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Transformational Branding for B2B business: Protective Packaging Company

Introduction

The expenses attributed to branding efforts has risen over the last decades, estimated to reach USD 559 billion by end of 2017 (Yu, 2017). This exhibits that the competitiveness in the branding sphere has become more intensive where brands cannot afford to remain in status quo. However, notwithstanding these huge expenditures in branding activities, gaps in research persist in the attention given to various areas concerning the application of branding strategy in the B2B sector. This is despite the fact that building strong brands is acknowledged as a crucial part of marketing strategy for B2B enterprises (Seyedghorban, Matanda and LaPlaca, 2016; Leek and Christodoulides, 2011).

One pertinent area of research in B2B branding would be brand transformation, a perspective where a collective set of actions and activities are coherently steered to regenerate the engagement experience from the brand, in turn creating value to the customer (Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015). Brand transformation is often practiced when enterprises intend to rejuvenate an existing brand, refresh an old brand, or rebranding an existing brand as a result of a merger or acquisition (Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015; Mininni, 2006). A critical procedure within brand transformation is the repositioning of a brand that encapsulates a radical change involving different stakeholders from internal and external of the organization (Cova and Paranque, 2016). Despite such theoretical claims, there is an inadequacy of case studies of brand transformation practices to support and attest for its positive impact to enterprises and their brands.

Taking the cue from the above argument, this study aims to achieve two objectives within the scope of B2B sector. First, it is to demonstrate the implementation of brand transformation from a performative view rather than the conventional ostensive perspective. Second, it is to underscore how brand transformation of a B2B brand has created value to the target audience as well as elevated the brand to greater heights in terms of business value and quality of relationship with customers. With this, the crucial contribution of this paper is to give practitioners a guide on how to translate the conceptual aspect of brand transformation into practice within their corporations under the appropriate circumstances.

Literature Review

Brand transformation is a rather new concept that rarely appeared in academic literatures until the last 2 years (Cova and Paranque, 2016; Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015). There were instances whereby it has been applied interchangeably or concurrently with terms such as re-branding, brand rejuvenation and brand regeneration (Cova and Paranque, 2016; Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015). On this premise, there need to be clarity and to establish definition for these terms before exploring the impact of brand transformation in practice.

With reference to Lucarelli and Hallin (2015), they highlighted that brands rejuvenate themselves when they undergo radical process changes (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006) in order to refresh their identity or are involved in business restructuring. Rejuvenating a brand identity is required when the brand had remained too long in a status quo position and threatened to be made irrelevant (Muller, Kocher and Crettaz, 2013; Syverson, 2008). Within the process of rejuvenation of a brand identity, brand owners have options to create a new brand, introduce brand extension or create new brand identity (Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006). Given this, brand rejuvenation could entail to embarking on a brand architecture strategy (Cova and Paraque, 2016).

However, Cova and Paraque (2016) further argued that brand regeneration and rejuvenation shared the same meaning, and they are actually one of the practices that subsumed under brand transformation. In a similar vein, Lucarelli and Hallin (2015) concurs and supports this view. Further, brand transformation could be considered as a concept under the general term of re-branding which refers to the change impose on a brand between an initially formulated brand to a new formulation (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). On this premise, it can be conceptualised that brand transformation involves brand regeneration or rejuvenation that involves radical changes, coupled with the constant steering of cohesive engagement of emerging loose assemblage of different stakeholders (Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015). The core objective of brand transformation is to create value through radical change (Cova and Paraque, 2016; Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015). In other words, brand transformation is characterised by components, which are the strategic perspective and the performative perspective with the primary aim to create value by expressing the brand in a new way through radical changes (Cova and Paraque, 2016; Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006).

