Altruism or Business – A Powerful Synergy

Riddhim Choudhary

Student
Prestige Institute of Management
and Research, Indore (MP)

Shaan Malhotra

Assistant Professor, Marketing,
Prestige Institute of Management
and Research, Indore (M.P.), India)

Dr. Manisha Singhai

Associate Professor, Human
Resource Management,
Prestige Institute of Management
and Research, Indore (M.P.), India

Abstract

"Your most unhappy customer is your biggest source of learning"- PHILIP KOTLER.

Learning is an ongoing process. The market comprises both sellers and buyers. The never-ending fight in the market is about what keeps the customers happy and satisfied. Yet there is no set philosophy for the same. Humans are the most complex breed due to their never-ending, always evolving, and changing demands in the market. Every marketer should strive hard to understand and successfully interpret the demands of their target set of customers. The internal environment of any organization also plays an effective role. The objective of this case study is to highlight the needs of the volatile market in terms of promotion and cohesiveness in the internal environment. This case speaks about a young, dynamic software engineer- Rahul who is enthusiastic about launching a new idea for the senior citizen. The case also highlights the day-to-day nuances of a new entrepreneur and the challenges faced by him and his team in taking their product ahead amidst extreme competition, HR challenges, and digital presence.

Keywords- Entrepreneur, Marketing, Digital, Innovation, Care.

The Dialogue

Rahul (CEO) "Is this not enough??? I don't understand where are we going wrong Nishant?

Nishant (Market Analyst) – "Sir, we are doing our best, let us give it some more time and observe."

Ankit (Marketing Manager)- "Rahul sir, we have given our best in terms of promotion also but even I wonder where are we going wrong"

Rahul- "I called this meeting to understand the reason; and not hear doubts and apprehensions from all of you. If you have a solution- make a strategy and I want it ready by tomorrow".

After this heated conversation, Rahul left the meeting and there was a void in the room.

Introduction

Rahul Sharma, a talented and compassionate software engineer was 27

working with a multinational company since the last 3 years. He was a graduate in computer science from Delhi University. Rahul's life was like any software engineer, working 9 to 7 and 5 days a week. He found this routine monotonous but as there were no better options available he was stuck with this. He found the purpose of his life in a very unexpected and unfortunate way when he saw his grandmother lying unconscious on the floor. He used to live alone with his grandmother after his parents passed away in a tragic accident. When he rushed to the hospital with his grandmother, the doctors declared her dead and said that she would have been saved if she had been brought a few minutes ago. After recovering from the loss Rahul wanted to dedicate his life towards the same. He decided that no one should witness the loss of a loved one as he did. Being a young, passionate, and educated engineer, he started working on a brand for elderly care technology known as Eldertech.

Eldertech was a ground-breaking brand dedicated to improving the lives of elders through innovative technological solutions. It had the mission of enhancing the quality of life of elders and providing peace of mind to their families and caretakers by providing innovativeproducts and services. With a focus on easy, user-friendly interface and features, it offered a range of affordable products to cater to the special needs of elders. Rahul conducted thorough research in the market already captured by one major playerin the same field- "We Care". We Care came into the market in the year 2021. As the market was undergoing a lot of turmoil due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the brand did not function well. This was a major drawback that was captured by him, which further led to the inception of "Eldertech" in the year 2022. He analysed the market closely and concluded that there was an extreme dearth of products specially meant for the care of senior citizens. He started his company with fifteen employees, three in the finance department, four in the marketing department, three in the research department, and five as basic floor staff. Rahul was an active member of the alumni association so offered jobs to his colleagues and juniors from college.

From smart home devices to wearable pendants and watches having various features like falling sensors, alarms, real-time connectivity, etc., their solutions were designed to cater to the basic supervision and care required by elders. The brand maintained its principle of innovation by constantly introducing new features and technologies to achieve its mission of improving the lifestyle of elders.The market for care technology and artificial intelligence was growing at a fast pace. This allowed the brand to make their place amongst their target audience who were adaptive and also had resistance towards changing their lifestyle accordingly. The brand wanted to inform their target audience about the potential of their products and the inclusive features they provided which can make their life easier and more comfortable.

