



Youth Opportunities

Branding in Bangladesh



Inspiring Excellence

Internship Report
on
Youth Opportunities:
Branding in Bangladesh

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Subject: Submission of Internship Report.

Dear Ma'am,

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your guidance and support you have provided me during the course of this report. Without your help the report would have been impossible to complete. With deep gratitude, I would like to acknowledge the help provided by Mr. Osama Bin Noor, Co-Founder, Youth Opportunities for providing utmost supervision during my period of internship in the organization.

To prepare this report I have collected what I believe to be the most relevant information to make my report as analytical and reliable as possible. I have concentrated my best effort to achieve the objectives of the report and hope that my endeavor will serve the purpose. The practical knowledge and experience gathered during my report preparation will immeasurably help in my future professional life.

I would really be grateful if you enlighten me with your thoughts and views regarding the report. Also, if you wish to enquire about an aspect of my report, I would gladly answer your queries. Thank you again for your support and patience.

Yours Sincerely,

Atif Ahmed

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my profound gratitude to all those who have been instrumental in the preparation of this internship report. I wish to place on records, my deep gratitude for the support, direction, and supervision in every aspect from, Youth Opportunities officials, my faculty, and friends.

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Finally, and most importantly, I would like to concede the guidance of Ms. Rahma Akhter, Lecturer, BRAC Business School, BRAC University, for her expert advice and help in preparing this report.

Executive Summary

Youth Opportunities is the world's largest opportunity providing platform with a very unique proposition. Since its inception in 2012, it has not only help the global youth with sharing different opportunities but also created a bridge between the opportunity provider and the opportunity seeker. Being a startup company the employees of the organization have been playing a vital role and the company also values its people the most. By working in the Operation and Marketing Departments I have come across the whole branding process, project preparation and overall marketing strategies of the department at the Youth Opportunities.

The title of the report is “Youth Opportunities: Branding in Bangladesh”. The report is mostly based on secondary data analysis along with a few primary data collected through different focus group discussions. In the overall report I have tried to focus mainly on how Youth Opportunities plans to penetrate the Bangladeshi market despite having a huge market share globally.

This report is a detailed representation of all the mentioned topics and contains a preliminary discussion about Youth Opportunities. This company is the market leader among all the other opportunity providing platform globally. In the overview part the company details are described. In the later part, I tried to make an analysis of the branding strategies of Youth Opportunities in Bangladesh.

Finally, I have tried to give some recommendations from my learning that I have got from my day to day job at Youth Opportunities and from my university lectures as well.

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Organization Overview

Youth Opportunities (YO) is an award-winning international initiative that started its journey out of Bangladesh. Youth Opportunities is the largest global opportunity discovery platform which provides equal, free and easy access to unlimited opportunities to young people from all across the world. Since 2012, YO has connected thousands of young people from more than 232 countries with different international opportunities ranging from scholarships, conference, workshops, internships etc.

For its value additive contribution, Youth Opportunities has been awarded with the Queen's Young Leaders Award and was selected as one of the aspiring social enterprise in Asia by Forbes Magazine. Recently, Youth Opportunities has received the National Mobile Application Award from the ICT Division of Government of Bangladesh.

Recently, Youth Opportunities have launched its local platforms in Bangladesh and Indonesia to cater to the need of the Bangladeshi and the Indonesian youth in finding and pursuing national and international opportunities. For its value additive contribution to youth development, Youth Opportunities has received some prestigious awards and recognition globally and nationally which has been mentioned before.

Despite access to unlimited opportunities, often it is seen that many youth struggle to make the most out of every opportunity which leads to frustration and disappointments. One of the reasons is the lack of preparation and guidance in pursuing the opportunities. Thus, it is important to build necessary capacity so that opportunities can be transformed in successes.



Rationale of the Study

Through Youth Opportunities, young people from all over the world can get free access to 10 different categories of opportunities which include: Scholarship, Conference, Award, Grant, Exchange Program, Internship, Workshop, volunteer service etc. for their personal and professional development. Besides, youth from all over the world are also assisted to pursue their higher education and passion to be successful in their endeavor.

