

# TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS FOR BRANDING THE NEW AGE PROGRAMS OF MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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**ABSTRACT**-In today's competitive market, every institution wants to be the best on its ability to attract, nurture and groom the students to be industry ready graduates. Higher Education Institutions have been running traditional management programs, with necessary up gradation in the content. But, traditional management programs may no longer guarantee a lifetime of secure career opportunities, due to the constant change in the market.

Job market in few sectors is undergoing massive and rapid changes since the dawn of the new millennium. The jobs which are in demand today did not exist few years ago, because of the on-going scenario; Higher Education Institutions have quickly adapted a new approach to address emerging industries as well as social needs by designing programs with a focus on industries/sectors.

Without necessary branding of newly designed programs, enrollment of students often to the program would be very much low and wouldn't exceed expectations. To reach out more prospective students, institutions are relying upon the technology to market their programs as it is very much difficult to communicate institutional brand without good strategies and experience in selecting the right tools.

This paper outlines the development of branding the new age programs and its role in recruiting the students for the HEIs. It highlights the need of technology by the institutions in reaching out the young millennial students and explains how technology solutions can be used to attract the prospective students and influencing them to enroll for the programs. Effective branding of programs can become a major plus point for the HEIs to recruit the students.

**Keywords: Higher Education, New Age Programs, Branding, Technology**

## INTRODUCTION

Over a long period of time, branding term has been used in business, marketing and advertising to distinguish the product of one unique seller from another. Today, we are living in a world of 'customerisation' where customers choose product based on their desirability and according to their favourability and loyalty to a particular product because of the unrivalled quality of the brand. Given this scenario, higher education institutions do share some similarities with business products, as the core business and product of an institution are teaching and learning.

Higher education institutions do have huge stake in the quality and type of students that institutions attract is critical to their development and success. Prospective degree candidates view institutions as serving them-teaching them, placing them in careers. An institution's ability is to raise its standing, attract top faculties, develop new age programs, and to bring in top recruiters.

Every institution that extends offers of admission hopes that students would enroll as many as possible. Consequently, institutions make substantial efforts to brand their courses to attract applicants who fit their mission and goals – irrespective of those students' finances, backgrounds or their location.

Technology can be an incredible asset in building higher education institution's brand identity. To achieve this goal, institutions have to make effort to integrate social media and on-campus engagement with new brands in order to make them active in marketplaces. Right now, higher education institutions face tremendous challenge in attracting the prospective students for their new age programs. Adept technology has to be used in order to influence students to enroll for the programs. Powerful technological solutions help the institutions to influence the students while increasing their market as well their reputation in the market.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Branding the new age programs is a key issue where it is growing exponentially. Attracting the prospective students has been found to be single most concern for the higher education institutions currently. Common motivations for higher education institutions branding include counteracting the decline in enrollments, enhancing image and prestige, signifying a merger between institutions and overall competition (Dubrow & Hartley, 2005).

Higher education institutions are pressured to differentiate from competitors to reduce competition and get access to resources. Consequently, branding and image management activities that signal differentiation are becoming increasingly important (Brown & Mazzarol, 2009; Chapleo, 2010)

An effective branding captures the distinctive aspirations, mission and strengths of an institution and appeals to the interests of the marketplace. A positive perception of a tertiary brand is expected to make an impact on recruiting the students and to create goodwill (Belanger, Mount & Wilson, 2002)

Increased competition in the global and domestic level have made higher education institutes to search for unique definitions of their existence in order to differentiate themselves and to attract right type of talent to learn (Waerass & Solbakk, 2009)

Marketing and branding the educational programs takes many forms such as sending out flyers, pamphlets, broadcasting educational programs over the radio or on television in order to reach out potential learners or students (Caffarella, 2002)

Branding do provides an institutional identity and it differentiates it from the other competitors in the market (Curtis et al, 2009; Judson et al, 2009; Gupta and Singh, 2010)

Higher education branding has been described as a “sea of sameness”, in which these observations portray that there is a need for new examinations of marketing and branding in higher education programs needs more relevance (Clayon, Cavanagh & Hettche, 2012)

The brand image plays as an important factor in the willingness towards programs by the prospective students. Unique brands can strengthen the brand image of an institution or a university (Fianto, 2014)

### NEW AGE PROGRAMS

New Age Programs are those programs which are specifically designed by both academia and industry in order to meet the demand of the market and to supply adequate man power to the industry.

