Enabling Cultural Identity –
A TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY AT INDHAN LTD.

The importance of facilitating a company culture in which employees live the brand, solve problems, make decisions, champion the brand internally and deliver a branded customer experience externally has been emphasized by numerous researchers including Harris & Chernatony (2001) and Baumgarth, Schmidt, (2010).

The leaders of many organizations also understand the importance of aligning employee actions with the culture of the organizations but often fail to set the wheels in motion, often due to lack of expertise in guiding the organization through the transformation. However, there is no need to panic or adopt a trial and error method because there several tried and tested methods to guide an organization through the process.

One of the important strategies in this context is ‘internal branding’. Internal Branding is the set of strategic processes which empower employees to deliver the appropriate customer experience in a consistent and reliable fashion. Internal branding leads employees to understand the brand promise by intrinsically motivating them through to own the brand (Devasagayam et al., 2010). The primary purpose of internal branding is to align its internal processes and corporate culture with those of the brand’s promise and values (De-Chernatony and Cottam, 2006).

Since branding is interplay between Brand Vision, Organisation Culture and Brand Image, a comprehensive collaborative and cross-functional approach would be required to manage the interplay. It is therefore important to “bring the entire organization on board the transformation process”. Hence, effective communication between internal and external stakeholders would be a pre-requisite. Honest self-assessment, responsive attitudes toward stakeholders, and respect for the values that attract all stakeholders to the corporation would add impetus to the internal branding efforts.

Hence, effective internal branding would necessitate drawing in from the rich resource of organization culture in order to make it an integrated part of the effort to build a corporate brand.
CASE IN POINT - INDHAN LTD.

Indhan Ltd. was poised for fast and rapid growth right from inception. With a capacity of about 10 million metric tons per annum covering a wide-range of petroleum products aimed to target both the public and private sector customers in India, cutting edge technology that supports global norms and expansion plans to top-up capacities, the organization was on an aggressive growth path.

Its strengths include its strong focus on technology, which has enabled it to achieve capacity utilization levels of 120 percent on a consistent basis. It is also among the first companies in India to be equipped with processes to meet the stringent Euro 4 and Euro 5 standards.

With multiple players in the energy sector, Indhan Ltd. was embarking on a journey to position itself as a brand of reckoning.

CHALLENGES & KEY REQUIREMENT

- In a bid to support its ambitious business plans, Indhan Ltd. has brought into its fold, more than 1000 professionals from diverse industries across the world. Hence, the organization comprised of multiple sub-cultures and needed to:
  - Effectively manage the differences arising from rapidly evolving, multi-cultural and diverse sub-environments
  - Leverage the Collective Strengths of the organization, through active collaboration

Indhan Ltd. therefore wished to embark on an endeavor to establish a Singular Cultural Identity that would enable an integrated culture.

DESIRE TO INITIATE CHANGE

Indhan Ltd. had initiated the cultural-integration journey by undertaking a few interventions which included the following:

- Identification of 100+ Potential Leaders who could be Culture Champions
- Design of Individual Development Plans for the identified leaders

With the key role players in place, the stage was therefore set for:

- Co-creating a Cultural Integration Blueprint (CI Blueprint) for Indhan Ltd.
- Cascading the blueprint through the Culture Champions

It was time for Vertebrand to take center-stage.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS – WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO

Vertebrand followed a 3-phased approach for the Cultural Integration endeavor at Indhan Ltd.

![Diagram](image-url)
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THE JOURNEY BEGINS – WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO

Vertebbrand followed a 3-phased approach for the Cultural Integration endeavor at Indhan Ltd. The initial phase of the journey started with studying the various elements of the ecosystem supporting the potential leaders in order to:

• Gain insights about the customer perspective by meeting with key customers across segments.
• Understand from the top-leadership team about the key strengths, challenges and aspirations of the organisation as a whole and of each Business Entity / Key-Function.

This phase helped decipher the key elements for cultural integration and hence arrive at broad framework for the CI Blueprint.

The first phase also involved:

• Deployment of Vertebbrand’s proprietary tool (the Entropy-EncodeTM PaaS) to assess the extent of cultural integration at organizational as well as function-team levels.
• This involved deployment of the PaaS to the Culture Champions spread across functions/departments.

The next phase was focussed on creating a felt-need as well as a sense of ownership for Cultural Integration amongst the identified culture champions. This was through a series of interventions with the Culture Champions which included wide-spread communication as well as customised co-creation sessions.

The creation of felt-need was through sharing the findings from Phase 1 which clearly conveyed the gaps in alignment and hence the need for Cultural Integration.

The sense of ownership for Cultural integration was driven through a set of customised co-creation workshops where the potential leadership was facilitated to arrive at the CI Blueprint for Indhan Ltd. The CI Blueprint which emerged was not only signed-off by the culture champions but key action plans were also developed in order to bring life to the blueprint within the organisation.
Phase 3:

The final phase was the handholding and guiding stage, designed and executed with the purpose of instilling confidence in the core team at Indhan Ltd. to take ownership and be at the forefront of the transformation process at the company. It involved many hands-on participative sessions including role play and case study to help the core team identify the right culture enabling parameters, assess where they stand now and identify priority areas for improvement.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The key takeaways of Vertebrand’s engagement with Indhan Ltd. were:

- Establishing a felt need for Cultural Integration
- Empowering the key leadership as Culture Champions
- Creating A Cultural Blueprint for the future

The effectiveness of delivering the above is illustrated by the collation of feedback from the organization on the CI Workshops as follows:

CONCLUSION

The present case related to the need for aligning the many sub cultures within Indhan Ltd. to create a strong integrated culture that serves as the driving force for the organization helps it channelize the potential synergies arising from the transformation process and emerge as a formidable player in the energy industry.

REFERENCES


