

Stellar effect

No NGO till date has been able to attract so much of attention as Being Human has managed to get - courtesy: Salman Khan, the face of the foundation

By Neha Goel



Smart Quotient

Using star power of Salman Khan for a social cause

Being Human is a brand name that has caught the attention of the Indian audience in a very short span of time. It is an NGO started by Salman Khan whose focus areas are education and healthcare.

There have been associations of Bollywood stars with social causes in the past, but this initiative by Salman Khan seems to have struck the right chord with its target audience - the youth.

The simple branding of 'Being Hu-

man', the merchandise and the digital presence of the brand has created quite a buzz around it, making it more of a style symbol. Salman Khan roped in all his Bollywood colleagues to promote the cause and in turn, the brand.

Rationale

Salman Khan is a mass favourite among the Indian audience. His association with a social cause definitely aroused curiosity among his fans and followers which worked well for the brand.

Also, the star made it a point to

promote the cause well rather than making it drab and dull.

The brand also earns brownie points for its understanding of youth and relating to them in their way. Associating with the cause is easy for the youth. The purchase of any merchandise under the 'Being Human' label ensures that the money goes in charity.

Kim Saidanha, Vice-President, Marketing, Customer Centria, the agency handling Being Human's digital marketing says, 'Being Human is actually a tangible product - essentially, everyone that buys an original Being Human T-shirt, a watch, a gold coin - contributes to the cause, and a much wider range of products is on the anvil, ranging from ₹ 10 to ₹ 1,00,000.

Execution

The brand has become synonymous with Salman Khan. The star factor is adding to the brand in a great way. Apart from the stellar effect, the brand has indulged in digital promotions as well, which are aiming to engage with the youth.

Merchandising is key for Being Human. This includes bracelets signed by Khan, his paintings, sketches, clothes he has worn in his films, 'Being Human' T-shirts, watches etc. Its tie up with BookMyShow enables national and international delivery of merchandise.

Being Human has a strong following amongst the masses and its online presence is predominantly unofficial.

BEING HUMAN STAR POWER

However, the organisation is trying to make its presence 'official' by building its presence on mediums like Facebook, Youtube and Twitter.

Saldanha gives an insight into Being Human, "From a purely practical and logistical standpoint, the administrative team at Being Human is very small. So digital, going forward is going to be a core medium for both brand building and resource mobilization and disbursement."

Digital thus becomes the brand's forefront where Customer Centria has used Salman Khan's communication tone to build conversations around the brand rather than using his popularity. On Facebook, all the unauthorised Being Human community owners have been contacted and the page rights have been acquired, to build a unique page with a community size of seven lakhs. The official website was launched in August 2011 which has given the organisation a separate and unique identity.

The brand's presence has also been reinforced by the fakes that can be spotted in almost all flea markets. This definitely indicates the brand's fame but defeats the purpose of the organisation. Saldanha says, "Just the fact that pirated T-shirts are selling like hot cakes, gives you an insight, as to the far reaching effect of this movement."

However, an anti T-shirt piracy campaign has been launched to counter



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VP - Marketing, Customer Centria

this trend. A live video channel called 'Being Human Live' has been launched under this campaign. The channel is fed with regular video bytes of Khan and his fans against Tee piracy. Video testimonials of 20 Being Human fans raising their voice against Tee piracy have also been posted.

Apart from this, there is a Facebook application also, which has 10 different levels of squads. After reaching each level, a fan can unlock a badge as a medallion, which can be attached to their Facebook profile images. The brand benefits from the viral nature of the Squad application. Further, the badges on profile pictures of supporters, draws further support and visibility.

'Ready for Live Tweeting' campaign was also launched by Being Human where Cinemax, the multiplex chain hosted a special screening presided by Salman Khan and Asin for their film - Ready exclusively for NGO kids.

Saldanha promises a lot more for future. "There is a lot more in store;

in terms of new products to be unveiled, online-offline activations, and of course taking a whisper and making it a roar online, through a host of campaigns and other engagement activations."

The NGO has also tied up with jewellery brand, Gitanjali, to come up with 'Being Human' branded gold coins.

Impact

Within five days of its launch, the Facebook application of Being Human engaged 2,800+ active users on a daily basis. The app is already being experienced by users across 27 countries. Customer Centria, the digital marketing agency of Being Human claims that Twitter feeds under the hash-tag #beinghumanlive was trending ahead of Baba Ramdev and corruption. More than 445 Tweets mentioned Being Human and the page had more than 100 followers in a very short time.

All for a good cause

| Salman effect

Backing of Salman Khan has allowed the NGO to utilise his fan power. Also, Khan's Bollywood associations too lend frequent support. Khan in fact promotes the NGO, while promoting his own movies

| Merchandising

Merchandising is key for Being Human. This includes bracelets signed by Khan, his paintings, sketches, clothes he has worn in his films, 'Being Human' T-shirts, and watches. BookMyshow is its online delivery partner

| Digital

Being Human has a strong digital presence through Facebook and Twitter, where contests from time to time keep the buzz alive around the brand. There's also a live video channel on Youtube dedicated to the brand