**Table 1: List of New Age Programs of Management in different universities**

New Age Programs	University
BBA – Brand Management and Communication	TeerthankerMahaveer University
	Ansal University
BBA – Financial Services	Intergral University
	Sikkim Manipal University
	Sandip University
	RK University
	Uttaranchal University
	Maharishi Markandeshwar University
	Rama University
	Sir PadampatSinghania University
	Centurion University
	K L University
	Ansal University
MBA – Digital Marketing and E-commerce	ADYP University
	K L University
	Centurion University
	Uttaranchal University
	Sir PadampatSinghania University
MBA – Business Analytics	Sandip University
	JagranLakeCity University
	RayatBahra University
MBA – Health Care Management	RayatBahra University
	Manipal University
	Chitkara University
MBA – Consultancy Management	BITS Pilani
MBA – Leadership and Management	Christ University
MBA – Global Business	Manipal University

Advantages of enrolling for the new age programs:

- These programs are unique where they are associated with the industry leaders
- Prospective who wishes to enroll these programs will get to have an internship with the industry partners

### SIGNIFICANCE OF BRANDING FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Branding higher education institution programs is the process where they strategically communicate the values of institution and programs as well. Many institutions are managed as corporate brands, this move is because of the necessity in markets where there is an increase in competition, a drive to differentiation and to provide best services for the students where it would make them a unique institution in providing those programs.

### RATIONALE FOR PROMOTING NEW AGE PROGRAMS

If a new age program is designed to cater the need of the students for a specialized career path, there are many reasons why institutions must single it out and focus their efforts on promoting it.

When a program specific branding strategies for recruiting the students are particularly used when there is a underperforming or to boost the enrollment numbers in the institution or when the institution is launching a new program and there arise a need to increase awareness of the program. Institution may have added new elements to the curriculum or might have improved the facilities in catering the program and wants to capitalize on these changes to remain unique institute in the market.

## **BRANDING THE INSTITUTIONS & PROGRAMS - USING TECHNOLOGY**

While the idea of branding has prominently increased over few years, many institutions are not branding their programs properly and they are relying on ineffective traditional marketing of their institutes. In order for the institutions to make a significant impact on the student mind, they need to have a clear content to market and brand their programs to increase awareness of programs among students.

Using technology institutions can reach the student base in a cost effective way and may improve the stakeholder experiences and outcomes. Each and every student is making their presence in the technology world and in order to grab their attention, institutions have to make their presence known in the technology driven world and must highlight their positive attributes.

Technology solutions can build an institution's advertising, and messaging in an effective way in reaching the students.

## **BRANDING SOLUTIONS OR BRAND MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS**

Based on the recent trends, there has been rise in using the branding solutions for marketing their programs as well as their institutions. The branding solutions enable institutions to efficiently manage the student recruitment process for the institutions.

Some of the branding tools which are specific to the higher education sector are discussed below:

### **1. INBOUND MARKETING**

Inbound marketing is a perfect promotional methodology for the higher educational institutions, where many institutes have embraced the approach in their digital marketing efforts has experienced a lot of success in recent years.

Developing an effective overall inbound strategy requires institutes to take a number of different elements into consideration i.e. creating social media, website and email content that is strategically aligned to the common values, motivations and concerns of their target personas and underpinning all of these elements with SEO, where in order to produce measurable, actionable and improvable results.

### **2. CONTENT STRATEGY**

In the recent years, many interesting developments are taking place in content marketing for recruiting the students as higher education institutions is continuing to find new and innovative ways of engaging and informing prospective students about their courses or programs.

Social media posts, video content and even institutions website elements such as program pages are all part of the recruitment strategy for their courses being held in their institutions, which each component strategically focuses to tap into the needs of students and is optimized to increase the online visibility and nurture the leads towards registering for the new age programs.

Many institutes are embracing new technologies and trends in their content strategies and exploring the potential of adding interactive content and virtual elements to their initiatives and providing prospective students with exciting and surprising ways to connect with their choice of institution.

Finding the right content for the institution do requires careful development and analyzing of students personas, and institutions should take time to consider their interests, tastes and values in order to create offerings that will resonate with the students.

### **3. EMAIL MARKETING**

Email marketing is one of the most effective higher education branding strategies, where it has completely disrupted the traditional postal based marketing tools within the higher education sector. As the social media is dominating the medium of communication, millennials still rely on email for formal communication with the institutions.

Email marketing is one of the valuable tools for brand identity and for recruiting the students. Most of the email marketing campaign is built on well-established goals which present a clear and engaging message in reaching out the prospective students.

### **4. SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media is one of the most dynamic strategic solutions in reaching out the students, where institutes have to refine and adapt their tactics to keep pace with new features, popular user trends, and the latest emerging sites.

