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**LANGUAGE MOLDS THE CHANGING RELATIONS OF COMPANY AND
CONSUMERS**



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Language Molds the Changing Relations of Company and Consumers. Global Business and Innovation Management- Trends and Competitiveness at Christ Institute of Management and Christ College, Rajkot.



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ABSTRACT

Globalization has changed the system dynamics of business. There are several factors that a company considers when deciding to operate in an international territory or with a foreign company. Factors such as language and culture greatly affect to mold the relation of the consumer and the company in today's world. Verbal and non-verbal communication helps in making the strategies in the challenging world of business. Determining the importance of language by a company is crucial to its success. Studying another language helps to understand the culture of the consumer which will assist in a corporation's decision making process. Every business' success and failure depends on the communication and the channel used by the organization in the communication process. English is a popular language in conducting business; however, communicating in other languages is gaining popularity. This paper will be answering the questions of in which way a company should use effective communication with the measures which are available in the market and in which way they should communicate with the consumers in an accurate and efficient manner.

KEY WORDS

Communication process, Language, Globalization, Consumers



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“The limits of our language” means the limits of our world.

–Wittgenstein.

Effective communication is vital in today's business endeavors. There are many companies that conduct international business. Governments need to communicate with each other and trade exists throughout many countries. There are many languages that are spoken in the world today and sometimes miscommunication can occur. English is a common language spoken in today's world; however, other languages are still dominant. The ability to communicate in a language other than English or one's native language can be beneficial to the success of a business venture. Learning a language helps one to learn and understand the culture in which that language is spoken. Understanding a culture and learning to speak its language can be very powerful in business communication. Effective communication within the business and its communities is crucial.

With the continuous changes in the economy, businesses have to adapt to newer technologies and operational procedures to remain competitive. Some companies realize the need to explore other markets for its products and services; as a result, these companies conduct business transactions in international markets. While operating in an international environment, a company faces several challenges, including effective communication in a foreign language. Communication is defined as “a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behavior.” There are components forming the framework for business communication in order to be successful. Communication



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involves written and verbal aspects, and it is suggested that verbal communication is one of the top competencies needed to excel in a managerial position (Shrivastava, 2012). Companies communicate internally and externally. External communication refers to relationships with persons outside of the company; examples include investors, suppliers, and customers. Internal communication refers to communicating with employees; communication within an organization. It comprises of formal and informal communication. Formal communication refers to letters, memos, and guidelines. Informal communication refers to personal relationships and the exchange of ideas and opinions. Language is an important aspect of communication; it is the systems of symbols used to communicate. One is able to express thoughts, ideas and feelings through the use of language. According to the Discovery Channel, there are approximately 6,900 languages spoken. The most widely spoken languages in the world, from most popular, are Mandarin, Spanish, English, Arabic and Bengali (“Linguistic Anthropology,” 2011). English may not be the most widely spoken language; however, some businesses consider English to be the official corporate language in business (Pikhart, 2011).

It has become widely accepted that the lingua franca of international business is English. Internationally operating companies use English as their official corporate language. According to Merriam-Webster, lingua franca is defined as “a language used for communication between two or more groups that have different native languages; it can be thought of as a standard language (“Lingua Franca,” n.d.)” Several studies have shown the importance of English in business communication. With so many other languages in the world, many persons are learning English in hopes of becoming more marketable.

Business communication and language go hand in hand with each other in order for companies not only to achieve success with its consumers, but also for employee satisfaction. Language seems to be gaining importance from not only companies, but from governments as well. Governments have seen the necessity to educate their nationals on foreign language; providing additional funding for language programs and making it compulsory to learn a language at a young age are all efforts to improve competence. But selling a product or service has become more difficult than ever due to the saturation in the market for competing similar products and new disruptive products. Consumers are subjected every day to hundreds of brands that do not differ much one from another. According to Dharma Singh Khalsa, M.D, in his book *Brain Longevity*, the average person sees 16000 advertisements, logos, and labels in a day. Only a few companies are enjoying the privilege of being at the top of mind as the most popular and visible companies in their categories. All the other companies tend to imitate each other and their advertising messages repeat over and over the same advantages and benefits without standing out or having better positioning in the market. What



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does a company do to move its product or service to top of mind by consumers and customers over all the other myriad product options? In which way should we communicate with consumers in an accurate and efficient manner? How will we position ourselves in the market? First of all one must understand and know your product, and what it can offer differently than other products of the same type. In which way do we want consumers to recognize our product? What benefits does our product bring in consumer needs and which values would it bring to their lives — ultimately what makes it unique and unrepeatable.

