

**BIM**

**BHARATHIDASAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT**

**B-School Branding  
-Address Your Stakeholders**

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## **B-School Branding – Address Your Stakeholders**

### **Introduction**

For quite sometimes Indian B schools have branded to explain the value of the business degree to the public. Now that the MBA and other business degrees are better understood, the drive to differentiate has come once again to the forefront. There is already brand differentiation like: IIM and non IIM brands. It's time to go further deeper.

The branding strategy and programme of a B-school need to go far beyond the product portfolio and embrace the whole offering from the business school including products, price, place and more importantly people.

A brand should be based on the reality of a school's present situation and culture. And above all, it must have credibility. B-school branding is based on not only who you are, but what you do as well.

Branding is both an art and science, once successful it provides the B-school the necessary enigmatic aura. But it isn't rocket science either. Rather, it's a culmination of discussions and process that starts with business school faculties, staff and Students asking and answering questions: " Who are we, how should we add value to stake holders?" To develop a distinct brand, business schools must look at their histories, their legacies, and their ambitions to uncover. it is always better to consider the seven good friends of Rudyard Kipling in brand building process: who , what , when , where , how , why and how much .the crux of brand building entails answering those seven questions to your stakeholders --MBA aspirants , current students , alumni , corporate ,other organizations and your social contour .this discussion will be focused towards how to build your brand through your stake holders --the tools and techniques.

### **Ranking:**

It is a must for your survival .you should participate in all major B-school rankings like in Business today, Business world, Business India, outlook etc. you may miss out your coveted position in some rankings---never get upset. Consider the parameters, find out where you really need to develop vis a vis your competitor B-schools. Work on those

areas with a single minded focus .ranking gives you an overall idea where you stands and what you should do to move up in ranking ladder. MBA aspirants are always guided by these ranks .even for corporate; ranking is a rational tool to select its required manpower from different campus. Your customers can never be wrong. You have got to value your customer's view. For alumni it's always a feel good factor if his alma mater achieves a good rank. It becomes easier for them to move up in corporate ladder and hop jobs for greener pasture .even if you just participate in ranking; it's still ok since it gives you visibility, necessary for a nascent brand. Work hard sincerely to be in cream de la cream class of ranking. If you are already in ivy league, your responsibility is more to maintain your class and progress.

**Magazine –Journal:**

It is one more way to create buzz in otherwise cluttered MBA market .Encourage your intellectual capital to don thinking caps and hone writing skill. To make you visible write consistently in different MBA coaching institute's magz on different MBA related issues .Do some value addition by providing quintessential tips on GD, interview, personality development and on exams like CAT, XAT etc. Make a series of articles on that so that repeated reading by aspirants leave a lasting impact –Top of the mind brand awareness .also write advertorials in those magz. Advertorial is more powerful to build the credibility than advertisement.

For developing your own brand publishing your own quarterly management journal is of utmost importance. Institute should arrange competition amongst ongoing batches, alumni and faculties for writing in different management categories. Out of that repository, best one will be chosen for the journal .even industry leaders, CEO, MD can contribute their real life management experience in it. There should not be any compromise in quality .Topic should be very relevant one and out of the box thinking should be encouraged .These journals should be distributed to different corporate houses, MBA coaching institutes and other B-schools on regular basis .Faculties should be encouraged to write at least one book a year. For that they should get incentives. Make you visible among your competitors and customers and start building rapport by taking

their feedback on your articles .writing by prominent alumni to different biz magz and paper should be encouraged by institutes.

### **Tie Up:**

Existing students are like your current assets. At every stage of two years course they should feel that there is sustainable value addition. 'Value for money' proposition works quite well for them. for both students and faculties , there should be tie up with foreign university .student and faculty exchange programme must be part of two years rigour .exchange of inputs and ideas between institutes should be carried out so symbiotically so that at the end of the day both the parties experience a win-win scenario. There should be tie up with different corporates for upgrading and developing courses to make it relevant and dynamic in every area –mark, fin, sys, HR, Ops –at least 2-3 corporates strong in related areas should proactively participate to develop course, MDP and executive programme. Also make sure that different companies CEO, MDs visit your campus and alumni meet very often for sharing their experience. Through interactive session, show them your class, get the desired attention. Tie up with different NGOs like – CRY, CARE; to work in tandem for social cause like natural calamity, AIDS, child labour, woman empowerment, rural development etc. it is necessary to do societal marketing to address social causes to get greater acceptability in govt bodies and society by showing that your MBAs are down to earth, don't live in ivory tower .build a holistic brand image.

