



**The University of the West Indies
St. Augustine Campus
Faculty of Humanities and Education**

**Language and Communication Seminar
COMS 3099**

GROUP PROJECT:

Janelle Applewhite

Nicholas Blackett

Dianne grant

Cherelle Marshall

Kerry Mohammed

YEAR: 2016

Lecturer: Dr Keston Pierre

TITLE OF THESIS:

Brand it: An investigation into the impact of promotional strategies

For official use only.

Date received: _____

Received by: _____

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies

of

The University of the West Indies

by

Janelle Applewhite – 813001638

Nicholas Blackett – 813004470

Dianne Grant – 813000219

Cherelle Marshall – 813000594

Kerry Mohammed – 812001063

Lecturer – Dr. Keston Pierre

2016

Department of Liberal Arts

Faculty of Humanities and Education

St. Augustine Campus

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Abstract

A communications audit was conducted on the company, Brand It, in October 2015. This audit revealed that the sales of Brand It has been stagnant for approximately two (2) years. An investigation into this issue showed that sales have been stagnant due to lack of effective promotional strategies. As such, Branding Communicators engaged in research and new promotional strategies to help resolve this issue.

In order to achieve this, various research methods were utilized. Surveys were conducted in Curepe and San Juan/Barataria in February, 2016. A questionnaire was the instrument used to facilitate this activity. Another method used was the implementation of new promotional strategies. Promotional Strategies implemented by Branding Communicators consisted of wearing 'Brand It' jerseys on commute to Brand It from the University of the West Indies, and while conducting the surveys. The other strategy included the posting of a photo album on Brand It's Facebook page comprising of pictures from Brand It's showroom. Branding Communicators also created a sales pitch to be relayed to several corporate companies.

Results showed that the majority of persons in both Curepe and San Juan/Barataria did not know about Brand It. As such, this may account for the stagnancy of sales at Brand It due to individuals being unaware of the services offered by the company. However, upon doing the survey individuals expressed their interest in Brand It. In addition, the impact of promotional strategies implemented by Branding Communicators was examined to reveal its effectiveness.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Acknowledgements

This research project would not have been successful without the help of several individuals. Firstly, Branding Communicators would like to thank Almighty God for His guidance, protection, and traveling mercies while conducting this research. Next, we would like to thank the University of the West Indies for affording us the opportunity to carry out this research.

A special thank you extends towards our lecturer, Dr. Keston Pierre, and tutor, Miss Carol Jaggernaut, for their assistance and supervision throughout the duration of the research. In addition, Branding Communicators would like to thank Mr. Richard Ramjohn, the owner of Brand It, for his time and cooperation with the group. This was truly appreciated.

We would also like to thank the families and friends of Branding Communicators for their constant love and support through this challenging process. We also thank each member for staying focused and determined, and for executing an excellent thesis project by working assiduously in a very amicable, supportive, and cooperative manner.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Table of Contents

Contents	Page
Cover Page.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Glossary.....	vi
<u>Chapter One:</u>	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background.....	1
Rationale.....	1
Significance of Study.....	2
Aims.....	3
<u>Chapter Two:</u>	
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
Research Questions.....	10
Hypotheses.....	10
<u>Chapter Three:</u>	
METHODOLOGY.....	11
Introduction.....	11
Research Design.....	12
Sample Selection.....	14
Data Collection.....	15
Data Processing and Analysis.....	16
Limitations.....	17

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Table of Contents

Contents	Page
<u>Chapter Four:</u>	
FINDINGS.....	18
<u>Chapter Five:</u>	
DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS.....	23
<u>Chapter Six:</u>	
CONCLUSION.....	29
Recommendations.....	30
Implications for Recommendations.....	30
References.....	32
Appendix 1.....	34
Appendix 2.....	35

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Glossary

Branding	assigning a brand name
Brand Awareness	the extent to which a brand is recognized by potential customers, and is correctly associated with a particular product
Branding Communicators	authors of the thesis research project entitled Brand It: An Investigation into the Impact of Promotional Strategies
Brand It	privately owned business by Mr. Richard Ramjohn which specializes in high quality screen printing, embroidery and laser engraving services in Trinidad and Tobago
Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model	suggests a four-stage theory of communication which includes production, circulation, consumption and reproduction. Messages are encoded and decoded on numerous levels
Limitation	a limiting circumstance or restriction
Marketing	the action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising
Market Research	the systematic gathering and interpretation of information about individuals or organizations using statistical and analytical methods and techniques to gain insight or support decision making
Promotional Strategies	efforts used to raise customer awareness of a product or brand, generating sales, and creating brand loyalty
Sales Promotion/ Behavioural Theory	suggests that the conditions of sales promotion are classical and operant conditioning. In classical conditioning, a stimulus occurs first, and a response is elicited. In operant conditioning the response is first emitted and then reinforced
Sales Pitch	a line of talk that attempts to persuade someone with a planned sales presentation strategy of a product or service that is designed to initiate a sale of the product or service.
Showroom	a room used to display goods for sale
Social Exchange Theory	indicates that social behaviour is the result of an exchange process.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Introduction

Background

'Brand It' is a privately owned business founded on October 20, 2007 by Mr. Richard Ramjohn. The business was initiated due to his interest in branding. It specializes in high quality screen printing, embroidery and laser engraving services in Trinidad and Tobago. Brand It's main office is situated in Barataria, Trinidad. This company is a one-stop shop for merchandising and personalizing items. Its overall goal is to make companies and promotional items distinguished. However, upon doing a communications audit it was noted that the company lacked a marketing department, and the sales of the company have been stagnant for approximately two (2) years.

As such, Branding Communicators aim to increase brand awareness of the company over a five month period. This would be done by examining current marketing strategies of the company, implementing new promotional strategies, and evaluating its effectiveness by the end of a five month period. Branding Communicators would target all potential customers in the market, specifically those interested in branding themselves or their companies.

Rationale

The main concern of Branding Communicators is the lack of marketing tactics from the company. The sales of Brand It cannot increase if citizens are unaware of the company and the services it offers. Thus, it is imperative to salvage the already existing customer base and work

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

assiduously on building others. Therefore, the issue of stagnancy, which results in very little or no form of new revenue for the business, would be of utmost priority.

Often, many businesses become stagnant due to the lack of effective promotional strategies. As such, heavy concentration on this area needs to be employed. Branding Communicators' objective is to examine the current promotional strategies exercised by Brand It, and to implement some new strategies that would aid in the company's overall success. Ultimately, this would benefit the company and also give all existing and potential customers an idea of the quality service and satisfaction that they desire. In order to achieve this, literature on marketing strategies, consumer buying behaviours, and several theories would be employed.