Youth Opportunities has already been recognized and has a great exposure globally. However, being a Bangladeshi Startup Youth Opportunities has not been efficacious enough to reach the Bangladeshi youth with a satisfactory rate.

Keeping this in mind, Youth Opportunities has decided to increase their brand awareness all over the country through difference promotional and activation programs. Being a brand management student, I have got the scope to use my theoretical and practical knowledge in these programs.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

Scope of Study:

It is an abundant opportunity for me to be a part of Youth Opportunities.

- This report is about the branding strategies of Youth Opportunities to penetrate the Bangladesh market. It has been a great chance for me to know and implement the branding activities of Youth Opportunities.
- By focusing on different branding activities, it can be understood regarding branding activities of Youth Opportunities.
- Chance of learning the basics of Branding through ICT and Social Media.



Limitations of Study:

- Confidential information were not shared.
- Insufficient primary data.
- Bangladeshi culture are not accustomed to the practice of availing international opportunities.
- Inadequate experience.

Objectives of the Study

Youth Opportunities has taken some imperative steps to increase the brand awareness among the Bangladeshi youth.

I. Broad Objective: Increase brand awareness among the Bangladeshi youth.

II. Specific Objectives:

- a. Involve with the school, college and university students through collaborative program.
- b. Partnership with the government and private organizations.

Methodology of the Study

The data has been collected mostly through secondary research. However, some primary data has been collected through different focus group discussions and personal observation.

Different journals and articles has been used to take references to connect the theory with the implications which has been cited properly and given the reference. Moreover, different cases has been considered while preparing the report which I learned through my brand management course from my honorable teacher Dr. Mohammad Tareque Aziz Sir.

In terms of primary data, the internal database of Youth Opportunities has helped to gather their information. Moreover, the FGD's has been taken a consideration as well to quote and take reference to.



Learning & Success (Youth Opportunities)

It has been a great opportunity for to work in such an organization where I have been able not only to practice my theoretical learning but also have the opportunity to experiment with different branding strategies. Below are some of the key learning I got from Youth Opportunities.

1. Experiment on customer development and retention.
2. Opportunity to work closely with the professional relationship team and finalize the deals.
3. Learned basic social media marketing (Facebook, Twitter & Instagram)
4. Opportunity to work closely with the corporate partnership team.
5. Prepared project proposal including thorough budget.





Literature Review

In this report, I have used several brand management theories with the help of some published journal articles. Youth Opportunities is leveraging themselves through the ICT Division of Bangladesh Government because they believe that “Brand leveraging is an important form of new product introduction because it provides consumers with a sense of familiarity by carrying positive brand characteristics and attitudes into a new product category. Instant recognition of the brand is established, and consumers with a favorable brand opinion likely will try a new product they perceive to have a similar quality level and attributes as their original favorite. Additionally, because the products are in different categories, they will not compete for market share – the crux of a successful branding strategy.” (Giddens, 2010). Moreover, in terms of leveraging the important points while leveraging needs to be considered as Bristol stated “Emergent attributes represent potential leverage points because they are unique to the combination of the brand and extension product category and thus to the brand within the new product category.” (Bristol, 2002)

Though, according to Keller “The value of a brand is defined by its equity, which is “the differential effect of brand knowledge on customer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1993, p. 2). Moreover, in order to create a new reputation to the customer YO has to be invest in different places and as Bresciani, Eppler stated “In particular, symbolic activities, investments in human capital and social capital help to build generalized reputation, whereas investments in product quality and building close relationships with customers lead to create local reputation” (Bresciani and Eppler, 2010). While preparing those, it has to be remembered that overall branding is a quite serious issue. It can take a company to the top, and at the same time, it can bring the company down to the ground with a mistake. “Branding is part art and part science. It is serious business. Make too many mistakes and you may not get another chance ± your customers may not forgive you, and your organization may not either. Proceed with caution, but do proceed. There is no excuse for not branding; failure to build a brand can result in extinction.” (Bergstrom, 2000)



Analysis

1. Research and Development:

According to JOHN TYREMAN “Brand management is the practice of analyzing how a brand is perceived in the marketplace and making adjustments based on ongoing research into a firm’s target audience.” He added that, “high-growth professional services shows that the fastest growing firms are twice as likely to conduct frequent research on their target market when compared to firms with no growth.”

