

FAITH MARKETING A THEORETICAL ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Now a days in India there is a tremendous growth of those organizations which are connecting their consumable products with the religion. India is a country of multicultural, multifaith, a cluster of different customs, language etc. The purpose of this paper is to elucidate its reader in general and to the marketers and organizations as a whole on faith marketing. In a society overrun by commercial clutter, religion has become yet another product sold in the consumer market. Faiths of all kinds must compete not only with each other, but with a uncountable of more enjoyable and more suitable leisure activities. The researcher tries to shows how religious branding has expanded over the past few decades in India to create a mixed world of commerce and faith where the holy becomes secular and the secular holy. Organizations dealing in faith marketing are having a tremendous growth in few years. The paper is also an attempt to establish the theoretical demarcation of the term faith marketing. The term faith marketing has caused controversy. There are two streams: that of the theologians, on one hand and that of the marketers, on the other hand. Marketers have their own view regarding the application of marketing into the faith sphere. The article tries to emphasise the necessity to adapt the religious organizations activities and the ways they must be presented to the society's actual characteristics. This can be achieved by using appropriate marketing tools and methods; however, the particularities of religion must be taken into account in order not to alter its faith values.

Keywords: faith marketing, Hinduism, Christian, Islam.

I. INTRODUCTION

Now a days in India there is a tremendous growth of those organizations which are connecting their consumable products with the religion. India is a country of multicultural, multifaith, a cluster of different customs, language etc. Organizations dealing in faith marketing are having a tremendous growth in few years. The term religious marketing has caused and is still causing controversy. Religious marketing or faith marketing, which comes under the field of service marketing, namely non-profit marketing, emerged long after product marketing. We are entitled to believe that the earliness of the term is one of the reasons why light has not been turned upon this concept. In a society infested by moneymaking muddle, religion has become yet another merchandise sold in the consumer marketplace. Faiths of all kinds

must compete not only with each other, but with a countless of more amusing and more suitable leisure activities. Religious branding has expanded rapidly over the past decades in India to create a combined world of commerce and faith where the holy becomes secular and the secular holy. Some strappingly state that in the field of service marketing, particularly non-profit service marketing, people first experienced marketing and afterwards became aware of it and took it into consideration for theory. The term marketing was first mentioned in the ecclesiastic sphere by Jay Benson Hamilton, in his paper Empty Churches and How to Fill Them (Hamilton, 1879). Ever since 1879, he presented the problems within churches and ways to counter them through marketing judgment. In India faith marketing has been around for thousands of years, in form of vendors selling their products in front of

religious places. It's only now that faith marketing has caught the attention of big organizations. Like the Patanjali Ayurved Limited, International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Dabur industries in form of Miswak toothpaste, the halal products of the Muslims organizations etc...

Why religious (faith) marketing has flourished in India

There are two main reasons why religious marketing has infused our culture. First, millions of Indians have been set free to choose their religion. The capability to choose has created the real open market for religion. Yes, when the Founding Fathers of constitution chose not to force a specific religion on the country, they were endorsing the propagation of religious choices. However choice is no choice if the rest of society (and particularly your mother) makes you go to a specific religious institution. In addition to the abolition of familial pressure to attend religious services, there is no longer a social stigma attached to not attending church, temple or a Dargah. Second, in the last 20 years the level of broadcasting (especially news agencies) flood in general has reached a height never imagined. We now have digital cable, with the average home having the ability to receive more than 1600 channels, not to mention direct broadcast satellite with its capacity to deliver several hundred national channels to the home of anyone willing to pay for them. The Internet has become a domestic item for many people and where this is not the case, people readily access cyberspace in their office or at their neighbourhood cybercafés. The media monster needs to be fed with content— all types of content. The simple fact that there is more media means that there is more religious media. These media houses have flared the religiousness in the average Indian citizens.

Subject analysis

Faith Marketing is a part of service marketing. Service marketing numbers several fields, including non-profit marketing. Faith marketing is included in this category.

How is non-profit marketing different from classic marketing?

There are a number of differences that evidently separate classic marketing from non-profit marketing; they are classified according to three standards: the economic standard, the legal standard and the social standard. The differences related to the economic standard refer to the specific features of non-profit marketing: in this case, we do not refer to material goods or financial services; the emphasis is laid on ideas, missions, causes and faith. The legal standard refers to the legal status of the organization and its responsibilities; in our case, the organization has a specific public or private status. The social character was cited in the last, but not least, whereas perhaps it is the most significant aspect: the aim is to satisfy the general interest, contrary to classic marketing, which is focused only on the particular interests.