The two core components are elaborated as follows. First, the strategic perspective consist of brand re-positioning, where it encapsulates the re-evaluation of the target audiences, the competitive frame, the strategic competitive advantage and brand promise (Aaker, 2014; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Temporal, 2010). This is where the business problems are recognised and identified, and a strategic direction is subsequently developed. To achieve the objectives of brand transformation, it is crucial to create a position of relevance by reframing the brand against the competitive set, where the brand can significantly stand out while concurrently make the competition perceived to be less relevant (Aaker, 2011). Second, the performative perspective is critical to drive the execution of the brand strategy. This is where managing of the dynamic interactions across different stakeholders, processes, resources, existing internal culture and service offerings is to be aligned (Ind, 2011; Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015). The challenge is to extract value from these interactions to derive a positive result that is coherent with the strategic perspective of the brand transformation (Cova and Paraque, 2016). To achieve this, changes in the visual identity and communications alone will not suffice (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). Rather, it has to strongly almagate people with processes to think differently and to embrace a positive attitude towards bringing the brand strategy to live, which ultimately deliver the brand promise (de Charnatony 2001; Merrilees and Miller, 2008; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). Augmenting this view, it is crucial to foster innovation-orientated approach to complement the brand oriented approach to brand transformation (Lee, O’Cass and Sok, 2016). Innovation is an important factor to drive differentiated marketable solutions and also instil a positive mind-set to work across boundaries encompassing various stakeholders and processes involved in the transformation (Cova and Paraque, 2016).

Businesses are often subjected to external market forces, which may inevitably compel them to take actions leading to brand transformation (Beverland, Napoli and Ferrelly, 2010; Muller et al, 2013; Temporal, 2010). Although conceptually, brand transformation should convincingly engender to positive outcomes, there are lack of cases that illustrate such success stories and how it is implemented. As such, this study intends to address two research questions.

- How can brand transformation be practiced within a B2B industry context?
- Does brand transformation lead to positive outcomes as discussed in the literature?

Method

The rationale of the method chosen is to facilitate full comprehension of a particular bounded system that should be described or explained (Stake, 2000). In this case, the bounded system is choosing a company within a B2B context. In addition, a case study approach is able to address questions related to how and why, especially when there is no requirement to control for events that are novel or contemporary (Yin, 2003) such as brand transformation in the stated bounded system. Past studies has also demonstrated that qualitative approach in branding research has been gaining favourability as well (Daly and Moloney, 2004; de Chernatony, Drury and Segal-Horn, 2003; Merrilees, 2005).

More specifically, a descriptive case study method is selected because it stresses on documenting the procedures (Yin, 1981) of a particular brand transformation event. On this premise, this study commences with the documented background and scenario that led to the impetus for brand transformation, followed by the documented practices and processes which occurred and concluding with outcome of the initiative. Insights for documentation was obtained through 20 semi-structured interviews (with management, consultants, customers and staff) and audit of communications touch points. A thematic analysis method using an inductive approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was applied to the interview data to identify patterns that define the perceptions of the brand, its strengths and challenges. Given this, the brand transformational journey of Fagerdala, a B2B brand is examined and described to demonstrate how it has garnered significant business success since embarking on the initiative in 2013 (Lim, 2016).

Background and Market outlook for Fagerdala

Fagerdala is a Singapore enterprise with an impressive history despite not having a name that may sound to be of Singapore origins. This is because the company did not establish its roots in Singapore but rather started off as a Swedish owned company with a history that dates back to 1964 where it was then known as Fagerdala World Foam. Fagerdala is actually a name of a small village in Sweden where the brand name took after. As its original name suggests, they are in the business of Polyethylene (PE) foam conversion, whereby they manufacture foam for a wide variety of packaging applications. In the past, their core focus was predominantly catering to the needs of many manufacturers of electronics and electrical appliances. It was not until 1983 when Fagerdala established its presence in Singapore, producing PE foam for clients in the Singapore market and then subsequently expanded further into the Asia region (Shiao 2017).

