

SPIRITUAL MARKETING-ADDING HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS FOR TODAY'S BUSINESS POST CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Over the last few years, the topic of spirituality has inspired scores of studies in management and related disciplines. Marketing scholars, it seems, have shied away from discussing spirituality in conducting business for far too long. Spirituality has become the most favored service provided by the spiritual gurus apart from the national boundaries and religion. It is our conscience that enables us to differentiate between good or bad, right or wrong, guided by our internal motives, impulses, feelings and emotions nurtured by beliefs, values and other several factors. Marketing is an ever-evolving field and marketers on how to adopt the higher-level consciousness strategies according to the changing behaviours of the consumer due to various factors. The present paper examines the importance of spirituality in Marketing and an attempt is identified few marketing strategies adopted by spiritual marketers and organizations.

Keywords: Spirituality, Transformational, Marketing, Leader, Consumer, Value.

INTRODUCTION

Today's contemporary societies are facing problems like domestic abuse, violence, crime, drug addiction, verbal aggressiveness, suicide etc at the individual level and poor work habits, disrespect for authorities, employee sabotage, sexual harassment, lack of self-control and antisocial hostilities at the professional level. Despite of such evils today's generation is so very ruled and motivated by spiritual leaders Spirituality blows in the winds of India but now a day's different spiritual leaders with different marketing strategies are arising in the horizon. Spirituality has become the most favored service provided by the spiritual gurus apart from the national boundaries and religion. It is our conscience that enables us to differentiate between good or bad, right or wrong, guided by our internal motives and impulses, feelings and emotions nurtured by beliefs, values and other several factors.

Defining Spirituality?

Spirituality is something that actually can't be defined. It is beyond the web of words and sentences. When we talk about spirituality we talk about God, we talk about those feelings and emotions that bind the soul with the creature of this universe, God. Spirituality implies the inner human urge to seek and unite with a reality beyond the ephemeral, sensory world, fulfilling the need for meaning. It is a search for inner self-compiled with peace and self-realization. To satisfy these needs, leadership must be based not on profits, but values (Fry, 2003). Such a leader has not only a high level of cognitive intelligence but also a high degree of emotional and spiritual intelligence. Cognitive and emotional intelligence constructs are fairly well known; meanwhile, the theory of spiritual intelligence is in the early stages of development. In one of the earliest definitions, Zohar (2012) defined spiritual intelligence as what we use to develop our longing and capacity for meaning, vision, and value. It allows us to dream and to strive. It underlies the

things we believe in and the role our beliefs and values play in the actions that we take and the way we shape our lives. It is something that comes from within. It inculcates values that are universal and beyond time. It is all about getting people to have faith in a specific system. It does not belong to any religion directly though inspired by it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Though today we are living in the jet age and got high intellectual property, people believe in science and facts rather than magic and myths, facing problems of diluted societal values, the interest of general people towards spiritual awareness has increased significantly. A gradual increase in spiritual leaders, their campaigns, Sabha and followers prove the fact that more and people are joining spiritual leaders for the different reasons of their own. Today, on this heaven called, Earth, we have got a number of gurus or leaders who pledge to show the path of spirituality to their followers. One can discover spirituality anywhere and with anything one finds associated. It is related to mind, heart and psychology. A mother can feel spiritual binding in motherhood and a workaholic in its work. It is the inner feeling generated out of eternal experience and feeling. It is a deep association with the self.

According to Alifahmi (2008), Spiritual marketing is: "*Marketing is sympathetic, touching the conscience, and solid moral message based on the intention of devotion to the divine.*"

Spiritual definition of marketing is: "*A model of marketing activities based on the spiritual values or Islamic values*".

According to Spiritual marketing is: "*This form of marketing is imbued with spiritual values in all processes and transactions until it reached the level when all the major stakeholders in the business of obtaining happiness*".

As well as according to Chalil & Dharmmesta (2015). Spiritual marketing is: "*It is a concept that provides a guarantee for everyone who wants to apply to be a success the world and the hereafter*".

