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Brand Awareness of Diagnostics Labs amongst Patients of Delhi / NCR Region

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In Today's global market, brand awareness plays a crucial in winning orders and in turn gaining sales numbers. A brand that has some level of brand awareness is far more likely to be considered, and therefore chosen, than brands which the consumer is unaware of. Additionally, the strength of awareness of the brands within the consideration set can also be significant. Every organization invests in this aspect to attract majority of consumers by creating awareness. Brand Awareness remains fundamental to consumer as it is the interaction initiation point with the brand. In the present work, a study was carried out to identify the methods adopted presently for the brand awareness amongst the diagnostics centres of NCR. The main purpose of this study was to find out the importance of doing Brand Awareness amongst diagnostics labs where socio-and economic stratum of customer was identified through primary research. The statistical analysis of data is based on descriptive analysis and ANOVA. The results indicates a positive and significant relationship between the Brand Awareness and stimulus for seeking services, frequency of visits, modes of services, location, diagnostics centers selection., sample collection from home. The results further revealed that the major consumer expectation were quality, benefits and discount offerings.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Diagnostics labs, Brand preference, Patients, Blood tests, IVD assays

Introduction

For centuries, companies have used branding to differentiate their goods from their competitors' goods. The word brand is derived from the Old Norse word brand which means “to burn”, as brands were and still are the means by which owners of a livestock population mark their animals to identify them. Aaker (1991) defines a brand as “a set of assets/liabilities linked to a brand's name/symbol that adds to the value provided by a product or service

Consumers' knowledge about a brand makes consumers respond differently to the marketing of the brand. The study of brand equity is increasingly popular as some marketing researchers have concluded that brands are one of the most valuable assets of the company. Branding only takes place when these perceptions are managed strategically to influence consumers' perceptions, attitudes or behaviour with the purpose to create commercial value by means of marketing communication.

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The modern concept of branding grew out of the consumer packaged goods industry and the process of branding has come to include much more than just creating a way to identify a product or company. Branding today is used to create emotional attachments to products and companies (Dolak, 2003; Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). Branding efforts create a feeling of involvement, a sense of higher quality, and an aura of intangible qualities that surround the brand name, mark, or symbol (Aaker, 1991;Dolak, 2003).

The most important assets of any business are intangible including its base of loyal customers, brands, symbols and slogans and the brand's underlying image, personality, identity, attitudes, familiarity, associations and name awareness. These assets along with patents, trademarks, and channel relationships comprise brand equity, and are a primary source of competitive advantage and future earnings (David Aaker, 1991; Neal& Strauss, 2008).

Brand equity is initially built by laying a foundation of brand awareness eventually forming positive brand images and is ultimately maximized by high levels of brand loyalty, which is illustrated in the following (Strategic Marketing and Research Techniques, 1992-2008): The importance of brand equity consists of numerous benefits for companies that own brands. Brand equity has positive

association with brand loyalty. More precisely, brand equity increases the probability of brandselection, leading to customer loyalty to a specific brand (Pitta & Katsanis, 1995).

Brand Awareness in Decision Making

In a situation where the consumer is aware of a number of brands which fit the relevant criteria, he or she is unlikely to put in much effort in seeking out information on unfamiliar brands. A brand that has some level of brand awareness is far more likely to be considered, and therefore chosen, than brands which the consumer is unaware of. Additionally, the strength of awareness of the brands within the consideration set can also be significant. Wilson (1981 cited in Woodside & Wilson 1985) confirmed the importance of top-of-mind awareness in a study which found that the higher the position of the brand in the consumer's mind measured by unaided recall, the higher the purchase intention and the higher the relative purchase of the brand. In another study, increases in brand awareness were shown to increase the probability of choice even without any accompanying change in attitude or perceptions.

Brand awareness enhances perceived quality : A further way brand awareness may affect choice within the consideration set is by influencing perceived quality. In a consumer choice study by Hoyer and Brown (1990) over 70% of consumers selected a known brand of peanut butter from among a choice of three, even though another brand was 'objectively' better quality (as determined by blind taste tests), and even though they had neither bought or used the brand before. This result is even more surprising considering the subjects were given the opportunity to taste all of the brands. Just being a known brand dramatically affected their evaluation of the brand. Intuitively, this makes sense: a consumer may rationalise that if they have heard of a brand, the company must be spending a fair sum on advertising. If it is spending a lot on advertising, then the company must be reasonably profitable which means that other consumers must be buying the product and they must be satisfied enough with its performance; therefore the product must be of reasonable quality. Stokes (1985) found that for a low involvement product (rice) familiarity had a greater magnitude of effect on the quality perception of a brand than either price or packaging. And further, that familiarity had a significant effect on purchase intention whereas price and package design did not.