In 1989, Mr. Paul Yeo joined Fagerdala World Foam who later became the visionary leader and Managing Director of the company in 2010 when he led a management reverse buy out of the company. This was because Paul recognised the potential of the business and anticipated it to rise to greater heights based on the impressive revenue it generated over the years. This revenue expansion was attributed to the aggressive growth of the Asia region led by China's phenomenal economic engine in the 1990s. As such, this was instrumental for the increase in demand for PE foams that Fagerdala manufactured. PE Foam was in high demand for the packaging materials needed by electronics and electrical appliances factories that were sprouting up rapidly catering to the rise in consumerism culture across the world. Apart from that, PE foams were also needed for other industries such as those in the biomedical, automotive, and telecommunication business sectors. Decisions to build more manufacturing factories at a rate of one to two factories became an aggressive business exercise which followed suit in countries such as Thailand and China to catch up with market demand (Ching, 2013).

Today in 2016, Fagerdala has transformed itself beyond being perceived as a manufacturer that merely produces PE foams for multi-national companies. It has re-branded and positioned itself as a protective packaging solution provider for equipment and consumer products that are sensitive to shock or vibration. With 15 facilities across 6 countries, coupled with two design and prototyping centres in Taiwan (Lim, 2016; SPRINGnews, 2016), Fagerdala is a brand that has captured tremendous attention in the current market since the re-branding initiative back in 2013. There was a compelling rationale for the re-branding exercise involving radical changes that led to a brand transformation. This will be elaborated in detail after identifying the underlying challenges it faced that motivated them to undertake this decision.

The Impetus for brand transformation after management buyout - post 2010

Despite Paul having an enterprising mind-set and strong aspirations for the business, there were challenges he recognised when he gained majority ownership of the company back in 2010. While the market for PE was expanding, the Industry was also experiencing a shift in several directions involving the volatility in raw material cost, movement for environmental sustainability, substitution of non-PE materials, and new competition. The key concern for Fagerdala was the ability to cater to the market demand at that time while staying relevant by being at the forefront of the evolution that was occurring. In this vein, they could capitalise on the market growth to raise their revenue, while concurrently gearing themselves for the next wave of market transformation. This reflects a scenario where radical change was needed to align with the drastic changes in the market involving the competition, the changing needs of the target market, and the rapid intervention of new technology that is available. This is where brand transformation was required (Cova and Paraque, 2016; Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015).

a) Heighten Market Growth for Protective Packaging

Fagerdala was riding the wave of global demand for protective packaging materials back in 2011. Globally, there was a huge demand for protective packaging materials with an estimated market size of USD 26.23 billion with a growth rate of about 6.3% per annum (Oristep Consulting, 2015). On the back of the world recovering from an economic down turn, consumer demand for packaged goods were fuelling market growth. This phenomenal demand for packaging materials

on a global scale was also largely bolstered by strong appetite for internet shopping made available through a wide array of e-commerce platforms (Butschli, 2016). Fulfilment of sales from internet shopping required reliable protective packaging materials that not only could withstand shocks and vibration during transportation but also lightweight to minimise shipping charges (Packaging News, 2016). With stronger market emphasis on protective packaging, Fagerdala faced the dilemma of whether they should focus on being a foam manufacturer or a protective packaging provider to spur market awareness and instil clarity towards their key business offering.

b) "Go green" Movement

Companies in developed countries were embracing the concept of sustainability and waste reduction, advocating environmental friendliness (Pratt Industries, 2017). On this premise, with Fagerdala's ambition to be an international enterprise, they needed to conform to these practices. Furthermore, their customers within their entire value chain were compelled to comply with sustainability requirements in order to stay relevant. Given that PE foam was predominantly not recyclable friendly, Fagerdala encountered this challenge of aligning themselves with this global initiative. In the longer term, Fagerdala needed to brace themselves with the replacement of PE foam since stricter implementation of green legislations may inhibit the demand for PE (Bond, 2016). They wanted to signal a strong intent to demonstrate to their business partners and customers that they will embark strongly on an effort to pursue "green" solutions such as developing bio-degradable PE foam. Their association to being a foam manufacturer did not come across with good connotation, where foam is normally construed to be synonymous to being an environmentally unfriendly material.

