How can Design Thinking help in Naming a Brand?

SCENARIO 01

"Can you repeat?" I asked him.

He repeated the word.

"Sorry, could not get it. Can you spell?"

He did spell.

"Now I understand. Thanks"

"How is it?" He asked me.

"Jig, You kept this name for your product. If you are finding it difficult to convey the name to me, how will your customer tell your product's name to another non-customer?"

Jig...bit confused.

"Jig, the best way of promoting the product is through a user. Assume your product is wonderful, and people love it. If the customer talks about the product to his friend over the phone, should you not keep the product name simple enough to communicate, so the other guy gets it and later search online?"

"If your product name need extra effort from user to communicate to another user, you have placed a barrier in diffusion of your product idea, blocking its viral spread"

"I understand"

SCENARIO 02

"Can you spell the name. I didn't get"

Sam explained. "It means "Inspiration" in our local language. Many of them are not aware of this word. Once they hear the word, they should be curious to know. What do you think about it"

"Before commenting on your sanitizer product's name, have you finalised "Positioning" of your product?"

"Not yet. Everything has to start from Name. Right?"

"Design Thinking asks us to start from the User's mind. A typical user has an image of Sanitizers in his mind. Where are you positioning your product? Have you thought about it?"

"Not Yet"

"Without positioning your product, you should not talk about names."

"See, My product quality will be at par with present competitors in the market. We can provide products slightly at a lower price. So, what do you think our positioning should be"

"If your product is like every other competitor or slightly desirable than others, then selling is going to be difficult, whatever name you keep. Spending huge amount of money on TV Ads, Newspaper may bring awareness, but it will not provide sufficient returns. It is very difficult to change minds with advertising"

"So, what's the solution?"

" As I said, we need to look at User's mind first. Your consumers have been comfortable using existing sanitizers and they won't be seeing any new need. But, you have to do some research to figure out his rational, unarticulated needs. Let's imagine that you have done research. You found a target segment "Travellers", maybe "Business Travellers". A portable sanitizer—very user-friendly product."

"Business Travellers market is very small. Household market would be great"

"But that market has tough competition. Your market share would be meagre even after spending money. You might earn more in a new category or new market, where you are the first person. Moreover, once you establish in this market, you can easily extend to the other market. There are many real examples on how you can enlarge your market later. As Al Ries says, "It's better to be a big fish in a small pond than to be a small fish in a big pond." You can later increase the size of your

pond"

"Ok"

"To enter into User's mind, you should be the first recognisable name in that category. You need to create a new sub-category first in your user's mind. Slowly, we have to convert this Sub-Category into a new category "

"I understand. There are no sanitizers specifically meant for people who travel very often. So, we have to focus on this and consider this as a sub-category. When we communicate, we have to communicate something like "Healthy Travel"?"

"Yes. I'm just giving an example. Create a sub-category first based on your user research"

"Oh"

"Remember 3 things. Be first in consumer's mind. Select an Attribute. Specialise in that. Let's come to naming your product"

"Finally"

"Your name should communicate what it is. Imagine a customer recommends your product to another person. Can your name, simplify his tasks to explain your product to others? For Example — Take, "Red Bull" energy drink. Do I need to explain anything more here as a customer? Red Bull is associated with power, dynamism, energy. So, it is easier for any customer to recommend your product."

"But what about names like Colgate, Google, etc..?"

"How to explain this? When you are the first one to human's brain in creating the main category, then no need to think about the meaning of the name. Here, in our case, you are trying to create a Sub-Category."

"Personality names are fine. Inventor's name, founder's name provide a certain value, as long as you can communicate the association"

"Let's see some names of pollution masks in the market, just see what names are already there in the market?"

"VogMask, OutGeek, IdMask, Smart Air, Venus Mask, OmPure, ..so

many?"

"None of them have thought about the product from User Perspective. From names, I cannot make out what they are for. Smart Air, OmPure — looks like purifying the air, Air Purifier? How different are they? We have to go a couple of steps back and ask why the user needs this product? Do you think a person buys a mask for getting pure air? No. He wants a healthy life. He wants safer lungs. If you ask again, you can unravel his real fears. You need to connect your product to his sub-conscious fears"

"There are also companies like Cambridge Mask Company, Delhi Mask Company"

"Delhi or Cambridge — if it is not associated with anything to a safe healthier life of people, and it's not adding any value to your product, then don't use the name. If a place is special for certain factors, and the user is well aware of it…remember, it's not that you as a company is aware of it….your customers need to be aware of it…then using the name of place is fine"

"Ok. How about Brand Extension? You already know that I'm a manufacturer of chemicals. Can we use the brand name"

"Whatever you do, think from a user's perspective. To be frank, Brand Extension rarely works. 90% of the time it has failed. Have you seen how many times Pepsi and coca-cola tried Brand Extension and failed? But separate names under their umbrella brand have succeeded. Mountain Dew, Gatorade, Aquafina, Tropicana, Dasani, Milkmaid, Fanta, Sprite… Products with individual names are hugely popular than the brand extension products. Do you know Colgate had so many products in their brand name? But nothing succeeded. Colgate toothpaste remains. Whereas HUL has different names for all its products"

"Why it happens?"

"Think from a User's perspective. In our minds, one particular name is associated with one product. Once I'm habituated…note….it has become a habit already, and then you introduce another product using the same name …It's "**Cognitive Dissonance**". If it is entirely a new category product, it would be fine. But if you are launching a product in the

existing category, using brand extensions, it completely goes against my established beliefs.

Think about other scenarios. Consider, I'm writing an item list for my provisional store. I just need to write Pepsi, Sprite. If it's brand extension, then I need to write Pepsi Cola Drink, Pepsi Lemon Drink, Pepsi Lemon Chips. One recent example. Gold winner brand has become synonymous with Sunflower Cooking Oil. When we write Gold winner in my list, it is Oil. No doubts for anyone. Maybe we can mention Olive or Sunflower. Now they are extending the brand to "Indian Dal" varieties. It is a situation of conflict. They can associate the brand, but they should have kept a separate name for Dal Varieties. It should be a 5–7 letter word name. Make it short to write, spell. It should mean only the product. One name should not represent more than one product so that it would be the first name to our mind. We need to consider other scenarios too."

"Ok. I have few more questions. "

"I think the length of the post is already of considerable. Can we continue after some time? Maybe in another post?"

"Sure"

"Thanks"