



THE MODERN MANTRAS OF BRAND-BUILDING

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Rethinking the Tenets of Brand Trust

The fourth edition of the Most Trusted Brands of India 2024 celebrated brands writing success stories by creating a deep well of trust for consumers to luxuriate in

Branding in the modern era has evolved into a multifaceted endeavor that transcends the traditional realm of logos and slogans. In today's hyper-connected world, where consumers are bombarded with innumerable choices and information overload, establishing trust has emerged as a crucial strategic differentiator for brands. And to establish that trust, it is essential to be finely attuned to the needs of modern consumers.

In fact, according to the Edelman Trust Barometer 2023, a

comprehensive study spanning 14 countries, India's Gen-Z makes purchasing decisions influenced by a brand's engagement as well as how much social good the company creates. Historically, having a good product or service was good enough, but no longer.

Some brands have understood and embraced this fundamental truth, and in the process of doing so have elevated themselves to the pantheon of Most Trusted Brands of India 2024, earning recognition for their feats in a glittering ceremony held in Mumbai.



Those recognised for their achievements included:

- AkzoNobel India (Dulux)
- Apsara by Hindustan Pencils in Stationery
- Armstrong Dematic
- Avery Dennison
- Birla Hil Pipes
- Charminar Fibre Cement Roofing Sheets
- Chola MS General Insurance
- Donear Group - Textile Apparel & Lifestyle
- DURASHINE® by Tata BlueScope Steel
- Elegant Steel
- Godrej Interio
- Gyproc India
- Haier Appliances India
- Hettich India
- Himalaya BabyCare
- INDOSPACE
- Johnson's Baby
- KAFF Appliances India Pvt. Ltd.
- Konica Minolta Business Solutions India Pvt. Ltd.
- Mother's Recipe
- Muthoot FinCorp Limited
- Muthoot Homefin (India) Limited
- MyTeam11
- Natural Remedies - Human Health Business
- NO SCARS® (From The House of Torque Pharma)
- Pankajakasthuri Herbals India Pvt. Ltd.
- Podar International School
- Racold
- Recykal
- Reliance Digital
- Rinac India Limited
- Sharekhan Limited
- Shirdi Sai Electricals
- Springfit Premium Mattress
- Starshine MFG.Co. Pvt. Ltd.
- U.S. Polo Assn.
- Tata Motors - Torchbearers of Trust
- Tata Structura
- Tata Tiscon
- Tata Wiron
- Thrive
- Turtle Limited
- TVS Motor Company
- UltraTech Cement
- V-Trans (India)
- Vijaya Diagnostic Centre Limited
- Wellwoman

From the Co-Founders Desk



"Customers today are more discerning than ever before. They can smell inauthenticity a mile away. That's why it's critical to always lead with transparency and integrity, creating an atmosphere in which customers feel a real connection and trust in the companies they choose. When you build that authentic bond, you earn loyalty that money can't buy."

Rajesh Khubchandani
Co-Founder and CEO, Team Marksmen Network



"In today's age of radical transparency, there's nowhere for companies to hide. Every action, every decision is inevitably laid bare. That's why companies must embrace authenticity and trust as their north star. Authenticity resonates with customers in a way that simple marketing just cannot replicate. It's how you build real, lasting relationships."

Akash Tiwari
Co-Founder and CMO, Team Marksmen Network



"The greatest asset any company can have is the trust of its customers. You can't trick people into trusting you - it has to be earned through consistent authenticity and delivering on your promises time and time again. Building and safeguarding that sacred trust has to be an unwavering mission for leaders, with customers seeing brands as allies working relentlessly on their behalf."

Sharad Gupta
Co-Founder and COO, Team Marksmen Network

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An era of brand authenticity

Jaideep Arora, CEO, Sharekhan, talks of the strategic importance of authenticity, transparency, and purpose in modern-day branding

With the proliferation of social media, I feel the era has come for brands to drive their respective authenticity by "putting forth what values they are driven by", such that they align with the brand's purpose.

Sharekhan as a brand & business is "designed for the serious" and our purpose is to "to be the voice and resource point for those who are serious about their foray into the stock market".

So when some recent studies showed

that 'a casual approach is leading to customers incurring losses' - we decided to drive our value of 'the truth serum that helps customers' and put out a campaign saying "If you are causal about the market - #TohMarketMeinMatAa".

