



Branding higher education through zero defects approach: A Discussion

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The responsibility for the education of children lands squarely on the teacher's shoulders. At the end of the day, the teacher is responsible for the quality of the final result or product i.e., educated child. The actual quality that students face in schools is relatively low and extremely insufficient as compared to other countries. The really critical aspect of Indian public education system is its low quality.

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Introduction

Many educational institutions across the world create an image to attract students; this process is called branding. Branding began as a channel of choice for consumers and has grown to include what an organization represents in worth and values. Specifically, corporations across the world wanted to be unique from others that might have similar offerings. Likewise, many college institutions such as Harvard, University of California Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California have branded their identity through the use of various branding techniques. Due to the increased competition in higher education, branding has become more relevant in promoting an institution's reputation, as well as generating additional revenue for the institution through the sale of trademarked goods.

As Herr (2001) explained, "In today's higher education landscape, college and university leaders may well consider principles of brand management to assure their positions vis-à-vis their competitors" (p. 23). This is also evident through the widespread use of trademarks to market and promote an institution to the public. Moore (2004) stated "Differentiating an institution depends on recognizing the core attributes of the category in which you operate, plus what makes you different from others in the category" (p. 59), and, "differentiation is the key to an institution's carving out its own niche in the marketplace" (p. 60).

"For a college or university, the name and all the symbolism attached to it, either through longevity, reputation, quality, or some other factor, represent its brand" (Rosenthal, 2003, p. 25). Branding institutions in higher education provide the community, and more importantly, prospective students of an institution, an easier way to identify and distinguish them from other schools.. This study focused on the use of quality to make institution a good brand name in the market. Quality is related with the number of defects but when it comes to service it is difficult to measure number of defects.

A defect means non-conformance to quality standards and not necessarily a failure¹. In today's competitive environment everyone is working to get best quality for their product and service. Today market scenario has changed as result of that many researchers and scientists have been working to fulfill the objective of getting quality but at affordable prices. Education is that sector where quality matters a lot as compared to other because there responsibility is to produce or

deliver highly educated and trained human resource to different industries. We have various methods to control and enhance quality such as Six sigma, statistical process control, Kaizen, Poka-Yoke, Kanban and so on. Zero defects is another methodology first conceptualized by the one of the quality guru Philip B. Crosby. Philip B. Crosby recommended performance standard that leaves no doubt regarding the goal of total quality².

According to Philip B. Crosby quality is “conformance to specification”³. “He said, “It is not that people never make mistakes, but that the company does not start out expecting them to make mistakes.” He proposed the idea of “Zero Defects: Do it right the first time” meaning high quality, may have been achieved at a specific cost, specific time cycle and with specific manpower. During his years of service with International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT) as vice president and director of quality, he wrote a book – Quality is Free. In his book, he insisted that quality does not cost money instead of those actions which cause failure cost money. Thereby, manufacturing industry spending 20% of their revenue in redoing activities that go wrong whereas services companies are appending 35%. Zero Defects is the simplest and most effective concept to achieve higher quality. Philip B. Crosby. Said it’s the management who are responsible for all quality enhancement initiatives. Management selects employees and they are only who needs to set quality objectives and provide training to them. It applies to setting a performance standard which applies to all work. It starts when leader accepts Zero Defects his or her personal performance standard which means errors will not be tolerated and they will be prevented.⁴

It’s the leader who needs to have defect prevention attitude and show it to employees at the place of playing lame game and making busy himself in hiring or firing people. A defect prevent behavior of leader is the secret of ZD’s success because people perform to the standard set or accepted by their leader. Everyone wants better quality. Nobody likes defects but how do you prevent them? The Zero Defects mantra is “Do it right the first time.” According to Philip B. Crosby, conventional quality control methodologies are not the actual proponents of high quality.⁵ Companies must set quality standards and follow them strictly. The quality standards must be based on the requirement of the management and their importance to employees and customers. Organizations must not allow employees to make mistakes from the beginning. They should not wait for their results to be occurred because to improve quality prevention of non conformance is important, not appraisal. Philip B. Crosby also said that the measurement of quality is the price of non-conformance, not the number of defects.⁶

The responsibility for the education of children lands squarely on the teacher’s shoulders. At the end of the day, the teacher is responsible for the quality of the final result or product i.e., educated child. The actual quality that students face in schools is relatively low and extremely insufficient as compared to other countries. The really critical aspect of Indian public education system is its low quality. For better understanding let’s first understand the different types of education systems in India. The type of education systems in India can be classified as:

1) Pre primary education in India: Pre-primary school education in India is not a fundamental right and is divided into two levels – Lower KG (for children between 3 – 4 years) and Upper KG (for children between 4 – 5 years).

