

A Case Study :

A research on parameters required for textile designer brief of Indian retail home furnishing market for new product development

ANU SHARMA

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ABSTRACT

The Indian Retail Home furnishing market is growing day by day. Many new brands are being launched every year. The Indian customer is also becoming more aware about the new designer market and is always looking ahead for something new and innovative. New Product Development is what caters to customers demand; it is the process in which the Manufacturers, designers, project client, users and vendors work together as stakeholders for creating new products. The information flow is from Manufacturer to designer, from designer to vendor and in the end to users. A communication channel is very important between any two stakeholders for the development of a successful product. This study however studies only the communication link from manufacturer to designer for new product development. This communication is called as *Designer Brief*. There is an empirical research available on the designer brief given by the manufacturers of Indian retail home furnishing market. The research will aim to find the parameters required by the designers in designer brief for New Product Development from the manufacturer in Indian retail home furnishing market.

Correspondence to:

ANU SHARMA

Department of Textile
Design, National Institute of
Fashion Technology, NEW
DELHI, INDIA

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For any successful project a strong communication network is required among all the departments of the company. Communication is the cornerstone of both business and social life. The ability to communicate effectively is increasingly important and is a vital factor in the development of anyone's confidence. Good communication leads to a clear understanding and success.

According to Corfield (1979) 'Failure to adopt a good, strong design policy can only be interpreted as one of the steps on the road to bankruptcy for companies'

Lets understand this in a better way with an example by Shaun Crowley.

"Picture the scene. You've just landed a new client, who hurries a brief to you for a marketing brochure. There are a few holes in the brief, but instead of asking for constant clarification, you get to work. Later you're told the design "isn't quite right". Before you know it, the client is refusing to pay. Familiar story? Ambiguous design briefs are infuriating. What's worse, clients who set you up to fail often go away thinking you stuffed up."

Well this is what the problem is?

The research is based on Indian retail home furnishing effective design management which involves good communication between different organizational

departments. Information appropriate to the design programme needs to be provided by production, finance, marketing and sales, etc. from inception of the project to its successful completion.

The research will aim to find the parameters required by the designers in designer brief for New Product Development from the manufacturer in Indian retail home furnishing market.

– The study involved two complementary strands of Market Research Surveys, carried out in parallel and the sample was non probability judgmental sample.

– The secondary data was collected through Journals, books and internet and the primary data was collected through open ended and close ended questionnaire for Textile Designers working for Indian retail home furnishing market.

– The first strand sought data involved open ended questions for Textile Designers having a work experience of more than 6 years to get the parameters for design conceptualization.

– The second strand sought data was a close ended question for Textile Designers based on the parameters derived through open-ended questionnaires for further analysis.

Limitations:

The research is limited to the retail brands of Home Furnishing in Delhi and NCR and for closer view and analysis the non probability judgmental sample was limited to 6 textile designers for first strand of questionnaire and the second strand of questionnaire was mailed to 50 Textile Designers working in retail home furnishing market.

Based on the secondary data and the first strand of the questions for Textile Designers the following parameters are required by the designers to produce a good quality and quantity of concepts for new product development.

- Information about the company, what they do what they are trying to achieve with this project
- Project message/theme
- Are there any corporate guidelines?
- Who are their competitors
- “Look” and “feel required” such as contemporary/ traditional/brash/minimal/corporate/fun/ examples of similar things they like
- Target audience
- Budget
- Technical Specs/ Specification Sheet
- Written Brief
- Time Plan of the project or submission
- Correct Information
- Feedback on the work
- Trends
- Reports of Research Team for the project
- Trends to be followed
- Color Palette details
- Venue for showcasing the product.

Based on the second set of questions from 50 Textile Designers the following tabulated analysis was done to conclude the requirements of the parameters in designer brief drawn from the first set of questionnaire.

- How many designers get written brief from the manufacturer?

47% of the designers say that they don't get any written brief from the company, 33% says that they get a written brief followed by 20% who says that they get it only sometimes.

- How many designers agree that they get a clear brief in terms of their understanding?

33% of the designers disagree on getting a clear brief from the company, 13% agrees that they get a clear brief followed by 54% who says that they get it only sometimes.

- How many designers agree that they get misleading information from the manufacturers?

6% of the designers disagree on getting any

misleading information from the company, 40% agrees that they get misleading information followed by 54% says that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

- How many designers get the costing framework of the product / project?

6% of the designers say that they don't get a costing framework of the project from the company, 67% says that they get a clear framework of the project followed by 27% who says that they get it only sometimes.

- How many designers get color palette details?

33% of the designers say that they don't get a detail of the color palette from the company, 47% says that they get a palette, followed by 20% who says that they get it only sometimes.

- How many designers get the details about the marketing plans of their designed products by the company or the brand?

13% of the designers say that they don't get a detail about the marketing plans of their products from the company, 47% says that they are introduced to the plans, followed by 40% who says that they get it only sometimes.

- How many designers say that they get second hand information through catalogues and printouts from the company?

47% of the designers say that they don't get information about their sales or products through catalogues and printouts from the company, 33% says that they get information through catalogues and printouts, followed by 27% who says that they get it only sometimes.

- How many designers agree that they have been shown the sales collection reports of past season or year for their better understanding of sales of the company?

40% of the designers say that they don't get a previous sales pattern of the collections from the company, 33% says that they get an idea, followed by 27% who says that they get it only sometimes.

- How many designers get the opportunity to interact with the research team of the company?

40% of the designers say that they don't interact with any research team of the company, 54% says that they interact with research team, followed by 6% who says that they do it only sometimes.

- How many designers get the information about the target customer?

