

VALUE, MARKETING AND REACH



HOW TRANSFORM HELPS
IMPACT ENTERPRISES WORK
OUT WHAT MATTERS TO THEIR
CUSTOMERS - AND THEN
MARKET WHAT THEY HAVE



WHAT'S IN THIS REPORT

01

In this report, TRANSFORM explores why marketing is often not a priority for impact enterprises.

02

We discuss how we move it up the agenda using TRANSFORM's experience working with a diverse range of entrepreneurs on this subject. We also see how TRANSFORM funds, offers advice and works alongside entrepreneurs as they expand into new markets.

03

We ask: what is a value proposition? And outline that it begins with a detailed understanding of your customer, because your best targets and customer motivations may not be who or what you think.

04

We explore how to find new and creative ways to reach customers – the materials and platforms you use and the need for constant testing to see they are right for your audience.

05

Finally, we ask when enterprises need to hire outside partner agencies which offer the skills they may not have in-house. We offer a useful guide to briefing agencies and getting the best out of them.

06

Although we profile several sanitation-focussed enterprises, the findings in the report can be applied across all sectors.



Source: BoPInc

THE POWER OF RECOGNITION

“

WE DIDN'T HAVE A LOGO OR ANY MARKETING MATERIALS. NO-ONE EVEN KNEW THE PROPER NAME OF THE COMPANY AND USED TO REFER TO US AS THE "WATER OFFICE".

THIS WAS IN THE EARLY DAYS OF SJP. WE OBSESSED OVER WHAT WE BELIEVED TO BE THE CORE OF OUR BUSINESS: THE HUGE TASK OF PROVIDING AFFORDABLE SANITATION AND WATER FACILITIES TO UNDERSERVED AND LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH ASIA.

WE WERE MEETING THE DEMAND FOR OUR PRODUCT, WHICH WAS PROVING TO BE WELL SUITED TO THESE CROWDED URBAN ENVIRONMENTS. ALL OUR TIME WAS TAKEN UP WITH THIS WORK AND WORKING OUT THE LOGISTICS OF PROVIDING PIPED WATER DIRECTLY TO HOMES AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE - AND TO BE HONEST, WE DIDN'T CONSIDER MARKETING TO BE IMPORTANT.

PHILIPPE DE ROUX
CEO, EAU ET VIE

It's a brave admission: but Philippe's story will be familiar to many entrepreneurs.

Shobar Jonno Pani (SJP), or Water for All, is the Bangladeshi impact enterprise created in 2010 by **Eau et Vie (E&V)**, a French NGO, to ensure the supply of running water at home in precarious neighbourhoods. The environment was a tough one: deprived urban neighbourhoods in Bangladesh and the Philippines.

E&V threw themselves into the challenge of providing piped water directly to homes at an affordable price, targeting the whole water supply chain, by agreeing a concession with communities and local authorities to build and distribute their water networks as well as to build a billing and payment network.

Small wonder he didn't have much time to think about marketing.



It's perhaps easy to think that impact enterprises like E&V don't have to work that hard to show why they exist and what benefits they bring. A clean, reliable water supply: the need is self-evident, surely?

But wherever you are in the world, buyers need to be persuaded that what you offer is worth spending their hard-earned money on, especially in the long term. Low-income communities have to juggle choices such as clean piped water versus food, school, energy, transport, etc. The willingness to pay and ability to pay both need to be overcome. They need to trust the brand.

The water supply sector has especially thin margins and suffers from non-revenue issues like leaks/poor billing systems. The sustainability of private initiatives is challenging.

Customers don't spend every minute of the day thinking about what you offer. And as Philippe came to realise, that begins by being recognised in the first place.

We feature several sanitation focussed enterprises in this report, but the principles and guidance we outline can be applied to most enterprises in any sector.

“

TRANSFORM HELPED US PUT IN PLACE A CUSTOMER-FACING VALUE PROPOSITION, A BRAND LOGO, MATERIALS WE CAN USE TO PUBLICISE OUR BUSINESS... AND EVEN A BOLLYWOOD STYLE ADVERT WE CAN SHARE WITH OUR CUSTOMERS TO EXPLAIN OUR SERVICE. THIS CHANGED EVERYTHING, BECAUSE NOW PEOPLE KNOW US.”

PHILIPPE DE ROUX
CEO, EAU ET VIE



Source: SJP

MARKETING AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

IN THIS REPORT, WE'LL LOOK AT WHAT TRANSFORM HAS LEARNED FROM THE PAST SIX YEARS HELPING ENTERPRISES DEVELOP A VALUE PROPOSITION: THAT'S THE 'WHY US?' QUESTION EVERY BUSINESS MUST ANSWER. MARKETING - THE OTHER HALF OF THE REPORT - IS THE 'HERE'S WHY'.