Significance of Study

Entrepreneurship can be viewed as another avenue for independence and manifestation of one's passion to reality. New businesses must not only have the resources but the knowledge, communication skills, and strategies to be impactful in the public domain. Lack of effective promotional strategies can be a major downfall to startup businesses and those in existence for years.

This study examines the relationship between promotional strategies and brand awareness. The research holds significance to budding entrepreneurs, startup businesses and veterans in the business industry regarding the impact of effective promotional strategies.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Aims

Generally, Branding Communicators aim to target all persons interested in the company's services in an attempt to effectively and efficiently increase Brand It's awareness. The objectives are as follows:

- 1) To engage in research previously done on promotional strategies
- 2) To utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods of research
- 3) To conceptualize and theorize data researched in order to achieve plausible research questions
- 4) To do field research in order to gauge how aware the general public is of Brand It
- 5) To create promotional strategies that would effectively aid in building brand awareness at Brand It
- 6) To implement the promotional strategies created within a five month period
- 7) To use data collected from the methodology to answer research questions in an analytical way pertinent to the study of research
- 8) To make the general public of Trinidad and Tobago more aware of Brand It through various promotional strategies over a five month period
- 9) To highlight the impact of promotional strategies used

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Literature Review

According to Berry, Hill and Klompmaker (1999), linkages between manufacturing and marketing strategies are crucial if a business is to be competitive in its markets (p. 3600). Many businesses fail to achieve their objectives because of the inability to develop consistent strategies (Berry et al., 1999, p. 3599). Berry, Hill and Klompmaker documented information from Buzzell's (1987) journal article which stated that in terms of analyzing and understanding the buying strategies of customers, the organization needs to know who these people are and their buying processes (Berry et al., 1999, p. 3603). Consequently, organizations would then be able to group its members and customer segments based on their buying habits.

On the other hand, in Campbell and Diamond's article entitled, 'Framing and sales promotions: The characteristics of a 'Good Deal,' they posited that it is important for marketers to recognize which sales promotion techniques efficiently generate consumer awareness and response (Campbell & Diamond, 1990, p. 25). Marketers need to know which types of sales promotions have the smallest noticeable difference and the largest latitude of acceptance (Campbell & Diamond, 1990, p. 26).

Berqiri, a lecturer and coordinator in the office of research projects and internationalization at Dukagjini College in Peja (Kosovo), acknowledges the impact of social media in building brand awareness (Berqiri, 2015, p. 91-92). However, companies fail to create strategies and objectives in the beginning. Marketers dismiss the procedures of measuring their social media activities. Therefore, issues arise with managing their relationship with their potential and current customers (Berqiri, 2015, p. 96).

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Customers are aware of their impact on businesses based on their ability to comment and share experiences about products or services. They view their engagement as an activity that should be recompensed (Berqiri, 2015, p. 97). This is particularly crucial for the implementation of sales promotions and promotional strategies.

As such, in order to implement effective promotional strategies, it is imperative to understand how it works. One theory that provides the conditions of sales promotions is the Sales Promotions Theory otherwise known as Behavioural Theory.

The conditions of sales promotion are classical and operant conditioning. In classical conditioning, a stimulus occurs first, and a response is elicited (Koekemoer & Bird, 2004, p. 279). Hence, it is referred to as the Stimulus- Response Theory. The consumer can be induced to form positive feelings towards a conditioned stimulus by associating it with an unconditioned stimulus (Koekemoer & Bird, 2004, p. 279). Classical conditioning is largely associated with sales promotion where the conditioned stimulus (promotional strategies) appeals to the unconditioned stimulus (feelings of consumers) to bring about a response (awareness/interest) (Koekemoer & Bird, 2004, p. 279).

However, in operant conditioning the response is first emitted and then reinforced (Koekemoer & Bird, 2004, p. 279). Skinner (1930) stated that operant conditioning suggests the response of the individual is likely to be affected by positive reinforcement (reward). Thus, it is referred to as a Response- Reinforcement Theory (Koekemoer & Bird, 2004, p. 279). As it relates to sales promotion, purchasing the product or services is the desired outcome, and a sales

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

promotion of some kind is the reinforcement provided. Sales Promotions Theory therefore illustrates the effects of sales promotion, and by extension promotional strategies, on consumers.

Based on this theory, businesses can market their products through promotional strategies to elicit a desired response (awareness/interest), and to provide positive incentives for continued behaviour. While it is important for businesses to know how to market to its consumers, it is vital to understand and analyze who its consumers are. Promotional strategies can be decoded in several ways to result in different effects among the target audience. As such, one theory which can provide the basis through which the audience can be analyzed is Stuart Hall's theory of communication.

Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model suggests a four-stage theory of communication which includes production, circulation, consumption and reproduction. Messages are encoded and decoded on numerous levels (See Appendix 1). The levels are as follows: technical infrastructure, relations of production, and framework of knowledge which all create meaning structures (Hall, 1973, p. 90-94).

In relation to this research, the encoding of promotional strategies would include: Brand It's technical infrastructure which encompasses machinery such as laser engravers, printers and other resources to provide services. The relations of production which entail the workers who correspond with Brand It's owner Mr. Ramjohn, and the framework of knowledge which entails assumptions about the target audience are also included. Thus, all three levels aid in the encoding of any promotional strategy utilized by Brand It.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Once a message is encoded meaningful discourse is created. This means that persons are able to interpret meaning from the promotional strategies used. The target audience is highly diverse in terms of demographics, and the assumptions the audience hold are shaped by their structures of understanding which include social and economic relations. This in turn forms their recognition at the reception end of the chain which permits the meanings signified in the discourse to be transposed into practice or consciousness (Hall, 1973, p. 93).

The same various levels are used for meaningful decoding. Thus, the decoding of Brand It's promotional strategies would include: technical infrastructure, such as the media platforms through which the strategies are conveyed, relations of production which is the relationship between Mr. Ramjohn and the audience, and the framework of knowledge which is the social and economic backgrounds of the audience which informs their decision making. Stuart Hall's theory teaches that messages can have multiple meanings which are dependent on the active interpretation within media codes. Based on the aforementioned levels of Hall's theory, companies are able to understand who their consumers are; their values, tastes and preferences, the various ways in which promotional strategies ought to be encoded, and the numerous ways in which they can be decoded based on specific factors.

