Touching Lives

Healthcare & Wellness
Client: Apollo Hospitals

The Apollo Hospitals Group is a pioneer of integrated health delivery which owns and manages 41 hospitals in and around India and is now an organization with several hospitals, management colleges, pharmacies, diagnostic clinics, third-party administration and consultancy services that they own and manage.

Challenge

Apollo Hospitals had the infrastructure, staff and geographical presence and a popular name in the healthcare industry. But with the unplanned mushrooming of franchised clinics, pharmacies and a growing patient perception of the brand being too commercial, impersonal and expensive, competition was rapidly catching up with this doyen of Indian hospitals. Now, the client felt it was time to consciously crystallize and grow its brand with the help of professional strategists who would shift the focus from “Medicine & Technology” to “Patient Experience”. Hence, Apollo Hospitals approached Vertebrand to reassess its Brand strategy using Vertebrand’s proprietary tools that are based on rigorous scientific research and analytics methodologies.

Objectives:

With the given challenges the objectives were to:

- Understand and clarify the relationships between the parent brand (Apollo Hospitals) and the sub-brands (Centers of Excellence).
• To Re-evaluate and Re-design the Corporate (Apollo) and Sub-Brands (Centre of Excellence) Brand Identity and Brand Architecture.

• Identify and set benchmarks for key service delivery areas.

• Chart a service excellence program and implement the program as a Pilot Project at each Centre and make course-corrections as required.

Solution:

With the given challenges and set objectives Vertebrand divided the assignment into 3 phases; Phase I was primarily Secondary research, Internal scan & Customer research; Phase II involved the creation of a new Brand Identity and Positioning Strategy for both the Parent Brand (Apollo Hospitals) and Sub-Brands - Apollo Centers of Excellence; this was followed by Phase III which involved the implementation and communication of the proposed Brand Strategy.

Phase I:

Secondary Research: In secondary research, key industry insights like market size, market growth was considered.

Internal Scan:

A four-pronged research approach was formulated that included in-depth interviews with referral doctors, patients and employees (nurses, doctors and
administration staff) plus service observation. The company’s hospitals and clinics in various locations like Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi and Kolkata were included in the study.

**Inferences:**

Based on thorough analysis of the internal scan, the strengths and weaknesses of Apollo as a corporate brand was established and a Business and Brand Strategy began formulation.

**Customer Scan:**

After Secondary research and Internal Scan, a Customer Scan was conducted which involved the screening of Apollo’s customers and customers of other hospitals. Through the Customer Scan, conducted as in-depth interviews, all pain areas of the hospital were identified.

**Strategic Insights after the research:**

After a comprehensive research with key personnel, Vertebrand hypothesized that Apollo occupied a position beyond ‘physical’ hospitals and it was a combination of key value propositions which Apollo stood firmly upon. These key value propositions created an incomparable trust for Apollo in the healthcare domain. Based on these value propositions, Vertebrand suggested significant strategic directions for Apollo hospitals.

**Phase II:**

After a 360 degree market mapping and considering suggested strategic implications, Vertebrand recommended a robust brand strategy through process called Vintellity which articulated brand architecture, organizational restructuring, physical identity for both the mother brand (Apollo Hospitals) and sub brands (Centre of Excellence). Vertebrand was instrumental in refreshing and contemporarising the logo as well as delivering the Brand Bible.

**Phase III:**

Vertebrand evolved a marketing plan which specified media and channels across the country and Advertising guidelines were articulated for both the parent and sub-brands. This resulted in the client being perceived as a complete healthcare brand rather than a hospital chain. Following our strategy the patient-experience (interiors, services, signage et al) was standardised across hospitals and franchised clinics. Processes and service guidelines were put together to make the brand more patient-centric in the hospital/clinic experience. What Vertebrand created was a cohesive brand which consistently spoke in a down-to-earth and knowledgeable tone across sub-brands and geographical locations. A brand that reflected the company’s international standards – in achievement, infrastructure, expertise and spirit.