Brand awareness benefits marketing : Brand awareness should be an important goal of the marketing communication efforts of a firm as it has a number of important functions. It is widely acknowledged that without creating brand awareness, brand attitude and brand image cannot be formed. However, equally important but less widely recognised is the importance of brand awareness as a heuristic approach which can affect inclusion in the consideration set and in many situations may be sufficient by itself to determine the choice from the consideration set. To the extent brand awareness can determine not only entry to the consideration set but can also determine which brand is chosen from the consideration set.However, there is difficulty in demonstrating the value of assets to the management. Aaker (1991a) complains the problem is that, firstly, enormous pressure exists for organisations and their brands to demonstrate short-term profit results. Brand managers are often given a one to three year time horizon and little incentive to make strategic brand building investments. And secondly, demonstrating the long-term value of brand building is "exceptionally difficult" (Hogarth 1980, Aaker 1991a). Even managers, who claim that they are concerned with the brand building activities of their firm, find difficulty in gaining support and resources for these activities.

In the light of Aaker's findings, a study by Kelly (1991) is very interesting. Kelly carried out a series of interviews with Australian marketing managers. Many of the managers he interviewed quoted that “Advertising was directed towards building the longer term effects of favourable brand image and strong brand loyalty”. Other managers recited that Brands don't wait for short-term results instead advertising provides them with an opportunity to incorporate branding and image building which is very much oriented towards the longer term benefit (Kelly 1991 p.5.). In other words, these managers claimed the long-term goals of brand-building and brand image is to be of greater interest to them rather than short-term objectives such as sales. However this research was based on discussion with managers, and might obviously suffer from managers saying what they felt they should do, rather than what they actually do, especially when talking to a marketing academic.

While studying the business world one can come to know that most of the business's objective is to enhance their sales as well as their profits. For this purpose organizations try to encourage people

towards its products and services for purchase and customer lifetime value means steam of purchases over the life time period. Brand awareness passes on that how to aware current and potential customers towards your product and service (Gustafson & Chabot, 2007). If an organization has a successful brand awareness it means that the products and services of the organization have a good repute in the market and simply acceptable (Gustafson & Chabot, 2007). The awareness of the brand plays a significant role while purchasing a product or service and may have control on perceived risk evaluation of consumers and their level of assurance about the buying decision due to awareness with the brand and its uniqueness.

There must be a consideration of brand while making a decision to purchase a product or service, if there is nothing to be considered the probability is that there is nothing to be chosen (Baker W, J, & Nedungadi, 1986). Brand awareness creates a great association in memory about a particular brand (Stokes, 1985). Creating a strong brand image in the consumer's mind depends on create an optimistic brand assessment, reachable brand approach, and a reliable brand representation (Farquhar, 1989). The importance of brand awareness in the mind of the customers can be evaluate at various stages e.g. recognition, recall, top of mind, brand dominance (they only call that particular brand), brand knowledge (what brand means to you) (Aaker D. , 1996). Brand awareness is very important because if there will be no brand awareness no communication and no transaction will be occur (Percy, 1987). Some of the consumers can make rule to purchase only those brand which are famous in the market (Keller, 1993).

Importance of brand awareness in brand choice : Taking Aaker's (1991) study on brand awareness enlightens this theory of brand equity's integral part that is brand awareness. As his studies had profoundly covered petite aspects of this topic to clarify its purpose of being there and why it has been so important and in fact gaining more insights by the organizations which are investing a lot in the brand share and its value which is caused from the initiation point of bringing awareness to the consumers about the brands in the market until its trial, adoption and re-purchase to the loyalty aspect which has been covered thoroughly.

Brand awareness and consumer/brand loyalty: Finally, brand awareness affects consumer loyalty and decision-making by influencing the formation and strength of brand associations in the brand image created through the different information attached to the brand in memory. In practice companies' use aided and unaided awareness, image and branding marketing research studies to determine the extent to which consumers are familiar and positive opinions about their products or services. Inmany industries, companies with the highest awareness levels also control the largest market share. Keeping in mind the importance accorded to the concept of "Brand Awareness" by various authors and practitioners, its research implications are well established (Market Research Worldwide, 2009).Awareness levels, measures whether consumers know about and are familiar with a company, organization, product, or service.