For young enterprises and the partners who help them get off the ground, the experience that Unilever and EY offer through TRANSFORM can be invaluable.

Both organisations stress the importance of the value proposition: the single reason why a customer will hand over their money. It's the foundation of every business, wherever they operate and whatever their purpose.

It also becomes the guiding principle for consumer testing, innovation and product design. Get it right and you can control your destiny, deliver a strong return on investment and gain a competitive advantage. But only if the world knows how valuable your proposition is: that's where marketing comes in.

Marketing expertise is at the heart of the TRANSFORM offer for the very good reason that small start-ups are dealing with a raft of technological, logistical, legal and political issues. They may have branding and marketing expertise, but lack the capacity and human resources to devote to it.

Commercially-viable business propositions are the best way to make a long-term, sustainable impact. **Doing well by doing good:** if you can make money from a product that delivers social value, everyone wins. The business has a commercial incentive to sell more; and by selling more, the communities served do better. That, in a nutshell, is why you won't find the words 'philanthropy' and 'CSR' in these reports. (To view the other reports in the series, go [here](#)).

Unilever has over 400 brands globally, 14 of which are in Kantar's list of Top 50 brands and over 2.5 billion people use a Unilever product every day. Those sales are underpinned by a lot of consumer psychology and creative skill. TRANSFORM seeks to use those same techniques to encourage people to use a neighbourhood piped water or latrine-emptying service. The company makes money. The neighbourhood is cleaner. And people have improved health and livelihood prospects.

It takes a lot of work – segmentation, profiling and propositions, communication plans and pricing strategies – to get to that point. But it always starts with the people, not the brand.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What do you offer that's new, relevant and compelling?

Is your motivation to drive growth and profits?

What benefits does that bring to the communities you serve?

DEFINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

IN 2021, THE MALINDI WATER AND SEWERAGE COMPANY (MAWASCO) IN KENYA PILOTED A NEW PIT LATRINE EMPTYING SERVICE FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE.

Pit latrine toilets are often emptied manually. The waste is either buried or emptied into a nearby drain or hole that is excavated by the Manual Pit Emptiers (MPE) or into open spaces; and that can contaminate the local water supply, surrounding environment and spread disease. In Malindi, over 75% of waste is not safely managed, impacting the local environment and economy. The service is haphazard and the work unsafe as well as unpleasant. MPEs are not regulated and have turned pit emptying to a nocturnal business as a strategy for evading the indignity and stigma that is attributed to the nature of the business.

MAWASCO wanted to run a professional service offering training, protective equipment and operational standards that would enable the business to comply and align with the existing legal

framework, while supporting the company to execute its mandate of delivering sanitation services to Malindi residents. But that costs money: who pays – and why?

For marketers, that's a question of defining your target market. It's easy to say, 'everyone who uses the toilets and everyone in the neighbourhood has an interest here', so they are all 'prospects'. But that's not targeting. That's wishful thinking.

Supported by TRANSFORM, the MAWASCO team looked hard for an individual, not a group. That's the starting point for every Unilever campaign: identify a single customer in your target group, understand more about them, design your approach with them exclusively in mind. Launch, test and learn. If all goes well, find another potential customer. Repeat the process, but never assume the outcomes and approach will be the same.

MAWASCO surveyed the market and were surprised to find they needed to focus on people who often didn't even use the toilets or live in the community. They targeted the landlords.



Source: SJP

THE ANSWERS WERE CLEAR:

Most people rent their houses, and when the pit latrines are full and need to be emptied, it is the landlord that normally pays.

The MAWASCO team conducted interviews with landlords to understand the problems they had with the way things were currently done. They asked questions to understand the overall lives of the landlords in the area where their service would operate. Do they live nearby? Where do they get information about new products and services? Besides managing the toilet, what are their other big frustrations?

TRANSFORM has its goals and missions to improve health and sanitation on a global scale, but for the owner of houses in these communities, the motivation is simpler and more immediate: less hassle. Their tenants would complain about the state of the latrine. The landlords are responsible for finding someone to empty it. However, the usual operatives aren't always around or reliable. So why wouldn't they pay to have that problem taken away, to know that an efficient, reliable team is a call away?

