




Spruha's Corner

By Spruha Srivastava

Can we "Reclaim India"?

"Do we believe India and its citizens are free in every respect? Do we feel angry, frustrated and embarrassed about the daily dose of news about scandals, corruption and lawlessness that comes out of India? Do we feel India has the potential to do a LOT better? Do we feel there was a way we could make a difference? And alter at least a little - the seemingly irreversible decline of a great nation. Do we wonder how?"

Such were the questions addressed on December 6th at a gathering in London of like-minded Indian professionals, organized by the Freedom Team of India (FTI), a forum for policy, strategy and leadership development to promote the freedom of Indian citizens. The event, aptly titled "Reclaiming India - what can we do as Indians away from home?" was attended by a number of NRIs from different parts of London and around to discuss India's governance, its problems and the solutions needed.

The event was organised by Anil Sharma, Lalatendu Dash, Shantanu Bhagwat and Vikram Balan, the representatives of FTI in London. The gathering took place in the lovely premises of Chowki restaurant in West-end. We Indians love to mix our food and political discussions, such has been the case for a long long time. And this was another occasion where food and politics went hand in hand.

But before going ahead with what happened through the discussions that evening, let's get to know a bit about FTI. I am sure a lot of us would have probably heard the name of this team for the first time. In their own words,

"We are a group of ordinary Indians who believe that India has the potential to become a truly world-class country. There are many people like us, disillusioned and frustrated with the inefficient and inadequate governance systems of India. We believe that, if given a platform, these people would dedicate their energies to the task of re-

building India in the image of a modern, prosperous and just society. This platform, built with great diligence over the past three years is known as "Freedom Team of India". Our goal is to make India the world's Sone Ki Chidiya. FTI members include, among others, a former civil servant, a diplomat, senior armed force officials, CEOs, professionals in engineering and medicine, and young budding thinkers. Many members have graduated from the world's elite academic institutions including

evening's event, apart from discussions on the way ahead, the focus was also on an outreach programme that one of the FTI members, Shantanu Bhagwat, is planning to do next year. The outreach effort has been planned in semi-urban and rural India.

According to Bhagwat, "This effort will mainly focus on "Ask" and "Share". "Ask" - and find out about the major concerns & political matters that bother our fellow citizens living in these areas as well as get insights on politics and top-of-mind



FTI members with Sanjeev Sabhlok, the founder.

IITs, IIMs and London School of Economics."

A crucial point differentiating FTI from other such initiatives is the willingness of all the members to be part of the political process, in due course of time. The group founded in June 2009 recently organised an All India Policy Writing Competition and has raised a total of INR 5 lakhs with contributions from Indian citizens in India and abroad. The competition, awarding INR 5 lakhs in prize money, including an INR 1 lakh first prize, is targeted towards university students, policy experts and policy think tanks across India. The first of its kind, the competition will help FTI formulate its own policies for the problems facing India. Policy submissions are sought in relation to basic roles of government like defence, police and justice, as well as broader topics like economic policy, local government, infrastructure, and poverty elimination, to name a few.

The competition was launched on November 15, 2012 and the last date for submission is February 28, 2013. All the other details are available on the website <http://freedomteam.in/policy>

Coming back to the

issues. "Share" and explain how the right "system" and right "incentive mechanisms" (& not just "good people") are needed to fight evils like corruption that plague India and get their support in spreading the message of liberal policies, smaller government and economic freedom to a wider audience. A positive side-effect that I anticipate from this outreach is the opportunity to connect with independent candidates & other like-minded people in the region."

Bhagwat plans to visit to 4-5 cities/towns in north India to conduct meetings, talks, discussions and general outreach activities over a period of 5-7 day. While the dates are not final yet, there are indications that this will take off in March/April 2013. FTI members, through this event, also raised funds for this outreach plan with those present contributing a minimum 10 GBP towards the cause.

While we wait and see how the initiative pans out, we can still be a part of it by joining the movement, supporting it or spreading the word. To find out more about FTI visit their website (<http://freedomteam.in>) or get in touch with their representatives.

A logo doesn't make a brand



Mo Luthra
Branding Consultant
www.moluthra.com

Much money is spent in branding and rebranding companies. Most of it is wasted.

When we talk about brand, people think of a brand as being a visual mark, a way to recognise a business in a competitive landscape.

For this strange reason business owners will fascinate and get very precious about what their logo looks like and dedicate unnecessary resources to that effort.

While the visual element plays a role in building a business, it is the thinking behind the logo that is far more important and is often

ignored in building a brand. The brand identity is much more than just the visual impression, just as we as people are more than the clothes we wear.

Initially you'll find that consumers verbalise or talk about a brand a lot more than they will visually recognise or connect with the logo.

For example many people know the Harley Davidson brand, they understand what it represents, and who would typically buy one, but most consumers couldn't tell you what the logo looks like.

That's why creating a great name for a brand is much more important than creating a complex logo. The brand name is the first translation point of a business.

A well chosen word or two for a business name is powerful enough that it can symbolise what the whole company stands for. It is able to get the business concept into a person's head very quickly.

Take for example Innocent, the smoothie

company. The name already makes you think that what they sell is simple, pure, and good for.

At its heart brand is all about imparting meaning. It is the idea, the principle, the philosophy, the emotion and connection that creates the reason to buy.

Furthermore, it forms the basis of a relationship between the individual and the company and delivers engagement. As customers we crave this connection from the companies we buy from.

Brands that have no meaning aren't truly brands. They are just visual marks with little depth. Like the brand names that you'll find in a Primark or a Lidl, they have no value. They don't communicate with an audience, and people wouldn't look twice at them if they weren't cheap.

Brands create emotions, opinions and feelings. Your business might have a logo, but it might not necessarily be a brand.

Lloyds TSB Bank hosts commercial finance event with Prideview Group and Vyman Solicitors

Lloyds TSB Bank hosted a special event in conjunction with The Prideview Group and Vyman Solicitors at the well known Indian Restaurant Blue Room, Wembley on 29th November, designed to identify opportunities to extend commercial finance to Asian entrepreneurs and property investors. With similar events being very rare in the current economic climate, those who attended made the most of meeting all the hosts and enjoyed the positive message conveyed.

Jez Hockley, senior manager commercial addressed the large number of invited Asian Businessmen.



Jez Hockley, senior manager Lloyds TSB and his team of Bromley branch with Anup Vyas, Vyman Solicitors, Vishal Patel and Nilesh Patel, Prideview Group and Payal Patel, Blue Room



Shalish Patel and Rajubhai Patel, Prideview Group, Naresh Patel, Blue Room and Kishore Parmar Advertising Manager, Asian Voice and Gujarat Samachar with others

Southall travel receives the "Best Overall Agent Award 2011-2012" from Jet Airways at an event held last month in London



L-R: Lydia Nazareth - General Manager UK & IRL, Anita Goyal (Neeta) Executive Vice President, Jaymin Borkhatria - Sales Director Southall Travel and Dame Edna look alike Simon Whitehouse - Comic Actor

Let us know what you think.

Email Spruha at aveditorial@abplgroup.com