Unaided awareness is the degree to which consumers' think of a company or product on a top-of-mind basis. "When you think of companies that provide these categories of products, which first come to mind?" (Market Street Research, 2004). Aided awareness on the other hand is the degree to which consumers who know about a company or product are familiar with that company or product. For example a question asked could be, "How familiar are you with this product?""Would you say you are very familiar, somewhat familiar, or not familiar?" (Market Street Research,2004).

Focusing on the relevance of brand awareness that is related to the strength of the brand node or trace in memory, as reflected by consumers' ability to identify the brand under different conditions (Rossiter and Percy 1987). In other words, how well does the brand identities, serve their function.

In low involvement decision settings, a minimum level of brand awareness may be sufficient for product choice, even in the absence of a well-formed attitude (Betteman & Park 1980; Hoyer & Brown 1990; Park & Lessig, 1981). Using elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) suggest that consumers may base choices on brand awareness considerations when they have low involvement, which could result from either a lack of consumer motivation or lack of consumer ability. A brand with high awareness and with positively distinguishing associations will have a high added value for consumers (Riezebos, 2003). Doney and Cannon (1997), in his study found that, trust as the perceived credibility and goodwill of a target party. The first dimension focuses on the objective believability of an exchange partner, as in an expectancy that one can rely on the partner's word

or written statement. The second dimension is the extent to which one partner is genuinely interested in the other's welfare and motivation to seek joint gains. In the health care context, trust can create an exchange environment in which a hospital can provide better care to its patients, or customers, while becoming or remaining profitable. Built on management capability, trust is a standard that hospitals and their employees offer patients. When patients complain about service, the hospital and its employees must do their best to respond to the complaints and thereby maintain or rebuild trust.

Role of Brands in Diagnostic Labs

Diagnostic laboratory : The features of a diagnostic laboratory are as follows:

- Provide high quality range of laboratory test
- Provide services to surgeons, hospitals, general practitioners
- Used to diagnose diseases and preferably sub classify it regarding

Points to keep in mind to form a diagnostic lab

- Quality assessment
- Quality assurance
- Quality control

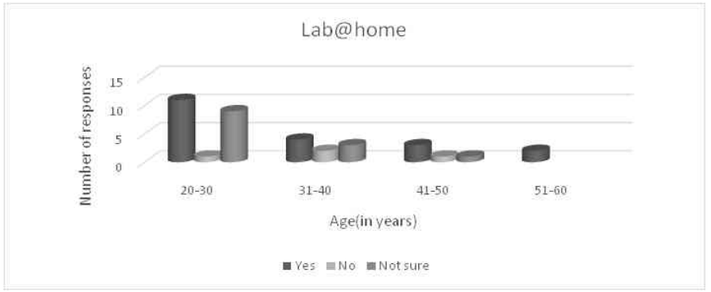
Analysis and Interpretation

People prefer going to their regular labs generally and then to the diagnostic centers referred to them by their doctors. Prescription is evidently the sole most criteria to go for any kind of diagnosis and very uncommonly people go for self-prescribed diagnosis.

As per the sample study ,it can may be infer that people still are not very aware of lab@home services and those who knows do not really trust them. Might be because of very less exposure or just pure antagonistic nature. People tend to oppose the change whatsoever.

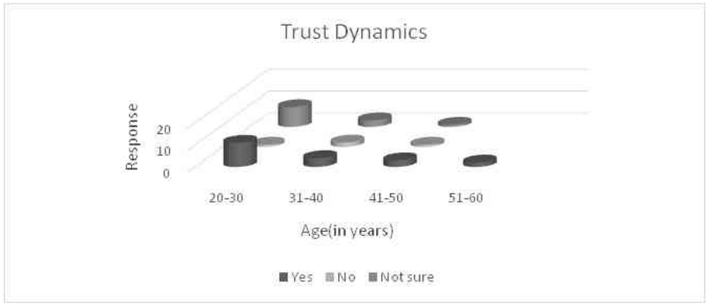
Age plays a major role in this selection procedure as well since the acceptance for/of anything new is more in youth. People of age group 20-30 are most aware of lab@home services and the awareness gradually decreases with increasing age, i.e. age is inversely proportional to the awareness.