The most important thing is to get out of the office and into the community you are serving. Bopinc, an inclusive business support agency which has worked on five TRANSFORM projects, uses a Consumer Insights Toolkit. The toolkit helps entrepreneurs find creative ways to reach their target market. For example, Bopinc runs mini sales competitions, giving the management teams a basket of goods to sell in the community where they operate. This gives office staff first-hand insights on how to sell.

At SJP – sure they had the right service, unsure how to find the time and resource for marketing –Bopinc was hired to help them understand the purchasing behaviour of their customers. As part of a focus group, they gave SJP executives fake money that was equivalent to their monthly earnings. They were asked to spend it on different categories like food and rent. The money issues so many people struggle with became tangible; they saw what they were competing with as they sought to get people to sign up to their services.

“

MAWASCO FOUND THEIR CUSTOMER WHO HAS AN INTEREST IN PAYING FOR THEIR SERVICE AND THE MEANS TO DO SO. IT WAS A PROBLEM SOLVED.

OTHER PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY WILL HAVE THEIR OWN REASONS FOR ADOPTING THE SERVICE. SO FOR MAWASCO TO EXPAND THEIR TARGET AUDIENCES, THEY HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE BLANK SHEET OF PAPER AND ASK: WHO DO WE WANT TO REACH AND WHY WOULD THEY BUY THIS FROM US NOW?”

CLIVE ALLISON, GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTOR AT UNILEVER

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you know who will pay for your product and who influences their decision?

Have you defined 1-3 consumer segments to target?

Have you interviewed consumers in each of your segments to understand their lives, problems and priorities?

These questions may help you identify a more promising group to target you might not have considered in your original plans.

DEFINE, THEN REFINE YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

IN 2016 IN THE CITY OF PUNE IN INDIA, WOMEN WORKING FOR SARAPLAST, A COMPANY PROVIDING THE COUNTRY WITH BETTER SANITATION THROUGH THE SUPPLY AND SERVICING OF MOBILE TOILETS, HAD AN EPIPHANY.

It was during celebrations for International Women's Day, in fact, that the female Saraplast team members realised there were no toilet facilities around the main attractions of their district – for example, the street food market. They joked that despite working for a portable sanitation solutions company, they felt helpless when it came to using public toilets themselves.

That irony became a solution: take a dilapidated bus, convert it, plug into the sewage network and then offer women a private, clean and safe toilets in the heart of the city.

The team began to realise their 'Ti buses' were meeting more than a single need, but a range of psychological, social as well as physical needs. They also realised that to make the Ti buses financially viable they needed to bundle multiple revenue streams together to make a profit.

The products and services that Saraplast offered needed to fit together around a central value proposition that made sense for the target users. This framing of the concept was vital.

Would you buy a cup of coffee in a toilet? Probably not. But you'd happily use a toilet in a café.

The Saraplast team started out by understanding the value they already provided to their users. Working with consultancy Quantum, they documented

how women were using the service. Schoolgirls were changing out of their uniforms into their day-clothes. Businesswomen came in to refresh their make-up. Other workers just wanted a respite from a busy day and a harsh climate – somewhere they wouldn't be disturbed.

Several customers were using the Ti buses as a rest stop on their long journeys home. **They told Saraplast:**

“

THIS IS A NEW KIND OF TOILET WHERE WE CAN REST WHILE WE ARE OUT AND ABOUT. IT IS CLEAN AND HAS SPACE TO TAKE SOME TIME AND REST, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE ON OUR PERIOD. THE IDEA THAT WE CAN GET ACCESS TO A CLEAN TOILET WHEN WE ARE OUT AND ABOUT IS GREAT.

THAT MEANS WE CAN SPEND MORE TIME OUTSIDE, PLAN OUR DAY WITHOUT WORRYING HOW MUCH TIME WE CAN AFFORD TO BE OUT. WE CAN DO OUR CHORES, GO SHOPPING AND STAY OUT AS LONG AS WE NEED TO.”

After gathering all this information the team started to develop revenue generating activities. They settled on testing out a café sitting area and even a laundrette where their users could drop off and collect washing on their commute to save them a job when they got home.

They tested these ideas. The laundrette idea didn't work out – and that's something you have to be prepared for when you're making such radical changes. But the café now provides a third of revenue in some locations.

Because Saraplast had not defined their value proposition at the outset, they ended up creating a lot of different value propositions for their early adopters. TRANSFORM helped them temper their services and constantly listen to what their customers want – now they've been able to refine their value proposition and marketing strategy so they can clearly communicate what they offer to their users.

TRANSFORM also applied this process when working with **Mercy Corps** to supply mosquito nets in Myanmar. At first, they assumed that the main benefit of the nets would be to reduce their risks of getting sick from malaria.

