

look at it as if I am a cement user myself (we are cement for our various expansion projects). When a brand moves from a standard product to a premium one, the packaging is on the preface. It has a role to play from its journey from commodity to brand.”

Fogla believes that this change in bags relates to the journey from commodity to brand. The journey has been from PP bags to PP laminated bags to BOPP bags.

Apart from packaging, other attributes also play important role in brand building. Saxena believes that a brand should also focus on the services as this is also the brand's responsibility to provide great services like expert advice, on-site guidance, hassle-free ordering, on-time delivery, and great customer service.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Associating a celebrity or famous personality

to your brand is the key branding strategy with the big construction or commodity brands to offer their customers a bouquet of services under one roof. Brand building is not a one-time task. From sponsoring cricket teams in IPL to having sports celebrities, cement players have engaged themselves with the best personalities to uplift their brands in the market. JK Lakshmi has Vijender Singh and Rohit Sharma as brand ambassadors.

The journey of JK Lakshmi Cement started by positioning their product on the plank of strength with a tagline of “Mazbooti Guaranteed”. “Then we progressed to a serious tone of narration depicting Nation Building with Brand Ambassador Om Puri. People associated JK Lakshmi Cement with that for close to a decade and then we moved to a more emotional campaign – India, Ab Soch Karo Buland,” says **Aseem Saxena, General Manager – Marketing Services, JK Lakshmi Cement.**

“Brands should never position themselves as price warrior”



How has been the journey of cement from commodity to brand?

The journey of our organisation in creating a brand out of cement has been quite interesting. We have been constantly progressing towards creating that persona for our brand that our audience can connect to.

We were amongst the first to introduce a coloured packaging of cement bag. The journey started by positioning our product on the plank

- **Aseem Saxena,**

General Manager – Marketing Services,
JK Lakshmi Cement

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As Brand building is not a onetime task, year on year we have invested significantly in various collaborations. From sponsoring cricket teams in IPL to having sports celebrities like Vijender Singh and Rohit Sharma as Brand Ambassadors to connect with our audience, we have invested in constant brand building activities which has certainly resulted in JK Lakshmi becoming a preferred brand in our operational markets.

What are the three important attributes of cement as a brand?

A cement brand should occupy the awareness set of the consumer's mind space in a positive way. The first and foremost attribute that comes

Similarly, UltraTech Cement has associated itself with Deccan Chargers team and Rajasthan Royals in the IPL. It has also partnered with some of India's premier construction product companies like Berger, Pidilite, Sintex, Supreme, Astral among several others.

JSW Cement has signed Sourav Ganguly and Sunil Chhetri as its brand ambassadors. It launched a new multi-media marketing campaign "Leader's Choice" with the two sports icons that promote the ideology of crafting a solid foundation for a better future. Apart from this, the company has partnered with a few channels and has embraced platforms like Whatsapp, Dealer App, Internal Sales app, etc. To address customer queries faster, they have rolled out an application called – Saathi App.

Reddy believes that adding a personality or celebrity is important. He says, "When new cement is launched, we would engage a personality that



can give confidence to the buyer. It is necessary for any new product but when the product is already established you can think of a different type of campaign. I remember at Bharathi cement, we had hired the well-known Telugu actor Surya as a brand

to mind is strength of the cement. Apart from that durability and finish of the cement are also important attributes.

With good product quality, a brand should also focus on the services as this is also brand's responsibility to provide great services like expert advice, on site guidance, hassle free ordering, on time delivery and great customer service which also helps in building a bond between the brand and the customer.

What do you think cement companies should avoid while establishing their product as a brand?

We feel that brands should never position themselves as price warrior. If a brand wants to mark their presence in the market, they should always avoid price war and should always focus on the product quality and look to provide augmented product benefits. Also overpromise and under-delivery needs to be avoided at all times as correct brand promise is the only key to build a chain of loyal customers in any industry and cement is not an exception.

Is it necessary to attach a personality to cement while creating a brand?

It is indeed necessary to attach a personality to cement while creating a brand, as the benefits it brings are very impressive. A brand personality

is something to which the consumer can relate as it adds life to your brand. It engages directly with the consumers on a psychological level, which makes the brand stand out and an unforgettable thing for the audience. JK Lakshmi Cement's campaign – India, Ab Soch karo Buland is intended to fuel up the audience with motivation. It inspires people to push their limits to achieve excellence with integrity and hard work. It also tells people to never compromise and give-up, no matter what the circumstances are, and to battle with every last ounce of strength.

How important is the compressive strength of cement while creating a brand?

The ability of cement that to what extent it can withstand compression, is known as compressive strength. Compressive strength of concrete is one of the most important property and it is also one of the most tangible benefits with which the customers can relate to. JK Lakshmi Cement's Mazbooti Guaranteed tagline is prime example of how much importance we give to the strength of our product. In 2020, we came up with a new campaign – Aa Strength Dikha, which is another attempt to showcase the higher strength of the brand vis-a-vis competitors. This campaign also takes our brand thought to another level by depicting that the strength of Buland Soch is always higher than Ordinary thoughts.