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## INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING: A SUCCESS STORY OF BJP IN 2014 LOK SABHA ELECTION

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### ABSTRACT

*The case study highlights the marketing strategies used by the Bhartiya Janta Party to lure the prospective Indian electorate towards them before the Lok Sabha elections which had taken place in April, 2014. The thrust of this case is on the usage of integrated marketing communication. The induction of the Integrated Marketing Communication in the marketing plan of the BJP has been studied and analyzed in the case study with the aim of finding out the components of the IMC which have had the maximum positive effect on the BJP's election campaign. The BJP used different marketing tools such as direct marketing, advertising, public relation, publicity, e-marketing, social media etc. for the promotion of their election manifesto and to give the voters a better view of their administrative plan.*

### KEYWORDS

Advertising, Communication, Direct Marketing, Elections 2014, Integrated Marketing Communication.

### BACK GROUND

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has been categorized by technological inputs. Technology has emerged as a binding as well as benefiting factor in this millennium. The flip side of this pervasiveness has made IT intrusive as well as invasive. In today's era there is so much information load that it becomes difficult for an individual to process and form their own opinions. As we all know that opinions are a product of synthesis and amalgamation of information and facts, reaching the target population (in this case the electorate) becomes crucial for any political party. The detractors of Modi expound that Modi mania is nothing but a media hyped strategy. The debate to this statement can continue but there is no question of doubt about the use of marketing tools and its strategic usage in 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Just like a great film is the result of much hard work of different workers behind the scenes, like cameraman, story writer, script writer, technicians, editor, music director, lyricist, etc., BJP's victory is a blockbuster. A lot of hard work and effort has been behind the successful positioning of Mr. Narendra Modi. A lot of research has been put in by large number of people who worked round the clock. Senior BJP leader Ajay Singh and Piyush Goel handled and managed the media strategy. Piyush Pandey of Oglivy & Mather's (O&M) advertising master, McCann group's Prason Joshi and Sam Balsara of Madison World used their skills to make Narendra Modi a big brand. Advertising agency Soho square, part of WPP group managed print campaigns, television and radio exposure. The slogan 'AB KI BAAR MODI SARKAR', became a litany of sorts for the Indian populace. Following the basic rule of advertising, party researched about the audience and their wants. With the help of thorough research they entered the battle field and attacked their opponents. (EXHIBIT 1) BJP gauged the issues and diagnosed the ailments and sufferings of people correctly. These important issues are corruption, women safety, economic growth, development, price rise etc. that's why there was a slogan "MEHNGAI, GARIBI, BHRASHTACHAR AUR NAARI PER ATYACHAR- JANTA MAAF NAHIN KAREGI". Then again there was slogan in which Narendra Modi started talking about strong government and good polity. "ACHCHE DIN AANE WALE HAIN". (EXHIBIT 2 & 3)



## POLITICAL PLAYGROUND IN INDIA

The Indian Politics functions within a set constitutional framework which provides the guidelines to every Indian state for the day to day administrative work and for the smooth functioning of the state operations. The constitution reigns supreme when it comes to defining the powers, responsibilities and the limitations of the authorities in power at the central and the state level. The Indian democracy follows a multi-party system where the voters enjoy the right to vote for any party of their choice. India is a federal parliamentary democratic republic in which the President of India is the head of state and the Prime Minister of India is the head of government. The Indian politics has witnessed a sea change ever since its inception and has witnessed a revolution in the sphere of election campaigning with the advent of technology and the social and the electronic media. The today's voter is spoilt for choices when it comes to extracting information about the various parties. The parties know that today's voters are laden with knowledge and have all the information at their hands at the click of the mouse. Thereby, the election campaigns which once revolved around making future promises to the voters today involve providing information to them about their past achievements and their progressive mindset. It wasn't surprising when the BJP decided to fight the 2014 Lok Sabha elections primarily riding on the information wave where they empowered their voters by providing them a leeway to witness the election campaigns, mandates and manifesto of the party at the party's website. This change in the Indian politics is attributed to the IT change in India that has swayed the whole nation and left especially the young voters asking for more.