This is of course true. But when we spoke to the users, they told a different story. After using the product, the thing they most valued was sleep. In fact, self-reported sleep satisfaction rates increased on average by 43% after using the product. We learned in this instance that that the value proposition for the mosquito



Source: Saraplast

nets didn't work best when it is focused on health. That's not to say focussing on health and functional properties may not be best in some markets.

As a general rule, people look for smaller, tangible benefits over the longer term, often abstract good. The mission you set as an impact enterprise may not always be the same as the value proposition for your target user.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Is your value proposition nailed down? If not, you may find yourselves launching products and services that just don't catch on with your audience. The good news: a value proposition that really resonates can lead on to some exciting brand extensions.

Can you describe the key reason why your customers pay for your product or services?

When did you last ask your customers how they would describe your product or service to a friend or family member?

Did your answers match those of your customers?

These answers might not be what you expect. But if they still lead to sales, you have both made money and gleaned some valuable insights.



Source: Saraplast

CUTTING THROUGH: HOW OUR ENTERPRISES SELL THEIR BRAND

Bopinc sets out to understand the needs of low-income households – and what drives entrepreneurs to sell to them. The challenge they face is getting those groups to understand one another. Branding can help.

Bopinc worked with **Water & Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP)** to rebrand **SWEEP** pit latrine emptiers as community heroes – clean and smart with a friendly face.

“

YOU ARE ENTERING SOMEONE'S HOME (SOMETIMES LITERALLY). SO, YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT HOW PEOPLE SEE YOU: ARE YOU QUIET OR LOUD? DO YOU TELL A FUNNY STORY, MAYBE? WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO NOT ONLY GET THE ATTENTION OF YOUR CUSTOMERS, BUT ALSO THEIR TRUST?”

SHIHAB UZZAMAN
BOPINC



চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন অনুমোদিত সেবা প্রদানকারী
চট্টগ্রাম সেবা সংস্থা
সেপটিক ট্যাংক/ পিট পরিষ্কার সেবা

দূর্গন্ধ মুক্ত ও আমেলাহীন
সেপটিক ট্যাংক পরিষ্কার চান?
সুইপ-কে ফোন করলেই
সমস্যা সমাধান

আজই কল করুন ০১৯৯৩ ৩৪০ ৯৯০

মেসার্স আল-হাসেমী ট্রেডার্স
বটলী বাজার (মাজার গেট, খাঁজা রোড)
কুলগাঁও, জালালাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম

সুইপ
আধুনিক ও পরিবেশ বান্ধব উপায়ে
সেপটিক ট্যাংক/ পিট পরিষ্কারের অনন্য সেবা

Translation: “Do you want your septic tank to be emptied without the smell and hassle? SWEEP is just one call away!”
Credit: Bopinc

Bopinc then worked with SWEEP to develop a marketing campaign, creating leaflets, posters and videos that could be used by brand promoters who went door-to-door selling the service.

There was a problem: users thought that the service was free because the existing materials showed the local government's logo. However, this logo also gave the service credibility and so the team didn't want to remove it entirely.

In the end, they developed a visual which showed every step the SWEEP takes the customer through: visiting the house, using their truck to remove the waste, transporting it and disposing of it in the government treatment facility. Then when the price was explained to the customer, they tested showing that the government was paying for the disposal step and that all the customer had to pay for was the emptying step. Customers immediately responded positively and they no longer demanded to know why the pit latrine activity was not paid for by the government.

In another TRANSFORM project with **Folia Water**, Bopinc went into the field with early versions of posters and advertisements. They asked: What do you think of the people in the photos? What do you think of their clothes? The rural households answered: they look like rich city people. Not believable, in other words.

“

YOU ARE JUGGLING THE REALITY OF YOUR CUSTOMER'S LIVES - SLUM HOUSES - WITH AN ASPIRATIONAL PICTURE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS IN THE CITY THEY ALL LOOK UP TO, BUT YOU HAVE TO FIND SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN THAT'S ATTAINABLE”.

