



## Build a brand, be global

Marketing guru Philip Kotler asks Bangladesh to work on its potential

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**M**ARKETING guru Philip Kotler suggested Bangladesh and its corporate leaders should focus on developing global brands for sustainable development.

Bangladesh and China have no global brands although the populations of the two countries are higher than that of many other countries, said the marketing guru. Whereas, many countries like Switzerland with a population of only seven million have a good number of international brands, he said.

"I think a large country like Bangladesh with 160 million people should develop strong international brands in certain industries by emerging as a centre of excellence," said Kotler who visited Bangladesh last week.

For achieving that, the country should identify its priority sectors and develop expertise in those to ensure faster economic progress, he added.

"You don't need to be good in every aspect of the economy," he said. "Study the best companies in each industry, choose industries you want to excel in and then reach out," said Kotler.

Kotler visited the country for the first time on an invitation from Ban-

gladesh Brand Forum. He took part in a number of sessions with the media, academics, young marketers and corporate leaders here.

The 80-year-old professor of international marketing at J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management of Northwestern University in USA is acclaimed for writing textbooks on marketing and broadening the idea of marketing.

He became an icon in the academic arena for popularising a groundbreaking theory of marketing - the Four Ps (product, price, place and promotion).

Kotler said Bangladesh is doing well in readymade garments, pharmaceuticals and food production, but still it has not worked out in which sector it wants to be a pioneer.

"Your garment goes to Marks and Spencer. Made in Bangladesh has got a good meaning," he said.

He said Bangladesh has to promote the brand "Made in Bangladesh" as brand is a story and marketing is telling the story.

Kotler suggested Bangladesh should focus on widening its industry base, which generates more foreign exchange through export and also attracts foreign capital.

"Marketing really means creating fans. The magic of marketing lies in

being present at the right time with the right product at the right place with the right people. The great companies always build community," he said.

Kotler wants to see Bangladesh on the world map with some of its great companies so that they have fans worldwide.

"The country is good in disaster management," said Kotler. "So the government should brand it globally as 'Solution Bangladesh'." Bangladesh should be included in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as it is a big country in terms of population, he added.

"To brand Bangladesh better, the people concerned should run a good campaign in those countries about which Bangladesh wants to know a lot and in which it wants to sell its products or services in increasing volumes."

The professor asked Bangladesh to target an exclusive section of people abroad, especially those who have capital. "You don't need 6.5 billion people of the world to know about you," he said.

Kotler stressed the need for a strong tourism industry, saying it plays an important role in portraying a good image of the country among people abroad.

He suggested providing a positive experience to the customers because

it is an essential tool in developing attraction and affection towards the brand or in other words, becoming a fan of the brand.

For example, Volvo is not only a product but it also portrays the experience of using the product, he said. Kotler suggested developing a brand that touches people's mind as well as heart.

Kotler also asked the marketers to focus on value driven marketing approach, which is known as 'Marketing 3.0' model.

The model of 'Marketing 3.0' treats customers not as mere consumers but as complex, multi-dimensional human beings. "Today's customers are choosing products and companies that satisfy deeper needs for creativity, community and idealism."

So, the old rules of marketing will not help them do this. The corporate houses should focus on value-based marketing.

He said an average company does not last long. "Ethics and values of companies are most important issues in branding and marketing."

About marketing of public services, he advised bureaucrats to set a target and evaluate the performances against the target, and arrange training for their subordinates. He asked the government and private companies to develop and foster a culture of

innovation to win the heart of the customers.

He said Bangladesh can follow the example of Japan, which made better and cheaper products to lift its economy from the devastation of the World War II.

"Japan, after the Second World War, started copying US products, but they made it better and cheaper," he said, adding that the strategy helped Japan win. After four to five years, the US manufacturers started envying the Japanese, the marketing boss said.

"You can always win the market through making better and cheaper products."

"Bangladesh is a sleeping tiger which will rise, strike and win." Kotler said he will provide assistance to Bangladesh for hosting World Marketing Forum where the country will be propelled into the global arena.

World Marketing Forum is a unique venture where some of the world's most influential marketers, academia, corporate leaders and development experts will gather to find solution to some of the biggest global challenges.

The forum aims at creating a better world through marketing. During the first year, education, health, food and environment will be discussed.

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## An ambassador of marketing

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**P**HILIP KOTLER, an American born renowned strategic marketer, is the world's leading author on marketing. He is the SC Johnson Distinguished Professor of International Marketing at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University in USA.

Kotler has been honoured as one of the world's leading marketing thinkers. He received his MA degree in economics (1953) from the University of Chicago and his PhD degree in economics (1956) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He did postdoctoral work in mathematics at Harvard University and has received honorary degrees from twelve foreign universities.

He has consulted for such companies as IBM, General Electric, AT&T, Honeywell, Bank of

America, Merck and others in the areas of marketing strategy and planning, marketing organisation and international marketing.

Professor Kotler is the author of more than 40 books and 100 articles. Marketing Management, Principles of Marketing, The New Competition; High Visibility, Social Marketing, Marketing Places, Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism, The Marketing of Nations, Building Global Biobrand, Ten Deadly Marketing Sins, and Marketing 3.0 are some of his renowned book.

**Marketing Management** The Financial Times cited this book as one of the 50 best business books of all times. This book explains the key issues of marketing theory and practice.

Topics covered in the book include brand equity, customer value analysis, database marketing, e-commerce, value networks, hybrid channels, supply chain management, segmenta-

tion, targeting, positioning, and integrated marketing communications.

He defines brand equity as the added value endowed on products and services. It may be reflected in the way consumers think, feel and act with respect to the brand as well as in the prices, shares and profitability.

Kotler stresses the need for customer relationship marketing in the book. He said: "Losing profitable customers can dramatically affect a firm's profits because the cost of attracting a new customer is estimated to be five times the cost of keeping a current customer happy. So, the key to retaining customers is relationship marketing."

He also explains the importance of effective marketing communication. According to Kotler, marketing communication represents the "Voice" of the company and its brands through which it can establish a

dialogue and build relationship with consumers.

**Principle of Marketing**

This is another widely used text book in graduate business schools worldwide. It explains how to create customer value, target the correct market and build customer relationships.

The changing nature of consumer expectations means that marketers must learn how to build communities in addition to brand loyalty.

The book is on the issues of defining marketing and the marketing process; understanding the marketplace and consumers; designing a customer-driven marketing strategy and marketing mix; extending marketing -- global marketing, ethics, competitive advantage.

Every marketing plan needs to clearly define marketing mix for its products or services. Marketing mix refers to the Four Ps (product, price, place and pro-

motion). Kotler spells out how to handle the Four Ps of marketing mix in the book for winning customers.

Customer-driven marketing strategy is about creating value for target customers. Kotler explains the major elements of a customer driven marketing strategy. This includes segmentation, targeting, differentiation and positioning. Marketers know that they cannot appeal to all buyers in their markets or at least not to all buyers in the same way.

Buyers are too numerous, too widely scattered, and too varied in their needs and buying practices. Therefore, most companies today practise target marketing -- identifying market segments, selecting one or more of them, and developing products and marketing mixes tailored to each.

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