On the other hand, another theory applicable to this research is the Social Exchange Theory. Social exchange theory, created by George Homans, indicates that social behavior is the result of an exchange process. This theory has been one of the major theoretical perspectives in the field of social psychology.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

According to Cook and Rice (2003), Homans described social exchange as an activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons (p. 54). The cost of interaction is defined in terms of alternative activities or opportunities foregone by the actors involved (Cook & Rice, 2003, p. 53). This refers to things such as time or money that is sacrificed by the participants for the sake of a beneficial relationship.

Homans' theory utilized B.F Skinner's reinforcement theory. According to Wei & Yazdanifard (2014), Skinner's theory states that positive reinforcement is a technique to elicit and to strengthen new behaviours by adding rewards and incentives (p. 9). Cook & Rice (2003) stated that Homans used reinforcement theory to explain the persistence of exchange relations (p. 54). This suggests that individuals maintain relationships in order to ascertain physical or psychological rewards from those relationships. The purpose of this exchange is to weigh the risks and benefits of a relationship and determine whether it should be maintained or not.

Social exchange theory has three parts which includes cost benefits analysis, comparison analysis and comparison level of alternatives. Homans described cost benefit analysis as finding the benefit from an action. Once a benefit is noted, the action is repeated. In the case of Brand It, if persons benefit from the printing, screening, embroidery and laser engraving services, they would most likely repeat this action because the reward is greater than the risk.

The second perspective deals with comparison analysis which states that the more often a particular stimulus has received a reward in the past, the more often the behavior is repeated. Thus, if Brand It's customers are rewarded for brand loyalty, in terms of discounts and special

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

offers, as compared to not be rewarded before, they are also likely to continue to partake in the company's services.

The third perspective states that through comparison level of alternatives, this would also determine the likelihood of continued behaviour. If Brand It provides better services than their competitors, this would most likely build brand loyalty and consumers would continue to partake in their services.

Social Exchange Theory is therefore useful to this research as it explains why potential clients may decide to enter into a business relationship with Brand It. The theory suggests that social relations are judged in terms of cost and benefit. Therefore, if businesses and individuals perceive the benefit of working with Brand It as exceeding the cost, these businesses may choose to maintain that relationship. Thus, if persons benefit from the printing, screening, embroidery and laser engraving services of Brand It, they would most likely repeat this action.

As such, Sales Promotion/Behavioural Theory, Hall's Encoding/Decoding Theory and, Social Exchange Theory prove that audience members are active. This implies that they read texts based on their understandings to bring about a reaction. Therefore, in order to have a positive and beneficial relationship with audience members, the promotional strategies implemented must be effective to achieve the desired outcome.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Research Questions

Based on the Literature Review, the target audience is a critical factor when determining promotional strategies. From the theories utilized, three research questions were derived to guide this research. These include:

- 1) How do promotional strategies affect brand awareness of Brand It?
- 2) How do promotional strategies affect the audience?
- 3) To what extent do promotional strategies build and maintain relationships between Brand It and its clientele?

Hypotheses

The research questions lead to the following hypotheses:

- 1) Promotional strategies implemented by Branding Communicators would increase brand awareness of Brand It.
- 2) Promotional Strategies will generate a positive impact on audience members.
- 3) Promotional strategies would create and foster extensive relationships between Brand It and new, as well as current clientele.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Methodology

Introduction

Branding Communicators utilized several research methods with the aim of gathering information and raising brand awareness of Brand It. These measures comprised of both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research involves the counting and measuring of events, and performing statistical analysis of a body of numerical data (Matveev, 2002, p. 60). The quantitative paradigm shows that measurements are reliable, valid, and generalizable in its clear prediction of cause and effect (Matveev, 2002, p. 60). Some advantages of Quantitative research include:

- 1) Statistical analysis can result in important facts from research data (O'Neill, 2006).
- 2) It allows for greater involvement of subjects which enhances the generalization of the results (O'Neill, 2006).
- 3) It allows for greater objectivity and accuracy of results (O'Neill, 2006).

The main quantitative measure used in this research is an in person survey. This allowed Branding Communicators to gauge a number of individuals and small businesses' awareness on Brand It as well as their tastes and preferences. Thus, Quantitative Research proved to be beneficial to this research.

On the other hand, Qualitative Research shares the theoretical assumptions of the interpretative paradigm which is based on the notion that social reality is created and sustained through the subjective experience of people involved in communication (Matveev, 2002, p. 61).

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Qualitative researchers attempt to accurately describe, decode, and interpret the meanings of phenomena occurring in their normal social contexts (Matveev, 2002, p. 61). Advantages of Qualitative Research include:

- 1) It provides depth and detail of information gathered (O'Neill, 2006).
- 2) It analyzes information and determines what measures are plausible (O'Neill, 2006).
- 3) It aids in the understanding of complex business phenomena (O'Neill, 2006).

Branding Communicators used a few qualitative research methods. As such, information was gathered about effective promotional strategies utilized by successful businesses and marketers. Additionally, different promotional strategies were weighed to scope its potential application and success at Brand It. A literature review was also done to theorize and conceptualize the main issue faced by Brand It in efforts to obtain measures for which it can be improved.

Another qualitative research method was an interview conducted with Brand It's CEO. Information about Brand It's relationship with its customers, as well as the functioning and intent of the business, were revealed. This guided the research on what measures should be impended or not. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative measures proved to be applicable to this research as the advantages of both measures aided in the credibility, validity and reliability of this research.

Research Design

Branding Communicators utilized a cross-sectional design for this research project. According to Chambliss & Schutt (2012), a cross-sectional design is a study in which data are

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

collected at one point in time (p. 25). The research design allows the researcher to see the different sections of the population at once. This research targeted individuals 18 years and older because they are more susceptible to partake in the services of Brand It. According to Levin (2006), one of the advantages of a cross-sectional design is that it is inexpensive and takes a short time to conduct.

However, there are also limitations to a cross-sectional design. According to Chambliss and Schutt (2012), one of the limitations of a cross-sectional design is that it does not directly measure the passage of time (p. 26). Therefore, it is recommended that researchers use a longitudinal research design in which data is collected at two or more points in time. However, due to time constraints and a small budget, a cross-sectional research design was more applicable to this research project.

