



## BUSINESS STRATEGY AND MARKETING MANAGEMENT OF A MULTINATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Unilever Bangladesh Limited, a fast moving consumer goods company, engages in the manufacture and distribution of home care products, personal care products, and foods. It offers household care, fabric cleaning, skin cleansing, skin care, oral care, hair care, and personal grooming products, as well as tea based beverages. The company was formerly known as Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd. and changed its name in December 2004. Unilever Bangladesh Limited was founded in 1964 and is based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Unilever Bangladesh Limited operates as a subsidiary of Unilever Public Limited Company. Unilever believes profitable growth should also be responsible growth. That approach lies at the heart of their business model, driven by sustainable living and the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan. It guides their approach to how they do business and how they meet the growing consumer demand for brands that act responsibly in a world of finite resources. Their business model begins with consumer insight that informs brand innovation, often with partners in their supply chain, to create products they take to market supported by marketing and advertising across a range of distribution channels.*

**Keywords:** Customer, Development, Marketing Plans, Management, Unilever

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Unilever is a British-Dutch multinational consumer goods company co-headquartered in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and London, United Kingdom. Its products include food, beverages, cleaning agents and personal care products. It is the world's third-largest consumer goods company measured by 2012 revenue, after Procter & Gamble and Nestlé. Unilever is the world's largest producer of food spreads, such as margarine. One of the oldest multinational companies; its products are available in around 190 countries. Unilever owns over 400 brands, but focuses on 14 brands with sales of over 1 billion euros: Axe/Lynx, Dove, Omo, Becel/Flora, Heart brand ice creams, Hellmann's, Knorr, Lipton, Lux, Magnum, Rama, Rexona, Sunsilk and Surf. It is a dual-listed company consisting of Unilever N.V., based in Rotterdam, and Unilever plc, based in London. The two companies operate as a single business, with a common board of directors. Unilever is organised into four main divisions - Foods, Refreshment (beverages and ice cream), Home Care, and Personal Care. It has research and development facilities in the United Kingdom,

the Netherlands, China, India and the United States ( <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unilever>). These days the brands of Unilever Bangladesh Limited are in fierce competition with that of other multinational FMCGs' that are currently established in Bangladesh- for instance Glaxo Smith Kline, Procter and Gamble, Reckitt Benckiser, Nestle, Novartis and so on. In order to stand out from the competition and hold more credibility, Unilever Bangladesh must ensure that their brands are certified and recommended by top dermatologists and dentists as general public highly depend on the advice provided by these specialists .To make a research successful it's very important to have few objectives. The study was carried out to about gaining an overall knowledge about various structures, marketing plan and management practices of Unilever- A Multinational Organization.

### 2. METHODOLOGY:

The report is based on primary and mainly secondary data and sources.

2.1 Primary Data: Primary data have been



collected by:

-Informal interview with the officers of HR department.

2.2 Secondary Data: The whole research is mainly based on secondary data. Data has been collected from:

- Company's internal data and official website
- Brochures, articles, manuals etc.

### 3. UNILEVER- A Multinational Organization

#### 3.1 Unilever Global

Unilever is an Anglo-Dutch company, with a history of colonial exploitation, on which it has gradually built its capital. Today it owns most of the world's consumer product brands in food, beverages, cleaning agents and personal care products. Unilever employs more than 247,000 people and had worldwide revenue of €48 760 million in 2002. Unilever has two parent companies: Unilever NV in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and Unilever PLC in London, United Kingdom. This arrangement is similar to that of Reed Elsevier, and that of Royal Dutch Shell prior to their unified structure. Both Unilever companies have the same directors and effectively operate as a single business. The current non-executive Chairman of Unilever N.V. and PLC is Antony Burgmans while Patrick Cescau is Group Chief Executive. Unilever's major competitors include Nestlé and Procter & Gamble.

