

# Grameenphone presents Bangladesh BRAND FORUM 2007

Inspiring Excellence in Branding



Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim



In a global economy subject to changing market dynamics and heightened competition, the role of brands has never been greater. Today's business world rewards companies that have stronger brand. When Proctor & Gamble acquired Gillette, it did not pay \$ 57 billion for Gillette's facilities, plants, and product inventory. P&G paid that much because of the value of Gillette's consumer brands, which it saw as reliable cash generators for years to come.

How many Bangladeshi brands we can claim to have similar strength and brand power? Not many. It is time we realize the value and power of brands and apply the principle to build enduring brands.

Timing of Bangladesh Brand Forum could not be more appropriate. And I congratulate Brandzeal, to take such an initiative where we focus on knowledge and skills to develop ourselves. The forum brings for the first time a distinguished panel of Global and local brand experts who has got vast experience in building some of the most recognized brands in the global and local markets. I am sure the participants will gain valuable insights from these sessions to unlock the secret of brands.

IBAs initiative in joining hands with Brandzeal to showcase core-branding concepts through the unique Brand Concept Fair is highly innovative in nature. This fair stands out, as it focuses not on company's products rather on the thoughts that went behind in making those products great.

In this defining moment of Bangladesh history we hope the forum will begin a new era for our corporate world who will apply their thoughts and creativity in creating brands that not only stands the test of time in Bangladesh market but shines as a symbol of New Bangladesh in the global arena.

I wish success for the Bangladesh Brand Forum.

GETEERA SAFIYA CHOWDHURY  
Advisor  
Ministry of Industries  
Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh

Dated: April 23, 2007



Whether we actually live in a truly Globalized world is certainly arguable. There is also argument as to whether the very notion of a world without any economic boundaries is actually possible. What has made the World a single market though, is the way we are thinking and conducting business.

Business today is all about channeling core competencies for economic progress. These core competencies establishes a brand. A brand may be a country. For example, "Made in Japan" was and probably is still a strong brand. Companies like Sony have leveraged that brand to establish what we today simply regard as Sony. So much so, that we no longer feel the need to identify where it came from although it may have come from Singapore.

That is the strength of a brand. Once it is established, leveraging it is easy. Bangladesh is a country which does extraordinary things. It is a huge exporter of RMG goods which is branded later into what we know to be Tommy Hilfiger, J.C. Penny, Van Heusen, Levis Strauss, and so on. We therefore could and can be a brand for RMG goods. When one looks around, it is easy to spot that this idea has certainly sunk into the minds of many entrepreneurs in Bangladesh. That is why we now see many "brands" starting to establish themselves, be it in a small scale, across the country. Given time, these brands could certainly move abroad and establish in the long run what we can truly call "a global brand".

Establishing a brand is not easy. There have been many which have not stood the test of time. For the ones that were successful, the name itself would sell in billions. As the CMO of one of the most powerful brands in Bangladesh, Grameenphone, my working scenario is quite humbling. The Grameenphone brand has not been built overnight. It has taken over 10 years to establish a brand that is a part of the lives of over 12 million subscribers. Although the number is something that makes us humble, we are also indebted to good and timely decisions, patient thinking, logical analysis, and strategic associations and decisions that have helped to bring this company and the Grameenphone name to where it is. We at Grameenphone would like to prepare ourselves for what lies ahead. With new ways of thinking to this market, we are sure to be able to deliver more.

All in all, what we intend to do is establish a bigger brand and I strongly believe that "brand thinking" is the only way forward to ensure continued success. Bangladesh is moving towards that new way of thinking.

This Brand Forum, therefore, is a wonderful platform for corporates, big businesses, SMEs as well as entrepreneurs to share and gain knowledge from each other. Grameenphone is proud to present this event and we hope that this effort will aid in knowledge sharing for years to come.

Stein Naevdal  
CMO  
Grameenphone Ltd.

## Bangladesh Brand Forum

Brands are recognized to be the most valuable asset for any company. In the 1980's the intangible elements (Goodwill) that made up the total market value of the FTSE 100 companies (London Stock Exchange) was an average of around 40%. Today, it is more than 70%. Today it can be demonstrated that the brand- whether in the corporate, service, product or not- for- profit sector- is any organization's most important asset. It is estimated that one third of the world's wealth can be accounted for by brands.