Furthermore, Chambliss & Schutt (2012) purported that an independent variable is the variable hypothesized to cause a variation in the dependent variable. However, the dependent variable is hypothesized to vary depending on the influence of another variable (p. 22). As such, the variables manipulated and examined in this research were the promotional strategies and the level of people's awareness of Brand It. The promotional strategies were the independent variable while the level of awareness was the dependent variable. Therefore, our research hypothesized that promotional strategies would increase the level of people's awareness of Brand It.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Sample Selection

The participants for this research consisted of corporate businesses in Trinidad, small businesses, and individuals within Curepe and San Juan/Barataria. The corporate businesses were selected from the following areas: Point Fortin, Point Lisas and San Fernando. These areas were chosen based on Mr. Ramjohn's aim of forming partnerships that would increase sales on a larger scale. Small businesses and individuals in Curepe were targeted due to the close proximity to the university, however small businesses and individuals in San Juan/Barataria were targeted because Brand It is located in this area. Generally, these areas were chosen mainly to gauge and increase the awareness of Brand It, and also to market the business in hopes of gaining new clientele and salvaging existing ones.

It was not feasible to interview each individual and small business within these areas given the time constraint. As such, a form of sampling technique was utilized. According to Chambliss & Schutt (2012), probability sampling methods require that the chance of each element being selected be known (~~pg. 90~~). Therefore, probability sampling was not viable because it requires a complete sampling frame of all the persons in the area which the group could not access. Therefore, non-probability sampling was employed. Non probability sampling invokes some element of the researcher's judgment and is sometimes referred to as purposive selection as the target audience can be clearly identified (Doherty, 2004, p. 21).

Availability/Convenience Sampling is a type of non-probability sampling method in which elements are selected on the basis of convenience (Chambliss & Schutt, 2012, p. 97). Similarly Farrokhi and Mahmoudi-Hamidabad (2012) stated that convenience sampling

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

allows the selection of members of the target population to meet a practical criteria such as geographic and easy accessibility (p. 785). However, there are disadvantages of convenience sampling including biases and outliers. It has been recommended that the sample should not be taken to be representative of the entire population. Describing the conditions under which the investigation occurs removes the majority of misinterpretations (Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012, p. 792).

Curepe and Barataria were most convenient as it is within close proximity to The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. Additionally, being major municipalities it allowed for easier access to a diverse range of individuals. Therefore, this research holds validity to the areas selected as there were no attempts to generalize findings to the population of Trinidad and Tobago. The concern of outliers holds relevance to quantitative studies such as experiments. However, this research was not experimental but instead blended both qualitative and quantitative measures to avoid this disadvantage.

Data Collection

Chambliss (2012) posited that in person surveys are face to face interactions that interviewers have with respondents in an effort to record answers (Chambliss & Schutt, 2012, p. 141). In an attempt to increase the level of brand awareness for Brand It within a five month period, Branding Communicators conducted in person surveys, also known as in person interviews, with fifty individuals in Curepe and another fifty in San Juan/Barataria.

In person surveys were used as it possesses many advantages to this research. These advantages are: response rates are higher as opposed to any other survey, questionnaires can be

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

longer; having both open ended and closed ended questions, questions can be complex, control over the order in which questions are read and answered, and clarification for respondents' misinterpretation of questions (Chambliss & Schutt, 2012, p. 141).

A questionnaire was the instrument used to conduct the in person surveys. This questionnaire consisted of fifteen (15) close ended questions (See Appendix 2). Closed ended questions provided options for opinions that can be easily tabulated. Due to the short span of time given to conduct the survey, close ended questions were most convenient.

In accordance to the advantages stated above, in person surveys were applicable to this research because it allowed for in depth information to be acquired. It also allowed Branding Communicators to gather information about the audience's knowledge on Brand It and their preference of different promotional strategies.

Data Processing and Analysis

In order to build brand awareness for Brand It, Branding Communicators initiated various promotional strategies. These strategies included the wearing of Brand It's jersey on commute to and from the company, and the posting of a photo album on Brand It's Facebook page comprising of pictures from Brand It's showroom. This album was then shared by members of Branding Communicators on their personal Facebook profiles. Creating a sales pitch for corporate businesses to partner with Brand It for events was also another strategy used.

Regarding the aforementioned promotional strategies, measurements must be used to determine its effectiveness of building brand awareness or not. Therefore, the wearing of jerseys

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

with Brand It's logo would be measured based on the number of persons who enquired about the company. The album post, including the items from the showroom, would be measured using the number of views that the album obtained from the commencement of posting to the concluding of the project. These items were posted from the Brand It's page to avoid any unethical actions of the research. To upload the album directly from a personal profile of any Branding Communicators' member may have resulted in friends and family showing support rather than having an interest in the promotions or services of the company. As such, the use of views would prevent these biases as views are calculated by Facebook administrators and cannot be skewed by personal intervention.

Lastly, the sales pitch would be measured by the number of emails of corporate companies collected to add to Brand It's database. These three promotional strategies are Branding Communicators' methods of researching the impact of promotional strategies on Brand It and how effective each strategy was in building brand awareness for the company.

Limitations

A major limitation to the research is the lack of a marketing department at Brand it. As such, various ideas and suggestions for promotional strategies were limited and also unincorporated due to lack of employees to utilize it. The owner of Brand It also had preconceived notions about several promotional strategies, therefore it was a challenge to relay the ideas that the group derived. Another limitation was the very short time span Branding Communicators had to carry out this research. If given more time, the group could have explored more research measures.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Findings

The following charts show the responses of survey question number one which asked, “**What is your sex?**”