Thus, for brands to effectively communicate their values they need to find the use case of that value such that it has maximum benefit for customers and not think about the resulting business impact. We feel this is how brands of the future shall get built.



Delivering innovation, consistently

Mahendra Shah, Chairman & MD, V-Trans India, outlines how finely balancing consistency and innovation has paid rich rewards

Achieving a delicate balance between consistency and innovation is crucial for brands to remain relevant while preserving their core identity. Many brands have achieved timeless appeal by mastering this equilibrium over decades. It's imperative for brands to have a clear understanding of their core values, mission, and identity right from the start. These values serve as guiding principles, ensuring both consistency and innovation.

By leveraging market research, consumer insights, and the evolution

of the brand, companies can gradually introduce new styles that align with changing consumer expectations. Brands can maintain consistency while innovating by integrating their core values and identity into their brand storytelling, ensuring coherence across various platforms. This approach allows them to introduce new products, services, or campaigns that resonate with their audience and reinforce their brand narrative. Brands must acknowledge that change is inevitable and staying relevant necessitates adaptation.



Growing from strength to strength

Manmohan Awasthi, Group President, SSE Group, reflects on the growth story of the company

Established in 1994 by our CMD N. Visweswara Reddy, Shirdi Sai Electricals Ltd. (SSEL) Group, has emerged as a leading transformer manufacturer and EPC services in India. The current manufacturing capacities includes 10,000 MVA Kadapa facility in Andhra Pradesh, 20,000 MVA Naini facility in Uttar Pradesh, (acquired from GE T&D), and 3,500 MVA Indo Tech Transformers Ltd in Tamil Nadu (listed entity acquired from GE Prolec).

Prioritizing innovation, SSEL has

earned prestigious awards like the National Energy Conservation Award in 2015 & 2022, most trusted brand in 2022 & 2023 and most preferred place of work award in 2022. Our focus remains on energy-efficient cutting-edge technologies to produce Amorphous Metal Transformers, Solar Transformers, 3D Transformers etc.

Additionally, the Group is diversifying into ingot-to-conductor manufacturing and also setting up an integrated solar module manufacturing unit through our subsidiary Indosol Solar Pvt. Ltd.



Epitomising quality and innovation

James Chelliah, Chief Financial Officer, Tata BlueScope Steel Pvt. Ltd., spells out the ingredients needed to create a brand that stands differentiated



DURASHINE® by Tata BlueScope Steel symbolizes the fusion of two global giants committed to providing quality with innovation in building and construction space. Established as one of India's most trusted brands, DURASHINE® delivers roofing and cladding solutions that surpass expectations, earning nationwide acclaim.

Tata BlueScope Steel offers innovative products like SUPERSHIELD™ and SMARTSPAN™,

ensuring durability and cost-efficiency. With a diverse product range from Roof and Wall steel sheets to Tile profiles, DURASHINE® offers high strength, longer life span, aesthetic appeal and superior thermal efficiency.

Recognized with prestigious awards, it boasts over 5,000 outlets nationwide, reflecting unmatched reliability. DURASHINE®'s journey epitomizes excellence, innovation, and customer satisfaction, setting the benchmark for roofing solutions in India.

Leading by example to build brand trust

Saurabh Agarwal - VP & GM - Materials Group, Avery Dennison, South Asia, outlines how being an upstanding corporate citizen is key to fostering trust among consumers

In today's consumer-focused era, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is key to fostering trust between businesses and customers. Companies can no longer prioritize profit alone; ethical practices are vital for a sustainable economy where businesses aim to benefit society.

Modern consumers value genuine ethics over mere marketing ploys. They want companies with values that mirror their own, influencing their purchasing decisions. For brands like us, CSR is more than a checklist - it's ingrained in every aspect of our operations, from supply chain to customer service.

Transparency plays a crucial role in strengthening the bond with consumers. By openly sharing practices, including successes and failures, companies invite scrutiny that builds trust. Our commitment to transparency allows us to connect with consumers by showcasing our

global operations and CSR efforts.