#### 3.2 History of Unilever

William Hesketh Lever founded Lever Brothers in 1885. Lever established soap factories around the world. In 1917, he began to diversify into foods, acquiring fish, ice cream and canned foods businesses. In the Thirties, Unilever introduced improved technology to the business. The business grew and new ventures were launched in Latin America. The entrepreneurial spirit of the founders and their caring approach to their employees and their communities remain at the heart of Unilever's business today. Unilever was formed in 1930 when the Dutch margarine company Margarine Unie merged with British

soap maker Lever Brothers. Companies were competing for the same raw materials, both were involved in large-scale marketing of household products and both used similar distribution channels. Between them, they had operations in over 40 countries. Margarine Unie grew through mergers with other margarine companies in the 1920s. In a history that now crosses three centuries, Unilever's success has been influenced by the major events of the day – economic boom, depression, world wars, changing consumer lifestyles and advances in technology. And throughout they've created products that help people get more out of life – cutting the time spent on household chores, improving nutrition, enabling people to enjoy food and take care of their homes, their clothes and themselves. Through this timeline you'll see how UBL brand portfolio has evolved. At the beginning of the 21st century, path to Growth strategy focused us on global high-potential brands and Vitality mission is taking us into a new phase of development. More than ever, how brands are helping people 'feel good, look good and get more out of life' – a sentiment close to Lord Leverhulme's heart over a hundred years ago.

#### 3.3 Unilever Timeline

19th century: Although Unilever wasn't formed until 1930, the companies that joined forces to create the business we know today were already well established before the start of the 20th century.

1900s: Unilever's founding companies produced products made of oils and fats, principally soap and margarine. At the beginning of the 20th century their expansion nearly outstrips the supply of raw materials.

1910s: Tough economic conditions and the First World War make trading difficult for everyone, so many businesses form trade associations to protect their shared interests.

1920s: With businesses expanding fast, companies set up negotiations intending to stop others producing the same types of products. But instead they agree to merge - and so Unilever is created.



1930s: Unilever's first decade is no easy ride: it starts with the Great Depression and ends with the Second World War. But while the business rationalizes operations, it also continues to diversify.

1940s: Unilever's operations around the world begin to fragment, but the business continues to expand further into the foods market and increase investment in research and development.

1950s: Business booms as new technology and the European Economic Community lead to rising standards of living in the West, while new markets open up in emerging economies around the globe.

1960s: As the world economy expands so does Unilever and it sets about developing new products, entering new markets and running a highly ambitious acquisition program.

1970s: Hard economic conditions and high inflation make the 70s a tough time for everyone, but things are particularly difficult in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector as the big retailers start to flex their muscles.

1980s: The business expands into Central and Eastern Europe and further sharpens its focus on fewer product categories, leading to the sale or withdrawal of two-thirds of its brands.

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The 21st Centuries: The decade starts with the launch of Path to Growth, a five-year strategic plan, and in 2004 further sharpens its focus on the needs of 21st Century consumers with its Vitality mission.

### 3.4 Unilever Design and History

In 2005, Unilever decided to change their logo to represent their new theme of vitality. The new logo was also planned to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the company. The new logo tells the story of Unilever and vitality. It brings together 25 different icons representing Unilever

and its brands, the idea of vitality and the benefits Unilever brings to consumers.

The icons are represented below.

**Sun:** The primary natural resource. All life begins with the sun- the ultimate symbol vitality. It evokes Unilever's origin in port of sunlight & can represent a number of Unilever brands.

**DNA:** The double helix. The generic blueprint of life and a symbol of bioscience, it is a key to healthy life. The sun is the biggest ingredient of life and DNA is the smallest.

**Bee:** Represent creation, pollination, hard works and bio diversity. Bees symbolize both environmental challenges and opportunities.

**Hand:** A symbol of sensitivity, care and need. It represents both skin and touch.

**Flower:** Represent fragrance, when seen with the hand, it represents moisturizing cream.

**Hair:** A symbol of beauty and looking good. Placed next to the flower, it

evokes cleanliness and fragrances; placed near the hand it suggests softness.

**Palm tree:** A natural resource, it produces palm oil as well as many fruits. Coconut and dates are also symbolize paralyze.