**SHIHAB UZZAMAN
BOPINC**

সুইপ কি?
সুইপ, একটি আধুনিক প্রযুক্তির পরিবেশ বান্ধব পৌরসংস্থা সেবার নাম। সুইপ দ্বারা পরিবেশ বান্ধব পদ্ধতিতে আবর্জনা সংগ্রহ করা হয় এবং পরিবেশ বান্ধব পদ্ধতিতে পরিষ্কার করা হয়।

সুইপের বৈশিষ্ট্য
- সম্পূর্ণ আধুনিক পদ্ধতিতে ব্রহ্মসংস্থা সমস্ত মাঠে পরিষ্কার করা হয়
- পরিবেশ বান্ধব পদ্ধতিতে পরিষ্কার করা হয়
- পরিষ্কার এবং পরিষ্কার করা হয়
- পরিষ্কার এবং পরিষ্কার করা হয়
- পরিষ্কার এবং পরিষ্কার করা হয়

চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন অসুযোগিতা সেবা প্রদানকারী

চট্টগ্রাম সেবার সংস্থা
সেপটিক ট্যাঙ্ক/ পিট পরিষ্কার সেবা

সুইপ কিভাবে কাজ করে?

১. ১০১৯ তে সুইপের নাম্বারে কল করুন।
২. সুইপ থেকে বুকিং
৩. সুইপের পরিষ্কারের সময় সুইপের ট্যাঙ্ক/ পিট থেকে আবর্জনা সংগ্রহ করুন।
৪. সুইপের পরিষ্কারের সময় সুইপের ট্যাঙ্ক/ পিট থেকে পরিষ্কার করুন।
৫. সুইপের পরিষ্কারের সময় সুইপের ট্যাঙ্ক/ পিট থেকে পরিষ্কার করুন।
৬. সুইপের পরিষ্কারের সময় সুইপের ট্যাঙ্ক/ পিট থেকে পরিষ্কার করুন।
৭. সুইপের পরিষ্কারের সময় সুইপের ট্যাঙ্ক/ পিট থেকে পরিষ্কার করুন।
৮. সুইপের পরিষ্কারের সময় সুইপের ট্যাঙ্ক/ পিট থেকে পরিষ্কার করুন।
৯. সুইপের পরিষ্কারের সময় সুইপের ট্যাঙ্ক/ পিট থেকে পরিষ্কার করুন।

সেবা গ্রহীতার বা বনে

রাহেয়া বেগম
আমি সুইপের পরিষ্কার পাইনি। সুইপের পরিষ্কার করার পরে পরিষ্কার করা হয়। পরিষ্কার করার পরে পরিষ্কার করা হয়।

শহিদা বেগম
আমি সুইপের পরিষ্কার হাতে হাতে দাঁড়িয়ে পরিষ্কার করিয়ে দিলাম। সুইপের পরিষ্কার করার পরে পরিষ্কার করা হয়।

সার্ভিস চার্জ

বার্গা সংগ্রহ ফি	৪০০০ টিটার	৮০০০ টিটার	১২০০০ টিটার
পরিষ্কার চার্জ (ফি)			
ড্রাগিং চার্জ (ফি)			

Gerwin Jansen of Bopinc explains that data capture is crucial part of the marketing process. It can help determine whether a business is having its intended impact and informs changes that need to be made to customer onboarding and retention. However, lots of impact enterprises don't measure their results with tangible metrics.

SWEEP tested their new marketing materials in January and February 2020, alongside freshly trained brand promoters who went door to door selling the service. The SWEEP entrepreneur generated almost 12% more revenue than the same months in the previous year and 70% more revenue in the trial months than the preceding months. Over 2,000 customer leads were generated during this time frame. COVID-19 limited data collection from March onwards.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What's the face of your brand? If it were a person, how do they speak, dress, talk to your customers?

What's the purpose of your marketing materials? Pure sales, information or to change perceptions?



SOMETIMES, IF YOU ASK THEM FOR THEIR CONVERSION RATES, THEY DON'T HAVE A CLUE. IF YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO DEFINE MARKETING SUCCESS IT WILL BE VERY HARD TO KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE ACHIEVED IT.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHERE CUSTOMERS LEAVE THE SALES AND MARKETING JOURNEY - KNOWING THE ANSWERS ALLOWS YOU TO FOCUS YOUR EFFORT. THIS CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHETHER YOU NEED TO CREATE NEW POSTERS, RE-TRAIN YOUR CALL CENTRE STAFF OR EXPLORE OTHER WAYS PEOPLE CAN SUBSCRIBE, FOR EXAMPLE BY GOING TO THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD STORE.'

GERWIN JANSEN
BOPINC

INVESTMENT, RISK AND SUPPORT

The FCDO provides the majority of the funding for TRANSFORM projects. This de-risks projects for entrepreneurs, allowing them to venture into markets they might habitually not consider. Unilever supports marketing/sales/distribution, while EY offers targeted consulting support to help refine the business model (e.g. modelling financial sustainability).