In principle, the spiritual marketing is a part of marketing ethics can guide marketers in conducting marketing activities in line with expectations so desired by the company. Spiritual Marketing is essentially an effort to make employees as the foundation of spiritual passion and commitment in performing his daily duties.

Researcher gap

This research has been made to quench the thrust of the topic by examining the following questions:

1. Does Marketing involve ethics?
2. Do the followers get what they expect spiritualism through by conducting themselves in business?
3. What is the need for publicity for spreading spirituality?
4. Does the marketing of spirituality need some different strategies to be focused?
5. What Spiritual marketing strategies can be adopted?

Methodology

Firstly, primary data was collected through various unstructured face-to-face interviews with academicians, Interview of followers of different spiritual gurus, analysis of their personal experience and views, collection of secondary information through various books, journals, internet etc and a constant self-observance and follow up of different Gurus at different times

from last four years led the author to write on the subject. The data collected through various discussions and sources are thoroughly analyzed to extract the relevant information out of that.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Nurbasari & Harani (2018) Concepts and practices in the world of marketing are growing so rapidly. However, the literature on gait spiritual-based marketing is still quite rare. The marketing world is very open to science with a touch of human values and spirituality as it relates to human interaction. The marketing concept is popular today leads to the humanization and spiritualization. It is evident from the appearance of the concept of social-minded marketing (societal marketing) and marketing-based friendship (relationship marketing) that combines the concept of marketing and communications or public relations, friendship-based marketing followed by customers (customer relationship marketing) that seeks to establish a more intimate relationship and reward customers.

Marketing

Marketing is all about identifying and meeting human and social needs as per the period. According to Kotler, the father of marketing, “*Marketing management is the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping and growing customers through creating, delivering and communicating superior customer value*”. Hence, to provide a holistic review of spiritual marketing, the author combines the marketing mix with the Customer, calling it the 4P’s and 1 C examination of the concept Figure 1.

<i>Marketing mix</i>	<i>Distinctive characteristic</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<i>Product</i>	Goods, services, places, events and people	Hand drums for meditation, reiki classes, the Sedona city in Arizona, Mindy, Body and Spirit festivals, Deepak Chopra
<i>Price</i>	Flexible and highly sensitive to the degree of uniqueness perception	Gemstones Psilomelane & Hematite for \$100 Burning Man ticket for \$380 + fees
<i>Promotion</i>	References to health benefits, mysticism, improvement of the self and authentic nonwestern cultural components / special sales promotions	Candles promising spiritual relaxation, Buddha bracelet for good fortune, rose quartz and ruby gems that help develop self-love, self-esteem and self-confidence / free tickets for Burning Man festival
<i>Place</i>	Conventional and specialized stores, intense use of the Internet and social media	Bookstores, vintage shops, gift shops, massage parlors, specialized websites
<i>Consumer</i>	Middle to high age, affluent, high-educated, female	Baby boomers, Generation X, business professionals and the retired

FIGURE 1
4P’S AND 1 C OF NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY (Basci, 2015)

Spirituality in Business

There’s a wide range of important perspectives. Some people say that it’s simply embodying their values of honesty, integrity, and good quality work. Others say it’s treating their

co-workers and employees in a responsible, caring way. For others, it's participating in spiritual study groups or using prayer, meditation, or intuitive guidance at work. And for some, it's making their business socially responsible in how it impacts the environment, serves the community or helps create a better world.

Kumar et al. (2014) says, Swami Ramdevji is the most famous guru in teaching yoga and pranayama in India and he, through Patanjali Yogpeeth, has launched several products not only based on ayurvedic medicines but also FMCG. Patanjali Yogpeeth established by Baba Ramdev is an institution of scientific research and treatment he conceptualized the idea of spiritualism with Ayurveda and has followers not only from India but from the whole world.