2) Primary Education in India: This serves as the link between primary school and elementary education. However, not much emphasis is laid on this level by the prevailing education system and policies in this regard continue to exist solely on paper.

3) Elementary Education: The Government has made elementary education compulsory for children between the age group of years 6 and 14.

4) Secondary Education in India: Serves as a link between elementary and higher education in the Indian education setup, which draws a blank again as far as policy is concerned.

5) Higher Education in India: Under graduate and post graduate level: After completion of secondary education, students can choose fields of their interest and pursue undergraduate and then post graduate courses. Only 7% of the population that goes to school managed to graduate and only 15% of those who enrol manage to make it to high school and achieve a place in the higher education system. We are not realizing that education is the source of income and those students who are not getting quality education they are unable to receive adequate rate of return.

1. Philip Crosby and Zero Defects – TenStepavailable

attenstep.altarum.org/completeI/.../700PhilipCrosbyZeroDefects.pdf

2. Dr Sharma, D.D., TQM- Principles, Practices & Cases. Sultan Chand & Sons Educational Publisher, Pg 988

3. Dr Sharma, D.D., TQM- Principles, Practices & Cases. Sultan Chand & Sons Educational Publisher, Pg 26

4. Crosby, Philip B., The myths of Zero Defects available at www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/pdffiles/11/1094.pdf

5. Crosby, Philip B., The myths of Zero Defects available at www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/pdffiles/11/1094.pdf

6. Crosby, Philip B., The myths of Zero Defects available at www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/pdffiles/11/1094.pdf

REASONS OF POOR QUALITY OF EDUCATION

- The person who has been specialized in some particular subject but it seems, he/she is teaching other subject in the classroom. More elaborately, if someone has done his/her masters in computer science, he is to be teaching mathematics to students. The fact that students cannot learn their true to point relevant information regarding their subjects and teacher cannot convey proper knowledge to his/her students.
- Nepotism can be a reason of this problem while choosing or hiring teachers in institutions, ministers choose their relatives for hiring in institutions without thinking that whether they are eligible for teaching or not? Without making any evaluations of their knowledge and expertise that could create complications for students.
- The teachers are not well qualified and therefore not well paid and therefore are not willing to work hard enough
- 80% of schools are managed by the government. Private schools are expensive and out of reach of the poor.

- More hands to earn remains the mentality amongst many families and therefore little kids are set out to fend for the family over going to school to garner an adequate education, in the most literal sense of the word.
- Infrastructure facilities at schools across rural areas and in slums dispense very poor quality of education.

Branding Higher Education through zero defect approach

Across the globe, many universities and colleges are applying various marketing principles and marketing theories to gain the competitive advantage (Brown & Oplatka 2007).

Branding starts with identifying customer needs and positioning the brand accordingly. In higher education, targeted markets include students, employers as well as society. Students can be treated as direct and immediate customers of higher education services. Positioning of higher educational institutions is more complex as the needs and wants of different stakeholders do not totally coincide with it. Also higher education has to satisfy more stakeholders making it even more complex. Principles of market segmentation and targeting do apply in higher education for primary consumers (students) but for other stakeholders, they may not apply in totality (Kantanen, 2007).

The teacher who understands ZD will have more successful students. It's not a motivational concept where a teacher has to motivate the students; here he has to develop the attitude of accepting and explaining problems to the teacher. Teachers should also produce defect free environment where students will perform to requirement you agreed to, and do it right every time. It does not mean that there should not be any scope for errors- it states that whenever you find a problem, solve it at that point of time only without waiting for the outcomes or results. Edison went thousands of filaments until he found the right one for the light bulb. Excellence means different to different people; we can achieve excellence if we work to get perfection at every phase of project. ZD's can be achieved only through the positive attitude towards excellence, ability to get perfection and putting efforts in making error free work environment.