That investment allowed SWEEP to spend more time understanding their insights and work with a high-quality agency to develop new marketing materials. How enterprises maximise the value of these relationships is a significant area of TRANSFORM expertise (see How to brief an agency, below).

This was an investment for SWEEP: but those materials are the face of the brand as they expand to new cities across Bangladesh. TRANSFORM also seeks to spread the learnings from these projects far and wide to help other impact entrepreneurs in their marketing journeys – see our [Test, Scale and Share report](#) for more information.

MARKETING AND NEW MARKETS

Sometimes a shift in marketing accompanies a much greater transformation in the life and operations of a company. [TrashCon](#) was busy acquiring new processing machines to tackle India's huge waste problem.

“

WITHOUT TRANSFORM FUNDING, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN JUST ANOTHER LAB PROJECT.

WE HAD BUILT A PATENTED ONE-OF-ITS KIND ZERO-WASTE TECHNOLOGY THAT COULD TAKE TRASH FROM THE STREETS AND CONVERT EVERY BIT OF IT TO VALUE. BEFORE TRANSFORM, WE HAD PROVEN THE CONCEPT AT A TWO TON A DAY MODEL. BUT WE HAD NO IDEA HOW TO SCALE OR HOW TO PROCEED WITH THE NEXT STEPS. WITH TRANSFORM, TRASHCON HAS BEEN ABLE TO SCALE 100 TIMES - 200 TONS/DAY!”

R M NIVEDHA
TRASHCON FOUNDER AND CEO

It was then that TrashCon and an EY team looked at something more fundamental about the business. What could they do with the waste?

There were regular, frank meetings with TRANSFORM and TrashCon - and a lot of what Nivedha calls 'course correction'. The strategic decision: for the next stage in TrashCon's development, they should focus on outputs as much as waste collection.



Source: Trashcon

Those 'outputs' included multi-layered flat polymer panels engineered from tons of plastic waste. The panels are as flexible as plywood, but there's a difference: they can be reused up to 13 times. So, an inorganic product may prove to be a more durable solution than wood. There was a wider vision behind the move into materials: to transform TrashCon from a donor-supported body to a profit-making enterprise - and so become a manufacturer as well as a service provider.

That required market insight and the kind of tough decisions on segmentation and targeting we mentioned earlier. When TrashCon first began operations, raising awareness was easy. Reporters and editors were fascinated by the story: they were featured in over 150 local and international media outlets. But now they decided not to speak directly to consumers and focus their efforts instead on the construction industry and associated trades such as interior design.

In marketing language, that represented an expansion into B2B (business-to-business) territory: the perfect brief for an EY team.

Since then, TrashCon panels have been taken up by the leading construction companies in India and beyond. They have a thriving export market to North America. TrashCon is on course to make revenues of \$2 million in 2021. What social impact does their growing presence in these communities have? Some examples. Informal waste pickers have better livelihoods and conditions of work. There's less waste leaking into sewage systems. Less waste being burnt.



Source: Trashcon
R M Nivedha, Trashcon Founder and CEO with the TrashBot Machine

But for Nivedha the most telling sign of success was when government schools started to acquire desks and chairs made from the panels.

“

THESE SIX, SEVEN-YEAR-OLDS HAD NEVER SAT ON A BENCH OR AT A DESK BEFORE, THEY USED TO SIT ON THE GROUND. ESPECIALLY DURING WINTER, THEY HAD HIGH FALLOUT RATES BECAUSE THEY USED TO FALL ILL.

WHEN WE VISITED ONE SCHOOL, THEY ASKED A 10-YEAR-OLD STUDENT, 'WHAT IS THIS MADE OF?' AND SHE SAID 'THE PLASTICS THAT WENT OUT OF MY HOUSE CAME BACK AS THE BENCH AND DESKS'. THAT DAY I HAD TEARS IN MY EYES. THE POINT IS THAT KIDS NOW LOOK AT PLASTICS DIFFERENTLY. IT'S NOT WASTE. IT'S A RESOURCE".

R M NIVEDHA
TRASHCON FOUNDER AND CEO

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Sometimes new opportunities open up that fundamentally affect the character and scale of your business.

Ask yourself, how can you meet the demands of the new audiences you are targeting? What support do you need and when?

WORKING WITH AGENCIES: A FIELD GUIDE

BY LISA HAWKES, SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE MANAGER, UNILEVER

Unilever is famous for our big brands and catchy advertising – and people often think that this is all done in-house. In practice, we do most of our work through external agencies, because this way we have access to the best and brightest in their field.