Figure 1. Sex of Participants

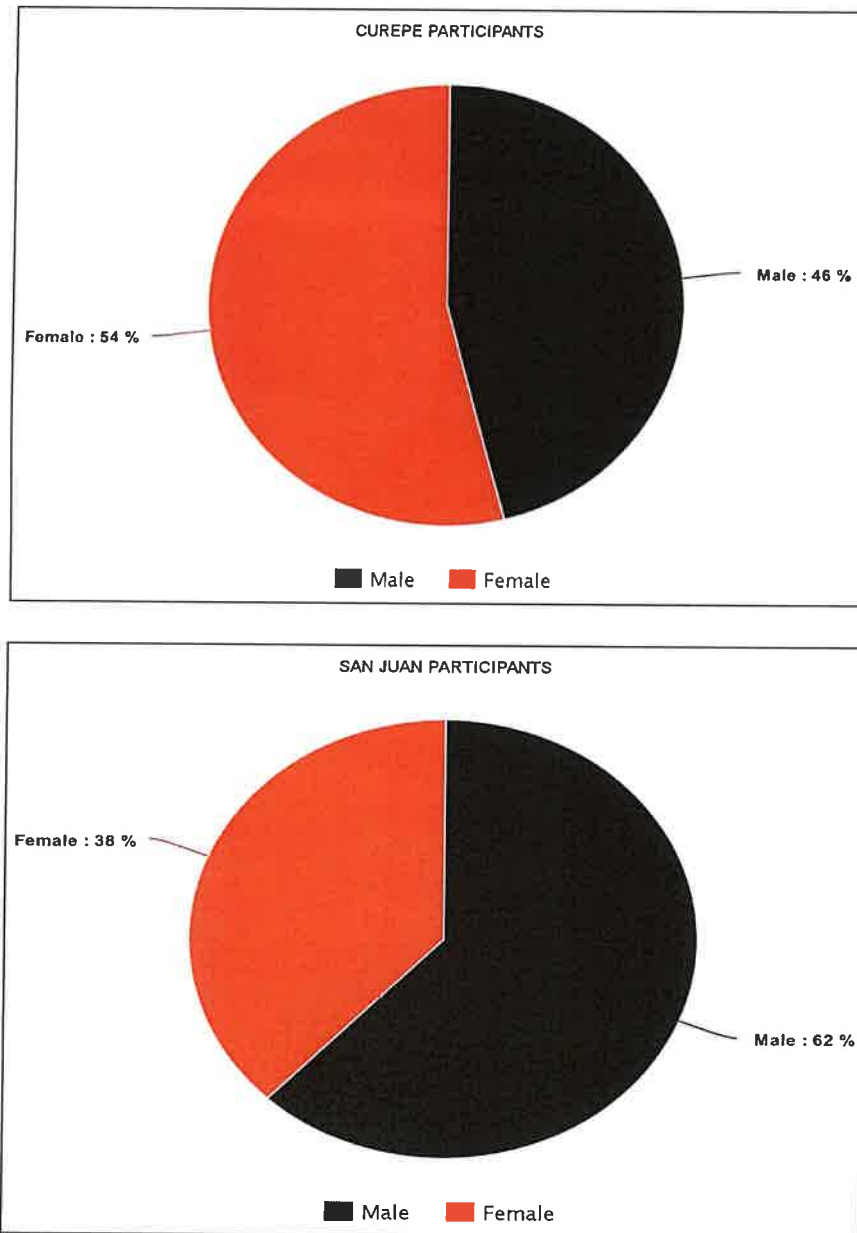


Figure 1. Sex of Participants. In Curepe 54% of participants were female and 46% of participants were male, while in San Juan 38% were female and 62% were male.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

The following table shows the responses of both Curepe and San Juan participants when asked pertinent questions during the survey conducted.

Figure 2. Responses of Participants

Questions asked to Participants	Responses of Curepe Participants		Response of San Juan Participants	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Have you ever heard about the company Brand It?	22%	78%	46%	54%
What do you value most from businesses such as Brand It?	Customer Service		Customer Service	
Which factor hinders you from using Brand It?	Do not know about the company		Do not know about the company	
What is your preference for means of promotional strategies?	Printed Visual Means (Billboards, Newspapers)		Social Media	

Figure 2. Responses of Participants. The table shows that 78% of Curepe participants never heard about Brand It while 22% did. In San Juan, 54% of the participants never heard about Brand It while 46% did. It also indicated that both Curepe and San Juan participants value customer service. The main factor that hinders participants in both areas from using Brand It is that they do not know about the company. Lastly, Curepe participants prefer printed visual means of promotional strategies, such as billboards and newspapers, while San Juan participants prefer social media.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

The following charts show the responses of survey question number fourteen which asked, “Are you interested in gaining more information, promotions and updates from Brand It?”

Figure 3. Interest in Brand It

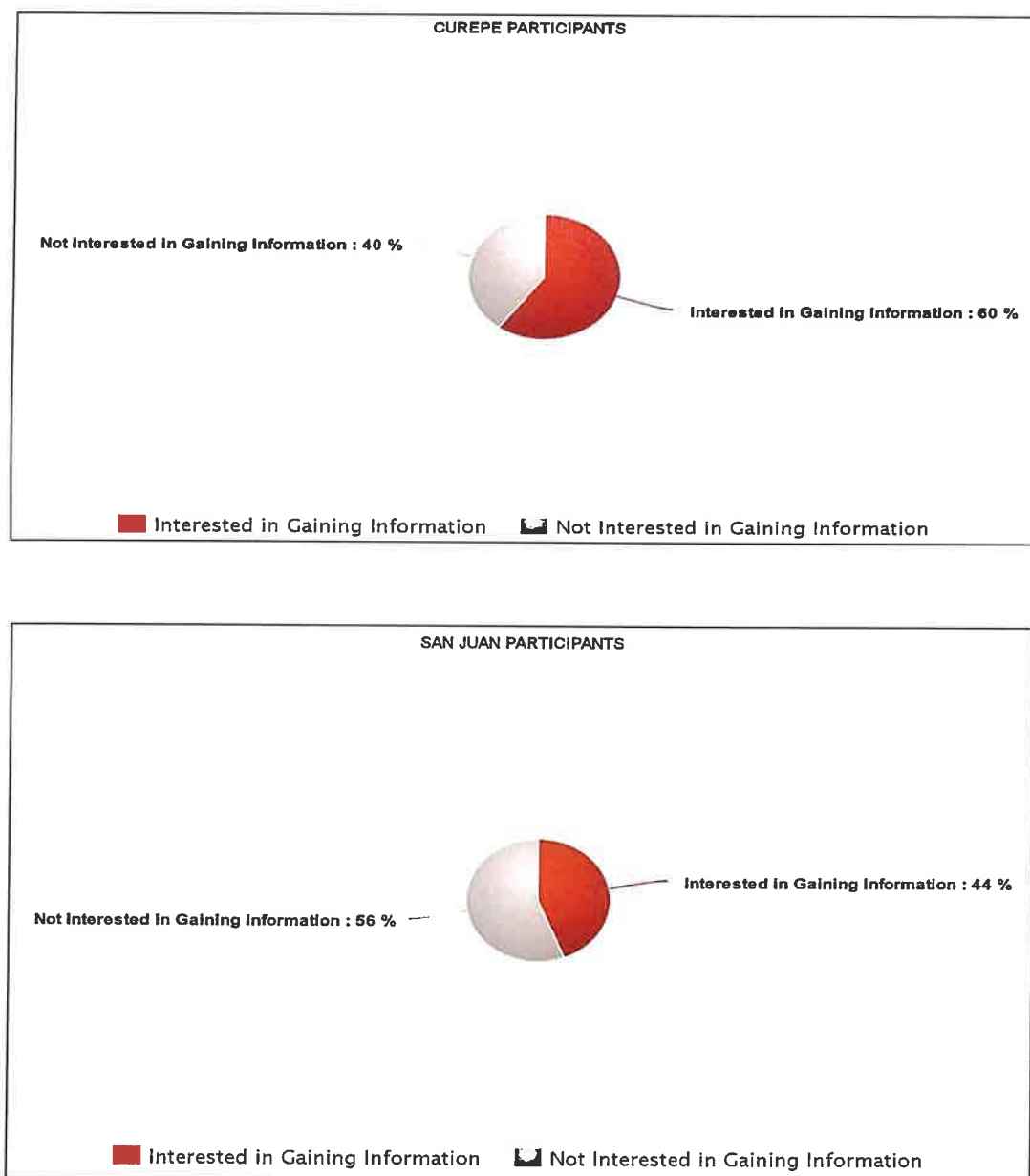


Figure 3. Interest in Brand It. In Curepe, 60% of participants were interested in gaining more information about Brand It and 40 % were not, while in San Juan 44% were interested and 56% were not.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

The following table shows the results of wearing 'Brand It' jerseys on commute to the business in Barataria from the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, and while conducting surveys in Curepe and San Juan/Barataria.

