helps to create desired word of mouth about the experience, and about the brand.

But this is a very competitive space. Branded events and activations are de rigueur. The strength of your media relations and the strength of your Activation program will be put to the test. Not every client has huge budgets to throw the biggest activities, so look for unique features that will appeal to media most relevant to your target. The entertainment, the venue, behind the scenes at the setup, right through to those who attended, can all be worked into relevant and newsworthy angles, influencing public perception and behaviour.

So, in a new world of marketing, where clients spend on more experiential forms of marketing is on the rise, PR will continue to play an important role in delivering on results.

In today's postmodern society, merely offering supreme product features on a functional or emotional level is not sufficient. While the basic idea about active brands is to execute the brand in other terms than marketing, the real value lies in the opportunities it creates. (Sempala, 2014) Most fundamentally, brand activation contributes in creating trust between the customer, the society and the brand (i.e. company). And trust is one of the key factors to create loyalty between consumers and brands. In return, companies can use the loyalty to create re-purchase behaviour or customer recommendation behaviours. Companies can also, according to Court, Leiter and Loch, use customer loyalty to diversify or focus their business. We do not look deeper into these strategies in this paper, but it is worth mentioning that when a company relies on customer loyalty to expand; the key challenge is always to retain the existing relation of trust between the customer and the brand.

If an advertising agency is like a Wife - the Brand marries Advertising and it's a stable long-term relationship, an Experiential Marketing/Brand Promotion Agency is like a mistress - brands go to her for a quick impact and often come back rejuvenated, refreshed, ready.

While traditional ways of doing public relations will continue, the slowdown will force marketers to try non-traditional channels. The classic divide of ATL and BTL will begin to blur and what will matter in the end will be the impact. Some networks have been readying themselves for this already and many such wives have already welcomed this mistress home - Publicis and Solutions (now Digitas), Bates 141 and Sercon, Grey and Rams, Encompass and JWT- have all done this already.

The motley of non-traditional / brand activation agencies are ready to embrace the challenges in their own different ways. Our sex appeal lies in the creation of experience - we believe in bringing brands to life as experiences-experience that creates an impact, through touch and feel, trial; be it a fleet of vans that roam the countryside retailing PC's, roadshows or creative contests that are reached in person to a customer's doorstep.

Brand Activation agencies are in a unique position of making the message deliver. We are in the business of delivering messages and seeing people respond to it. While traditional methods may deliver on communication, we are the conversation specialists - brands talk to the people through us and brands listen to people through us.

The current economic slowdown has been leading to several changes in the industry, media and advertising spends. A gradual shift is beginning to emerge from above-the-line to below-the-line activities, which is due to, in part, the result of changing consumer attitudes and a more sophisticated consumer demand relevant messaging that engages them in a dialog, and which allows them to interact with the marketer through their preferred communication channels. At the same time, technology allows marketers to better target consumers and to better track results and measure ROI of BTL campaigns. (Enigma, 2008)

During Recessionary times, brand activation makes all the more sense to be used as a primary PR tool, this is for the following reasons:

- Brands move away from the typical brand building and PR tools and start to focus more on marketing services which ensure a sales uplift and that is where activation scores.

- As spends go down, brands look at focussing on targeted TG and hence turn to activation.
- Retention becomes more critical than new customers and hence focus all the more on Customer Relationship Management.

Public relations have shifted from a traditional, print-oriented emphasis to that of a multi-faceted marketing discipline. P.R used to mean writing, media relations and special events. Now there are no limits; it may be direct mail or a presentation to Congress. There isn't anything under the marketing umbrella we aren't capable of doing. We never say, 'that's not our job'. If it's part of the marketing mix, it's our job. Incorporating different aspects of promotion and in due course communication in the Public Relations ambit will take the benchmarks for success high, yet also very achievable, and at this point, its trusted to say that Brand Activation is here to stay.

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7 Appendix

Structured Questionnaire:

Q.1 Which according to you is the best medium for Public Relations a corporate should ideally use?

- Print
- Television
- Radio
- BTL activities
- Web/Internet

Q.2 Which according to you is the most important criteria for success for brand activation.

- Increased brand awareness
- Customer/Employee satisfaction
- Increased product/service knowledge
- Increasing brand preference
- Qualified leads generated
- Gaining competitive intelligence
- Acquisition of new representatives or distributors

Q.3 Which sector according to you, should BTL (Below the line) activities be focused to meet their communication objectives?

- Auto
- Information Technology
- Healthcare
- banking & financial services
- FMCG

Q.4 According to you, keeping the communication intention and objective as constant, which is the Brand Activation technique with highest return on Investment?

- Creative contests (residential areas)
- Mass Participation activities
- Informative get together
- Road Shows
- Direct sponsorship with established events
- Mall/multiplex activities

Q.5 What according to you is the biggest advantage of brand activation?

- Direct interface with the target audience
- High recall value
- Minimal mindspace clutter
- Product trial and brand connect/fit

Q.6 Do you recall any BTL activities which according to you have been the best brand fits with regard to their PR objectives?