At Avery Dennison, we demonstrate our commitment towards ethical business practices and CSR initiatives at both organization and individual level. Globally, we employ strategic practices in our approach to sustainability to manage how our products affect the environment upstream and downstream and determine how we can mitigate the impact of our operational footprint. Moreover, our innovation platforms focus on material circularity and waste reduction and elimination, which are fundamental to our stated ambition of delivering products and solutions that advances the circular economy. We annually report our Scope3 greenhouse gas (CHG) emissions through CDP and have a sharp focus towards meeting our 2030 sustainability goals in order to create a sustainable impact within the Industry.

Additionally, with our philosophy of being a force for good, we support partnerships and contribute to social causes that help us to make a difference in the society and our communities. Through these partnerships with NGOs such as Read India & CanKids and many more, we strive to make a positive social impact by enhancing the livelihood of our people at grassroots, thereby, empowering communities and individuals.



To convey our initiatives effectively, we utilize various channels such as social media, corporate reports, and collaboration with influencers to demonstrate our dedication to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). We focus on deploying impactful communication strategies to engage stakeholders, foster dialogue, and inspire action.

We truly believe that businesses embracing CSR and ethical standards not only excel in the industry but also cultivate consumer trust.

Innovation: A Crucial growth lever

Mandeep Singh, Executive Director, Torque Pharmaceuticals, outlines how leveraging innovation has helped the brand stay ahead of the curve



In today's dynamic business landscape, where consumer preferences are rapidly evolving, fostering a culture of innovation is imperative for brands aiming to remain relevant and stay ahead of the curve. We at Torque Pharma, aim to focus on three pillars of innovation - empowering culture, technological advancement, and strategic engagement.

Organizations can enable innovation by recognizing and valuing the unique contributions and diverse thoughts that every stakeholder brings to the table. By

fostering an environment where different perspectives are encouraged and valued, companies can tap into a wide array of creative ideas and solutions. There is a need to create systems where teams can collaborate and nurture their ideas. This approach includes being open to change and adapting organizational processes to be more inclusive and responsive to new ideas.

Moreover, with the advent of advanced technologies like AI and data analytics, brands have infinite opportunities to understand and accurately predict market trends and

consumer behavior. By investing in technology and data analytics capabilities, companies can mine their own data as well as that from the market to discern patterns that inform product development, marketing strategies, and customer engagement. This tech-centric approach not only enhances efficiency but also ensures that innovations are aligned with real-time consumer needs and preferences.

To maintain relevance and to stay ahead in competitive markets, brands must regularly engage with their consumers and peers on the field. This involves social listening-using tools to listen and analyze conversations across social media and other platforms to identify consumer pain points and expectations. Additionally, forming strategic partnerships with other organizations can provide access to new markets, technologies, and expertise, allowing brands to innovate more effectively and adapt to changing consumer demands. Partnerships and collaborations should be chosen strategically to complement and enhance the brand's strengths and market position.

At Torque, we recognize the importance of innovation in meeting the diverse needs of customers and maintaining a competitive edge in the market. Taking along partners and consumers, we believe that brands can create a sustainable innovation ecosystem that keeps them at the forefront of industry trends and consumer preferences.



Meeting customer expectations with simplicity

V. Suryanarayanan, MD & CEO, Cholamandalam MS General Insurance Company, underlines how to build consumer trust in an age of misinformation

Building and reinforcing trust with customers and business partners continuously is required in an era of fake news and misinformation. This requires transparency, authenticity, integrity and consistent messaging across various platforms. Delivering high quality products that meet customer requirements are essential both for customer retention and growing the customer base.

Customer expectations must be met with an approach of simplicity. Engaging with the customers through the lifecycle is important. All modes of communication must be kept 2 ways—one to disseminate information and the other to receive feedback or solve for their concerns and grievances.

Participating in social responsibility and environmental issues enhances the promise of the brand. Sustainable practices that support the overall cause of the business must matter to the audience all the time. Fact checking demonstrates the commitment to truthfulness and reliability. Building

communities foster a sense of purpose, share experiences, and support one another. Prioritizing data security and privacy goes a long way in living the brand promise. Robust security measures help customers believe in brands.



Strategies to building brand authenticity

P. Sukumaran, Founder and Jt. Managing Director, Rinac India Limited, expounds on the ways in which brands can foster deeper connections with audiences

It is imperative that brand promises are always kept, and every touchpoint with your customers adds value. This includes digital media. Since brand=trust, if you're focusing on 'Trust' building, you're essentially building your 'Brand.'

