

JULIE BANERJEE MEHTA HAS A TETE-A-TETE WITH MARKETING GURU SHIVAJI DAS GUPTA ON HIS NEW BOOK, *MARKETING THAT WORKS: BUILDING BREAKTHROUGH BRANDS IN INDIA*



Shivaji Das Gupta

"Inclusiveness was an integral element of my parental culture, a lesson that is now a way of living." Excerpts from the interview:

How long did it take you to conceptualise this book, and how did you think of structuring the chapters as "nuggets" in the Beta section of the book?

For over a decade, I have been attempting to develop an India-centric brand development model, inspired by the prolific homegrown successes in the post-liberalisation era. Quite patently, the Western models were increasingly inappropriate, as they failed to sincerely absorb local realities,

whether consumption or curation. So I was determined to put forth a foundation which could be fathomed by all and implemented by most, thus acting as a meaningful template for future business folks with a tech edge or a fine intuitive advantage.

The nuggets were always designed to be behavioural patterns as opposed to case studies, where every reader could identify personally or professionally. This is a book designed primarily for practitioners, so the idea was to have short-form (low attention span) content that would make sense in miniature parts and hopefully add up to a greater whole. Thus, giving life to a brand development construct for every kind of business.

How do you think your book, which stands out in its clarity and its unfurling of complexities, makes a contribution, first, in the corporate world, and second, in academia?

In the corporate jungle, the book may act as a willing adhesive. To

help the many diverse actors find meaning in a "template", counter intuitive at the core. Also, to derive empathy from the nuggets that have been suggested as base evidence of an already provocative pattern. So, the market performance potential of their business multiplies manifold. The power of the 'brand' in achieving this is deeply underestimated.

In academia, this is a brand new thought process, and I am

attempting to populate as much empirical evidence as possible in my regular online and offline opinion columns as well as many direct contact forums. Hopefully, this will inspire a whole host of meaningful India-origin work, powered by the prolific potential of technology. Importantly, work which is real-time and in quick reaction

mode, as market dynamics are changing rapidly, every quarter.

In a corporate world like the one in India, where experience tells us changing mindsets is perhaps the most difficult task to succeed in, how do we go about building

breakthrough brands in India? My UMA (Unify Magnify Amplify) construct attempts to put a structure on this evolution, so that every business can take advantage of the learning curve. The first stage is to "unify" ambitions and access for every Indian, wherein I have proposed a dashboard approach to track developments in key arenas — health and wellness, the great Indian mobility and many more.

The second stage is "magnify", wherein businesses define the playground they wish to focus on and, more specifically, their product or service. The third stage is "amplify", where businesses must define the brand energy statement and also chart the brand expression. A whole host of measurable action points, across the traditional and emerging marketing mix, which will bring the brand to life as a structured customer experience.

Julie Banerjee Mehta is the author of Dance of Life, and co-author of Strongman: The Extraordinary Life of Hun Sen. She teaches Masters English at Loreto College, and curates the monthly Literary Circle discussion of the Rising Asia Foundation