Perplex! The Marketing Dilemma

The market is a fragile place, especially for the newcomers. The idea chosen by Rahul surrounded him with a lot of performance pressure. He wanted to prove that 'Eldertech' was a product that would support the family members of senior citizens and help them track the movements of their elderly family members. Eldertech was launched with a vision of providing innovative solutions to the problems faced by the elders. Initially, the brand gained better attention compared to the later phase but soon the sales and engagement were stagnant along with a lack of a strong digital presence and low conversion rates.

The target audience of the brand comprised of elders, their caretakers, and family members. It had an easy user interface, making it comfortable for the elderly. It was made available at affordable prices withthe latest technology. Being new in the market the brand faced problems with their target audience, especially because elderly people were not flexible and adaptive enough to opt for the product, and their caretakers and family members were also reluctant to use a new technology for their elders. Affordable was not enough as the market chosen by Rahul was inadaptable to new services as trust was the major constraint.

Rahul did not have a marketing background due to which he was unable to connect the dots and find a way out of the marketing dilemma. The strategy opted by him was just focused more on providing a quality product and service.

The HR Nightmare

Digitalization was taking over the market at a very fast pace. With artificial intelligence, the market was swamped with something new in technology now and then. Eldertech offered many advantages and inclusive features of technology and cost-effectiveness in terms of value for money. They still witnessed a fall in their sales which forced theexecutive board to perform a market analysis for understanding their weak area in terms of growth and sales.They were surprised looking at their performance since inception. 2021, was the year of inception of this idea and in 2022 the brand was launched in the market will full-fledged promotion.
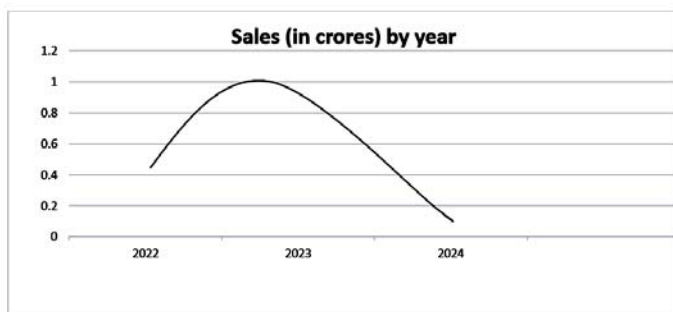
Human resource are the blood and soul of any organization. Rahul made sure to motivate his employees and he understood the role of motivation and internal cohesiveness within the organization to yield better results.

Eldertech wanted to adapt the digitalization and design a roadmap for the effective implementation of digital marketing strategy The executives wanted to have a look at the marketing team of the brand and they were shocked to see the situation of their team in which absenteeism was very common, the team members were unaware of the market trends and latest technologies which were used for content creation by their competitors. They also got to know about some interpersonal conflicts in the marketing team. Due to their weak financial status, they couldn't hire more skilled marketing professionals and had to compromise with the current team after giving them a warning.

Despite all the efforts to revamp their digital footprint, the lack of results and internal constraints left the executives in a challenging position with uncertainty about the future.

Questions

Q1. What were some key challenges forced on the brand by the external environment?

Q2. In your opinion, to what extent marketing manager was right in his approach to interpreting the problem?

Q3. Do a SWOT analysis of the case study.

Q4. What recommendations would you make to the brand to improve its performance across the relevant social media platforms?

Q5. "Research plays an effective role during the inception of a product" Do you agree? Justify your answer.

Teaching Notes

The case attempts to provide an insight into the strategies adopted by, dynamic software programmer- Rahul who is excited about introducing a new concept for the senior citizen. The case also brings out the day-to-day realities of a new entrepreneur and how difficult it is for him and his team to take their product forward in the face of cutthroat competition, HR issues, and online presence.