This can be achieved by highlighting testimonials, case studies, and project successes from client engagements and disseminating them through digital media. Establish brand communities on social media platforms and nurture them. Sharing authentic content builds trust and encourages brand loyalty. Share achievements, such as winning an award. Respond to client interactions on social media empathetically, showing genuine interest in their opinions and feedback. Thank them for their interactions. Deliver specialized, useful, industry-specific educational content to clients belonging to different verticals, for example, through a webinar. Invite reviews from satisfied

customers on the company's social media channels. Participate in FAQs posted in forums and blogs of your client industry, branding your company as a problem-solving and value-adding entity. Repeatedly emphasize what you do, how well you do it, and what you stand for through consistent brand and marketing communications.



Digital, the great democratiser

Manoj Gadgil, Vice President of Marketing & Business Unit Head, Essential Health & Skin Health, Kenvue, elucidates on how brand-building has evolved in the digital age

In today's digital era, the scope of marketing has been reimagined with technology bringing rapid changes in the ways brands engage with consumers. Digital transformation has truly democratised marketing, transcending boundaries, bridging the urban-rural divide and bringing trends, solutions and most importantly the brands closer to the consumers.

The emergence of new digital platforms has enabled brands to double down on customisation and personalisation as well as curate immersive

experiences to connect with consumers.

As a brand which has partnered with parents for generations, digital platforms have enabled us to better understand their needs, create immersion engagements and curate compelling campaigns through various digital touchpoints. For Johnson's Baby, we are leveraging digital extensively especially in our influencer marketing strategy. For new mums, word-of-mouth especially recommendations from their trusted communities, are among the top 2 drivers of purchase. Additionally,



we pioneered an augmented reality (AR) innovation that enables mothers to discover more about our baby safe ingredients to make more informed decisions.

While the possibilities of digital transforming marketing are limitless, it also presents challenges of misinformation, click baiting, false claims. This makes it imperative for brands to market responsibly with transparency.

"Authenticity is paramount"

Dhruv Verma, Founder & CEO, Thriwe, reiterates the importance of brands to be authentic if they are to win hearts and not just wallet-share



In a world rife with impersonal transactions and generic promises, crafting an authentic brand story is the key to winning customers' hearts, not just wallets. Communicate your brand story and values consistently across all platforms to reinforce your identity and trustworthiness. Integrate your brand values into your narrative to authentically showcase your company's principles.

Emotional connections foster customer loyalty, so share personal stories to deepen relationships. Personalization is key; understand your customers' preferences and tailor your messaging accordingly. Authenticity is paramount; stay true to your brand's identity. Loyalty solutions are essential for brand identity and customer engagement, incentivizing repeat purchases and strengthening

relationships. By following these strategies, you can effectively communicate your brand story and values, building lasting connections that drive loyalty and success.

At Thriwe, we specialize in enabling brands to forge meaningful personal connections with their customers, crafting tailored solutions to cultivate a distinctive brand identity that resonates effectively.

Trust & Credibility: The bond that builds great communities

Shubhanshu Singh, Chief Marketing Officer, Tata Motors Commercial Vehicles, underlines the criticality of trust and credibility

Steadily, the 'influencer industry' has fragmented into smaller, niche channels. There will always be the Jenner's and Cristiano Ronaldo's, with the ability to sway massive audiences. But the influencers who do what truly matters to business are more plentiful and more specialised. And this ability of people everywhere to create content and personalise it in real time smashed the gates of traditional media. Fame acquired a niche character for the first time. People could create, engage and build communities of followers. This has been a most profound change in marketing communication.

This can be called the digital, always on and influencer era. Here, micro is good. People want 'artisanal' content. It shouldn't be slick and commercial. It need not be contrived. Just tell them the way it is.

These social media micro influencers typically have a much more modest following; depending on the platform. They work or specialise in a specific niche and frequently share social media content about their interests. What they lack in following or viewership, they make up in terms of hyper-engaged audiences. It is another facet of specialisation.

Brands may be even better served by partnering with "nano-influencers", those within the 1,000-10,000 follower range because of a booster on overall engagement and wider proliferation. Data from influencer firms points to diminishing returns after just 1,000 followers. Needless to say, this varies market to market in terms of online perusal, engagement and universe sampling.