In recent years, social sites have implemented major changes to their platforms that provided new opportunities and challenges for marketers. Among the most important developments were Instagram and Twitter's algorithm changes, which altered the way users experienced the sites. For institutions, changes like these have made them to constantly revise their strategy in order to remain relevant and visible in the social sites.

Social media still remains one of the most important elements of successful recruitment of students for their programs and one of the most effective avenues for conducting their direct communication and engagement with potential leads for their programs.

### **5. SEO (SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION) & PAY-PER-CLICK**

SEO is the heartbeat of a successful digital marketing solution. It not only maximizes the institutions' online visibility and makes sure that prospective students are exposed to the institution offerings, which are crucial in reaching lead generation and also provides measurable results that can make improvements in future campaigns of the institutions

Pay-Per-Click marketing acts as a supplement for SEO and lead generation efforts, where it acts as an invaluable element of overall marketing mix of higher education institution. It also amplifies the presence on both search engines and social media sites, test the viability of new keywords and target markets, and strategically remarket to existing leads.

### **6. WEB DEVELOPMENT**

Website can say lot about the institution. A well crafter, intuitive, and aesthetically pleasing design gives an impression on prospective students that institution is professional, knowledgeable and dedicated, and always value the needs of student and provide them with best possible experience.

Web development can also be a challenge for higher educational institutions in today's continuously changing landscape of recruiting students. Evolving trends and tastes have made rebranding and redesigning their site a priority for many institutions, while the continued rise of mobile technology has made responsive design essential in order to ensure student access the site through different digital devices.

## 7. DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing is taking over the world like a storm, and the higher education sector is no exception. Most of the institutions are now reporting that they are using digital marketing in engaging with students and reach out the potential applicants or prospective students. Even though digital marketing is constantly getting evolved and millennial students are aware of the marketing techniques.

Digital marketing makes use of digital mediums where it allows institutions to personalize and use creativity on a whole new scale. With digital marketing, higher education institutions can react and respond to emerging trends in the market and can engage with students directly. Higher education institutions can choose wide number of digital marketing tools and it can cater to the individual needs of the institutions

## 8. DATA & ANALYTICS

Digital marketing is fuelled by data i.e. from web traffic to ad campaign performance. Almost every aspect of institutions efforts can be tracked and monitored, providing actionable metrics which can be used to drive improvement.

The capabilities of online analytics continue to improve, with popular tools like Google Analytics and Facebook Insights becoming more detailed, intelligent and expensive. With the right expertise, the insights provided by online data analytics can be leveraged to a more informative picture of the students.

While the potential for institutions to use analytics and data in student recruitment is huge, understanding of this area is still in the initial stage. Taking the time to become familiar with some of the key metrics, reports and tracking capabilities offered by analytics can help institutes to produce more dynamic, cost-effective, and engaging digital marketing initiatives.

The above discussion is just an overview of the branding solutions that are available. There are many other technological solutions are offered such as

- **Marketing automation** – The key to improve the prospective students' enrollment to the new age programs is by delivering right messages to the right prospective students. Marketing automation can help institutions in attracting the students and enrolling them for the new age programs more effectively. In the current trend, the institution's ability to deliver personalized information which is totally based on prospective students' interests and engagement can be a major differentiator. Under automation, there are many tools which help out such as lead generation tool and campaign management tool.

- **Lead Generation Forms** – Lead Generation is a important stage in student recruitment funnel where visitor shows curiosity about the new age programs, are good prospective students. A lead is generated when a visitor provides contact details in exchange for the course details or course structure.

- **CRM system**–In the current situation, higher education institutions are experiencing major changes in operating and interacting with the prospective students, currently enrolled students, parents, alumni, employers and staff members. Stakeholders are demanding immediate attention and service and so many of the institutions are turning to the technology where CRM system is catering to the demand in an effective way.

CRM system is a software application where it is used to automate and manage the communications with stakeholders. Information pertaining to the stakeholders is compiled to a single database enabling for easier access and to allow personalizing and customizing of messages and the channels used to deliver the message to the stakeholders in a timely manner.

## CONCLUSION

Branding is one of the most important aspects where it aligns what customers think about a company with what the company wants them to think. To stay competitive, institutions must become strategic when using the brand solutions & in recruiting the students.

For higher education institutions, branding offers to attract and reach out to the prospective students and creates more market for them and gives them a competitive advantage over the other institutions. With technology, institution can reach out the students in a faster and cost effective way.

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