Chart 1: Lab at home services awareness



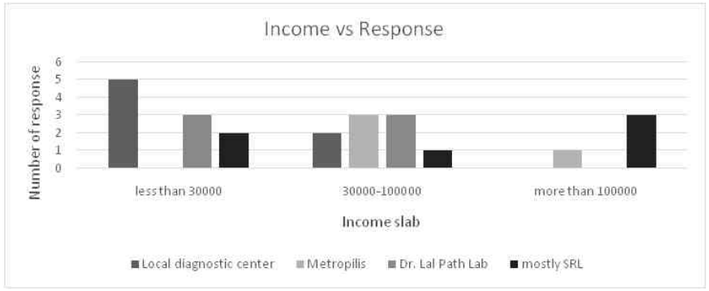
As the awareness similar pattern was observed in trust dynamics. Most acceptances of the services are in younger age group people than in elderly people.

Chart 2 : Response vs Age relationship



Respondent's choice varies greatly with their income. The respondents earning or having more family income greatly believes in quality thus the choice of diagnostic center is mostly SRL.

Chart 3: Income and response relationship



People are brand/name loyal, the diagnostic center they go to they refer it to others too and does considers it their family lab. Since, their trust and loyalty builds up on the particular name. More than accuracy or reports people tend to go for word of mouth, i.e., their doctors or sometimes friends and families advice.

Central Delhi : Most of the respondents do believe and choose the lab suggested by the doctors and as the Dr. Lal Path has been serving since many years it has a good hold in the market and thus reliable and convenient for the patients to easily choose from existing labs.

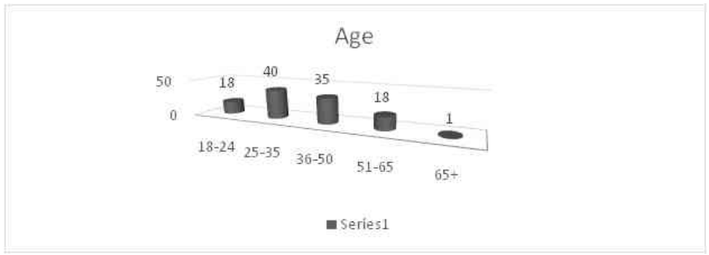
Table 2: Labs according to rank given on the basis of responses

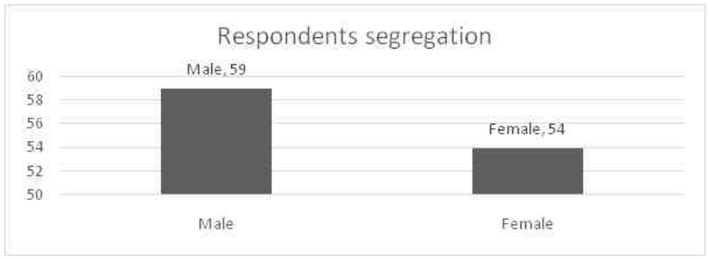
Lab	Rank
Dr. Lal Path	1
SRL	2
Metropolis	3
Other	4

"Lab at Home" is not known by many but yes when explained about the concept mostly young population were able to acknowledge the service. Price for the tests offered are really not an issue because when compared the tests prices they all stand more or less the same.

Noida: Respondents visit a diagnostic centre after every 3 months whether due to some illness or for other necessary checkups. The preference of choosing a diagnostic centre is as per the doctor's advice, also an opinion from friend/relative who already had an experience with a diagnostic centre. The parameter for selecting a diagnostic centre depends upon the doctor's advice or a concern from a family member or relatives. People are not well aware about the lab@home services. The only market leader being observed was Dr. Lal Path Labs. Respondent's segregation basis their age group was:

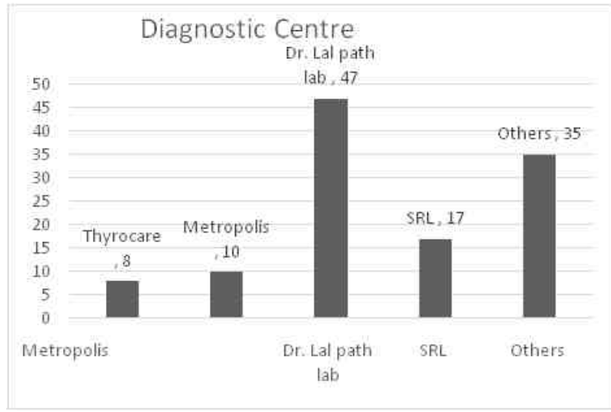
Chart 4 : Age segregation of respondents





Most preferred diagnostic centre in Delhi/NCR region is Dr. Lal path. The ranking as per the responses came out to be:

Chart 6: Diagnostic center preference



It was observed that doctor's prescription/suggestion plays the major decisive role in the selection of diagnostic centers services rendered and the need of services required.