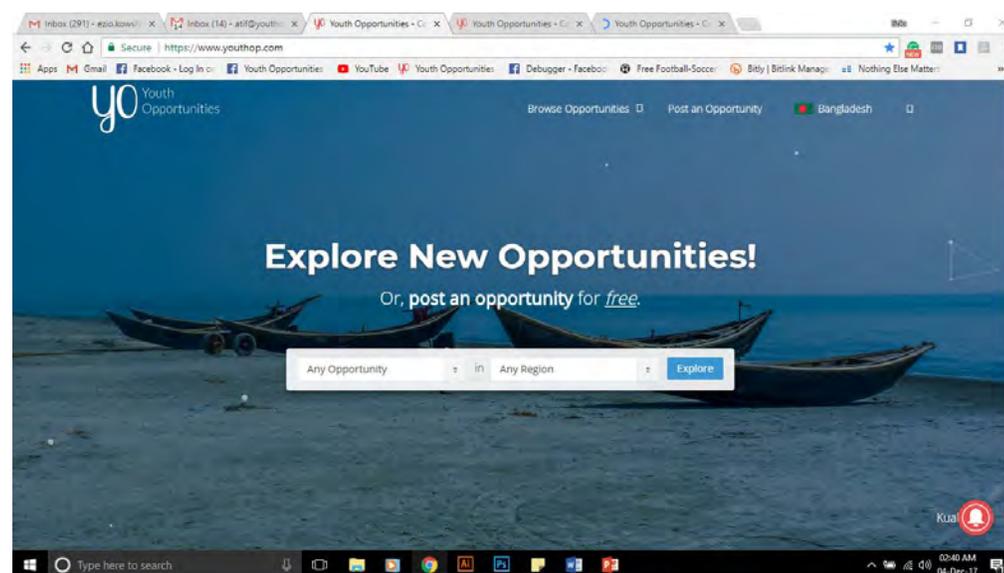
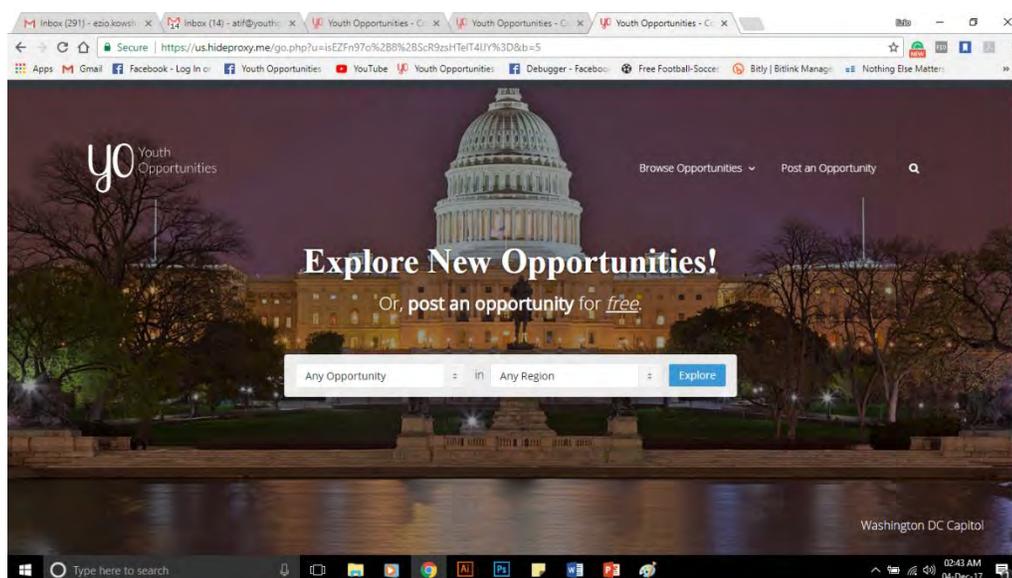
A proper market research will always improve the efficiency of the company. Furthermore, when it comes to marketing the importance increases more. To make a proper branding strategy will go in vain without a proper market research. A detailed and prolific market research helps the company to maximize the benefit against their investments.