c) Innovation driving market for protective packaging beyond PE foam

Industry application of PE foam, more specifically in the area of packaging protection, was skewing towards features that could handle shock, vibration, abrasion and other damaging effects attributed to shipping and handling. In other words, there was a strong market need for solutions that offer all these features and benefits as more industrial and consumer products require long distance shipping. Over reliance on PE foam alone could put Fagerdala at a disadvantage and lose relevance when there are more innovative materials that can offer the same benefits more effectively and at better price. For instance, novel innovative materials were being introduced to replace conventional PE foams such as pulp, plastic film and mushroom roots (Mohan 2015) that threatens Fagerdala's business in the future. Fagerdala World Foam as a corporate brand were too entrenched to being associated to PE foam and could mislead the industry customers in the long run on their ambition to reinvent themselves rather than remain as a foam manufacturer.

d) Transformation from commodity to product with value added features

Dependence on PE foam as the primary material for producing protective packaging placed Fagerdala's profit margins at the mercy of the volatile petro-chemical commodity market that is effected by crude oil prices (King, 2016). Progressive innovation in the protective packaging material sector had expanded beyond I.T appliances into food, bio-medical, beverage and

automotive segments. This had triggered the attention of Fagerdala's management. It made them realise that they could garner better profit margins and competitive advantage if there is more value added to the commoditised PE foam that was primarily used in the market at that time. Trends of customised designed protective packaging were picking up particularly for higher end market segments such as bio-medical and high value electronic products. Technological augmentation was emerging for consumer segments as well where security features, antimicrobial features, QR coding and sensor tags (for food) could be built into protective packaging (Irkin and Esmer, 2015; Mohan, 2016).

e) *Cost pressures from the market*

Many MNCs have shifted their manufacturing of I.T. and electrical products to China and developing countries such as Thailand. As a consequence, it was inevitable for Fagerdala to make their manufacturing presence felt in China. This was within the period where the country was experiencing phenomenal economic advancement, leading to increasing labour cost and rising currency valuation that contributed to rising operations cost for Fagerdala. While concurrently, Fagerdala faced pricing pressures from MNCs who constantly negotiate for lower prices, taking advantage of alternative suppliers, due to the low entry barriers to the industry. Packaging materials were becoming more commoditised as any chemical based products being subjected to price war (Budde, 2011). Given this scenario, Fagerdala was compelled to reinvent themselves to be more competitive while not succumbing to a price war with the local competitors.

Cross road of identity crisis - A Review of business strategy

Taking into account all the considerations for the impetus for brand transformation, the management of Fagerdala World Foam had to contend with the dilemma of redefining their brand positioning. That is, whether to be perceived as a PE foam specialist or protective packaging solution provider in the marketplace. They needed to project a clear brand identity to their customers of "who they were", "what they were best at doing" and "what they promise". In other words, they wanted to create a brand that their target audience could connect and engage with confidence on a long term basis. On this premise, Fagerdala engaged A.S. Louken Branding, which is a brand strategy consultancy for advice on to strategize in developing its brand positioning.

"We knew then our mission was to elevate packaging beyond commodity, reflecting the brand's potential and actual capabilities for greater things beyond foam manufacturing" (Consultant for Fagerdala)

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

To achieve this, the management of Fagerdala World Foam embarked on a corporate strategy and brand strategy planning exercise (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Merrilees and Milner, 2008; Temporal, 2010). A two-step approach was embarked, firstly establishing business directions with strategic intent and then followed by a brand strategy to support the business direction forward.

At the first step, a review was performed on the market opportunities and threats, coupled with the identifying gaps associated with the market needs through interviews with their external stakeholders. Subsequent discussions with senior management elicited a common understanding of what they recognised as their unique competitive advantage that they inherently possess or they could cultivate. A summary of all the findings are exhibited in Figure 1, as elaborated according to the impetus for brand transformation. On this premise, the management concurred that their strategic intent was to expand their focus on initiatives to develop non-foam materials that are environment friendly supported with cost efficient processes.

