

# BRAND MAPPING, A TOOL FOR DESIGN MANAGEMENT

Shetall Natuu<sup>a</sup> and Anirudh Natuu<sup>b</sup>

*Symbiosis Institute of Design, 231-3A/4, Vimannagar, Pune, Maharashtra.*

*Email: <sup>a</sup>shetall@sid.edu.in, <sup>b</sup>dy\_director@sid.edu.in*

With saturation of market situation, design will be the key differentiating factor in the new era. Design can help businesses scale new horizons and address to their specific audiences. Through Brand Mapping specific design insights will help design accurately and help launch more close to market requirements, products and services.

The paper proposes how brand mapping which is a conventional management tool can be applicable to new developments in design. Combination of management tools can achieve the required insights for design directions. Brand mapping tries to clarify the goals that a Brand has. It also tries help differentiate what can't be defined otherwise. Thus brand mapping in a way helps further achieve a proper management of design. For the management of design various tools such as Asnoff matrix and Grid analysis also come handy.

In the changing market and cultural environment, design can contribute to define & broaden business objectives. Advantage goes to those who can out imagine and outsmart their competitors. Design influenced companies should understand their customers profoundly and mobile around those insights.

*Keywords:* Brand mapping, Design management, Strategic design insights.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The world is undergoing a very rapid change. Technological developments have made a world a small place to live. The world is continuously evolving, at a very high rate. Global Influences, Local changes, Lifestyle change, emerging of new global production hubs and new retail formats are the present contexts. “Glocal” is the new phenomena; and the environment is extremely dynamic when it comes to doing business. Managers can never know precisely what they are trying to achieve or how best to achieve. They can't even define the problem. Much less engineer a solution<sup>1</sup>

The decision makers are always perplexed with management of change. Either for mapping out a sales strategy, or streamlining a manufacturing operation, or crafting a new system for innovation. They are engaged in the practice of design,<sup>2</sup> a function that has always been surrounded by uncertainty.

The objective of this study is to elaborate on how brand mapping which being a management tool, also has tremendous potential of being used successfully in the context of Design Management. Brand mapping is conventionally considered to be a decision maker's tool. The market is saturated with many players, attracting the same audiences and hence design will be the key differentiating factor in the new era. Design disciplines like communication design, branding, new product development, packaging, web and multimedia can help business scale new horizons and address to their specific target consumers. Make over is the need of the hour, and for that conventional management tools also need to be redesigned in newer contexts.

Brand mapping if looked from the perspective of Business, can prove to be a very effective tool for 'Design of Business' as well as 'Manage Design'. It can give clearer business directions, define the path that the business should follow, as wells as facilitate formulating specific design insights for

the designers to work on. Brand mapping helps segmentation, find the right target audience and also helps to position the new product in the market. These insights if are available to the designers, which are more precise and accurate, can reduce the efforts of design and help launch more close to market products and services.<sup>3</sup>

Brand mapping is an insight method that makes otherwise invisible connections visible. A comprehensive brand map helps organizations identify new and relevant opportunities to strengthen the brand connection with consumers by driving differentiation, relevance and authenticity. Brand is the most valuable asset of a company. Brand mapping identifies where that value resides and where the customer expectations can be better managed.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. THE PROCESSES OF BRAND MAPPING

Primarily there are two ways to understand the brand position or market status of the product of an organization 1) intuitive 2) scientific .

Brand mapping can simply be done by plotting the price on the X axis vs. functionality of the product on the Y axis. It gives results which indicate the true functionality of the price, product value, perceived value, segments of the market and gives the exact positioning of the company in true space.

1. Intuitive Method: Brand Mapping can be done as an internal process by the people within the organization .The sales data and performance index generated within the organization can be used for this purpose. This involves intuitive judgments and the experiences of the stakeholders. By understanding the feelings, views and opinions through interaction with people on field, sales and market .
2. Scientific Method: This is based on field research and actual field data and statistics. To gather and analyze the users/customers perspectives, voices, to draw insights into the brand and its performance.<sup>5</sup>

There are few techniques to carry out brand mapping. Brand Diagnosis is a preparatory tool. Diagnosis depends on the perception and awareness of the brand in the minds of the customers, employees and other key audience. It is the sum of the interactions that define their experience delivered through various touch points. These associations define the relationship between the brand and the customers. Brand Mapping helps to quantify and improve the brand.<sup>6</sup>

There are a couple of tools that are also used to support this diagnosis .The first tool is called “mean to end tool”. This tool is primarily used to map “user buying behavior”. The second tool being “competitive intelligence”, where competitors are mapped, assessed, monitored for their actions and long term market prospects. A competitor is a rival company operating in the same industry, selling similar goods. The brand is competing against the rivals to win customers on the basis of price, type of promotions or perhaps the quality of service that they are offering. Through market information, and word of mouth information, the positioning of the company with respect to the competitors could be understood. Also to have an understanding of what their future & current strategies of business are. This sort of knowledge is competitive intelligence <sup>7</sup>.