Another specific element regarding non-profit marketing is exactly the way of measuring the results of the implementation of the marketing process. The pursued results usually regard the increase in the number of members, the retention and loyalty of the existing members, improving the organization's image, collecting funds for numerous causes, raising aid within numerous programs, changing the attitudes towards different aspects, changing certain behavioural characteristics, raising the awareness regarding certain global, national, regional, local, problems, etc.

Non-profit organizations are divided into three categories, depending on the field of activity:

- Charitable,
- Specialised,
- Political.

The aim of the first category is signified by charity acts and all the charitable actions from different sectors: health, education, culture, social work, church, temple or Dargah etc. The professional organizations include leagues, clubs, foundations, associations, unions etc., and the political organizations include parties, lobbyist organizations, etc.

According to Adriana Zait the marketing process within non-profit organizations (religious organizations in our case) includes 5 steps:

1. The main step is identifying the goals,
2. Placing the organization on the market,
3. 7P Marketing Mix
4. Designing the marketing plan, implementing the marketing plan,
5. Developing the message to be communicated; (Zaiț, 2004, p.230)

8. In marketing the Win-Lose principle is practised
9. Customer orientation

A little awareness of faith marketing organization:

Patanjali Ayurved Limited is an Indian FMCG company. Manufacturing units and headquarters are located in the industrial area of Haridwar while the registered office is located at Delhi. The company manufactures mineral and herbal products. It also has manufacturing units in Nepal under the trademark Nepal Gramudhyog and imports majority of herbs in India from Himalayas of Nepal. According to CLSA and HSBC, Patanjali is the fastest growing FMCG company in India. It is valued at ₹30 billion (US\$460 million) and some predict revenues of ₹5,000 crore (US\$770 million) for the fiscal 2015–16. Patanjali declared its annual turnover of the year 2016-17 to be estimated ₹10,216 crore (US\$1.6 billion). Baba Ramdev has stated in his interview with CNN-News18 that profit from Patanjali Products goes to charity.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), known colloquially as the Hare Krishna movement or Hare Krishnas, is a Gaudiya Vaishnava Hindu religious organisation. ISKCON was founded in 1966 in New York City by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who is worshipped by followers as Guru and spiritual master. Its core beliefs are based on select traditional scriptures, particularly the Bhagavad-gītā and the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. ISKCON is a direct descendant of Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya. The appearance of the movement and its culture come from the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, which has had adherents in India since the late 15th century and American and European converts since the early 1900s in North America, and in England in the 1930s. In West Virginia, the Praphupada’s Palace of Gold, built to be a home for Swami, is now a shrine for the founder, who died in 1977. ISKCON was formed to spread the practice of bhakti yoga, in which those involved (bhaktas) dedicate their thoughts and actions towards pleasing the Supreme Lord, Krishna. ISKCON as of 2017 is a worldwide confederation of more than 850 temples and centres, including 60 farm communities, some aiming for self-sufficiency, 50 schools, and 90 restaurants. Its most rapid expansions in membership as of 2007 have been within India

In order to outline several differences between classic marketing and non-profit marketing, I will present the following parallel performed by Adriana Zaiț regarding Service Marketing:

Table 1 Parallel regarding Service Marketing

Reflection elements	Non-profit marketing	Classic marketing
To whom it applies	Ideas, organizations, persons, places, and indirectly goods and	Goods, products and services, except ideas
Goals	Complex, multiple, usually financially unquantifiable (social attitudes,	Financial (turnover, profit)
Components	Beneficiaries and benefactors (two targets)	Clients (buyers) (one single target)
Nature of the exchange	Mainly informational, moral, educational, etc.	Mainly financial
Market segmentation	Affected segments, unreal from the economic point of view	Profitable segments from the economic point of view
Benefits	Most often uncorrelated with the payments made by customers	Correlated with the payments made by customers

Source: Zaiț, A. Marketingul serviciilor, Editura Sedcom Libris , 2004, p.233

Strâmbu presents the most common criticism regarding the implementation of religious marketing and provides answers (Strâmbu-Dima, 2008):

1. Marketing wastes the money offered to God by the member parishioners
2. The marketing activity acts as an intrusion into the life of the individuals
3. Marketing is manipulating
4. Marketing militates against the spirit of leadership
5. Marketing desacralizes religion
6. In Romania, people are still interested in the religious message
7. Larger churches have a greater need for communication

and, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe.