Spiritually in Marketing

People practice spirituality to earn peace and to come out from the negativity of their lives. Generally, they need a 'Guru' to learn or understand how to gain positivity. All this is the game of psychology. Therefore, it is important to catch the exact psychological requirement of the devotee. Spiritual marketing is based on thoughts and their delivery. It is the practice of clearing doubts, fears, negative thoughts generating in the mind of followers. No doubt, it a tough job to revolutionize the thought practices of others. The mind is an instrument in the hands of the intellect. The intellect judges what cognized by the mind is and decides as to the nature of the action that has to be taken in respect of the object in the given circumstances. Intellect guides regarding good or bad, necessary or unnecessary, right or wrong, moral or immoral etc.

The intellect is associated with another principle within, called ahamkara or ego. No logic is necessary to prove the ego, for we do not prove our existence It is conscious that inhibits the action of any individual. Our conscious rules our ethics and values. Consciousness, as described by a Quantum physicist is transcendent; ground of being and matter exists as quantum possibilities within it. It is an emergent property of the quantum brain. It is all about developing a perception of one's knowledge of the world. Perception is a process of receiving, selecting, organizing, interpreting, evaluating and reacting to data collected by an individual. Spiritual marketing works on to stimulate the perception of potential customers with the aid of psychological tactics. Not everyone possesses leading skills. Spiritual leaders are transformational and charismatic leaders followed by situational leadership style as per my findings. They lead people from different culture, values, attitude, belief and origin to a common path and goal.

Spiritual Marketing Techniques

Spiritual marketing do follows all the techniques or rules followed for a normal product or service. E.g., we can see huge and regular flex boards of spiritual campaigns and Gurus like any other product to create awareness in the mass public. Despite it have some extra modes to attract potential customers. The product in spiritual marketing is the teacher himself. Spiritual marketing is the ability to articulate & convey your authentic beliefs around a service, product or brand transparently, consciously and with the end-users benefit in mind. Thus modification is required in the teacher. The general idea is to present a spiritual image of the teacher to the customer so that the authority of the teachings is not doubted:

Psychosomatic transfer: Gurus are inflated at the top of the spiritual spectrum, a dignitary with powers to influence the life of his followers positively.

Fashion and style: presentation as a spiritual teacher is very important. The outlook of the leader needs to fit with the expectations of the target audience.

Name modification: Names are the reflection of the type of spiritual teacher. Changing the name to an exotic-sounding one is very important in the presentation of a spiritual master. Regular names do not carry the same weight as something like "*Shivananda*" or "*Atmananda*".

Behaviour: Spiritual people are generally regarded as very peaceful and loving, and soft-spoken.

Vocabulary: Spirituality has its vocabulary. The vocabulary of spiritual leaders is different from other leaders. They use of exotic words or phraseology to earn a competitive edge on rest.

Narcissism: Certain amount of narcissism in the behavior of such leaders enhances their self-confidence and charisma. Confidence, Charisma and a strong sense of humour are the tools to transform and attract the customers.

Comprehensive teaching materials and opportunities: videos, lectures and lecture recordings, guided meditations, books, internet updates and weekend courses and holiday retreats in exotic locations, are the most lucrative marketing strategies adopted by spiritual marketers. A monthly newsletter (both paper and online) or even magazine, satsangs etcare also used to keep individuals in touch.

Ashram or spiritual center: This adds credibility to the organization.

Website: It is now vital for any 21st Century master to have a web presence.

Auxiliary sales: It is not just teachings are marketed; pictures, pendants, key chains and other items imbued with Guru's energetic spiritual vibrations and blessings are also made available to followers.

Reward obsequious followers: Keep telling the most passionate followers how fantastically they are doing on the spiritual path to feed their spiritual egos.

A Promise of bliss, health and happiness: The final destination of the spiritual path is a state of eternal bliss, perfect health and sublime happiness-enlightenment. Most people start following the spiritual path when they become disillusioned and unhappy with normal life. Maybe they are unwell or maybe they have been through traumatic experiences.

Special/Secret teachings and techniques: This is a very attractive strategy to attract potential customers (followers), that they will only find awakening if they follow these particular teachings/techniques. This locks them into the leader very strongly.