At the second step, a brand platform was developed based on established corporate brand strategy framework (Merrilees and Miller, 2008; de Chernatony, 2001; Temporal, 2010). However, a strong emphasis was centred on reframing Fagerdala from being categorised as a foam specialist to be a protective packaging solutions provider, and this differentiates a conventional branding approach to one that is transformational. This is because the insights derived from the market audit by the consultants indicated that Fagerdala was already recognised as a specialist for PE foam manufacturing. However, Fagerdala lacked the perception that they had the capability of delivering a one-stop service for packaging materials, despite Fagerdala did possess most of the ability to do so. This is an attribute that was most pertinent to customers, which was construed to be a salient perception gap in desired customer expectations versus brand image.

It was on this basis that the brand platform was developed with an emotionally articulated brand promise of “Freedom to focus”. Such a brand promise enforces the strong positioning intent of the company (Kalafis, Tsogas and Blankson 2000). This was to signal to the market, particularly the customers, that Fagerdala would strive to alleviate them from the concerns in keeping their products protected, and give them the confidence to focus their effort towards their core business. Concurrently, the corporate brand was amended to just “Fagerdala”, dropping “World Foam” out. The intention was to re-frame the brand and suppress the current association to foam manufacturing in order to uplift its perceived relevance as advocated by Aaker (2011). This switches the attention away from PE foam, de-commoditise the brand and to demonstrate that they are offering an entire solution that is accompanied by both tangible and intangible benefits. To emphasize the intangible perspective of the brand, Fagerdala needed to be endowed with a relevant personality that reflect their ability to work smart and relentlessly to fulfil their promise. As such, the personality dimensions of *Inspiring, hardworking, and personal* were introduced for the brand. This will express a personality that that would invoke a sense of confidence and attachment from the target audience (Phau and Lau, 2000).

“We were able to communicate our value proposition of giving our customers the Freedom to Focus on their businesses which reflects the inner working of Fagerdala’s rebranded identity both internally and externally” (Senior management)

To deliver on their brand promise, the management needed a clear guiding post to galvanise and rally the entire corporate machinery to be inspired by a single brand essence or mantra (Keller, 1999). “Integration at its best” was the brand essence adopted. Underscoring the rationale of this brand essence is the single minded effort required to provide a seamless end to end integration across the organization to make the brand promise realised (de Chernatony 2001).

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

Bringing the Brand Transformation to live

Transcending from the directions set in the brand strategy platform, it was imperative for radical transformation both internally and externally for Fagerdala. This is where the performative aspect of brand transformation is initiated and observed. Such transformation is crucial to substantiate the re-positioning of the brand to be a protective packaging solutions provider. Enabling this transformation warranted an effort to integrate the brand communications and action plans together across internal and external stakeholders given that these are the two core interaction perspectives of the brand as illustrated in Figure 2 (de Chernatony, 2001; Jevons, Gabbott and de Chernatony, 2005). Merely a brand imagery revision alone would not suffice to generate the experience that the market sought and to fulfil the audacious brand promise which Fagedala desired to claim.

The realisation of brand transformation for Fagerdala came from implementing and managing changes internally and externally in a coordinated and coherent manner. It was crucial that the internal staff were prepared for changes, and brace themselves for the transformation. Personnel “buy-in” was important to garner a change of mind-set (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006), spurring them to embrace and internalise the brand essence of “integration at its best”. This is because the internal processes, culture and the staff are instrumental in delivering the brand promise externally. Indeed, this transformation exercise resonates closely with the paradigm of brand as a process of becoming as asserted by Martin and Schouten (2014).

a) Internal Brand Transformation

There were several initiatives that the Fagerdala management planned and put into action for internal transformation that is coherently aligned with the strategic intent. First, an internal branding campaign was carried out across all facilities around the world involving cross-cultural and cross nationality workforce (Lim 2016). This ensured that all personnel adhered and applied consistent processes throughout the organisation centred on the brand essence of “Integration at its best”. Workshops were carried out to ascertain that everyone bought in to the brand promise given to customers. These internal workshops were supported with HR handbook and tool kit that served as reminders to support continuity of the internal branding campaigns.