Dabur (Dabur India Ltd. derived from Doktor Burman is India's largest Ayurvedic medicine & natural consumer products manufacturer. Dabur demerged its Pharma business in 2003 and hived it off into a separate company, Dabur Pharma Ltd. German company Fresenius SE bought a 73.27% equity stake in Dabur Pharma in June 2008 at Rs 76.50 a share. Dabur's Healthcare Division has over 260 products for treating a range of ailments and body conditions, from common cold to chronic paralysis. Dabur International, a fully owned subsidiary of Dabur India formerly held shares in the UAE based Weikfield International, which it sold in June 2012.

Dabour Experts explain the power of Dabur Meswak Meswak is a scientifically formulated herbal toothpaste with pure extract of the Miswak plant 'Salvadora Persica', the famous 'Toothbrush Tree' used for centuries. The astringent and anti-bacterial properties of Meswak help reduce tooth decay, fight plaque and prevent gum diseases. This product was launched keeping in site the religious affiliation of the Hindus and the Muslims both. In promotions campaigns they have tried to capture the Ayurveda concepts for the Hindus and the miswak concept for the Muslims.

II. CONCLUSIONS

In the current conditions, in which society is in a continuous change worldwide and especially in India, but not necessarily in a good way, there are a series of particularities that must be taken into account when we establish our future steps. It is of vital importance to keep up with the modern society or more correctly, the post-modern one, and, if we don't know its characteristics, the results will definitely be disastrous. The world doesn't wait for us, and the contemporary phenomena conquer our lives.

The temple, dargah and the Church must realise that there have appeared fundamental changes and it has the duty to try to acknowledge, discover and find a solution to them. Stefan Iloaie, in his book "Christian morality and post-modern ethics", page 14, sees the process of globalization as being

"characterized by the universality of economic, social, cultural, social values, religious mutations and the speed of the Exchange between value-non-value" (Iloaie, 2009, p.14).

The temples, Dargah, Churches and all those similar organizations dealing in faith marketing must quickly adapt to these changes and to try to counteract the negative effects that will surely come out. In the process of globalization, there are a lot of negative effects, affecting religion too and in what follows, I will mention only some of them: the relativity of faith, the disappearance of the feeling of belonging to an authentic religious tradition, syncretism, the relativity of spiritual values, individualisation, the increasingly less knowledge of reality and the interest in it, the ignoring of man's spiritual problems, the issue of integrating the religious villagers in urban life, the ignoring of our conscience and its disappearance.

In this process of globalization, man suffers from a disease that is inherent to the society we are living in: loneliness. Man is alone because he is cornered from every angle, he focuses on the near future and necessity, he hasn't developed a defence system against the economic and technical manipulations; therefore, due to the lack of religious values, he falls prey to his instincts, hedonism, aggressiveness and entertainment. If we consider faith, values are of utter importance and all these changes create a state of mystery around them, but the marketing organizations must act as quickly as possible and to use means that are adapted to the society we are living in; the industry of marketing can be very useful from this point of view. The mass-media presents and the people consume what they are being offered. We as marketers can easily manipulate, but we don't create ourselves a defence system, a battlefield. Marketing can act in different directions in religion. Using religious marketing is a way to counteract some of the negative effects of progress with its own weapons. But it must be adapted to nowadays society and its characteristics; if not, some of them previously presented, the Church, faith have no chance of winning this war. We are too easily manipulated and all the information around us is not helpful. After a period of restrictions, we got into too much freedom. Not a real one, one misunderstood, one that limits and ties us up into a chain in which

every ring means selfishness, hedonism, nihilism, relativism...

The production is unrestricted, but the needs have also become unlimited. The expectations know no limit and so we have the tendency to bury ourselves in today, lonely and sad.

Our only chance is to identify moral values to respect and grow on a fertile soil. But we need help and the Church is entitled to offer it to us. I would emphasize that it must be offered through modern methods because we are bombed by information, colours, images and the Church has to use marketing as a tool adapted to our needs and characteristics.

From this point of view, the theologians and marketers must work together. A marketer without solid religious knowledge will never be able to carry into effect an efficient marketing process, whilst a theologian without knowledge in marketing will share the same fate too.

All that will be done from now on must respect the dogmas and the Holy Tradition.

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