In the same way that your product should be different, it also has to be understood and perceived as part of the suite of products that have the same social roll. Consumers do not expect to interact in the same way with a Tour Operator than with a Financial Institution or vice versa. The market niche needs to be wisely chosen, specifically as to whom the product is targeted. Your product is not designed to meet the needs of all types of consumers but it should be targeted to a small sector of the consumer population. This niche must have a close relationship with your differentiating values and with your Brand values. The more precise you are in knowing what your niche is, the easier it is to identify the most potent opportunities to market your product. So if I'm looking for something online, I think of Google. If I want a quick sandwich made with care, I think of Subway. Your communication should be repeating over and over again your brand values. Companies that base their communication on fads or ephemeral trends, waste precious resources of marketing budgets and lose forever their market timeliness and opportunity. It's like fad-based pop bands that have one hit and are really popular for a while, and then they disappear without a trace. Companies that know themselves, and are able to effectively to express their special qualities, in a relevant way, are establishing a strong connection with their customer needs and experiences. There are certain factors which are essential to answer the above questions. These factors are:

- 1) Buyer decision-making process
- 2) Creating Value for Customers/ Customer Retention

1) BUYER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Buyer decision making process states that customers go through a five-stage decision-making process in any purchases made. The individual stages are summarized in the below followed by brief explanations.



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**Need Recognition and Problem Awareness → Information Search → Evaluation of Alternatives
→Purchase → Post Purchase Evaluation**

This model is very paramount for everyone who makes marketing decisions. The model compels marketers to consider the complete buying process rather than just the purchasing decision. The model shows that customers go through five essential stages in every purchase. However, in more frequent purchases, customers sometimes skip some of the stages. For example, someone who is buying a favourite drink would recognise the need for thirst and go straight to the purchase decision, skipping information search and evaluation. However, the model is very important when it comes to understanding any purchase involving some detail considerations (Jobber, 2001, p 65).

- **Need recognition and problem awareness**

The buying process begins with need recognition or problem awareness. At this stage, the customer, firstly, recognizes a problem or need or attracted to an advertisement. Advertising has a great impact on the modern marketing society. In order to arouse customers' interest, various strategies and skills in advertising language are employed by advertisers. It classifies four fundamental psychological factors that affect customer's response to advertising stimuli. These are motivation, perception, learning and memory. This is particularly true in the areas of advertising. Apart from the visual content, the language used in an advertisement conveys specific messages with the intention of influencing consumers to purchase from or subscribe to a particular service provider. The success of an advertising campaign has a strong influence on the development of a brand. In a context where the consumers are multi-racial and multi lingual, the advertisers may need to be extra cautious about the language to be used in advertising.

- **Information search**

After the buyer has recognised the need for something or an existing problem, the customer then moves on to the next stage; searching for information. An "aroused" customer then needs to decide how much information, if any, is required. If the need or the problem is so pressing and there is a product or service close at hand that meets the need or solves the problem, then a purchase decision is made immediately. If not, then the process of searching for information begins. There are several sources that a customer can obtain information. The information can be gathered from:

- 1) Personal sources: family, friends, neighbours
- 2) Commercial sources: advertising, salespeople, retailers, dealers, packaging, point-of sale



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displays.

- 3) Public sources: newspapers, radio, television, consumer organisations, magazines.
- 4) Experiential sources: handling, examining, using the product

The usefulness and influence of these sources of information will vary by product and by customer. Here one can say that customer's value and respect personal sources (the influence of "word of mouth") more than commercial sources. The challenge for the marketing team is to identify which information sources are most influential in their target markets.

- **Evaluation of alternatives**

The next stage in the model is the evaluation stage, where the customer chooses between the alternative brands, products and services. This is very important stage. Here the sales representatives also need to emphasize on the important characteristics of the product, the advantages as compared with other substitutes through his regional or national language. Sometimes the customer could be encouraged to try free samples of the product with the hope of getting the customer back to make more purchases of such brand.

