# BRANDING STRATEGIES OF MANAGEMENT INSTITUTES IN UTTARAKHAND REGION- THROUGH BRAND RESONANCE MODEL GIVEN BY KEVIN LANE KELLER

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## INTRODUCTION

Management institute as a brand name has great impact in the mind of prospective students & their parents. Education in the modern era is directly linked up to the job employment opportunities and from an abstract concept of learning it is more of knowledge transfer in relevance measured in terms of future performance which is again being continuously judged by the employers and industrialists'.When we look at today's young generation, we find that management education is the most sought after higher education option for a majority of the brightest and most talented graduates. Branding in context of management institutes not only involves the name, sign, symbol but also the services which are intangible and benefiting the students in shaping their career for future. While discussing branding we cannot ignore brand equity. It is the added value endowed to product or services. In other words, power of brand lies in the mind of existing or potential candidates and what they have experienced directly or indirectly about management institutions. Keller (1993, p. 2) defines brand equity as 'The differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.'

Management institutions as a brand involve creating mental structures and helping candidates to organize their knowledge about the institute's service in a way that clarifies their decision making and, in the process, provides value to the institute.

Broadly, the following factors can be considered to affect branding of management institutions-:

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| 1.Infrastructure including (Classrooms, Reading room, Library, Laboratories, Hostel facility etc.) | 2.Faculty qualification |
| 3.Alumni association's response | 4.Proprietary assets (such as patents, trade mark, and channel relationship with other institutes.) |
| 5.Management association | 6.Admission procedure |
| 7.Teaching | 8.Advertising |
| 9.Placement | 10.Industrial visits/ Training |
| 11.Employees & Others | 13.Extra- curricular Activities |
| 14.Other Facilities (Canteen, Mess, Sports facility etc.) | 15.Seminars/Conferences |

For measuring success of branding, the model of Brand Resonance given by famous scholar Kevin Lane Keller can been used. He has introduced a pyramid of Brand Resonance which refers to the nature of relationship customer has with the brand and the extent to which customers feel that they are in sync with the brand.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Keller (2001,p.14) companies can develop strong brands only if the brand development process includes the following steps:

(1) establishment of proper brand identity,(2) creation of appropriate brand meaning, (3)extraction of the right brand responses, and(4) building of appropriate brand relationship with customers.

Professor Varun Arya has prepared an article and reported management education is the most sought after higher education option for a majority of the brightest and most talented graduates. He found that students look for AICTE approved institutes. In 1987 the Government of India had established a statutory body called "All India Council for Technical Education" (AICTE) with a mandate to ensure and regulate quality in management education in India.

Dr. L.K. Tripathy has written an article on tackling placement issues of students Many management institutes have a dedicated team of professionals, providing training and placement support to the students seeking employment opportunities in the corporate world.

Dr.V.V.S.K Prasadalso talks about Students placements-Problems and issues in the changing environment reported The most significant fact about Campus Recruitment is that instead of the job seekers approaching employers, the employers come to the most suitable prospective candidate with a job offer.

Dr. K.S. Srinivasa Rao has given article on management practices in Indian management institutes and reported difference between Management Institute and a B-School and categorized it in following 1. Management Colleges2. Management Institutes3. Business Schools (B-Schools).

Shreekumar K. Nair and Sadhana Ghosh has studied factors affecting the placement prospects of MBA students. They attempted to link students' placement prospects, operationalised through student perceptions of recruiting organisations to certain academic parameters such as performance in the entrance examination, group discussion, as well as personal interview, grade point average, internship marks, and ratings on extra- curricular activities. They found that students having prior work experience got placement in organisations which are perceived to be better.

Richard K. Coll* and Chris Eames has gone through on the role of the placement coordinator assuming an alternative model. They reported three models for the role of the placement coordinator; a simple administrative role, as part of a centralized unit of coordinators whose role is still substantially administrative in nature, and a model in which coordinators hold joint positions as placement coordinators and teaching faculty within their specialty areas. Such a model increases the opportunity to forge strong links with employers, leading to collaboration in other ways but have relatively high administrative costs.