Chart 9 Modes of Services Located

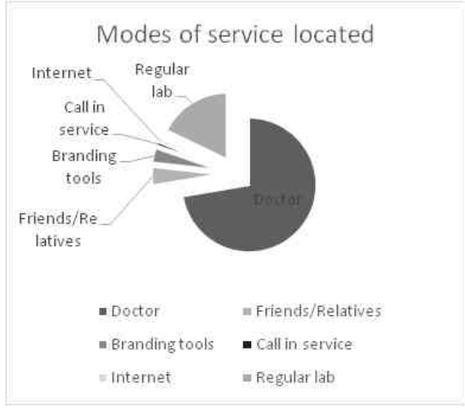
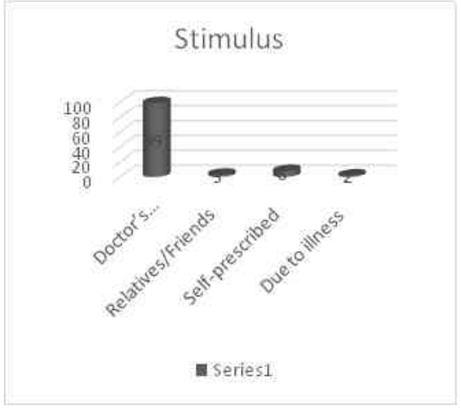
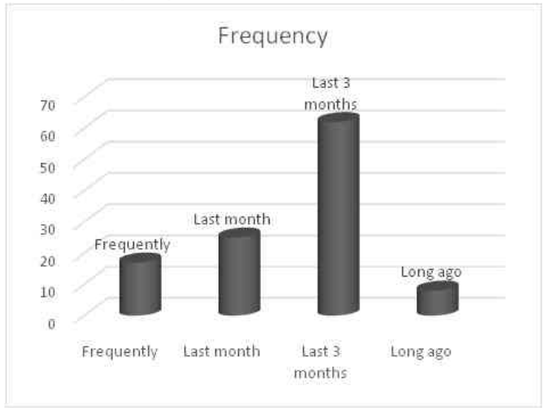


Chart 10: Stimulus for seeking services



Also, it was observed that there is a positive relationship between more frequent visitors and brand awareness levels.

Chart 11: Frequency of visits

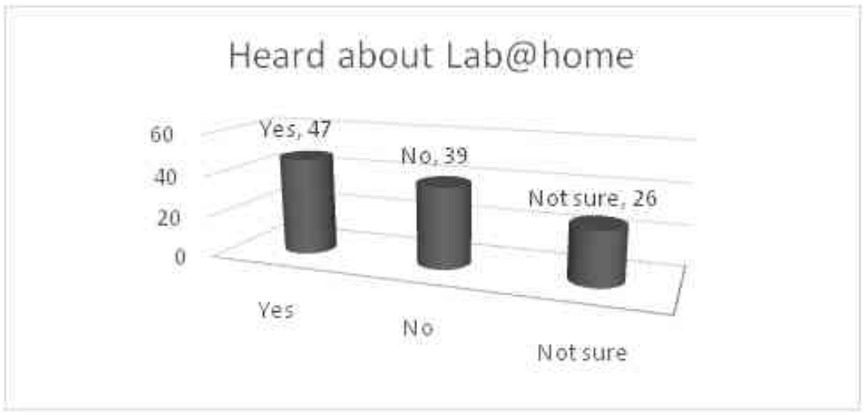


47% of the respondents give recommendation of the diagnostic centers they are most aware off.

Chart 12: Recommendations given to others



Majority of the respondents were aware of lab at home services, in which 23% were sceptic about their surety regarding the awareness or knowledge.



Results

In the following pages, the results of the questionnaire are shown. As can be seen in Table two items stand out. The item that was rated highest is 'Heard about Lab@home service' & 'Any lab recommendation you've given'. The average rating for these item are high, 37.33. Other items that really matter to patients when choosing a diagnostic centre are "Stimulus for Seeking Service"(28) & "Last Time Path Service Used" (28).

Another finding of the research is that some items turned out to be not important. "How is a service located" (18.67) are items that are not important for patients when choosing a diagnostic centre.

Minimum Standard Error depicts that the quantum of the fluctuations is decreasing. The maximum mean value shows there is association between specific factors and brand awareness. It displays these are the main factors which will affect the brand value of diagnostic centres.