## SNAPSHOT OF MAJOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PARTIES WHO WON IN LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

Lok Sabha	Year/Tenure	Party/PM
1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup>	15th Aug 1947 – 27th May 1964	INC/ Jawaharlal Nehru
3 <sup>rd</sup> (acting)	27 May 1964 – 9th June 1964	INC/ Gulzari Lal Nanda
3 <sup>rd</sup>	9th June 1964 – 11 January 1966	INC/ Lal Bahadur Shastri
3 <sup>rd</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> January 1966-24 January 1966	INC/ Gulzari Lal Nanda
3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup> January 1966-24 <sup>th</sup> March 1977	INC/ Indira Gandhi
6 <sup>th</sup>	24th March 1977 – 28th July 1979	Janta Party/Morarji Desai
6 <sup>th</sup>	28th July 1979 – 14th January 1980	Janta Party(secular)/ Charan Singh
7 <sup>th</sup>	14th January 1980 – 31st October 1984	INC/ Indira Gandhi
7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup>	31st October 1984 – 2nd December 1989	INC/Rajiv Gandhi
9 <sup>th</sup>	2nd December 1989 – 10th November 1990	Janta Dal/V.P Singh
9 <sup>th</sup>	10th November 1990 to 21st June 1991	Samajwadi Party/ Chandra Shekhar
10 <sup>th</sup>	21st June 1991 – 16th May 1996	INC/P.V Narsimha Rao
11 <sup>th</sup>	16th May 1996 – 1st June 1996	BJP/Atal Bihari Vajpayee
11 <sup>th</sup>	1st June 1996 – 21st April 1997	Janta Dal/H.D Deve Gowda
11 <sup>th</sup>	21st April 1997 – 19th March 1998	Janta Dal/ I.K Gujral
12 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup>	19th March 1998 – 22nd May 2004	BJP/Atal Bihari Vajpayee
14 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup>	22nd May 2004 – May 2014	INC/Manmohan Singh
16 <sup>th</sup>	May 2014 –till date	BJP/Narendra Modi

The Bharatiya Janata Party is today the most prominent member of the family of organisations known as the "Sangh Parivar" and nurtured by the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (RSS). Like the RSS, the BJP is wedded to India's unity and integrity, its intrinsic identity and the social strength, individual character and cultural uniqueness that have been the hallmark of this great country and its people for millennia[Exhibit 4]. Bhartiya Janta Party projected L k Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpai as its priministerial candidates in 1996. In 2014 lok sabha election Narendra Modi has proved him the game changer and redefined the Indian politics. (EXHIBIT 5) (EXHIBIT 6)

Technology has been used very smartly for the campaigning like 3d holograms used in rallies of Modi or use of DTH services to address voters in remote areas. Archana shukla also writes about the back up team of Narendra Modi which includes political strategist, backroom boys, campaign strategist and communication managers. And the team that puts it into practical ground includes analytics, the big brains, mind reading team, fanning out people, the it team etc.[Exhibit 7] We cannot forget the continuous buzz trending of Modi and related news on every channel and media. (EXHIBIT 8)

Near about 20 lac volunteers worked hard and many among them even quit their jobs just to keep the Modi wave alive. Their professions varied from marketing, media, IT to financial services. Namom4pm, Namochaiparty, pledge4modi, modi4pm were some of the campaign they ran. (EXHIBIT 9)

BJP's campaign can better be understood by looking at a communication model, political persuasion in the light of mass marketing and campaigning at ground level. The BJP's campaign in the mass media and on social media was supplemented by an on-ground campaign.

According to India today's Kunal Pradhan and Uday Madhurkar, [Exhibit 10]" over the last nine months Modi has traveled 300000 km, or seven times the earth's equatorial circumference. He attended 5187 events, addressed 477 rallies in 25 states while sleeping barely five hours a night and harnessed the internet and mobile telephony to connect with estimated 230 million people or one in every four voters.