The next being a “Delphi process” which is an iterative process to collect and distill the anonymous judgments of experts using a series of data collection and analysis techniques interspersed with feedback<sup>8</sup>. In short it involves, giving a common set of questions to the stake holders of the company to seek opinions, and to map them on a common scale and understand variances of their opinions.

This diagnosis when plotted is called brand mapping, this is a status tool, its a new variance of information. This leads to giving the management a true understanding about the organizational status. As a tool it can be used to identify the market trend and analyze business dynamics.

## 3. BRAND MAPPING AND DESIGN

Brand Mapping can have a profound implication for strategic direction and brands resulting performance.

### Example: POLAROID

The results of a brand mapping in Western Europe led Polaroid to decide to change its conventional photography image to the “fun side” of its cameras. Polaroid gave one group of consumers 35 mm cameras and another group Polaroid cameras. Both groups went out to a wedding and were told to shoot a roll film. The 35 mm photos were typical wedding fare – posed and proper. The Polaroid photos were completely different- spontaneous and spirited. Polaroid learned from this research that its cameras could be social stimulant and catalyst, bringing fun into people’s lives, a theme that was picked up in advertising and suggested new distribution strategies.<sup>9</sup>

By Carrying out the process of Brand Mapping we get a clear idea about how the consumer are perceiving the Brand. The organizational status can be gauged as well as competitive landscape understood. Along with this market trends can also be understood and key insights that are extremely essential for design and design management can be delivered. Brand mapping is a very useful tool from the context of design. Design management is a process that directs design to fulfill corporate objectives. Design management works across an organization at three levels. The corporate level, the project level as well as the design activity level. Insights and understanding obtained through brand mapping then further can be strengthened through design management. Even at this level various management tools like Asnoff matrix, blue ocean strategies can be very effectively used to manage design.

Through brain storming, possibilities of design direction emerge. One of them, very popular and contemporary thoughts are the Blue ocean strategies. These are used to foster change and innovation. Blue oceans are open and empty spaces with ample room to expand and sail where you want. There is often no competition, if there is it can’t touch you. Here demand, customers, and growth are infinite. The organization stops using competition as benchmark, and they go their own way creating higher and higher benchmarks for themselves.<sup>10</sup>

Another relatively time tested tool is the Ansoff Matrix or also known as product/market expansion grid. Ref Figure 1. It shows four growth options for business formed by matching up existing and new products and services with existing and new markets. Primarily there are options of market development, market penetration, product development and diversification.<sup>13</sup>

After one has brainstormed into the various concepts/directions to take one is left with a plethora of ideas. The design decision taken here regulates your future actions, growth and consequences. Validation thus becomes utmost important. The various methods to evaluate are Grid analysis, Cost benefit analysis and Risk analysis<sup>10</sup>.

1. Grid analysis: It is also known as decision matrix and is a key tool for evaluation of attributes, usability & comparison of alternatives. It’s invaluable; it helps to bring disparate factors into decision making process in a reliable and rigorous way.
2. Cost benefit analysis and risk analysis: It helps to look at risks objectively. It uses a structured approach for assessing threats, and for evaluating the probability of events occurring on account of them. It also indicates what they may cost to manage them.<sup>11</sup>

Diagnostics tools, status tools and Decision maker’s tools help formulate new businesses.

## 4. BENEFITS OF BRAND MAPPING IN THE CONTEXT OF DESIGN MANAGEMENT

1. New Products can be crafted after a niche is analyzed. A new position, with new audience can be targeted, technological partnership can be harnessed.
2. In case of the product that are already launched in the market and are not doing too well, Brand Mapping may prove to be an analytical tool to identify the gaps in the product and match them with the expectations thus rectifying the defects that the product may have. Gap analysis gives rebranding, repositioning, placing strategies.
3. Identifying new market opportunities & potential customers.
4. Quick turnaround time of the project. Valuable information that helps in good decision making.

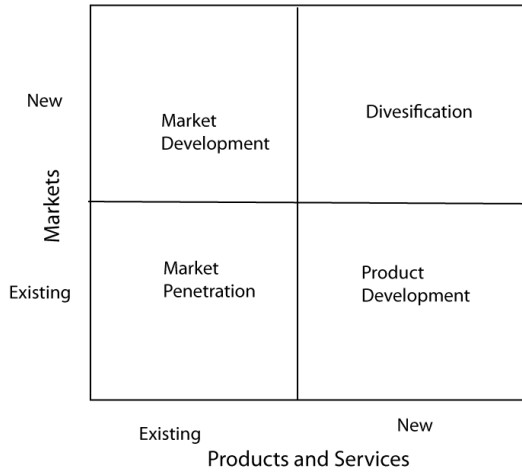


Figure 1. The Ansoff Matrix-Business.