Figure 4. Impact of Wearing Brand It Jerseys

Members of Branding Communicators	Tally of Persons Who Enquired About Brand It	Number of Persons Who Enquired About Brand It
Janelle Applewhite	+++	8
Nicholas Blackett	+++ +++	10
Dianne Grant	+++	9
Cherelle Marshall	+++	8
Kerry Mohammed	+++ +++	10

Figure 4. Impact of Wearing Brand It jerseys. The table shows that eight (8) persons asked Branding Communicators' members Janelle Applewhite and Cherelle Marshall about Brand It due to the company's logo being on the jerseys worn. It also shows that nine (9) persons asked group member, Dianne Grant about Brand It; while ten (10) persons asked both Nicholas Blackett and Kerry Mohammed about Brand It.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

The following picture shows the number of views the showroom album posted on Brand It's Facebook page achieved.

Figure 5. Brand It's Showroom Post.



Figure 5. Brand It's Showroom Post. The photo indicates that two thousand, eight hundred and eighty (2,880) persons viewed this post.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Discussion and Analysis of Findings

The survey conducted resulted in several findings pertinent to the research topic. It was noted in *Figure 1. Sex of Participants* that 48% of Curepe participants were male while the remaining 54% were female. However, in San Juan/Barataria, 62% of the participants were male while only 38% were female. This comparison showed that more females took part in the survey conducted in Curepe while more males took part in the survey conducted in San Juan/Barataria.

As indicated in *Figure 2. Response Rates of Participants*, participants in both areas stated that the main factor which hinders them from using the services of Brand It was the mere fact that they did not know about the company. It can be perceived that the reasons for this results from the lack of a marketing department at Brand it, and also the lack of promotional strategies exercised by the company.

The participants of the survey were diverse in age, preference, interest, and values. On an important level of Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model, called the framework of knowledge, he denotes that the audiences' framework of knowledge informs their preferences and decisions. This is influenced by their social and economic relations. As seen in *Figure 2. Response Rates of Participants*, San Juan/Barataria participants chose social media as their preferred means of promotional strategy while in Curepe, participants preferred printed visual means such as billboards and newspaper advertisements.

The desire for printed visual means of promotional strategies amongst the participants in Curepe may reflect from the majority of the participants surveyed being older. The older

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

population (ages 30 and older) is least likely to use technology and have technological competence. As such, this may account for their reliance printed visual means.

However, in San Juan/Barataria which consisted of a younger demographic (ages 18-29), there was a desire for social media as the means of promotional strategies. Research conducted on Generation Y, which are persons born in period of constant access to technology, revealed that through the use of Facebook, 62% have accessed a brand or fan page, 19% checked and 39% bought (Ramsaran, 2013, p. 75). Thus, it can be inferred that Generation Y may prefer social media as their means of promotional strategies due to being technologically competent and more involved as opposed to the older generation who prefers more traditional means such as print.

In efforts to achieve the main aim of building brand awareness of Brand It, Branding Communicators implemented three promotional strategies. The first strategy used was the wearing of 'Brand It' jerseys. The group commuted to Brand It's headquarters in Barataria from UWI, St Augustine, wearing jerseys with Brand It's logo at the front and contact information at the back. Additionally, these said jerseys were worn while conducting the surveys in Curepe and San Juan/Barataria. In all locations, members of Branding Communicators were queried about Brand It and the services the company offers.

Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model (1973) states that encoding and decoding a message occur on various levels (p. 92). Relations of production is one such level. This level indicates that interaction between Mr. Ramjohn or his employees, and the target audiences which include general public, small businesses and corporate businesses must occur in order for messages to be effectively encoded and decoded.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

On behalf of Mr. Ramjohn and his company, the use of Brand It jerseys worn by Branding Communicators was an integral part of encoding a message. Group members wore these jerseys with the aim of having several individuals enquire about Brand it. It was also worn to gauge comments on the quality and print of the jerseys. This exercise was one of elements within the relations of production which is the encoding of a message. The other element is the way in which the message was decoded by individuals.

Based on *Figure 4. Impact of Wearing Brand It Jerseys*, it is seen that approximately 10 persons asked each group member about Brand It. This therefore means that based on the intent of the encoded message, the message was effectively decoded. Thus, the relations of production which was the interaction between Branding Communicators and the audience proved to be successful. It also proved that the promotional strategy of wearing 'Brand It' jerseys was efficacious.

In addition to Hall's Model, the impact of wearing Brand It jerseys can also be examined using Sales Promotion/Behavioural Theory. This theory states that the consumer can be induced to form positive feelings towards a conditioned stimulus by associating it with an unconditioned stimulus. Thus, the conditioned stimulus would be the wearing of Brand It jerseys on commute to and from the company, and whilst conducting the survey in Curepe and Barataria/ San Juan. However, the unconditioned stimulus would be the audience or consumers feelings towards this promotional strategy.

The wearing of the Brand It Jerseys stimulated the audience to become more aware about Brand It. This was achieved through enquiring about the company and the services it offers.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Upon learning about the company while the survey was conducted, persons became more interested in the company, generating a positive response. As seen in *Figure 3. Interest in Brand It*, 60% of Curepe participants were interested in gaining more information about Brand It whereas in San Juan/Barataria 44% of were interested. These results therefore proved that the association between wearing Brand It jerseys and enquiries of audience members induced positive feelings towards Brand It. It also meant that Branding Communicators were able to increase brand awareness through this association.

Another promotional strategy used included a photo album of Brand It's showroom. The showroom comprised of products which displayed the type of services offered by Brand It. These pictures were posted in an album on Brand It's social media Facebook page, and the album was uploaded on 25th February, 2016 which was then shared by group members. As indicated in *Figure 5. Brand It's Showroom Post*, views of the album accumulated to two thousand, eight hundred and eighty (2,880).