- **Post-purchase evaluation – Cognitive Dissonance**

The last stage is the post-purchase evaluation of the decision. After the customer has made the purchase, it is usually common for the customer to deliberate on the purchase decision. But after buying the product the customer gets into dissonance. Dissonance mostly increases in a situation whereby each of the alternatives offers a unique attribute or benefit which is not available with others. Dissonance which arises in the post-purchase stage could be managed or reduced by encouraging the customers, through advertisements or brochures, that they have made the right decision.

2) Creating Value for Customers/ Customer Retention

After a customer has been able to determine a solution to his needs and wants, the next line of action is where to visit for optimum services to solve his problems. To make it simple, service providers or retailers are expected to offer good measures that will entice customers to visit their shops. Most importantly, the retailers try to establish a strong relationship with the customers such that they will continue to buy regularly from their shops, instead of other competitors. Successful retailers, in this regard, are very much concern about customer retention. Customer retention could be described as the activity that is performed by organizations to establish long-term relationships with customers in order to reduce customer defections



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(Jobber, 2001, p 689). When a customer is ready to make a buying decision, individual retailers are expecting to be chosen over other service providers. However, other service providers will also be ready to provide solutions to customers' needs and wants. Therefore, what makes a customer choose a particular retailer over others? Why customers choose one shop over another is quite difficult to determine. Customers themselves do not have much idea. Most of them are of the view that they visit a particular shop because the products or services are better, but, in reality, it is because they trust the source which gave them the information about the shop. Many factors determine why a customer will buy goods or services from a particular service provider rather than other competitors (Abrams, 2008).

- **Solve your customers' problems**

Companies emphasize on selling solutions rather than products or services. This simply means customers usually buy for a reason: they have a problem or a need and the retailer is expected to provide the solution. Selling high-quality items is not enough. However, retailers must understand the needs of the customer and how these needs could be solved better than other competitors.

- **Treat Customers with respect**

Retailers should observe fair treatment of customers regardless of their age, gender, race, appearance, or size of purchase. At the same time, their prices, and advertisements should be transparent. There should not be any hidden policies with the view of exploiting customers. Retailers should demonstrate competence, and a high sense of respect when interacting with customers. Customers will not buy from you if they entertain fears, and do not trust in you, or have ever had any bad past experience.

- **Connect with your customers' emotion**

Retailers should endeavor to get emotionally connected with consumers. It is a matter of establishing feelings of closeness, affection, and trust with the potential customers. Customers prefer buying from retailers who share their emotions with them. Retailers should connect emotionally with customers by making them feel at home, telling them the truth, impressing them, and showing love and appreciation. Customers feel more related to retailers who exhibit the following qualities;

- Coaching skills or expert in the area of the business
- Friendly or Caring



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- Have same goals as customers (customers want to be convinced that your goal is to help them solve their problems but not just taking their money)
- Relationship marketing (establish a sense of being related)

Customers choose you over your competitors because you are a good business to deal with. You are friendly, approachable and offer better service than other service providers. You have higher knowledge levels and expertise that other competitors do not seem to have. These put you on top or the best over your competitors.

- **Save Your Customers' Time**

To be more attractive to customers, retailers must offer their customers with convenient transaction in four ways. Retailers must ensure convenient retail locations and reliable operating hours (access convenience). They must put in place good measures for consumers to locate and pick up their desired products easily (search convenience). They must have enough stock of products at any point in time, in order for customers to get what they want, to avoid disappointment (possession convenience). And they need to maintain enough space for consumers to be able to pay for their selected items without wasting much time (transaction convenience). Customers prefer visiting shops where they will spend less money to locate, where it could easily be seen by passing cars, or with good signs for easy location.

- **CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that the language used in advertising is important in shaping customers' patronage decision, particularly when the service is targeted towards a specific population. It shows that the language used in advertisement has a positive influence on customers' overall patronage intention where race plays a strong mode rating role. Thus, it is crucial for advertisers to focus on the language used in conveying their message. The way in which you can positively influence the shaping of your brand and its proper implementation will position your company or organization in the right place in the market. A well thought-out brand draws the customer in, long before a purchase is made, transforming your product or service into the right choice for your consumers that they in return will "choose" with confidence. Craft a brand communication that precisely represents your organization's unique strengths and attributes which facilitates excited and enthusiastic customers. In a marketplace awash in the "me-too" approach to branding, it is time to break the mold, and discover who you are and who you want to be.



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