**Stewart Collins and Saija Turunen has done their research on** College Based Placement Co-ordinators in the United Kingdom on their Perceptions of Stress. They found Placement co-ordinators on college-based social work courses have a demanding task, liaising with students, tutors and agency training sections in order to provide appropriate practice learning opportunities. This research examines job satisfaction, pressure and constraints, psychological well-being, the impact of the host institution, and some changes that might alleviate stress. It resulted that the co-ordinators enjoyed considerable autonomy and a reasonable amount of support. Generally, they had positive attitudes towards the institutions where they worked. Males tended to emphasize the importance of the institutional context rather than females. However, around half of the placement co-ordinators had considered giving up their posts; only about a quarter liked their work. Respondents enjoyed only limited job satisfaction, felt pressurized, subject to excessive demands and were ambivalent in attitudes about managers, colleagues, students and practice teachers.

Prahlad(Peggy) Krishnamurthi in their article has reviewed the pyramid model, it is useful to heed Keller's advice not to take shortcuts: "The length of time to build a strong brand will therefore be directly proportional to the amount of time it takes to create sufficient awareness and understanding so that firmly held and felt beliefs and attitudes about the brand are formed that can serve as the foundation for brand equity."

Prof R K Gupta, has written about brand development and said that a brand cannot be built around advertising alone. There have to be some strong underlying product characteristics or features, which then get associated with the brand image. In so many of the cases, the features are subjective (or soft) like taste, lifestyle, fashion, and the associations with the brand cannot easily be replicated by a competitor.

Prof R K Gupta, has issued an article on management education development and said as the business is getting global, day-by-day, there is an increasing need for the colleges to produce global managers. Therefore, it has become necessary that Indian management education should also become more global. The message is quite clear, the response to the globalization of business is the globalization of management education.

Prof R K Gupta, has issued an article on secrets of successful branding 'Successful Brands', he said Power Brands are invaluable assets of companies in this highly competitive world of goods and services marketing. In fact, it is one of the best intellectual properties a company can possess and thus ensure for itself sustained profitability and growth rate.

Fang, X.; Lee, S.; Lee, T.E. and Huang, W., in their research on "Critical Factors Affecting Job Offers for New MIS Graduates" has shown a recent survey by the National Association of College and Employers found that 42.4 percent of employers indicated that they expect to cut college hiring (Lee, 2003).According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of unemployed workers between the age of 20 and 24 is 1.4 million, up to 60 percent from four years ago. Today's graduating seniors are no longer under any delusion. A survey by job-search website Monster.com found that 61 percent of college graduating seniors expected to move in with their parents (Chen, 2003). Since the end of the dot-corn boom, unemployment among IT professional has soared, reaching a high of 6.5 in March 2003. Most observers believe that outsourcing, immigration, and continued pressure to lower costs denote that white-collar workers will continue to struggle to find new employers. And these factors generally hit the software field harder than other technical fields. MIS students are facing greater challenges in terms of finding MIS full-time job offers.

One study (Gault, Redington, Schlager, 2000) reported that new employees with internship experience received greater entry-level compensation than non-interns, with starting salaries averaging $2,240 (9.23%) higher than non-intems. The time for interns to obtain their first positions was significantly shorter than for non-interns. However, the analysis in the study did not reveal that, for undergraduate business alumni, major area of study nor GPA was correlated with time to obtain first job, starting salary, and current salary. There was also no correlation between the above-mentioned measures and gender. Tests for interactive effects involving GPA, major, gender, and other demographic factors also failed to produce any significant results. For graduates with equal years of experience, only

internship participation resulted in a significant difference in the aforementioned rewards. Graduates with business majors were the participants in this study; graduates with MIS majors were not separated out.