6% of the designers say that they don't get information about the target customer from the company, 81% says that they get the information, followed by 13% who says that they get it only sometimes.

- How many designers follow or don't follow specific Indian forecasting trends?

60% of the designers say that they don't follow any

specific Indian forecasting trends, 13% says that they follow specific Indian forecasting trends, while 27% says that they follow it only sometimes.

– How many designers are aware about the company's objectives to be achieved for that season or year?

20% of the designers say that they are not aware about the company's objectives, 47% says that they are told about the objectives, followed by 33% who says that they get it only sometimes.

– How many designers know the budget and time plan of the project they are going to do for the company?

6% of the designers say that they don't get a budget and time plan of the project from the company, 60% says that they get a framework, followed by 34% who says that they get it only sometimes.

– Do designers get any Specification Sheet for the products they are supposed to design from the company?

47% of the designers say that they don't get a specification sheet for the project from the company, 20% says that they get a sheet, followed by 33% who says that they get it only sometimes.

– How many designers get the information about the competitor brands of the company they are working for?

13% of the designers say that they don't get information about the competitor brands of the company, 54% says that they get the information, followed by 33% who says that they get it only sometimes from the company.

– How many designers agree that they get enough time for conceptualization of their designs?

27% of the designers say that they don't get enough time to conceptualize and complete the project from the company, 40% says that they get enough time, followed by 33% who says that they get it only sometimes.

– How many designers apply new trends to their designs?

40% of the designers say that they don't imply any new trends like eco design, green design, sustainable design etc. in the collections, 40% says that they imply, followed by 20% who says that they imply it only sometimes.

– How many designers have the knowledge from the company about the place or venue of their showcased products?

60% designers say that they know where their products are going to be showcased, followed by 33% who says that they know it only sometimes.

– How many designers visit showrooms where their designed products are showcased?

13% of the designers say that they don't visit where their products are showcased, 47% says that they visit the place, followed by 40% who says that they do it only sometimes.

– How many designers agree that Indian market requires domestic trends mapping?

94% of the designers agree that they require domestic trends mapping, while 6% disagree with it.

– How many designers get feedback from the company?

60% of the designers say that they get the feedback, while 6% don't get any feedback from the company while another 34% say that they get feedback on their work only sometimes.

– How many designers get multiple feedbacks from the company?

54% of the designers say that they get a multiple feedback from the company, while 20% say that they don't get it while another 26% say that they get multiple feedbacks only sometimes.

– How many designers agree that there is a requirement of designers in Indian retail home furnishing market?

100% designers agree that there is a requirement of the textile designers in Indian Retail Home furnishing market.

– How many designers get the feedback from Managing Directors or owners of the company?

88% of designers get the feedback from the owners or Managing Director or the Head of the sampling Department. Rest 12% gets it from other officials.

– How many designers agree that the knowing company's background help them to understand the company requirements better?

According to 100% designers company's background helps them to understand company's requirement from them better.

Conclusion:

As per almost half population of designers they do not get any written brief or any specification sheet. There is loads of misleading information which leads to an unclear brief. While on the other hand the costing framework and color palette are defined to them before they start working on the project. The marketing plans are also discussed with the designers about the product for a good conceptualization of designs. The information given to the designers about the product range of the company is through catalogues and printouts. The designers are also not aware about the collections which have top the chart of the sales and popularity in the latest

seasonal collections of the company. There is an interaction with the research team headed by the marketing team which gives them information about the competitor brands and target customer before starting any collection. The budget and time plan of the project are also discussed along with the details of the showroom where the products are going to be showcased. But designers still feel that there is lack of time given to them for conceptualization of designs. As per majority of designers the retail home furnishing market requires textile designers input. The Indian retail market doesn't follow any forecasting trends and also doesn't allow any trend applications. To understand the Indian retail market the trends mapping of domestic market is required. A big percentage of designers feel that they get a multiple feedback from the company which leads to a confusion and non conclusion state.

To summarize designers agreed that:

- They do not get any written brief or any specification sheet
- There is loads of misleading information
- The costing framework and color palette are defined to them
- The marketing plans are also discussed with the designers
- There is an interaction with the research team headed by the marketing team which gives them information about the competitor brands and target customer before starting any collection
- The designers are also not aware about the collections which have top the chart of the sales and popularity in the latest seasonal collections of the company
- The budget and time plan of the project are also discussed
- There is lack of time given to them for conceptualization of designs
- The Indian retail market doesn't follow any forecasting trends and also doesn't allow any trend applications
- To understand the Indian retail market the trends mapping of domestic market is required
- Designers feel that they get a multiple feedback from the company which leads to a confusion and an indecisive state?

To conclude following points are required in designer brief for a good communication from manufacturers to designer for NPD through designer's viewpoint.

Format of design brief required by the designers from the manufacturers for NPD.

- Project Brief
- Collection details (in terms of design)Print,

woven, surface

- Buyer..... Name of the buyer
- Theme.....If any
- Season..... Spring-Summer / Autumn-Winter/ Occasion
- Market..... Northern India/ Southern India/ Western India / Eastern India..... Metro City/ Suburb
- Color palette..... If Any
- Costing framework.....Sampling Cost of the product with its break ups.
- Reference material for Forecast.....If any
- Target Customer..... Details of the customer
- Reference material in terms of collections visual
- Reference material in terms of Designs
- Company's Objectives..... To target a certain market or customer
- Budget of the whole project..... Details of the break ups of the project
- Time Plan..... Idea about the time when the product will be in the market Launching Time. To assess time from making a product to launch of the product.
- Research of the research team for the project.
- Specification sheet of all the products
- Reference of Competitors brands.
- Requirement of New trends..... If any.
- Venue of the showrooms where the products will be displayed.
- Feedback

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