A 21<sup>st</sup> century political campaign cannot be conducted using 20<sup>th</sup> century media tactics. And BJP in this election proved clearly. In the BJP's communication approach communication was sharply focused on Modi and duration of campaign was determined with the help of BJP party members Piyush Goel and Ajay Singh. Modi frequently appeared in full image on the front page ads in news paper in different languages, commercials across television channels and hoarding all across the country.

Commercial time was bought big time on radio networks to reach out to smallest cities. India has 13.31 million active users on twitter who are above 15 years and access twitter via PCs and laptop (source IMRB International). Through the micro blogging site twitter Modi secure the place in the heart of 4million followers. Modi's media managers made the best use of technology to reach out to people in media dark segments. vehicle equipped with his pre recorded video messages were sent into remote villages to boost up the campaign. (EXHIBIT 11)

The concept of *chai pe charcha*- discussion over tea was a hit. People gathered to tea stall where they could see or talk to Modi over a website and sip tea from paper cup with his picture on them. Modi's presence simultaneously at 150 location became possible with the help of 3D holograms images made for his public meeting. (Source: financial times blog) (EXHIBIT 12).Even during IPL cricket matches the gap commercials was totally occupied by advertisements in which funny ads were shown praising Modi governance.(EXHIBIT 13)

## INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION

In this case study we have seen that BJP's marketing strategy for its political campaigning was based on the very well known concept of marketing called integrated marketing communication. We saw that BJP has used every medium of communication and they integrated all those tools to capitalize them and maximize their performance by integrating them properly.

According to 'Kruti Shah and Alan D'souza'in their book 'Advertising & Promotion An IMC Perspective-2009' {1} said that IMC is management concept that brings together all tools of marketing communication to send consistent messages to target audience. According to them instead of dividing communication into several overlapping areas, IMC unifies each communication element to deliver consistent messages with one voice, one theme and one strategy. A task force from the American association of advertising agencies defines integrated marketing communication as a 'concept of marketing communication planning that

recognizes the added value of comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of variety of communication disciplines- general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relation'.

Through this case study we saw that each and every element of marketing communication was the part of BJP campaign. They didn't leave any stone unturned. Everybody knows the importance of marketing and communication. It might be chance that layman does not have the word to explain it but he /she understands its importance. Nobody ever had an idea that marketing in politics could change the future. In politics old ways of approaching to voters are common. But in 2014 Lok Sabha election BJP has proved itself one step ahead among all political parties with help of marketing and promotion.

In marketing management there is concept of communication mix, which consists of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, public relation, publicity and event-n-experience. BJP used all of them in a proper manner and integrated them to get exemplary results.

#### MODEL OF INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION



#### WEBSITE

The BJP's think tank delved into the IT arena by launching an array of websites exclusively devoted to providing information to the Internet users about the functioning and the administration of the BJP. The various websites started by BJP for the reason were [www.narendramodi.in](http://www.narendramodi.in), [www.bjp.org](http://www.bjp.org), [bjpelectionmanifesto.com](http://bjpelectionmanifesto.com), [www.bjpjunagadh.org](http://www.bjpjunagadh.org), [www.bjpbengal.org](http://www.bjpbengal.org), [www.bjpgujarat.org](http://www.bjpgujarat.org) (Exhibit 14)

#### TV /RADIO

BJP decided to attract the public's attention by launching an internet TV initiative of their own which had the database of their past videos which highlighted BJP's past achievements and their rich history. The private FM channels also carried the messages in Narendra Modi's voice where he would induce the listeners to vote for change and development by voting for his party. (Exhibit 15)

#### EMAIL MARKETING

BJP sent a series of mails to the general public providing an update to the prospective voters about the party's manifesto and their activities, through BJP online communication cell. (Exhibit 16)

#### DIRECT MARKETING

BJP used mobile networks to reach its prospective voters via sending text messages regarding its activities and induced them through this medium. (Exhibit 17)

#### ADVERTISING

BJP ruled the roost in advertising also. Through advertisements BJP showed its vision. Some of the advertisements were based on cricket campaign during IPL 2014. (Exhibit 18)

#### PUBLICITY

BJP initiated a new way of interacting with general public by setting up tea stalls in local areas of different states all over the country which came to be known as *Chai pe Charcha* which provided a platform to the locals to voice their opinion and exchange their views with others regarding their PM candidate Narendra Modi and the working of BJP. (Exhibit 19)