**Spoon:** A symbol of nutrition, tasting and cooking.

**Bowl:** A bowl of delicious smelling food. It can also represent a ready meal, hot drinks or soup.

**Spice & Flavors:** Represent chili or fresh ingredients.

**Fish:** Represent food, sea or fresh water.

**Sparkle:** Clean, healthy and sparking with energy.



Bird: A symbol of freedom. It suggests relief from daily chores, getting more out of life.

Recycle: Part of commitment to sustainability.

Lips: Represent beauty, looking good & taste

Ice-cream: A treat, pleasure or enjoyment.

Tea: A plant or an extract of a plant, such as tea, also a symbol of growing and

farming

Particles: A reference to science bubbles and fizz.

Frozen: The plant is a symbol of freshness, the snowflake represent freezing, a transformational symbol.

Wave: Symbolize cleanliness, freshness and vigorous icon. (With the clothes icon)

Liquid: A reference to clean water and purity.

Container: Symbolizes packaging- a pot of cream associated with personal care.

Clothes: Represent fresh laundry and looking good.

Heart: A symbol of love, care and health

Sauce or Spread: Represent mixing of stirring. It suggest blending in flavors & adding taste.

### 3.5 Unilever Bangladesh Limited

The history Unilever Bangladesh Ltd is one of the world's most successful fast moving consumer goods manufacturing companies with local manufacturing facilities, reporting to regional business groups for innovation and business results. Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd. as a subsidiary of Unilever is leading the home care, personal care and food product market of Bangladesh. On 25th February 1964 the eastern plant of Lever Brothers Pakistan Ltd. was inaugurated at Kalurghat, Chittagong with a soap production capacity of approximately 485 metric

tons. It was a private limited company with 55% share held by Unilever and the rest by the Government of Pakistan. After independence the eastern plant was declared abandoned. But on 5th July 1973 it was registered under the name of Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd. as a joint venture company of Unilever PLC and the Govt. of Bangladesh with a share arrangement of 60.75% to Unilever and 39.25% to the Bangladesh Govt.

### 3.6 Unilever today

Unilever brands are trusted everywhere and, by listening to the people who buy them, they've grown into one of the world's most successful consumer goods companies. In fact, 150 million times a day, someone somewhere chooses a Unilever product. UBL have a portfolio of brands that are popular across the globe - as well as regional products and local varieties of famous-name goods. This diversity comes from two of their key strengths:

Strong roots in local markets and first-hand knowledge of the local culture.  
World-class business expertise applied internationally to serve consumers everywhere.

### 3.7 Unilever at a Glance

Type of business: Fast Moving Consumer Goods Company with local manufacturing facilities, reporting to regional business groups for innovation and business results.

Operations: Home and Personal Care, Foods

Constitution: Unilever - 60.75% shares,

Government of Bangladesh - 39.25%

Product categories: Household Care, Fabric Cleaning, Skin Cleansing, Skin Care, Oral Care, Hair Care, Personal Grooming, Tea based Beverages.

Brands: Wheel, Lux, Lifebuoy, Fair & Lovely, Pond's, Close Up, Sunsilk, Taaza, Pepsodent, Clear, Vim, Surf Excel, Rexona, Dove, Vaseline & Lakme.

### 3.8 Manufacturing

Facilities: The Company has a Soap Manufacturing factory and a Personal Products



Factory located in Chittagong. Besides these, there is a tea packaging operation in Chittagong and three manufacturing units in Dhaka, which are owned and run by third parties exclusively dedicated to Unilever Bangladesh.

Employees: Unilever Operations in Bangladesh provide employment to over 10,000 people directly and through its dedicated suppliers, distributors and service providers. 99.5% of UBL employees are locals and they have equal number of Bangladeshis working abroad in other Unilever companies as expatriates

### 3.9 Mission

Unilever's mission is to add Vitality to life. They meet everyday needs for nutrition; hygiene and personal care with brands that help people feel good, look good and get more out of life.

### 3.10 Vision

To make cleanliness a commonplace; to lessen work for women; to foster health and contribute to personal attractiveness, in order that life may be more enjoyable and rewarding for the people who use the products.

### 3.11 Goals

The goals of UBL are:

- To manufacture high-standard products.
- Promoting products to the highest extent
- Producing large volume to achieve production

cost economies.