But even they need help. That's where skilled project management comes in. Unilever brings this expertise to TRANSFORM, helping the impact enterprises we fund to either create their own marketing or work with agencies.

Which leads straight to the first question: who should do the work?

This often depends on the capacity and capability of the team in your impact enterprise. If you have people with marketing experience and great ideas, then go for it.

Even so, be prepared for your ideas not to land as well as you'd hoped. As we outline in this report, you need to test, test and test again with your customers and users. Let them guide you.

And even if you have the skills to, say, make posters, videos or radio adverts, you might still need to work with an agency. If so, it's important to clearly communicate what you're looking for.

Your first step is to define the job you want your agency to do and then define it very clearly for them. An agency specialising in execution won't help you with your strategy and vice versa. You don't want to brief an agency for a phone number change in a leaflet and have them send back an entirely new leaflet design.



Source: DoctHERs

LET'S LOOK AT A SPECTRUM OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS YOU CAN WORK WITH AGENCIES:

- **Execution only:** You need minor changes on graphics and visuals. You have existing materials, and you need someone with design skills to make superficial changes – adding a new logo or updating contact details on flyers.
- **Execution and strategy assistance:** You are sure you know what you want to communicate, but need help executing it. For example, you might want to go onto Facebook talking about your company's world-beating customer satisfaction rating. The content is straightforward: you need to see asset and message options for how to get the point across.
- **Execution, strategy and research.** You don't know what your message should be, or which format will work best. You need help from someone who can provide a full service from insight to execution.

HOW TO BRIEF AN AGENCY

LIKE MOST THINGS, WHAT YOU GET OUT IS ONLY AS GOOD AS WHAT YOU PUT IN. YOUR AGENCY WON'T BE ABLE TO DO A GOOD JOB UNLESS THEY HAVE A GOOD BRIEF.

First, the format. We encourage the enterprises we work with to produce both a written brief that can be sent to the agency and then a verbal brief to explain it over a call. People tend to go for a verbal brief, but this carries significant risk. Misunderstandings still arise from a written brief, but they're less likely, especially if your writing is concise, to the point and unambiguous.

A good brief should allow your agency to get up to speed quickly with what you already know about your users. It should have a balance of fact and emotion. They need to know what your hard objectives are for the work; but we always include sections on how the consumer currently feels, thinks and behaves and how we would like them to feel, think and behave after they see our campaign or intervention.

You should also include any relevant background or research you've done previously on your users, on their demographics, interests and influences.

HERE ARE OUR TOP TIPS FOR QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF DURING THE BRIEF:

- What is the high-level goal for the project? Here's a simple formula we use:
Get (target audience) –
Who (current behaviour) –
To (desired behaviour)
- What is the measurable business outcome you want to achieve?
- What do your users currently think, do and feel now?
Why do they do this?
- What can you say that would disrupt their current behaviour?
What problem can you solve for them?
- Why would they believe you (we called this the 'reason to believe')?
- What do you want your users to think, do and feel afterwards?



Source: Zayohub

Ask the agency to send you back a proposal in response. This should include how they would approach the work and the cost.

In our experience, it's also important that they add a section to summarise your brief to show you they have understood your project and what you are trying to achieve. If there has been a misunderstanding at the start, it will throw the whole project off later.

IDEALLY, THEY SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE SOME EXAMPLES OF SIMILAR WORK THEY HAVE DONE SO YOU CAN SEE THEIR STYLE AND QUALITY. TWO BIG WATCH-OUTS ARE:

- **Have they worked with your kind of consumers before?** If you focus on low-income communities and their experience is exclusively with premium brands, then that's a warning sign.
- **Are the people who did the work that you like going to be working on your project?** Agencies sometimes have a high turnover of staff, so be sure to check who will be working on the project and see their level of experience.



Source: Zayohub



Source: SJP

Finally, how do you find an agency? Of course, you can do a basic search online, but it's better if you can get a recommendation from someone you trust. Ask other companies locally whom they would recommend or use already. If you see an advert or some content that you like, then contact the company to see who they worked with.

It's great to try to get at least two or three proposals back from different agencies so you can sense-check the scope and budget they are proposing.

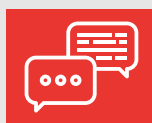
COMMON MISTAKES



Don't move the goalposts. Make sure that you have given the agency all the background information they need before they start. Sending them vital information halfway through the project won't allow them to deliver.



Be hands-on. The agency is a supplier – you are paying them for this work, after all, but they need your help to do a good job. They will never know as much as you do about the business and your customers, and so they need your perspective. But not too much – otherwise you're micromanaging, and let's remember, you are hiring them for the specialist skills you don't have yourself.