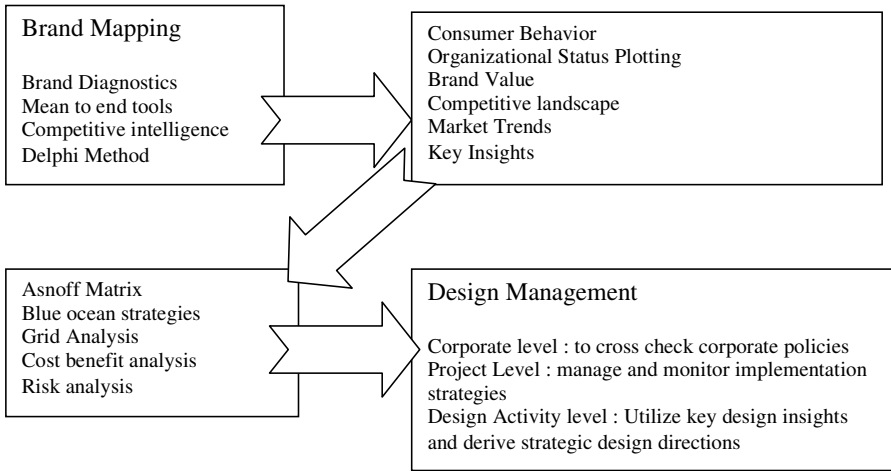


Figure 2. Role of Brand mapping in Design Management.

5. CONCLUSION

In the changing market and cultural environment design can contribute to broaden and help define business objectives. Companies will prosper only if they push to higher levels of innovation and creation. The real value creation comes from using imagination. All business challenges have to be dealt like problem solving exercise. Traditional organizations have to perform like design shops, where no assignment is fixed or permanent. Design influenced company should understand their customers profoundly and mobilize around that insight.

Organisations who want to begin new business or upgrade existing business, who are looking for diversification either allied or non allied are the key beneficiaries of this study. Understanding their business and market backgrounds, brainstorming on the variables that are instrumental to benchmarking with their competitors would be done. And the plotting of their status with the aid of mapping tool would be carried out. Establishing the likely threats from technology upgradation, obsolescence and large multinational players and unorganised segment would be looked into. Business directions and

conclusions based on these interactions through the exercise of mapping would be drawn. Designing a business strategy and evaluating the business at established intervals would be looked into and at the end these businesses would be able to prepare design briefs and design directions for their appropriate survival and growth. Importance of Brand mapping tools and techniques should be introduced to find the right alignments needed in the context of businesses.

Direction of being price centric, design centric, and user centric can be sought after and Largely the Mid scale and small scale businesses may be able to differentiate themselves from the other brands

## REFERENCES

1. Interpretive management: What general managers can learn from design,1998,Richard K Lester, Michael J.Piore,Kamal M. Malek Available at [www.noisebetweenstations.com/personal/essays/designthinking-business](http://www.noisebetweenstations.com/personal/essays/designthinking-business) accessed on [April,2010]
2. The design of Business, Roger Martin,2004, Available at [www.noisebetweenstations.com/personal/essays/designthinking-business](http://www.noisebetweenstations.com/personal/essays/designthinking-business) accessed on [April,2010]
3. Rotman Business design Conference, 2005 speech by Tim Brown, Available at [www.noisebetweenstations.com/personal/essays/designthinking-business](http://www.noisebetweenstations.com/personal/essays/designthinking-business) accessed on [April5,2010]
4. Strategic Brand Management, Jean-Noel Kapferer, Kogan Page, 2008, Page 31, Page149, Page 206, page 326.
5. Brands and Branding: White paper, John Kuraoka, available at [www.kuraoka.com](http://www.kuraoka.com) accessed on [6-07-2010]
6. Brand Mapping, perception and postion, Mcorp Consulting, Avaible at [www.mcorpconsulting.com/services/tools/brandmapping](http://www.mcorpconsulting.com/services/tools/brandmapping) accessed on [June 28, 2010]
7. Competitive Intelligence, Mindtools, Available at [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/news/str\\_60.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/news/str_60.htm)[6-09-2010]
8. Decision making techniques, available at [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/news/new TED\\_00.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/news/new TED_00.htm) accessed on [6-09-2010]
9. Marketing Management, Philip Kotler, Abraham Koshi, 12th edition 2007, Page 269.
10. The design agenda: Rachel Cooper, Mike Press, Page 269, Page 267.
11. Presentation on demand forecasting, Ravi Meena, Available at [www.scribd.com/doc/3895250/demand-forecasting](http://www.scribd.com/doc/3895250/demand-forecasting) accessed on 15-05-2010
12. Blue ocean strategy, available at [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/news/new STR/\\_46.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/news/new STR/_46.htm) accessed on [6-09-2010]
13. Ansoff Matrix, Available at [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/news/tmc\\_90.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/news/tmc_90.htm) [6-09-2010]
14. Brand concept Maps: Measuring what your brand means to consumers, Prof Barbara Loken and Deborah Roedder John, Journal of marketing research