Despite its elevated status in the global corporate world, Bangladeshi companies are yet to take the full benefits of the brand power. Brand management is holistic and need to be done by involving the whole organization in bringing the promise alive to the consumer, something which is not a very easy task. When asked how he builds the brand, Southwest Airlines CEO replied, that each traveler comes into contact with Southwest for 10 times during one journey from ticket inquiry to luggage collection and on an average 5 million travelers chose Southwest every year, that means 50 Million consumer touchpoint where Southwest has to deliver its brand promise every time and consistently. Although, daunting the returns are huge, as is evident from the success of Southwest Airlines.

Most producers in Bangladesh are in unbranded, highly price sensitive, primary commodities which is a very risky business. Our market of sameness means everyone is offering almost the same product, communicating in almost the same manner, where customers don't have any other criteria to choose from except price. This results in companies either offering reduced price to consumers or to the trade, both of which reduces the profit margin. A brand mindset always focuses on offering more value and not on price only. It is all about standing for something unique in the minds of the consumer.

Branding is not an option that we might do, it is a necessity as we become a brand in the consumers mind whether we want it or not. Challenge is how we can own the desired space to reap the maximum benefit. The 1st Bangladesh Brand Forum hopes to present brands in its right context to the corporate world. Its vision is highlighting the value and fundamentals of branding, which we hope will inspire our local entrepreneurs and business leaders to innovate and build their business based on sound consumer insight, creativity and passion.

The Forum for the first time brings global brand experts from around the world who have extensive knowledge, experience and insights in building some of the most powerful brands of the world. It also brings very successful local experts who have already proven how brands can make a difference in our local context. Forum participants will surely gain invaluable lessons in the intricacies of brands, its values, and ways to extract the maximum benefit out of the philosophy. A brand cannot be built through its marketing team only. A true brand consistently delivers its promise through all consumer touchpoint, a challenging task only possible when all the employees appreciate the value of brands and are aligned with the core brand strategy. Bangladesh Brand Forum in the mission to spread the knowledge to the wider present & future corporate executives is also organizing a unique knowledge fair at Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka. The Brand Concept Fair will present the core branding and marketing concepts to the visitors. Each visitor will get a brief tour on the theory, key steps, processes and application of the concepts in a world class example.

Our next initiative in creating world class brand in Bangladesh is preparing the minds that will create those brands. The forum is starting a Brand Exchange Forum at [www.bangladeshbrandforum.com](http://www.bangladeshbrandforum.com) where anyone in Bangladesh can register and send a problem or query that he/she is facing in any of the brand development or execution areas. Other members and experts will try to provide solution to that problem. We hope that, this will enable much wider access to the thoughts and ideas of branding across all the cities of Bangladesh. A number of forums global and local experts who are coming to the forum will be present at the exchange forum to offer their advice.

The next Brand Forum will take place in 2009 where the forum will again bring the latest thoughts and expertise in the world of branding to you.

Let the journey begin.



To business people attending the 1st Bangladesh Brand Forum During 28th - 29th April in Dhaka.

Bangladesh is at the stage where its business and government personnel need to develop a dynamic marketing mindset regarding problems and opportunities that they face. We have seen the example of other Asian countries reach a stage of a high rate of economic growth. Their people are working hard, turning problems into solutions, and building local, national and international brands where there were formerly only commoditized products. They turned their minds to think about consumer and business needs and found ways to offer more value than their competitors. Marketing is a mindset. Bangladesh must also move to this mindset whose mantra is "Create Superior Value for Chosen Groups of Customers." I hope that you will succeed.

Philip Kotler  
S. C. Johnson Distinguished Professor of International Marketing  
Marketing Department  
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I am delighted that Brand Zeal has taken the initiative to launch The Bangladesh Brand Forum on the 28th and 29th April, 2007. I am also very excited to be participating in it. Furthermore, this also happens to be my first visit to Bangladesh, so I am particularly looking forward to it. The Bangladesh Brand Forum in my opinion is an idea whose timing cannot be more opportune because Bangladeshi companies and brands today are at a critical junction and are facing four major challenges:

- > Rise of two economic juggernauts namely, China and India and consequently competition from Chinese and Indian companies and brands
- > Globalization and homogenization of tastes, fashion, trends, wants etc make consumers seek aspirational global brands instead of local brands
- > Rapid Commoditisation of brands leading to price based competition
- > Growing Importance of Intellectual property, design etc as we are moving into a knowledge based economy

The way forward for Bangladesh Companies is very clear - To jump into the brand wagon! To build world class brands that capture the imagination of not only Bangladeshi consumers but the global consumers. The most effective and often the quickest way to compete with Global companies is by creating strong brands.