According to social learning theory, human behavior is transmitted largely through exposure to role models and teachers identified by students as models in education. Teachers must set self performance goals and work to achieve them strictly and then set common standards as well as individual standards based on the requirement of students such as punctuality, on date submission of assignments and so on. They must follow them sincerely without doing any discrimination among students. Management should also work and provide support towards Zero Defects goal and if they consider following factors then there will definitely be a ZD:-

- ✓ Encourage teachers and students to establish improvement goals for themselves
- ✓ Encourage teachers' to communicate problems to management
- ✓ Recognize and appreciate who follows and shows improvement
- ✓ Head of the institute should work as a role model for teachers and students
- ✓ Teachers should also work hard to become a role model for students
- ✓ Provide opportunities to teachers to interact with experts of their fields for learning skills
- ✓ Higher authorities should also ensure that teachers are properly instructed and trained
- ✓ Correct errors whenever you find them at any stage of work.
- ✓ Repeat and emphasize to do things right the first time on daily basis.

The actual poisoning must be deeply intrinsic in any organizations functioning and it is also the starting point for telling the story of what makes an organization different rather it is the only story that should be told in order to send consistent, focused and aligned messages designed to

support the time consuming process of brand building (Chapleo, 2004). In higher education, positioning statement is a promise that an institution should put across what an institution can and should deliver. Also positioning in higher education should have a differential focus on those who contribute more in revenue terms (Temple & Shattock, 2007). Therefore we see that there are limitations in using positioning concept in higher education, so it can be proposed that in higher education positioning concept can be used but with some judicious adaptations.

Fundamentals as perceived and followed for Branding in higher education

Over the years, higher education sector has witnessed a paradigm shift with respect to the growing application of marketing and branding principles and now colleges and universities have begun to embrace the fundamental principles of branding. (Gupta & Singh, 2010). An institution's brand should drive marketing strategies but that it should also give the institution something to live up to through quality (Apte, 2004). In higher education, brand promise comprises of factors such as academic offerings, student experience, an institution's prestige, and other "intangibles". The brand promise is also based on academics and emotional engagement that derives partly from the institution's leadership (Gupta & Singh, 2010). All the stakeholders i.e. staff, faculty, administrators, and even the students themselves--play key roles in delivering an institution's brand promise through quality (Jim Black, 2009).

Being mostly non-profit, educational institutes have to be much more careful about the perceived commercialization and commoditization of their marketing and branding efforts (Vijender, 2007). As the most premium institutes generally rely on gifts, endowments, consultancy income and not as much on tuition and having more faculties per student and smaller class sizes are being reckoned as stronger brands in the higher education domain while the opposite is true for business, where the focus is generally on the bottom line i.e. ensuring maximum profitability and also to become more and more efficient by getting more production out of fewer people (Joshi, 1998). Most of these brands began as commodities, which is what education brands can easily fall into, more so when there is greater demand than supply (Yasawy, 2007). In the conventional sense, branding in higher education has a limited scope (Gary, 2003). Establishing a strong brand may as a consequence mean that some students are attracted by it, while other does not really impressed by it (Warwick, 2004). Some institutions in the process of branding, portray themselves as 'the best', 'world class', leading' etc. While trying to be unique, the institutions rather become more similar (Belanger, 2002).

Conclusion

“Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect.” Teachers performance towards his or her teaching assumes an important influence on the quality of educational program and eventually on the competence of graduates, i.e., like teacher, like student. Thus, teachers must establish an environment that puts students at ease to voice his/ her opinion and not get penalized for their “wrong answers” whereas they should work for getting the solution of their problems to avoid failure. Zero Defects can only succeed when teacher accepts Zero Defects as their personal performance standard. Branding in higher education can also be a means of unifying the institution around a common purpose and vision. Hence education being branded holds opportunities and threats, but with the right attitude it could embrace a larger community that will not only benefit but will want to contribute and own a part of the premise that brand

represents. In the context of the changing meaning of a brand and its application in higher education it can be proposed that, education being branded is natural and holds promise.

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