Teaching Objective:

By the end of the case discussion, students should be able to:

1. Recognise the obstacles to establishing a values-driven firm in a traditional yet modern market.

2. Explore start-up ecosystem.

3. Evaluate the importance of consumer education towards digitalization.

4. Assess operational difficulties such as research, digital marketing strategy and adaptation towards technological enhancement.

5. Provide strategic recommendations for service sector.

Issues involved in the case

Rahul Sharma, founder and CEO of Eldertech, started a tech company for elderly care products after facing a personal tragedy. Though the product was innovative and well-intentioned, the company faced stagnating sales and weak digital presence. An internal meeting revealed frustration across leadership, marketing challenges, and

HR dysfunctions, including absenteeism and lack of market awareness. Rahul, lacking marketing expertise, relied solely on product quality, which wasn't enough in a trust-sensitive market. This case explores the interconnected dilemmas of strategy, marketing, and HR in a start-up environment.

1. **Target Audience:**

- Level: BBA

- Subjects:

    ▪ Entrepreneurship

    ▪ Digital Marketing

    ▪ Strategy

    ▪ Social Innovation

2. **Case Type:**

- Decision-making case with an open-ended challenge

3. **Case Position:**

- Ideal for a module on Strategic marketing, Human resource management and Digital Marketing. It can also be used for an interdisciplinary sessions on "Handling people during digital transformation in marketing functions". This case fits well through the course covering frameworks like digital marketing, social innovation and HR dysfunctions.

4. **Case Duration:**

- 90 Minutes

5. **Pedagogical Tools:**

- Case Reading, Guided Discussion, Group Debate, Role Play, Strategy Simulation

Teaching Plan:

1. Pre-Class Preparation

- Students should read the case in advance.

- The instructor may assign reading or short videos on:

o Start-up ecosystem

o Challenges faced by an entrepreneur

o Consumer behaviour in digital markets

2. Opening (10–15 minutes)

- Quick recap of the case.

- Ice-breaker question:
"How do you define an unhappy customer? How will you deal with them?"

3. Discussion Questions 20-30 minutes)

- What problem is Rahul really solving?

- What are the risks in building a brand in digital environment?

- How can the team be motivated at all times?

- How would you structure a marketing strategy to educate consumers?

- How can Rahul overcome staff issues?

4. Class Activities (Optional, 15–20 minutes)

- Role Play: Divide class into groups—Rahul (Entrepreneur), Nishant (Market Analyst), Ankit (Marketing Manager)—and discuss how each stakeholder would react to the problem they are facing.

- Group Pitch: Each group proposes a strategy to solve the issue.

- Debate: "Can digital transformation succeed without first resolving internal team and skill-related challenges?"

Teaching Strategies:

1. The students need to come prepared with basics of entrepreneurship and the strategies used in industry in Marketing, Human Resources and resource management.

2. Students could evaluate the case in light of current development of the start-up environment.

3. As this case is designed to help students understand what makes or breaks a strategy, the students can briefly present another start-up that succeeded or failed in a similar space.

4. The case can be taken when the faculty teaches entrepreneurship, marketing, and resource management.

5. The students can refer to books and journals on these issues for further studies and analysis.

6. Students can be asked "If you were Rahul, what personal biases would influence your decisions? How

would you overcome them?" This would encourage ethical thinking and emotional intelligence in students.

7. In the end every student can write down three learnings from the case study.

Bibliography

- Armstrong, M. and Taylor, S. (2020). Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice (15th edition.). Kogan Page.

- Chaffey, D. and Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). Digital Marketing (7th edition). Pearson Education Limited.

- Davenport, T. H. and Redman, T. C. (2020). The Discipline of Data: A Practitioner's Guide to Data Management in the Age of AI. Harvard Business Review Press.

- Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H. andSetiawan, I. (2021). Marketing 5.0: Technology for Humanity. Wiley.

- Robbins, S. P. and Judge, T. A. (2022). Organizational Behavior (19th edition). Pearson Education.