Callanan, G. and Benzing, C., has issued an article on "Assessing the Role of Internships in the Career-Oriented Employment of Graduate College Students, they assessed the relationship between the completion of an internship assignment prior to graduation and subsequent employment in a career-oriented job after graduation. Subjects for the study were 163 seniors graduating with a business degree from a large public university in the mid-Atlantic region of the USA. Results showed that the completion of an internship assignment was linked with finding career-oriented employment, but was not related to a higher level of confidence over personal fit with the position that was selected. The article presents implications for future research and discusses practical issues related to the use of internships and other forms of anticipatory socialization in the career management activities of college students.

Mustafa Ozibilgin and Ahu Tatli of School Of Business Management ,Queen Mary University Of London, concluded in their research that successful planning and delivery of work placements  require multi-party and multi-faceted approaches .This can be achieved if work placements are designed with unique recognition of labour market dynamics, social and economic circumstances, unique institutional arrangements and requirements in both universities and host institutions, as well as the particular conditions, expectations and career ambitions of students who take up these work placements.

Jelena Jokanović, the author of corporate brand equity valuation in the food and beverage industry in Slovenia has reported that Brand equity is a measure of the health of the brand. Thus, it can be used for marketing decision-making. In addition, brand equity cannot be viewed only from the companies' perspective, but one must be concerned with the way customers perceive product or service brands.

## NEED OF THE STUDY

Are these branding strategies adopted by management institution in Uttarakhand, really strengthening their image?

Branding of management institutes in Uttarakhand is an important constituent of the progress of institute as well as the nation. It plays major role in placement of students and mobilizing the young talent and channelizing them into their deserving prospects. Thus, by performing a research on branding strategies of management institutes in Uttarakhand, it would be useful for the recruitment companies, students and for the institute itself to find out the best possible avenue for overall growth.

As Uttarakhand has a wide range of management institution in remote areas which can prosper with an efficient branding , a growing economy, greater confidence, greater thrust of technology resulted in advanced management which has increased the appetite for job opportunities have helped institutions not to just grow their business but also to the companies to drum their profile into shape.

Not much research work has been done in the field of branding strategies in management institutes in Uttarakhand. Thus, an analytical study would help in providing important insight into the effectiveness and developmental procedure of the selected institutes in Uttarakhand. We need to find ways and strategies which will give us the guidelines on important factors that constitute the brand equity work would go a long way in helping institutes in efficient practice of services and enhancing prosperity in the growth of region.

## MODEL OF BRAND RESONANCE PYRAMID APPLIED TO MANAGEMENT INSTITUTES
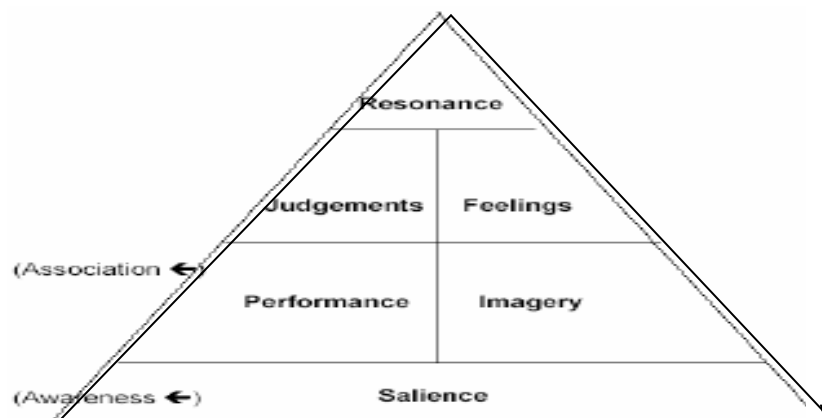


Source: Keller, 2001, p. 19

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This model has the following sub-dimensions:

**Salience** includes: Category identification and Needs satisfied

**Performance** includes: Primary characteristics and secondary features like Product Reliability, Serviceability, Efficiency and Effectiveness, Empathy, Style, Design & Price.

**Imagery** includes: User profiles, Purchase & Usage situations, Personality, Values, History, Heritage and Experiences.