Social exchange theory states that social behaviour is the product of an exchange process. The theory postulates that people assess the value of a relationship in three ways. One of the ways is through cost-benefit analysis, which states that people weigh the benefits of a relationship against its cost when determining whether a relationship is worth starting or maintaining.

According to Siddiqui (2008), when a person perceives the cost of a relationship as outweighing the perceived benefits then that person will choose to leave the relationship (p. 161). With regards to the research, in early discussions with Mr. Ramjohn he stated that the quality of

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Brand It's products exceeds that of his competitors, so too does the price of his products. In this situation, the quality of the products would be the benefits and the costs would be the price. Therefore, the purpose of the Facebook album was to focus the attention of the public on the quality of Brand It's products. This was to get potential and existing clients to see the benefits of a relationship with Brand It as surpassing the costs.

The second means of assessing the value of a relationship is through the comparison level analysis, which states that people use a past relationship as a base for which all future relationships will be judged. The Facebook album allowed people to see the quality of Brand It's products which enabled them to make a comparison with the quality of products of other printing companies. Therefore, if a person perceives that a potential relationship offers more rewards and less costs than a previous relationship then that individual will enter that relationship. For example, when Branding Communicators were distributing questionnaires, one was given to Karen Douglas who is the owner of 'My Place' restaurant. This led to a discussion between Mrs. Douglas and a group member where the owner expressed disappointment in the quality of the restaurant's current banner.

In a previous meeting with Mr. Ramjohn, he suggested that the researchers locate businesses that would be interested in receiving a free banner on the condition that a small portion of the banner is used to promote Brand It. The researcher informed Mrs. Douglas of the banner proposal which she accepted. Based on the perceived benefits of the banner proposal, Mrs. Douglas judged that a relationship with Brand It would be more rewarding than her past experience with another printing company.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

The third means used to assess the value of a relationship is through the comparison level of alternatives which states that people assess the alternatives outside of their current relationship in order to determine whether to stay in the relationship or leave for a better alternative. The images of Brand It's showroom were posted directly from the company's Facebook page which means that people who have done business with Brand It would have seen the post. For these people, the images served as a reminder of the quality of products and services offered by Brand It. This makes Mr. Ramjohn unmatched to his competitors.

Therefore, the images used in the showroom album were to convince Brand It's current clients and potential clients that there is no better alternative regarding high quality screen printing, laser engraving or embroidery. As such, Brand It's ability to build and maintain a relationship with clients depends on the company's ability to effectively communicate through its promotional strategies. With the Facebook post reaching 2,880 views, this was achieved. Consequently, this increased not only the awareness of Brand It but also inculcated the impact and effectiveness of social media.

A sales pitch was also developed as another promotional strategy to target corporate companies and to add each company's contact information, including email addresses and phone numbers, to Brand It's email database. This was done in hopes of fostering partnerships. As such, group members sourced emails and phone numbers of 15 corporate businesses. However, a major limitation which surfaced was that Brand It's owner, Mr. Ramjohn, did apply this strategy even though the resources for its implementation were provided. Consequently, Branding Communicators could not gauge its effect.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Conclusion

Branding Communicators' main aim was to increase brand awareness of Brand It over a five month period. This was to be done by examining current marketing strategies of the company, implementing promotional strategies, and evaluating its effects by the end of a five month period. This was to be achieved by targeting all potential customers in the market.

The promotional strategies used by Branding Communicators included wearing of Brand It jerseys on commute to and from the organization, and the posting of a photo album on Brand It's Facebook page comprising of pictures from Brand It's showroom. Branding Communicators also created a sales pitch to be relayed to several corporate companies. However, this measure was not implemented by Brand It's owner, Mr. Richard Ramjohn, due to the lack of a marketing department.

Generally, the promotional strategies implemented by Branding Communicators were able to achieve the desired outcome of increasing brand awareness of Brand It. Due to the willingness of fifty participants in both Curepe and San Juan/Barataria, one hundred (100) persons are now informed about Brand It. In addition, several individuals responded profoundly to the wearing of Brand It jerseys; with approximately fifty (50) individuals enquiring about the company. Brand It's showroom post was also an effective promotional strategy. The post attained two thousand, eight hundred and eighty (2,880) views gauging individuals' attention and interest. This meant that persons are engaging in social media and keeping channels open in efforts to maintain relationship with Brand It.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Recommendations

Based on the positive impacts of promotional strategies, Branding Communicators noted that promotional strategies play an integral part in building brand awareness of companies and generating consumer interest. As such, Branding Communicators derived the following recommendations:

- 1) Brand It should engage in market research to acquire information about the market, market share, and competitors.
- 2) Brand It should invest in a competent marketing management team to implement promotional strategies in efforts to raise more brand awareness and increase sales.
- 3) Brand It should hire a social media expert in order to maximize the social media platform of the company and to help maintain the company's relationship with its customers.

Implications for Recommendations

Market Research can be regarded as the systematic gathering and interpretation of information about individuals and organizations to gain insight or to support decision making. Based on the information gathered from market research, Mr. Ramjohn can market his business to highlight its strengths in efforts to further increase brand awareness and sales of the company. Due to the lack of a marketing department, Mr. Ramjohn was unable to utilize the promotional strategy of relaying a sales pitch, created by Branding Communicators, to corporate companies. Therefore, it is recommended that Mr. Ramjohn hires a marketing department to create and

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

implement effective promotional strategies that will continue to build awareness for the company and generate interest in services offered.