- Enabling quality products to be sold out at obtainable prices.

### 3.12 Unilever's Contribution

Unilever Making a positive contribution to society through their brands, the commercial operations and relationships, their voluntary contributions to the community and through their wider engagement with Bangladeshi society. 72% of the company's value addition is distributed to the Government of Bangladesh. UBL operations provide employment to over 10000 people.

### 3.13 Unilever Brands

Unilever has a portfolio of about 400 brands globally. However many of these are local that can only be found in certain countries, e.g. Fair & Lovely. In Bangladesh the number of UBL's existing brands is 18 which are categorized in different sections. The brands fall almost entirely in two categories-

- Food and beverages
- Home and personal care brands

In Bangladesh the company operates in four distinct product categories. These are:

- Fabric Wash
- Household care
- Personal care
- Food



<p><b>Fabric Wash</b></p> <p>Wheel Laundry Soap Wheel Washing Powder Wheel Power White Surf Excel</p>	<p><b>Household Care</b></p> <p>Vim Powder Vim Bar Vim Liquid</p>
<p><b>Personal Care</b></p> <p>Personal Wash</p> <p>International Lux Lifebuoy Total Dove bar Lifebuoy Liquid soap</p>	<p><b>Hair Care</b></p> <p>Sun Silk Shampoo All Clear Shampoo Lifebuoy Shampoo Dove shampoo All Clear Hair Oil</p>
<p><b>Skin Care</b></p> <p>Fair &amp; Lovely Multivitamins Fair &amp; Lovely Body Fairness Milk Fair &amp; Lovely Ayurvedic Fair &amp; Lovely Menz Active Pond's Age Miracle range Pond's Daily Face Wash range Pond's Cold Cream Pond's Perfect result Cream Ponds Dream Flower Talc Pond's flawless white range Pond's White Beauty Range Pond's Body Lotion Lakme skin care products Dove skin care products Vaseline skin care products</p>	<p><b>Oral Care</b></p> <p>Close-up Toothpaste Pepsodent Toothpaste Pepsodent Toothpowder Pepsodent Tooth brush</p> <p><b>Deodorant</b></p> <p>Rexona Axe</p> <p><b>Foods</b></p> <p>Lipton Taaza Danadar Lipton Taaza strong Lipton Taaza Teabag.</p>

3.14 Strategies followed by the company

3.14.1 Functional Level Strategies:

Unilever Bangladesh Ltd follows different functional level strategies to gain competitive advantages and sustain it in the long run in the matured industries.

- They increase their efficiency through exploiting economies of scale and learning effects. For example, 808,720 bars of soaps, 1,023,810 packets of detergent powders, 154, 430 toothpaste tubes and sachets, 329, 530 bottles and

sachets of shampoo, 156, 910 tubes, jars, bottles and sachets of creams and lotions, and 35, 000 packets of tea are produced in one day in Bangladesh by Unilever.

- They adopt flexible manufacturing technologies, upgrade the skills of employees through training and perform research and development function to design products that are easy to manufacture.
- They have higher customer responsiveness rate. They carry out extensive research to innovate new products and modify the existing products to better satisfy the consumers.
- They continuously innovate products, promotional activities, packaging and distribution. This way they can respond quickly



to customer demands.

### 3.14.2 Business-Level Strategies:

Unilever's strategic managers adopt different business level strategies to use the company's resources and distinctive competencies to gain competitive advantage over its rivals. These are:

- They follow cost-leadership strategy as they have intermittent over capacity and the ability to gain economies of scale. This way they can produce cost effective products and yet be profitable.
- They also follow differentiation strategy for some products to meet the needs of the consumers in a unique way.
- They also target different market segments with different products to have broad product line. By product proliferation they reduce the threat of entry and expand the range of products they make to fill a wide variety of niches.