Factors	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Q.2 Stimulus for Seeking Service	28	47.4
Q.3 How is a service located	18.67	31.3
Q.1 Last Time Path Service Used	28	23.7
Q.6 First name of the lab that comes to mind	23.4	16.9
Q.8 Heard about Lab@home service	37.33	10.59
Q.12 Any lab recommendation you've given	37.33	13.31

Table 4

Factors	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Minimum	Maximum
Stimulus	4	28	47.4	23.7	2	99
Modes of service located	6	18.67	31.34	12.79	1	81
Frequency	4	28	23.7	11.85	8	62
Which hospital	5	23.4	16.94	7.5	8	47
Heard about Lab@home	3	37.33	10.59	6.11	26	47
Recommendation	3	37.33	13.31	7.68	26	52

ANOVA

Factors					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1129.973	5	225.995	.285	.916
Within Groups	15069.867	19	793.151		
Total	16199.840	24			

According to the table the 2 factors with highest mean () this shows both of them affect the brand awareness of diagnostic centers, depends on them and their std deviation is minimum displays these factors have some association with reputation and awareness of brand.

We have proved it with the help of F-test.

Hypothesis (H_0): There is significant difference between various factors and brand awareness of diagnostic centers at 5% significance level.

H1: There is relationship between factors and brand awareness.

The Table shows the ANOVA results. The results indicate the value of F is .285 which confirms the association of relationship in this study model at a level of Significance 0.916.

Interpretation: The significant value according to ANOVA table is 0.916, which is more than 0.05 that proves there is some relationship among factors and brand value.

If these diagnostic centers will change the quality as well as the quantity of these factors, it will affect brand awareness of diagnostic centers either in positive or negative way.

Conclusion

People commonly visits those diagnostic center's which are close to their area, there are very less people who do not prefer quality so they can walk an extra mile to afford a good diagnostic services. People are not so familiar with the concept of lab@home services, and even they know it than it is for Dr.lal path lab.

Suggestions

1. More than advertisement customer relationship has to be maintained.
2. Retaining the customer and to make them feel as part of the organization by keeping a data base of every patient and keep reminding them about future growth and their appointments.
3. Special treatment for the elderly aged patients.
4. In addition to this different branches should be opened as to provide ease to the customer.

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BOOK REVIEW

"The power of Social Intelligence"

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To become an effective Social person without reading this book will be like an incomplete effort one makes to pursue a successful social lifestyle. This book deeply engrosses readers in various social situations that any executive would experience while advocating the embellishment of social skills in real life scenarios. A simple message that one should never give up and constantly attempt directed efforts with full positive adjustments can turn any adverse situation favorable within no time.

The book revolves around the tips required by any individual to successfully counter social requirements that can make a lasting impact on peoples mind when ever and where ever any one faces, it can ease social pressures in minutes through application of social intelligence techniques

The book is an eye opener for all business executives as it is not just a business degree that constructs competency but also small learning from everyday life and committed social lifestyle that can teach you to solve any complex situation successfully by learning and developing social intelligence techniques.

Review Message 1:

Believing in the power of Social Intelligence:

The book constantly guides readers to believe in the magic of developing interpersonal skills of social intelligence which is to initiate the keenness to learn and flexibly adopt social intelligence techniques learning in every day work. As the author advocates that being successful socially has a fortunate immediate and positive impact on your wealth and on your physical well being. The author narrates the work of psychologist Shelden Cohen stating that diverse social networking induce a" feel good factor" that also boost the ability of the human immune system to attack invading viruses.

Review Message 2 :

Use what language you will, you can never say anything but what you are:

While feeling the increasing significance of body language the author highlights that 55 percent of all meaning conveyed in any act of communication is given by your physical demeanor, Author Tony Buzan states that your posture, energy levels, eye contact, foot movement all communicate much before the actual communication starts. Discussing the American research, he narrates that mirror neurons found in monkeys brain exactly corresponds to the speech production region of the human brain too which at times affect humans to imitate each other while communicating in the society.

Review Message 3:

A man without a smiling face must not open a shop:

This is one of the best lessons any business executive can learn, the book states that a simple smile is the best way to win and influence people, the author calls this" primary effect" and emphasizes that this is an epidemic as the connected people keep passing on the smiles endlessly throughout the day. Quoting Helen Colton from the book joy of living the author states that if you greet and hug people with appropriate gestures of affection hemoglobin in your blood also increases significantly and it is this that supplies and carries oxygen making your healthy heart and brain.