**Judgment** includes: Quality, Credibility, Consideration, Superiority.

**Feelings** include: Warmth, Fun, Excitement, Security, Social approval, Self-respect.

**Resonance** includes: Loyalty, Attachment, Community and Engagement.

1. The 1st level of the pyramid deals with establishing the identity of the Brand. Keller suggests a single building block for this phase and terms it brand salience. From the point of view of management institutes, for building an institute as a brand, it needs awareness campaigns which would not only build depth (ensuring that whether institute will be remembered and how they grade it) but also breadth (the range of situations in which institute comes to their mind as if someone requires it).

2. The 2nd level of pyramid deals with giving meaning to the brand and here Keller presents two building blocks brand performance & brand imagery. For an institute we need to explore the first block i.e. performance of the institute on the basis of its certain characteristics like reliability, serviceability, efficiency and effectiveness. Along with that the important factors of empathy, infrastructure and fee structure etc. also play an important role here. Another important aspect of this factor is the impact upon prospective candidates of others' experiences or opinions.

   The second block of this level is Brand imagery. It deals with the way in which the brand attempts to meet customers' psychological and social needs. We need to examine people's response why they are choosing the particular management institute and how they connect it with their mental and social need. Whether it is matching with their demographic profile (like age or income) or has psychological appeal in that it matches their outlook on life (conservative, traditional, liberal, creative etc.). Imagery is also formed by association of personality traits (honest, lively, competent, rugged etc.)

This can be reviewed by measuring the success rate of advertisement and words of mouth recommendations which creates strong, favorable and unique associations for the institute.

3. Third level is about developing a consumer response to the brand. Keller proposes two building blocks for this namely brand judgment and brand feelings. We need to gather the information for brand judgment about the perceived quality (expectations), its credibility (the extent to which the institute is perceived as having expertise, being trust worthy and likable, its consideration (people are likely to accept it or not) and superiority. We need to examine the extent which people view that institute is unique and better than others.

   Another block at this level is brand feelings refer to consumers' emotional responses to the brand. Keller identifies six brand building feelings that he believes consumers can have towards a brand namely warmth, fun, excitement, security, social approval and self-respect.

   The first three are experimental / observed and latter three are private (secretive) and enduring. These parameters can be studied from the responses of candidates, individuals that how they are connecting themselves with it.

4. The final layer of the pyramid deals with consumers with the brand and here Keller introduces the sixth building block which he calls brand resonance. It is identified by four building characteristics – loyalty, attachment, community and engagement.

   Important parameters to be measured would include the loyalty of workers, management, alumni association and others. The left side of the pyramid shows the rational route to brand building where as the emotional route is right hand side. The fact is that when institutes are mushrooming day by day there is a fierce competition among management institutes and so their survival is becoming critical without branding.

   It has been observed that there is an increasing tendency among B-schools to view students as customers of the B-school and B-schools are adopting marketing practices

similar to any other service. B-schools should address the needs of all stakeholders such as students, faculty, corporate, society, and media. Brand management in B-schools has not been researched exhaustively in  B-schools of Uttarakahnd. The proposed conceptual model draws constructs from literature review and qualitative discussions with academics. The model is specific to the Indian context, but care has been taken to incorporate inputs from current research in branding  concepts and practices followed in Uttarakahnd. The authors propose to validate the conceptual model of brand building with a sample of Indian B-schools through an empirical study. Managerial implications and further research potential B-schools  in  India  face  tough competition from Indian to international B-schools. With more-and-more B-schools brands offering similar courses, there is a  need  for B-schools to break away from the clutter and offer innovative, market-oriented courses. B-school top management has to understand what a B-school brand is.

It is important to know the process of understanding what goes into building  a B-school brand. Branding of services, though very evident in industries like airlines, hotels, banking,etc. is still young in educational services like B-schools. B-school branding can  be researched from various perspectives and the elements of B-school branding are likely to be quite different from other services branding because of the number of stakeholders involved, role of top management, and changing market dynamics. If the B-schools are able to work on all the important factors at different levels of the model, this will definitely result in an improvement in the branding f the institute.

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