Micro-influencers are seen as more credible, persuasive and relatable. In terms of the creator ecosystem, they crowd a niche. Conversations are genuine and meaningful.

The proliferation of micro-influencers has blurred the line between organic "word of mouth" consumer conversation and direct, top-down marketing tactics. The test question becomes whose recommendation is authentic and credible? Everything else is noise.

This decentralisation and democratisation ought to be welcomed: influence that was once concentrated with a few, powerful celebrities has splintered because new sub plots have emerged. They flourish because they bring greater specificity.

In my two stints in the Automotive industry, earlier as global CMO at Royal Enfield and now at Tata Motors' CV business I have developed the role of influencers. The positive results are

all in the public domain. Our work has steadily gained traction and we got to over one hundred thousand subscribers on YouTube in a record time of less than a year and were given the silver button in April 2024.

In the commercial vehicle industry, customers rely on word of mouth and recommendations from trusted sources to a great extent.

A diverse array of Influencers have built unique relationships with customers. They provide them a wide range of content ranging from first impressions to real world, 'in use' reviews and the like.

Top influencer content garners lakhs of videos in a couple of days or sometimes even faster. Customers don't flock to these videos for their production quality, but for their raw authenticity. As a part of our digital progression at Tata Motors Commercial Vehicle, we have done a bunch of exciting things by leveraging regional micro-influencers for our various product and service initiatives. These activations have helped us in creating an alternate channel of regional brand advocates that not only connects better with our end-customers but are a perfect choice for storytellers as a third-party voice leading to credibility and trust.

As a brand, all you can do is educate the influencers and facilitate them to experience your vehicles and then let them do their own thing.

If you try to control their rhythm, it breaks. I truly feel that influencers of today make it easier for manufacturers and marketers to spread their word far and wide, fast. These people are often customers themselves and members of the user community. They intimately understand the technical aspects of products and services being offered by brands.

We make use of the latest technologies to help us filter the most relevant influencer set that connects with our target groups best.

While we are all aware that influencer marketing as a medium works trickle-down with the primary objective of creating unplugged conversations still all our influencer-led plans are evaluated on key metrics such as views, engagement, costs per view, growth in organic search, web traffic and eventual lead generation.

Since influencer marketing is a step-by-step process of consistently creating content that leads to trust building and product advocacy, brands should have a long-range view of building perpetual brand assets on social

media platforms resulting in better yield and product recall.

Above all a brand is about trust. So is influencer reputé. The two are natural partners.

Secretary of State George Shultz once said, "When trust was not in the room, good things did not happen. Everything else is details." As we envision a next stage for marketing's digital ecosystem, we cannot allow distrust, puffery or banality to cast its shadow over the purity of messaging. To ensure that trust stays in the room, we must all endeavor to support and prioritize the trust of intenders, consumers, and the community at large. Let us embrace influencer marketing.



Decoding the nature of leadership

Team Marksmen Network's Influential Leaders of India 2024 will laud visionary leaders who have made a profound impact on industry and society



Throughout the ages, the significance of leadership has remained steadfast in human history. Even in contemporary times, certain cultures continue to seek guidance from mystical figures like shamans, driven by a profound belief in their ability to deliver solutions, regardless of how improbable they may seem. Leaders maintain a talismanic presence at the core of modern-day culture, and Team Marksmen Network's Influential Leaders of India 2024 will focus on better understanding the essence of leadership and celebrating changemakers leading the change.

The event, to take place in September, will delve deep into the psyche of leaders and will explore various topics, such as the nature of new-age leadership, the criticality of leading with purpose, integrity, and empathy, and how to build high-performance teams that remain resilient in the face of adversity in addition to much more.

Sharing his thoughts ahead of the event, Rajesh Khubchandani, Co-Founder and CEO, Team Marksmen Network, said, "Leadership is primarily two things - firstly, having bold ambitions and the ability to inspire others to follow. Because if you can't inspire others to follow, then you're not going to achieve those bold ambitions. And secondly, the ability to embrace and stay committed to big ideas from the original huge conception, because that's where the outstanding returns in society come from. If you look at the leaders who've had a big impact, they were inspired by ambitions that were huge for their times and they stayed true to their convictions, and Influential Leaders of India 2024 celebrates these cadre of leaders making an enormous contribution to industry and society."

To know more about the event and other such unique initiatives, write at contact@teammensmen.com



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