



## **Knowledge Exchange Forum (KEF)**

**Date: October 7, 2009**

**Topic: Brands Work Wonders**

TASMAC conducted a very interesting and a fascinating panel discussion on 'Brands Work Wonders' at Hotel Le Royce. TASMAC Knowledge Exchange is a forum where a diverse range of topics which highlight relevant corporate, civic and socio-economic issues are discussed. Panellists are drawn from various sectors of industry and business. . Through these panel discussions, participants can get valuable insights provided by captains of industry and professionals from multitude of corporate houses and eminent personalities from public life.

The Panel discussion 'Brands Work Wonders' was moderated by Nandita Khaire, Director, Cygnus Branding Services who is also a faculty member teaching branding at TASMAC. The panellists included

- Kerman Kasad, Director Corporate Communications, Symantec;
- Shriharsha Koshti, Senior Regional Manager, Sales at Tetra Pak
- Gargi Sharma, Founder Director of Changing Sky.

The discussions began with Nandita introducing the topic to the audience and then asking Kerman how companies go about internalizing a brand for delivering a promise. Mr. Kasad responded by stating that it is the employees who really create a brand so it is important that they believe in it. After the acquisition of Veritas by Symantec, it was important that the employees of both organisations accepted the merger positively. These were two companies in the same industry, however, the products were entirely different. He added, 'When mergers take place, a brand could either be allowed to take its own shape or needs to be controlled on how it gets shaped. Thus, there is a need to effectively communicate regularly with the employees. When two companies come together, different cultures come together. So sometimes there is also a problem of high profile people leaving the organization. Hence, there is a need to bring people together, so that the same core values run throughout the organization.'

Mr. Kasad pointed out that the leader must first lead those values. HR should take an initiative to train the employees so that the core values are ingrained in the organization.

Nandita then moved to Mr. Koshti and raised the important point of brand re-vitalisation. Mr. Koshti responded by giving the example of Asian Paints, where he once worked. He stated, 'At one time even Asian Paints had the need to revitalize the brand. Earlier, Asian paints had used Gattu as a mascot for advertising purposes. However, after some years the company decided to stop using Gattu in its ads. This was for 2 reasons: One, the mascot was becoming more popular than the paint company itself, and two, the mascot in the developed countries was looked down upon and gave the impression that the company was a cheap company.' He continued, 'With this action initially the sales dropped drastically, even the share prices went down. However, today, the company has fully recovered and enjoys an impressive market share'

Nandita then asked Gargi who has worked in the designing sector of branding to speak on her experience in visual branding. Ms. Sharma responded by saying, 'It's very important to choose the right colours, its combination, etc. I would like to give an example of ICICI whose logo we had created. ICICI has a combination of the maroon and orange bands. It's very important that there is consistency in the colour. Not even a slight change is acceptable. So for obtaining this purpose we chose only one vendor who would take care of the consistency.'

The panel discussion was followed by an interactive question and answer session, where the audience had the opportunity of asking questions and clearing their doubts with the august panel. The panellists patiently answered all the questions raised by the members in the audience. Mr. Narasimhappa, the recently retired Chief Commissioner of Income Tax was seen in the audience actively participating in the question and answer session.

This panel discussion was organised in association with DNA, and the hospitality partner for the programme was Hotel Le Royce.