Freedom of emotional expression: Any teaching that encourages free emotional expression can be very attractive and free.

Testimonial for teachings: Spiritual marketing is like any other kind of marketing, marketers use testimonials and case studies for the media to promote particular spiritual teaching and teacher. With the rise of social networking, this often happens spontaneously.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

For leaders, we found no significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and work satisfaction. We could not compare this result with other studies as we found no previous relevant research. Comparing the spiritual intelligence of leaders and employees, we found that the level of leaders' self-reported spiritual intelligence is significantly higher than that of employees. Although leaders' self-reported level of work satisfaction was higher than that of employees, no significant difference emerged.

Human resource managers should assess the spiritual intelligence of their job applicants to recruit the best candidates. They should do the same throughout employees' careers so they can adjust training and education to their spiritual needs. The development of spiritual

intelligence could be a valuable part of an organization's development strategy as a way to create similar objectives and goals among employees about the objectives and goals of the entire organization.

Findings

Despite a diluted society no doubt more and more people are following one or the other Guru and trying to find peace and solution to their problems in such activities and yes, uprightness of spiritual knowledge is important for the upliftment of society. Spirituality has got wider acceptance beyond political, national or cultural boundaries. Belief in self brings infinite possibilities. Domain thoughts create a pathway to manifest pure soul and ultimate gratification. Different techniques to attain spirituality developed by leaders like Meditation, yoga, mantras, relaxation, dance, tantra, and fasting and breath control are also supported scientifically. These used to make followers get associated with a feel-good fix with the teacher and the teachings. The key is to control the inner process to release the negative vibes and stress for a much relaxed and stress-free experience.

In Indian philosophy, much emphasis is given on Nishkam Karma (NK) i.e., to work without anxiety for the results and Chittashuddhi, i.e., to purify the mind and the heart for the all-round happiness and prosperity. No doubts that different spiritual leaders may not have attained such wide acceptance and admiration worldwide had they not marketed themselves strategically.

The Law of attraction of metaphysics states that like attracts like. If we treat the mind as a magnet it will collect the like particles spread in the internal and external environment and the result will be dependent on the type of gathering and their treatment with the intellectuality.

Limitations

Spirituality unites mind, body and soul and Commercialization of spirituality is the most negative aspect of the most innate and personalized feelings. Spending money brings expectation about required results and the real sense of spirituality is out of any type of expectations, it is the personal experience varying person to person. Devotion does not expect and feelings can't be priced. The fusion of self to supreme self is above all types of marketing, techniques, motivation etc. The professionalism of spiritualism has deglorified its actuality and reality. The need for self-belief and devotion are self-stated. This journey of searching for self starts and ends at self only.

Dogmatism is another limitation to attain actual spiritual realization. Religious concepts are more conservative rather than progressive leading to discrepancies in most cases. Spiritual experiences are personal and generally can't be explained to their actual heights. They are timeless, ineffable, amazing and surprising. Spiritual maturity drives towards undemanding love and service beyond small self.

CONCLUSION

The spiritual Marketing dimension is fundamentally experiential and intuitive rather than conceptual. It is a thought process. It fills the individuals with the belief that every being has the spiritual energy. Spirituality is in the roots of Indian environment in all activities, whether it is a social, cultural, economic or religious activity. Bhagwad Gita says man is made up of faith. Man is by default made from the stuff faith. Man believes and shows faith in all those who enlightens them and shows the path of self-purification and development. Spirituality usually offers inner happiness, unlimited love, physical, emotional and mental healing and a touch of

wholeness. Spiritual practices, including meditation, prayer and contemplation, are intended to develop an individual's inner life, fulfilling the Self-actualization need prescribed by Abraham Maslow as fifth and the last need of individuals. There is a lofty need of purification of our soul and thoughts to practice the ethical way of living. Pure and noble emotions when mixed with strong will and clear vision brings positive vibes creating magic both for the individual and the society as a whole.

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