One of my friends, a wealthy businessman from Dhaka told me recently, "branding is for big western companies that have a lot of money. I think my business neither needs it nor can afford it now!" I found this remark very unsettling, yet representative of how most Asian companies view branding - as that of an expensive luxury that can wait!

As a brand strategist who has consulted with several Asian Companies and GOVTs for over 15 years, a curious paradox that has never ceased to baffle me is: Why does Asia have so many big companies, but very few big brands? These big companies in Asia can definitely challenge the big MNCs from the west in size and scale. But when it comes to brands, Asia seems to woefully lag behind. Think Mitsui, Hyundai, Proton, Sumitomo, Haier, Reliance, Petronas, Telecom Malaysia, NOL, Creative Technologies, etc, you will probably get the picture. These are pretty big companies with arguably world class products and services. They certainly have world class scale in most cases. But are they world class brands? This is an important question that lies at the heart of my argument.

Inspite of having nearly 60 % of the world's population, almost 150 US dollar billionaires, 5 Tiger economies, the world's second largest economy (It's Japan by a mile just in case you thought it was China), two economic juggernauts (India and China), Asia's performance is underwhelming when it comes to its brand scorecard with fewer than 10 brands among the top 50 world's most valuable Brands list.

Why then is Asia facing this "big companies but small brands paradox"? And what is holding Asian companies from creating outstanding world beating brands? Is it lack of brand expertise? Is it lack of will or lack of belief? Or is there a deeper problem that is beneath the radar?

As this question was bothering me for a long time, I spent a good part of the last 2-3 years trying to understand the real issues, challenges and questions that most Asian companies are grappling with vis-à-vis building brands. I have identified 7 big challenges or issues most Asian brands are struggling to address and deal with:

1. Asian Companies believe brand building is a luxury and not a necessity
2. Asian Companies continue to think in terms of products and manufacturing and not brands
3. Asian Companies do not understand their customers as well as the Global Brands do
4. Branding Through Testosterone and Instinct
5. Brands are seen as an expense and not as an asset by most Asian Companies
6. Brands are built on expensive advertising created by Advertising Agencies
7. Branding is about getting your logo out there, creating slogans and communicating cool things about your product or company

In the final analysis, I think Bangladesh falls under the same spectrum, which has all the characteristics of Asian brands and maybe a little more in that regard. With the way the economy is growing, and the potential that it possess, specially with all the initiatives that are going through now, I can tell you this much, a large number of companies and brands will be eyeing the country as it offers vast untapped opportunity. Bangladeshi companies do have a significant catching up to do because your consumers soon will be extremely brand conscious which probably means, if you are not a strong brand, you have no future. Secondly, given the intense competition and the cheap manufacturing options available in Asia, the choice is very clear for most Asian Companies, if you don't get on the brand wagon real fast, you are nothing more than commodities. Finally, Asia is where the opportunity lies and where the action is. So if the Asian brands don't seize them, Global western brands will! Or as one of my clients put it, "if you don't eat your lunch, Some one else will". I wish Bangladesh Brand Forum will be the catalyst, to elevate Bangladeshi companies in the next level.

Karthik Siva,  
Chairman  
Global Brand Forum.



I am proudly presenting IBA, a brand name by itself, as a partner of this international brand forum. Bangladesh Brand Forum is a very timely initiative by IBA, Brandzeal and Grameenphone where the true value of brands is highlighted to our corporate world. In today's knowledge economy a company must focus on improving its knowledge base, updating for what is the best practice around the world, something not regularly done in Bangladesh. This brand forum has brought global and local experts to share the best practices in branding from all over the world. I hope our corporate bodies will be inspired from the stories and case studies and will put those insights into developing world class brands.

Development of human resources of a company should fall under the top priority for any company. To grow on a sustainable basis a company should improve the knowledge base of all its employees, and not just the top management. I am especially pleased with the first knowledge fair that is organized at IBA where knowledge is shared to all. The fair focuses on different marketing and branding concepts and most importantly will make an attempt to link theory with practice. This innovative initiative surely will benefit tremendously all the visitors who are involved in business of any sort.

Brand forum is also going to start a know how exchange where anyone can register free at the Bangladesh Brand Forum website and pose their question/problem and all the other members along with the experts will try to provide solution. Through this forum we can combine the power of all our combined knowledge with technology and share the knowledge among all.

I wish all the success for the forum.

Prof. Dr. S. M. A. Faliz  
Vice Chancellor  
University of Dhaka



Bangladesh Brand Forum is a very timely initiative and IBA, a brand name by itself, is proud to be a partner of this international brand forum.