In addition, it is important for companies to understand what its target audience perceives as benefits. According to Lee (2014), companies use social networking services to solicit feedback on customers' product experiences and assess their preferences (p. 281). Therefore, Brand It should hire a social media expert in order to maximize its social media platform to learn the preferences of its target audience, and emphasize these qualities in its promotional strategies.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

References

- Berqiri, G. (2015). Marketers and Social Media Marketing. Proceedings of Multidisciplinary Academic Conference, 91-98.
- Berry, W., Hill, T., & Klompmaker, J. (1999). Aligning marketing and manufacturing strategies with the market. *International Journal of Production Research*, 37(16), 3599-3618.
- Campbell, L., & Diamond, W. D. (1990). Framing and sales promotions: The characteristics of a 'Good Deal'. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 7(4), 25-31.
- Chambliss, D. F. & Schutt, R. K. (2012). *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*. (5th ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Cook, K. S., & Rice, E. (2003). *Handbook of Social Psychology*. Retrieved January, 2016, from <https://www.researchgate.net>
- Doherty, M. (1994). Probability versus Non-Probability Sampling in Sample Surveys, ., *The New Zealand Statistics Review*, 21-28.
- Farrokhi, F., & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, A. (2012). Rethinking Convenience Sampling: Defining Quality Criteria. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(4), 784-792.
- Hall, S. (1973). *Encoding and Decoding in the television Discourse*. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.
- Koekemoer, L., & Bird, S. (2004). *Marketing communications*. Juta and Company Ltd.
- Lee, I. (2014). *Integrating Social Media into Business Practice*. Pennsylvania: Business Science Reference.
- Levin, K. A. (2006). Study design III: Cross-sectional studies. Retrieved April 17, 2016, from <http://www.nature.com/>
- Matveev, V. A. (2002). The advantages of employing quantitative and qualitative methods in intercultural Research. *Institute of Management, Business and Law Publishing*, New York P. 59-67.
- Ramsaran- Fowdar, R.R & Sooraj Fowdar. (2013). The Implications of Facebook Marketing for Organizations. *Contemporary Management Research*, 9(1), 73-83
- O'Neill, R. (2008). The advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Retrieved April 18, 2016, from <http://archive.learnhigher.ac.uk/analysethis/main/quantitative.html>

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

References

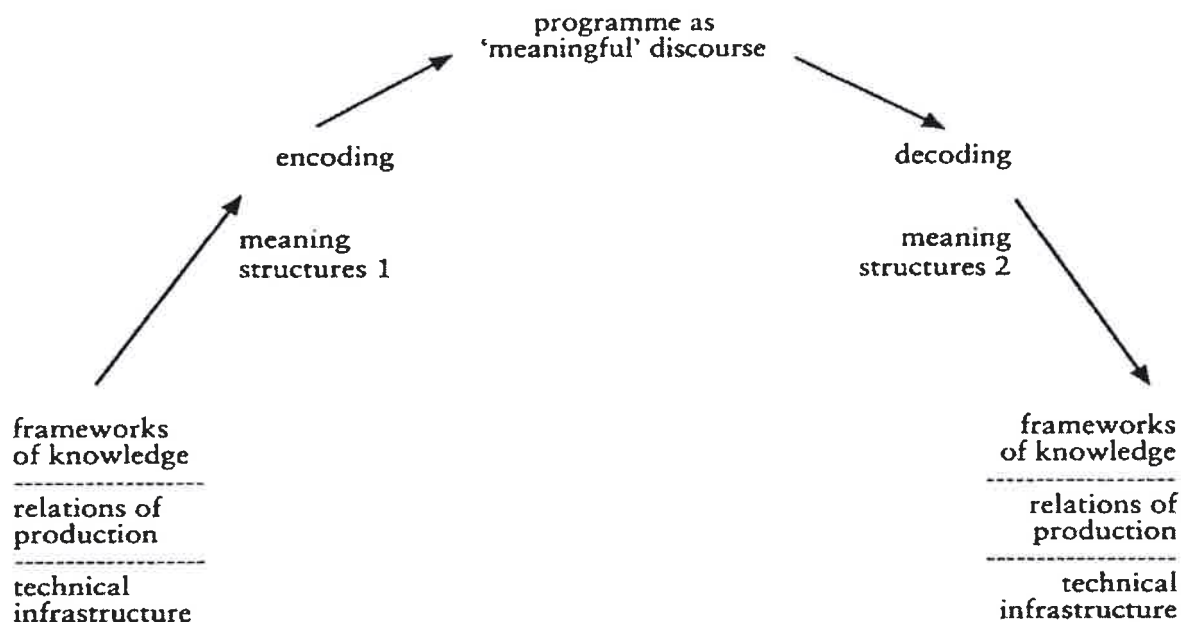
- Siddiqui, M. H. (2008). *Philosophical and Sociological Foundations of Education*. New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.
- Wei, L. T., & Yazdanifard, R. (2014). The impact of Positive Reinforcement on Employees' Performance in Organizations. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 4, 9-12. Retrieved January 24, 2016, from <http://www.scirp.org/>.

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Appendix

Appendix 1

HALL'S ENCODING/DECODING MODEL



BRAND IT (encoding)

- Framework of knowledge- Assumptions about the audience (preferences)
- Relations of production- Communication between Brand it manager and his employees
- Technical infrastructure- printers, laser engravers, and screen embroiders etc.

AUDIENCE (Decoding)

- Framework of knowledge- assumptions shaped by structures of understanding, and social and economic relations.
- Relations of production- Interaction of audience with Brand it agents
- Technical infrastructure- newspapers, social media, physical advertisements (signs)

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Appendix 2

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

25/02/16

University of the West Indies,
St. Augustine

Dear Respondent,

I invite you to participate in a research study for our undergraduate thesis project. The enclosed questionnaire has been designed to collect information on brand awareness at Brand It .Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. There are no known risks to participation and your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. If you agree to participate in this project, please answer the questionnaire as best you can. It should take approximately 5 to 7 minutes to complete. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Thesis students

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

- 1) What is your sex?
A) Male B) Female
- 2) What is your age bracket?
A) 18-23 B) 24-29 C) 30-35 D) 36 and Over
- 3) In which area do you reside?
A) North B) South C) East D) West
- 4) Have you ever heard about the company Brand It?
A) Yes B) No
- 5) Where did you encounter Brand It's name?
A) A friend B) Social Media C) Newspaper D) Other (Please state)
- 6) Do you know where the company is located?
A) Yes B) No
- 7) Are you aware of the type of work produced by the company?
A) Yes B) No
- 8) Have you ever used services (printing, screening, embroidery) from Brand It? (If yes answer questions 9-15, if no ignore questions 9-12)
A) Yes B) No
- 9) Were you satisfied with the quality of product or service?
A) Yes B) No
- 10) What do you value the most from businesses such as Brand it? (Feel free to tick more than one)
A) Customer Service B) Quality C) Timeliness D) Cooperation
- 11) What factor is more important if one is deciding whether to utilize Brand It's services?
A) Quality B) Affordability C) Equal Importance
- 12) Would you recommend the company to a friend or anyone who is interested?
A) Yes B) No

BRAND IT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

13) Which factor hinders you from using Brand It?

- A) Do not know about the company B) Do not own a business
C) Uses another company

14) Are you interested in gaining more information, promotions and updates from Brand It?

(If yes, please state your email address in the space provided.)

- A) Yes B) No
-

15) What is your preference for means of promotional strategies?

- A) Printed Visual Means B) Audio C) Social Media E) Other (please state)