“With a multinational and multicultural workforce, our shared HR handbook and toolkits have become our common language across countries,” (Senior Management)

Second, the senior management restructured the entire Human Resource framework to better attract and retain talent as they recognised to be the backbone of the organization going forward. It encompassed attractive compensation and benefits, performance management, professional development and relevant training programmes to make Fagerdala as the brand of choice for those seeking a fulfilling career. Paul, the Managing Director stressed that “employees are key asset and

driver of the company's growth" and grooming talents is part of a systematic approach to prepare for leadership succession and sustain the brand (Lim 2016). As such, a more vibrant and innovative staff composition entailed, which reflects the rejuvenation of the brand personality.

"We are able to align our people, product and service offerings and elevate our brand promise and brand essence." (Senior Management)

Third, technical capabilities received strong attention as part of the transformation. New automation machines coupled with robotics technology were acquired, with personnel trained to operate them effectively (Shiao 2017). This gave Fagerdala the edge to handle complex customisation that customers desire at lower cost and faster pace. The in-house engineering team was mandated to design and manufacture automation equipment that could be built, set-up and put into operations within a short period.

"Robotics automation has always been our core competency and we are always improving the equipment we built". (Senior Management)

This enabled Fagerdala to position themselves in close proximity to their customers' factories which reduces shipping cost and establish better working relationships.

Forth, Centres of Excellence were created, to further spearhead innovation to strengthen competencies in material R&D, engineering, design, process, environment sustainability and automation (Ching 2013). With this transformation initiative, they were able to develop and share knowledge more effectively, and stay ahead of the curve in anticipating evolving customers' needs. These centres also generate thought leadership by producing white papers and execution of training across different areas of relevant expertise.

"The Centres of Excellence force us to constantly explore and test new strategies to boost the company's performance and productivity as we anticipate our customer's needs." (Senior Management)

Finally, another crucial part of the internal transformation was establishing vertical integration that drives the seamless end-to-end solution to customers. This transformation gives Fagerdala strong control in delivering their brand promise. With control over raw material, they could better customised the characteristics of the protective packaging to fit the exact needs of their customers. This vertical integration complements the supply chain and automation processes in furnishing a fully customised solution to customers.

"We are differentiated for our vertically integrated process. We control the entire value chain from raw material extrusion, packaging design and fabrication process to supply chain management." (Senior Management)

b) External Brand Transformation

External transformation encompassed visual communications, market outreach and customer engagements. From the visual communications perspective, it involved redesign of the logo, secondary graphics, typology, and other design elements. Symbol, colours and design were specifically chosen and applied coherently to stimulate the manifestation of the brand personality. Vibrant but yet strong were selected to highlight innovation, eco-friendliness and reliability. Design of the logo was unconventional to suggest that Fagerdala is always thinking out of the box to explore on new materials, and processes to better exceed the expectations of their customers. All design elements creatively conveyed the Fagerdala's identity as an international brand delivering global quality while cultivating relationship with customers as though they are local partners. This is in line with Steenkamp, Batra and Alden's (2003) study which demonstrated that perception of high quality attribute is usually construed for brands that conveyed a global brand image.

In terms of market outreach, Fagerdala collaborated with external research institutions to champion eco-friendly campaigns and initiatives. Such initiatives accentuated Fagerdala's message to the market that they are advocates of sustainability, reminding customers the enormous effort that they have invested into environmental friendly solutions to be in line with market needs and trends. Some of the efforts embarked upon were collection of PE waste from customers and recycle them to be Fagerdala's 100% recycled PE foam, which are made of bio-degradable resins (Lim 2016). Another initiative was also partnering their customers to reduce usage of foam in their protective packaging, which concurrently reduce the overall weight of the packaging for more efficient transportation and fuel efficiency in delivery trucks. One such example was their collaboration with Leica, a global microscope manufacturer as they embarked on a sustainability programme. Fagerdala redesigned and standardized their packaging cartons, introduced recycled foam, reduced the number from 23 to 11 pieces for each packing, and reduced the overall weight from 4.5 kg to 3kg (Lee, 2017).