### 3.14.3 Strategy in the Global Environment

Unilever Bangladesh Ltd. is registered under Unilever. As a part of a global company it follows some generalized strategies and principals of Unilever. However, they also modify different strategies based on the national conditions. The different strategies that they follow in the global environment are stated below:

- As a worldwide famous company and comprising internationally renowned brands gives them unique strengths that allow a company to achieve superior efficiency, quality, innovation, or customer responsiveness. The different policies and strategies Unilever follows and their experience is transferred to Unilever Bangladesh Ltd.
- They import the raw materials from the places where it is less costly, thus achieve location economy.
- They are locally responsive. They are always ready to improve and modify their products to meet the needs of the local customers.
- UBL follows a multi domestic strategy where the companies extensively customize both their product offering and marketing strategy to

different national conditions.

### 3.14.4 Corporate strategy

UBL carries out the following corporate level strategies:

- They involve in short term contracts and competitive bidding for the supply of raw materials.
- They have a diversified business. UBL has both related and unrelated diversification. They compete in nine different industries with various products from home care, personal care and even food products. They have economies of scope as most of the products can share the same manufacturing facilities, inputs and specially the distribution channels.

### 3.15 Unilever's Growth

Although Unilever has been around since pre-liberation days, the real impetus for growth started from 1999. Since then the sales growth has consistently been in double digits and at more than double the GDP rate of growth. In 2003 UBL was the fastest growing business for Unilever Asia delivering profitable growth of 17%. They have also strengthened the fundamentals of the business and have been able to double the rate of gross margins, which has provided us the necessary fuel for growth. During the last few years the profit after tax has increased more than 8 times and this has resulted in exponential growth in shareholder's fund now being one of the highest in corporate in Bangladesh.

### 3.16 Organizational Structure

In terms of Unilever, they have two chairmen leading the company worldwide. They have seven top directors leading seven different departments. They have divided their worldwide business into different region and have different business groups to manage them. Unilever Bangladesh limited falls under the Southeast Asian region. On a more micro scale, Unilever Bangladesh ltd is monitored by Hindustan lever Ltd. which oversees operation in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Srilanka. The chairman of

Unilever Bangladesh Limited is known as the managing director. The management staff of the company consists of six layers, starting from junior manager (who are local managers) to manager grade 5 (who are Unilever managers). Apart from this the company also hires many non-management staff as well as operatives to work in the factories.

**Unilever Bangladesh Limited structured in the following manner:**

Unilever Bangladesh Limited has five departments to carry out all the organizational

functions. Respective director's head are head of all departments. These departments are:

1. Customer Development Department Headed by Customer Development Director (CDD)
2. Brands & Development Department headed by the Brands and Development Director (B&DD)
3. Supply Chain Department headed by the Supply Chain Director (SCD)
4. Finance Department headed by Finance Director (FD)
5. Human Resources Department headed by the Human Resources Director (HRD)



**Figure. Organizational structure**

**3.16.1. Brands and Development Department:**

The Brands Team has been expanded to Brands and Development, thus providing opportunity of increased coordination between the marketing and Development Team. Insight into consumer needs and aspirations is critical if new market opportunities are to be identified. New market opportunities must be identified if they are looking for sustainable profitable growth, keeping them miles ahead of their competitors. However it is also crucial to exploit technology and developments to translate the found insight into tangible products catering to the needs and aspirations of the consumers with speed. A deep understanding of both consumers and technologies provides an essential foundation for successful innovation. To ensure a successful innovation process at Unilever, Brands and Development have been bought together. This will help their development team to have closer contact with the consumer world, following the

leads and cues of their aspirations and thus innovating products tailored accordingly at a faster pace. Brands and Development Department is further divided into six major areas. They include:

- Home care
- Personal care
- Dental Service
- Food
- Tea export
- Marketing research

**3.16.2. Supply Chain Department**

The Supply Chain Director (SCD) who is in charge of planning, buying, manufacturing and distributing heads Supply Chain Department. The supply chain process constitutes a series of important activities ensuring smooth delivery to the consumers. Supply chain process led to



joining planning and buying with manufacturing. Joining distribution to the chain, thus integrating both backward and forward linkages, further extends this chain. An integrated supply chain will give them the advantage of acting with speed, enabling them to keep up with pace of the ever changing business scenario. At present, it is divided into the following functions:

- Manufacturing
- Engineering
- Company Buying
- Distribution
- Quality Assurance
- Planning

personnel functions are looked after by factory personnel manager, training and development activities are supervised by Manager Human Resource Development, Employee Welfare, activities are monitored by Assistant Manager labor welfare, personnel services are looked after by the FPM along with the office services manager

#### 3.16.3. Finance and IT Department

The Finance and IT departments are jointly headed by one Director. The main objectives of this department are to serve all the division and departments of the companies, to secure and safeguard company assets and interest, to ensure proper internal control within the company and above all, to be cost effective in order to get optimum benefit for the company while operating.

At present the major sub departments are:

- Business system
- Finance
- Legal.

#### 3.16.4. Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Director (HRD) currently heads this department. The major functions of this department are:

- Factory Personnel functions or Industrial Relations
- Recruitment, Training and developments, labor welfare
- Personnel Services and Security.

All these major personnel functions are integrated in the best possible way in Unilever Bangladesh Limited which results in its higher productivity. Industrial relations or the factory



and finally security officer is responsible for all the security services. At present, the total number of personnel in Unilever Bangladesh Limited are 720 which includes 159 in management & 543 unionized permanent workers.

### 3.16.5 Customer Development Department:

Managing customers i.e. retailers, wholesalers, and distributors, is becoming critical day by day. With the evolution of modern trade and aggressive local and international competition, role of Customer Management has also been gradually shifting from traditional “Sales: to “Trade Marketing”. Category Management, Space Management and In-store merchandising are becoming more and more important. Exploring and developing new channels are becoming critical to drive their business forward. With more and more sophistication, the role of Customer Management will evolve further and the whole game will be turned into “Relationship Marketing”. The customer management director (CMD) heads the Customer Management Department. Reporting to him are the Sales Operation Manager, Regional Sales Managers and Area Sales Managers. Company organized media is under the Sales Operation Manager. Assistant Area managers report to the Regional Sales Managers. Territory Managers report to the Assistant Area sales managers, Area Sales Managers and Regional Sales Managers, which differ in different sales areas. The Customer Management Department, early called ‘Sales Department’, is responsible for all company goods and maintains the following customer management strategy:

- Strong distribution network
- Widest distribution with seasonal operation in cost effective areas.
- Effective and focused company sales force
- Major thrust in rural market

### 3.17 Unilever’s Social Responsibility

The company feels that they have some duties towards the environment and the society. Hence they carry out the following actions:

- Eco-efficiency – Unilever Bangladesh Limited always tries to reduce the impacts of company operations by efficient manufacturing equipments and proper waste management system.
- Eco-innovation – Unilever Bangladesh Limited also aim to mitigate the impacts of Unilever Bangladesh Limited products by using recyclable packages and safe ingredients.
- Sustainability programs in fish, agriculture and water.
- Unilever Bangladesh Limited Code of Business Principles.
- Fair Business Practice.
- Supporting local communities

## 4. CONCLUSION

Unilever Bangladesh Limited is one of the leading multinational business firms in the world of FMCG industry. Over the last four decades Unilever Bangladesh Limited (UBL) has been relentlessly bringing new, innovative and world-class products to make the lives of Bangladeshis easier. Over 90% of the country’s households use one or more of UBL products. Unilever currently offers nineteen variety brands in spread across four different categories- Food and Drink, Home care, Personal Care, Water Purifier. Making these brands popular amongst the people of Bangladesh is the core objective of the “Activation department” (a small yet proactive segment of the Brand Building department of Unilever Bangladesh Limited). Marketing activation is the execution of the marketing mix as part of the marketing process. The activation phase typically comes after the planning phase during which managers plan their marketing



activities and is followed by a feedback phase in which results are evaluated with marketing analysis. Professional Marketing is an activation campaign that recently began and is planned to be continued. The core need of this activation campaign came from the fact that doctors and dermatologists are considered a strong source of generating word of mouth; so it is always important to get their recommendations when it comes to product quality and credibility for the mass consumers. Building good and happening relationship with its community is vital especially for the range of category of products where safety is a big concern.

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