Youth Opportunities is facing a crisis when it comes to their brand image in Bangladesh. It might be because of their Brand problems, such as poor image, inconsistent voicing or poor targeting etc. A Market research provides objective ways to assess your brand’s marketing and other characteristics from an outside point of view. This problem with their strategy can be solved by shifting directions before the problem becomes critical.

2. Shopper Marketing:

Youth Opportunities use this strategy of shopper marketing pretty seriously. They change their website and mobile application interface after a certain period. Moreover, to look the website interesting, they came up with a very interesting idea name “Geo Tracking Customization” where the user get to see the pictures of their own country when they visit it. Basically, they use the IP address of the user to track their location and show the picture according to that specific country.

With this, the visitors get empowered with sense of ownership and start to think Youth Opportunities as one of their own.



3. Media:

Since, this is an ICT based platform and using the technological advancement to operate the show, the primary media of Youth Opportunities is their website. Along with the global website www.youthop.com, they have launched the Bangladeshi version of their website (www.youthop.com/bd) which only shares the opportunities that are eligible only for the



Bangladeshi Youth. Moreover, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and other social media platforms are also used to get connected with the global and local youth.

However, to penetrate the Bangladeshi market, Youth Opportunities is about to launch a nationwide ambassador program where students from different schools, colleges and universities will work as a representative of YO in their institution. The motive of this program is to create a culture of sharing of national and international opportunities with Bangladeshi youth and ensure personal development of the ambassadors to design and undertake initiatives with guidance and support from YO.

In a short note, YO wants to engage and train ambassadors, representing public & private schools, colleges and universities to build themselves as social catalysts to promote access to information for all and to enhance local capacity of youth in pursuing opportunities.

4. Customer Development:

Customer will come and go. A company should always keep preparing its new customer database. You will always lose a certain number of customer in every year. So, strategy should be prepared in such a way so that, customer developed by itself.

Youth Opportunities is doing different workshops and seminars in different places to increase the brand awareness among the Bangladeshi Youth. As it is said that, “Any brand, no matter how hard you try, 15-18% of your customer will leave you.” (Reicheld and Sassar, 1991), YO is no different than this. They are losing a good number of customer due to the change of policy of Facebook for the pages, since YO used to get a significant number of visitors through them.

But because of the recent change in Facebook policy, the visitors are decreasing but YO is using other sources to cover it up. For example, Instagram, Push notification, Email Subscribe etc.



5. Brand Resonance

- a. **Sense of Community:** Along with the other strategies, Youth Opportunities is working with the sense of community from Brand Resonance where YO want to give its users to have the feeling of belongingness.

Youth Opportunity, along with the ICT Division of Bangladesh government is working for the Marginalized youth who lacks opportunities.

Despite having the asset of hardworking and able population Bangladesh is yet to reap the full benefit of the underprivileged young people. Some of the socially deprived groups in our society are – people with disability, students from Madrassa and indigenous people. Youth from these groups most often feel themselves less qualified from the rest of the world. Despite the praiseworthy development of the country, these groups of youth still lag behind because of limited awareness, lack of opportunities and proper guidance.

Youth Opportunities believes that every individual should get the chance of develop themselves. It has been working for the development of youth since its inception in 2012. With the vision of “Access to Opportunities for all for Free” and with the determination of helping the underprivileged youth of Bangladesh, Youth Opportunities organized a Round Table Discussion named “Leading towards Success Together” on 17th October, 2017. The participants of the discussion had a representation of the underprivileged youth of the country – students from Madrassa background, Indigenous people and people with disability. There were also representatives from organizations that work for this group of youth, and a few corporate faces to understand in depth the reasons that holds them back and necessary solutions towards it. The aim of the program was to identify the need of the underprivileged group of youth and also to create awareness among them about different prospects and opportunities that can benefit them for their self-development. The chief guest of the program was Engr. Mohammad Enamul Karim, Director of Bangladesh Computer Council, who shared his valuable insight upon the matter.