Organizing seminars in various cities for building awareness is important and for that matter tying up with various MBA coaching institutes like IMS, Career Launcher, TIME- is a very pragmatic idea .Apart from joint seminars, constantly be in touch with these institutes .Show your performance, placement, up gradation of course – prove with rock solid information why you are better than so many B-schools .once they are convinced, they will pass them those information to MBA aspirants. So make these coaching institutes your spontaneous mouth piece for MBA aspirants.

### **Event management:**

It is the most in thing and any B-school should exploit its advantage to the hilt. Any event management creates a short term buzz around the brand. It's like promotion of a product.

Road show, seminar at different cities with the help of PR firms; co branding at different management, economic and business seminars; participate in Biz quiz, debate, extempore organize by corporate, media house and B-schools –all come under purview of event management .not only participation, achieving laurels one after another in these events is essential to augment visibility and brand image amongst corporate and other B-schools. First participate, learn from these events, then arrange your own event where corporate, media and other prominent B-schools should participate. Try to make this event as your USP.

**Online:**

In today's World Wide Web era, none can afford to miss online interaction with its stake holders. Develop your web site very carefully. Before that go through at least 50 Indian and international B-school sites. Observe how do they put things and communicate. Make then your own one –which is presentation wise very attractive, highly informative, dynamic, very much user friendly .There should be different topics related to Indian and world business and economy. Make your website a good repository of business and industry knowledge. Add few good links like present in –[www.madhukarshukla.com](http://www.madhukarshukla.com), so that netizens visit your site again and again for valuable inputs. Build awareness of your institute website amongst MBA aspirants and corporate through online ad like banner, flash in different portals (rediff, indiatimes etc.) youth sites, jobsites, business media sites etc.

Make it mandatory for existing every students to write at least one web articles in every trimester for different MBA sites like – cool avenues, bizkool, indiainfoline etc. To make the issue serious, there should be certain percentage of CGPA in each trimester, earmarked for such writings .By that measure, in every month, be very conspicuous by your student's articles in MBA related portals and make noise to all other B-school peers. Like wise put your institutes seminar and other information as well into those websites.

**Alumni:**

They are your biggest assets and your real interface with corporate –your flag bearer. Always keep them in good humour .Don't just try to be in touch with them during

placement time – they will feel exploited. Be in touch round the year by taking inputs for course, faculty and infrastructure. Ensure that they feel, they are very much part of the family. Networking is the order of the day. The older is the B-school, the bigger is the alumni base. Make alumni database –batch wise, sector wise-- modify it often. Share that with all alumni. why should an ex student come back to alma mater wasting his valuable professional and personal life unless he/she finds some value addition in it ! MBAs know the value of networking. Let him feel through your action that you still remember him and help him in his progress, process of networking. Encourage alumni in participating in different corporate quizzes and debate shows –provide interested candidates enough guidance and materials for the same. Go for tie ups with good job consultants and job portals so that they provide enough MBA opening information across all levels time to time. Also provide enough professional and personal development materials to alumni. Make separate HR alumni database and committee. Discuss various ways how to influence corporate and develop long lasting relationship. Few are interested in academics – provide them valuable inputs to pursue their career in that field. Apply emotional marketing strategy for alumni. Send 1000 sms at 100 rupees only, to 1000 alumni at one shot! Inform them through mail and sms –the progress and happening of Alma mater. Through that process if 20% of alumni respond, well enough! After all 20% of your people is responsible for 80% of your success! Through alumni develop overseas contacts, leads to bring 1-2 new overseas companies at your campus every year.

The bottom line is simple: think for your alumni, they will think for you.

**Some more tips:**

- Always make the process objective rather than subjective .show must run seamlessly even if person is not there.
- Give actionable, measurable target to different student committees of current batch with dead lines. Allocate some percentage of student’s CGPA in that responsibility. Be clear of your Return on investment (ROI).
- There should a brand manager for institute brand building with a team – they should visit different B-schools...adopt their best practices and more importantly implement in their own house within a time frame.

## Bschool Branding, Saptarishi Sarkar

- Every student during summer training should collect 3 HR contacts; every respective student should build good relationship over the time with them so that they become convinced to visit your campus.
- Make your brand colour, logo and language consistent in all your communication.
- Take entrance through only CAT or XAT –never through both. It causes brand confusion in target segment’s mind.
- In placement time, have a heterogeneous basket of companies from diverse field and operation. That shows your brand’s acceptance cutting across diverse sectors in industries.

### **Conclusion:**

Make daily improvement your mantra in all parameters. Thrive for excellence constantly. Be early mover to break the clutter .Position yourself in innovative way in B-school market. Act like a successful corporate house with dynamism and professionalism at crescendo. Walk the talk. Set benchmark for others .Think global and most importantly act global also. Make world your oyster .Your brand success will not remain will-o-the-wisp ----- for sure. Remember Rome was not built in a day --- so is your B-school brand!