From my personal perspective a brand is perhaps the sum total of all that is known, felt and perceived about a company, service or product. Branding, then, is the process of making products and companies into brands- the consistent and disciplined way a company communicates a brand's essence to the public. Consumers' response to the brand revolves around the brand's image. This makes the concept an essential input into marketing strategy since a positive, strong brand image will presumably lead to choosing a particular brand.

Therefore it makes sense to understand that branding is not about getting one's target market to choose one over the competition, but it is about getting one's prospects to see one as the only one that provides a solution to their problem. To succeed in branding one must understand the needs and wants of customers and prospects. It is the sum total of their experiences and perceptions, some of which one can influence, and some that one cannot. It's important to spend time investing in researching, defining, and building your brand. After all brand is the source of a promise to consumer.

I am sure this forum will open a historical edition to the growth and creation of local brands for Bangladesh. Let us all work together to create more IBA's that is proudly representing the academia of not just Bangladesh but perhaps even beyond the seven seas.

I wish all the success for the forum

Muhammad Ziaulhaq Mamun, Ph.D.  
Professor & Director, IBA



On behalf of Brandzeal and Bangladesh Brand Forum, I would like to welcome all to the 1st Bangladesh Brand Forum.

Brands are powerful weapons changing the entire landscape of industries. Great Brands touch people, great brands strike a personal chord with us. They make us feel better, different, bigger, smaller, happier more comfortable, warmer, more confident. Brands are about hearts and minds, feelings and emotions. They touch us. They do so because they are associated with values with which we identify. Great brands stand for something, something which people believe in and which matters to them.

The impact of brands is now manifest in every single aspect of business life, from the smallest decision in the corner store to the biggest decision in the largest company. Inside and outside the organization the brand is all embracing. It touches all of our business activities. The brand delivers in a very concentrated form, a business vision, business plan, corporate culture, image and many more aspects of business life that were previously conceptually compartmentalized. It means that every one of us needs an understanding of what branding really is. In 1988 British Foods company Rank Hovis McDougal made history by becoming the first firm to include a brand valuation on its balance sheet- attaching an asset value to its brands. The brand is now becoming the dominant component in the financial valuation of any enterprise.

To demonstrate how great is the economic contribution of brands to companies, consider that the McDonalds brand accounts for 70% of shareholder value while the Coca Cola brand alone (not including other brands in the company's portfolio) accounts for 51% of the stock market value. We should always remember that brands succeed because people want them. Far from being bullies they are the ultimate accountable institution. If people do not like the product, service or corporate behavior, they will stop buying it. Brands only become powerful when it is producing a great product or service, and is doing it in a way that improves people's lives and communities.

Brands are the best incentive for companies to behave well, as it gives them a reputation to protect, wherever in the world they operate. Till date, branding in its truest sense, is absent in majority of our companies. The result is very clear, we have handful of brands that have stood the test of time for the last 2 decades. As our economy grows, number of international brands coming to Bangladesh will only increase, a trend which has already started. If local companies do not connect with the consumers emotionally, something which is only possible through branding their market shares will keep on dwindling.

For Bangladeshi companies wishing to build a sustainable business or taking their product or services to the global market, branding is the road to travel. This is the strategy that has been missing in many of our board meetings, something we must change. Because a strong brand is essential for survival in the coming days. Our corporate world need to prepare itself to face globalization. We can only do that when, we realize the value of intangibles like Brands and Creativity. To create something unique we need to blend the global best know how with our own passion, local know-how and create something unique. We need to understand that, we can never stand out by copying. Bangladesh Brand Forum is designed to bring the global best practices and knowledgebase and blend it with our local expertise.

We hope The Forum, will provide the necessary insight and knowledge to inspire our corporate world to excel in branding. The Forum also includes a unique Knowledge Fair ('Brand Concept Fair') at IBA, University of Dhaka where the key brand concepts will be presented. We are greatly indebted to IBA for supporting the entire forum and specially in actively working to make the Concept Fair happen. We are specially grateful to our Platinum Sponsor Grameenphone; the leading mobile phone company and one of the most powerful brand in the country, without whose support this forum would not take place. We also want to thank our other partner Global Brand Forum, the media partners Channel 1 and The Daily Star, hospitality partner Pan Pacific Sonargaon & Official carrier Etihad Airlines. Event of such magnitude needs support from different sectors, and all the partners extended their full support in making the forum happen.

I will end with a quote from the famous French writer Marcel Proust The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes I hope the forum will help us to develop our new eyes

Shariful Islam  
Convenor, Bangladesh Brand Forum  
CEO, Brandzeal

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