Results and Managerial Implications

This descriptive case study on the brand transformation journey at Fagerdala had addressed the two research questions specific to this study. First, it demonstrated how the conceptual understanding of brand transformation was applied in a B2B context from the strategic perspective of practicing the brand regeneration process and followed by the performative process of execution. Second, it demonstrated that brand transformation has brought forth positive results that were evident in creating value to the organization and business.

"We are growing at a CAGR of 18% and our profit has grown at CAGR of 14%-15%" (Mr. Paul Yeo)

Anecdotal evidences exhibited that the entire initiative drew positive attention to new prospective customers and leading to new business deals being closed with large MNCs. In addition, the branding initiative also led to investment by Heliconia Capital, which is part of Temasek, the sovereign wealth fund management of the Singapore government (Temasek Review, 2016). This is an endorsement of confidence that investors have placed on the brand after the brand transformation exercise.

There are three major managerial implications from this study. First, it demonstrates that management should take notice of certain indicators to decide on brand transformation. That is,

when the business is catching up in a rapidly evolving industry or when they have stayed in status quo position for too long. Second, management of enterprises can take directions from the framework applied in this case as a guide for brand transformation of their own enterprises. Although transformational branding utilises established brand strategy frameworks at the strategic perspective, what sets it apart from conventional branding is that it pushes the “framing of competitive set” to the extreme. Internal branding and stakeholder management that is innovation oriented (Lee et al, 2016; Merrilees and Miller, 2008) is another critical practice to push the “reframing” to be successfully realised. For instance, a brand in the construction business such as Sunray (Lim, 2016) had deployed such a similar approach by reframing themselves to be an “interior fit out specialist” with the management taking an active decision to introduce various innovation to integrate all internal processes that had speed up their project completion by 30% ahead of the industry norm. Finally, this study illustrated that having strong leadership is imperative to drive the success of brand transformation. This is because it involves everyone associated to the organization and requires commitment across all groups. Change management is a critical success factor, underlined by strong business action plans that is supported by a team of brand champions within the company (Ind, 2011; Merrilees and Miller, 2008).

Conclusion and Future Directions

Fagerdala is a practical example of a B2B company which demonstrated that a comprehensive and impactful branding initiative involves transformation, often is underlined by an innovation mind-set. This success story of Fagerdala attest that superior brand performance can be achieved through integration of brand orientation and brand innovation (Lee et al, 2016; Merrilees and Miller, 2008). Brand transformation was realised by cutting across all silos within the organization with augmentation of human resources, management processes, stakeholder engagements, brand identity and communications systematically and cohesively (Aaker 2014). The harmonisation of all initiatives across silos was made possible with a single minded focus on the brand promise that is inspired by the essence of the brand.

Generalisation of the brand transformation concept and practice entails testing with further research. Recommendation will be to perform more of such case studies that characterise structured brand transformation initiatives across different industry verticals within both B2B and B2C enterprises. This will capture common practices and challenges, particularly at the performative perspective which could be consolidated as best practices for implementing brand transformation. In addition, the nuances in the challenges experienced in aligning different stakeholders and process together which could be specific to certain industry verticals can be captured in future studies. With this, the brand transformation framework at its performative perspective can be made more robust.