#### PUBLIC RELATION

To make good public relation BJP used 3D holograms images of Narendra Modi created for his public meeting and with help of DTH service Narendra Modi interacted with people living in remote areas. (Exhibit 20)

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

BJP used every element of social media and left no stone unturned. BJP found great numbers of followers on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Whatsapp. BJP ran different campaigns like Nam04pm, pledge4pm, modi4pm. India 272+ Portal was The Medium on which BJP heavily relied on. (Exhibit 21)

<b>Commonality of Image, Colour And Idea, Strengthening the Integrated Marketing Communication.</b>	<b>WEBSITE</b> <b>Image building:</b> Picture Modi on the front page. <b>Background colours:</b> saffron and green one man, one colour, one idea has been promoted.
	<b>TV/RADIO</b> <b>Image building:</b> YUVA Internet tv initiative showing picture of Narendra Modi on the front. <b>Background colours:</b> saffron and green. one man, one colour, one idea has been promoted.
	<b>DIRECT MARKETING:</b> India272+ app showing icons having saffron and green as a colour combination, one man, one colour, one idea has been promoted.
	<b>ADVERTISING:</b> During IPL streaming, advertisements with saffron colour as background and with slogan 'abki bar modi sarkar', one man, one colour, one idea has been promoted.
	<b>PUBLICITY:</b> Through Chai-pe-charcha concept, MODI'S presence on paper cups having saffron colour in its background, one man, one colour, one idea has been promoted.
	<b>PUBLIC RELATION:</b> Through the 3D images of Narendra Modi image and saffron colour in its background one man, one colour, one idea has been promoted.
	<b>SOCIAL MEDIA:</b> India 272+portal having Modi on front page and combination of saffron-green for designing the text showing one man, one colour, one idea.
	<b>E-MAIL MARKETING:</b> Through the e-mails from communication cell, BJP opened the membership drive. E-mails having Modi picture wearing saffron colour waist coat, showing one man one colour, one idea.

**CONCLUSION/ROAD MAP**

The success of BJP in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections was lauded not only by the BJP supporters but by the marketers as well since it paved the way for the entrance of the marketing tools into the main stream Indian politics in a big way. The BJP garnered enough votes to make the government at the Centre on their own but even the political big wigs couldn't deny the fact that it wouldn't have been possible, had it not been for the coalition between the marketing tactics used by the BJP's IT and marketing machinery which worked round the clock to connect the voters with the party. The introduction of the components of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) into the election campaign of the BJP made the marketing analysts all over the country stand up and notices the introduction of hardcore marketing tools in the political arena. The Indian politics was swayed by the culmination of marketing with politics. Many marketing organizations for years have inculcated the Integrated Marketing Communication components while deriving their marketing strategies, but for IMC to become all pervasive, its scope needs to be widening even further more. The marketers need to be more ambitious with the implementation of the IMC strategies in the different spheres. BJP's success at the marketing front proved that the consumer remains deeply affected by the marketing ideas and tools of IMC, no matter the type of offering. One of the most significant aspects of the IMC tools is providing the required information to the consumer in the format in which they would like to receive it. The IMC provides a good mix of the marketing tools to the consumers to choose from rather than inundating them with a marketing medium which they find uncomfortable to deal with. IMC aims at strengthening the consumer bond with the brand to make a loyal customer base which was adapted in to the promotional activities initiated by the BJP during their election campaign. The IMC helped BJP reach to a wider audience in a limited time with effective cost cutting measures in place. The efficacy of the IMC tools is palpable from the fact that the it is one of the most popular marketing strategies which has been to able to make their mark in various fields applied at different organizational levels with the objective of winning the trust of the consumers and helping them build their trust with the brand name as proved again by the successful election campaign of the BJP. It was one historic political victory which brought a big smile on the faces of the marketers, filling them with the hope of better application of the various marketing tools in the diversified fields with the aim of achieving maximum results out of marketing world.

**EXHIBITS**

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