The program gave a platform to the underprivileged youth to share the obstacles they face. Anjad Hossain, a student of Dhaka University, who is visually impaired, shared great sorrow over the fact that authority does not pay much heed to their demand. “Every year new books are added to the curriculum, but the Braille books are not updated accordingly” he mentioned. Another participant mentioned how the infrastructure of the buildings is still not their need friendly. Acknowledging the problems people with disability face the Chief Guest said “It is important that we acknowledge these issues and take immediate actions about this. An accident can make any of us disable any day”

The students from Madrassa background pointed out about the lack of resources on their institutions. Afroza Afsana, a student of Madinatul Ulum Madrassa shared her story of winning a coding competition. She and her friends had to practice coding with much difficulty with the only laptop they had in their school. Some other participants pointed out that the competitions arranged for the Madrassa students do not get much institutional back-up and sponsorship; hence the number of such competitions is really low.

The participants from the indigenous community mentioned that there are not enough opportunities for them. “There is quota for us, but that is not properly utilized” mentioned Sumita Rabidas from Indigenous Student Council.

The common problem that all of them acknowledged is the lack of opportunities for them. Makshud Manik, Co-founder of Youth Opportunities shared some of the opportunities that are designed for these groups of youth. He mentioned that there are many more.

Osama Bin Noor, Co-founder of Youth Opportunities, shared the platform of Youth Opportunities with them and mentioned how they can come across different national and international opportunities through the website.



The program was a small initiative by Youth Opportunities to overcome the lack of awareness, ensure empowerment and skill development. By empowering them they are working on the long term investment in building the capacity of underprivileged Bangladeshi youth.



6. Brand Leveraging:

In order to leverage with the help of an established brand, Youth Opportunities made a partnership with one of the strongest brand in the country, which is the Government. YO became partnered with The ICT Division - Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and currently working with them with several ICT related projects to empower the youth of Bangladesh. This strategy not only leverage YO in terms of brand value but also it is helping to increase the brand awareness among the mass people. Moreover, YO and ICT Division is working to ensure the access of the youth to the huge number of opportunities throughout the world. Since, YO has the resource and infrastructure to help the youth and ICT Division has the access and reach over the country, the partnership has created a new entity and leveraging each other with a new value.



Findings of the Study

While doing the internship, I have found some interesting and saddening information. In Bangladesh, people fear to share the opportunities. They fear that, the competition will increase if they share an opportunities with others. This is a sad but real scenario of our country which keeps our youth behind from the global youth and decrease their own confident as wel.

Moreover, Youth Opportunities has huge lacking in their human resource. In order to penetrate the huge Bangladesh market, they need more human resource in their operation team. However, a proper branding strategy is the most important things that Youth Opportunities currently need.

Furthermore, they have so many ideas and plans in their mind to increase brand awareness in Bangladesh though they have executed only few due to the lack of proper infrastructure and proper planning.

Recommendation

Youth Opportunities has expanded globally for a quite some times. Unfortunately, being a Bangladeshi company, it has not created any impact to the country yet. The positive side is, they have started looking into the matter and the best part of it that, they have the government and some other corporate giants alongside them to support YO in their progress.

According to me, they need a proper and thorough research and development team to complete a rigorous research to get what the customer needs and how they should cater those needs.

However, as I have already mentioned, there is a huge potential market for Youth Opportunities in Bangladesh. If they come up with a proper planning and strategies, soon they would be in the heart and minds of the youth of Bangladesh.



Conclusion

“In particular, symbolic activities, investments in human capital and social capital help to build generalized reputation, whereas investments in product quality and building close relationships with customers lead to create local reputation” (Bresciani and Eppler, 2010)

Youth Opportunities is provide an orientation to the new students about the importance & necessity of building skills and professional profile to enhance employability for future. And this is how they are going forward towards the Bangladeshi youth. They are going slowly but they are increasing in terms of their market share and growth every now and then and becoming more assertive.

Since, YO is working with the theme of ensuring access to the youth to get a success, and they are going in the right direction so far. It can be hoped that, they will be achieving their vision to help all the Bangladeshi youth get connected with all the global and local opportunities which will help them to go forward in their career through Youth Opportunities.



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