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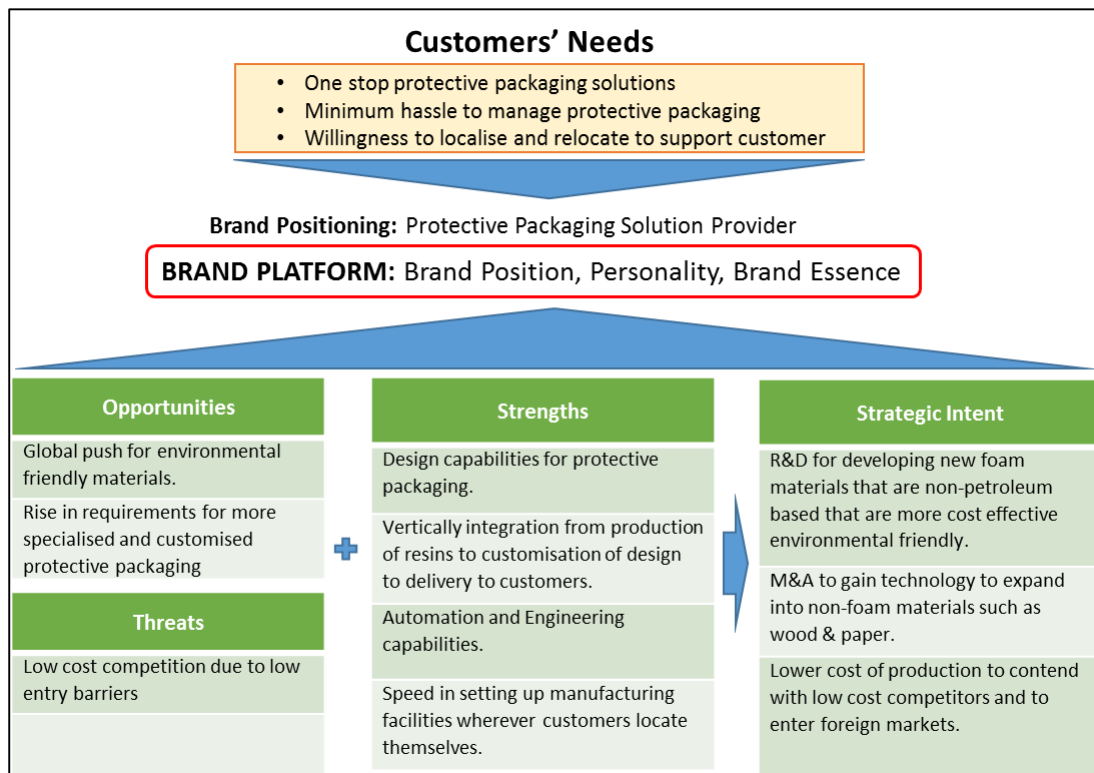


Figure 1. Brand strategy framework for Fagerdala

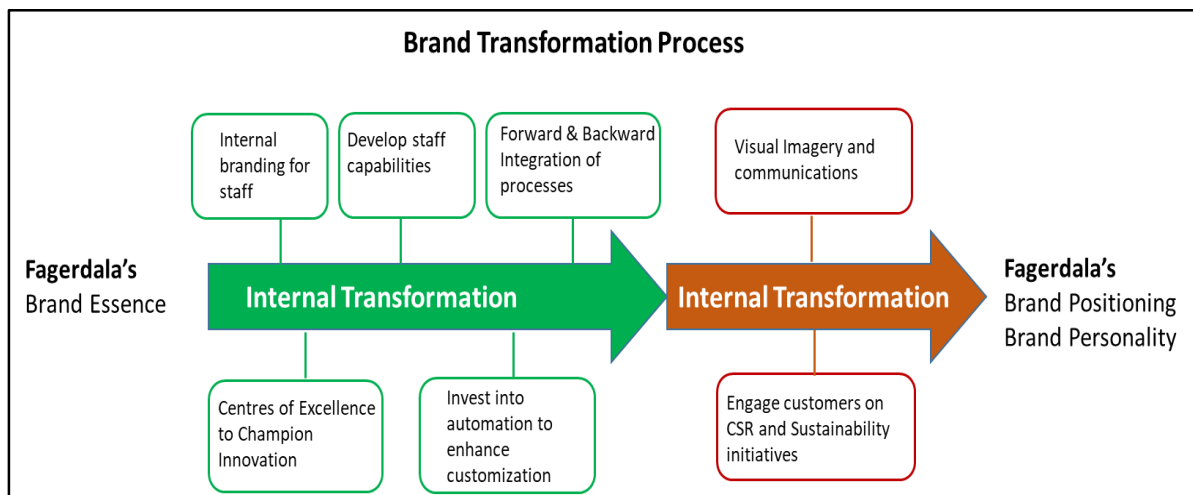


Figure 2. Brand Transformation Process