Discuss how you will work together in detail. How often will they present their ideas to you? Who should be involved? Have them outline the milestones and decision points. Make sure you are consulted and happy with the decisions made at these key stages, but allow them time and space to be creative. You need to allocate resources in your team to support this so that the agency has at least one point-person they can contact to bounce ideas off or ask questions.



Make time to pause and reflect. If you think that the work is going in the wrong direction, it is essential to stop and say so. You are paying for this work: it needs to be right for your business and your customers. They are experts in marketing, but you are the expert on your business and your company. Either explain why the direction won't work based on what you already know – or even better, test the idea or concept with some customers and they will tell you if it's right. If you're not happy it's better to pause or even stop the project rather than waste money on something that's not right.



See this as a development opportunity for your team. Working with an agency allows your team to access new skills and expertise. Give them time to work alongside the agency and learn along the way. Have your team think about what they need to take out of the process: perhaps they can do it themselves next time? For instance, if you want to re-run focus groups with consumers yourselves, ensure that team members attend these and take notes on how this is facilitated and what questions to ask.



IN SUMMARY

TRANSFORM enterprises are in the business of invention. They are inventing machines, processes, apps, media, systems, ways of delivering services and a lot more. They are engaged in some of the toughest challenges facing low-income countries, and this becomes their priority focus.

By working with TRANSFORM, our enterprises have access to grant funding, but also to experts who know how to identify new markets, reach target audiences, and build and raise awareness of brands. **Unilever has been using these concepts for almost a century and EY builds the need for marketing and marketability into every strategic plan.**

Our enterprises are provided with vital branding expertise and commercial consultancy at a time when they are under most pressure to become established, grow and scale up. **Helping to excel their journey from being a project to becoming a brand.**

But the people that you most need to ask when developing your marketing materials are not EY and Unilever – it's your customers. And you need to ask your customers again and again what they want and need, from day one.



Ask them about what they would say to their friends about your product to validate your value proposition.

Ask them if the clothes and the models in your posters look right.

Ask them about how they hear about similar products.

If you are led by them, you will rarely go wrong.



TRANSFORM is a joint initiative between Unilever, the FCDO and EY. Established in 2015, it works to accelerate impact enterprises, blending funding and support to deliver market-based solutions to the world's biggest development challenges. TRANSFORM uses its capabilities and expertise in marketing, distribution, digital, and business resilience to deliver transformative market-based solutions to low-income households in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia that last. For more information on TRANSFORM, visit our [website](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office pursues the UK's national interests and projects the UK as a force for good in the world. It promotes the interests of British citizens, safeguards the UK's security, defends its values, reduces poverty and tackles global challenges with its international partners. For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office>, and follow us on Twitter [@FCDOGovUK](#) and [@FCDOResearch](#).

This initiative has been funded by UK aid from the UK government; however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.



Unilever is one of the world's leading suppliers of Beauty & Personal Care, Home Care, and Foods & Refreshment products, with sales in over 190 countries and products used by 2.5 billion people every day. We have 149,000 employees and around 400 brands found in homes all over the world.

Our vision is to be the global leader in sustainable business and to demonstrate how our purpose-led, future-fit business model drives superior performance. The Unilever Compass, our sustainable business strategy, is set out to help us deliver superior performance and drive sustainable and responsible growth, while: improving the health of the planet; improving people's health, confidence and wellbeing; and contributing to a fairer and more socially inclusive world.

While there is still more to do, we are proud to have been recognised in 2020 as a sector leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and - for the tenth-consecutive year - as the top ranked company in the 2020 GlobeScan/SustainAbility Sustainability Leaders survey. For more information about Unilever and our brands, please visit www.unilever.com.



EY | Building a better working world

EY exists to build a better working world, helping to create long-term value for clients, people and society and build trust in the capital markets.

Enabled by data and technology, diverse EY teams in over 150 countries provide trust through assurance and help clients grow, transform and operate.

Working across assurance, consulting, law, strategy, tax and transactions, EY teams ask better questions to find new answers for the complex issues facing our world today.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via ey.com/privacy. EY member firms do not practice law where prohibited by local laws. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com.

About EY Ripples

The global EY Ripples program aims to positively impact one billion lives by 2030. EY people, together with clients and other like-minded organizations, use their skills, knowledge and experience to bring positive change across three focus areas: supporting the next generation workforce, working with impact entrepreneurs and accelerating environmental sustainability. Learn more at ey.com/eyripples.