

# INTERNAL BRANDING IN A SERVICE INDUSTRY- THE CASE OF BANKS IN GHANA

*Johnson Yeboah, Lecturer, MBA*

*George Dominic Ewur, Lecturer, MBA*

*Evelyn Delali Adigbo, Lecturer, MBA*

*Ernest K. Asirifi, Lecturer, MBA*

Department of Marketing, Takoradi Polytechnic,  
Takoradi, Western Region, Ghana

---

## Abstract

In branding literature, the employee role is recognized as crucial in delivering the service as promised by the brand. The creation of a strong brand and the deliverance of perceived service quality are premised by employees' ability to deliver on customer expectations. This paper, therefore, explores the differential effect that internally oriented initiatives have on an organization's human capital and its subsequent impact on the organization's brand. A case-study approach is adopted using a qualitative methodology. In-depth interviews reveal that employees feel that their actions are vital to the brand, and findings from a survey of 500 respondents demonstrate positive relationships among internal branding and their brand promise delivery. The paper also helps to emphasize the importance of internal branding for customer attraction in the banking industry in Ghana.

---

**Keywords:** Internal Branding, Banking Industry, Financial Services, Ghana

## 1.0 Introduction

Many businesses and organizations view “brands” as something vital, but somewhat elusive when it comes to trying to measure, in terms of performance and real added value, (Aaker 1996). The fact is that what is not measured is not managed and as a result organizations too often let the value of brand slip right through their fingers. Brands exist to help companies win over the hearts and minds of consumers. But in the financial services industry, the commodity-like features of most financial products complicate the task of building a brand.

As markets mature and competition intensifies, organizations are exploring ways to increase the equity of the brand which has been shown to increase company's profitability (Aaker, 1991). One strategy that has gained

considerable attention is internal branding in which firms invest in developing employees to live the brand. Key features are emerging from this paradigm; not only does it result in increased employee retention,(Albrecht &Zemche, 1985), (Doyle1989) but also has the potential to provide a sustainable competitive advantage to the firm as the intangible aspects of a brand relationship are not easily duplicated by competitors, (Barney1991). Besides, it has the potential to ensure satisfaction amongst both customers and employees.

A brand is only as powerful as an organization allows it to be, that is why the biggest barriers to brand success often lie within a company. Brand building succeeds when everybody in the organization is truly informed and inspired to live up to the promise of the brand day- to –day, (Keller,2003) that’s certainly a daunting task.

(Berry, 2000) in a research into brand equity analysed the strategies of 14- high performance service companies. He revealed that the primary source of brand awareness is the company’s controlled communications which covers advertising, service facilities and the appearance of service providers, company name, and logo. He posited further that brands gain meaning as the customer is influenced by the *experience* with the company. This in his view is because service businesses, especially, the banking industry are labour intensive and human performance, rather than machine performance, plays a critical role in building the brand (Berry, 2000).

The people element of any service organisation is therefore very important and critical to the success of the brand strategy. They are the advocates of the firm. In fact their activities can either promote or affect the health of the brand. Yet often front-line employees are not trained to understand customers and do not have discretion to ensure effective responses, (Debra &O’Cass2001). Furthermore customer-facing staff may be relatively poorly paid, resulting in low levels of motivation and responsibility. This can be disastrous for a service company and in the longer term, brand value.

Branding has become increasingly necessary due to the fact that the service sector is people oriented and living the brand have already become a rather well known expression. However to what extend is the banking industry for that matter committed to developing their people means of building the strength of the brand. There are several reasons why one needs to research the effectiveness of branding campaigns in the banking sector.

First, there are differences between service and a product (Doyle, 2002); services are largely intangible and are characterized by heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability (Kotter, 1991). The nature of a service requires a different brand strategy quite distinct from that of products; (de Charnatony& Rite 1999). (Kotler, 2003) supports the assertion when he

reiterated that consumer packaged goods model for brand building is inappropriate especially for service firms. Given that service quality measurement is on-going in major service firms, there is also the need to examine whether employee relationship as measured by internal branding add any further equity to the total brand value. If so, then this would suggest that managers implement and monitor internal branding programme as a way of improving service delivery.

### **1.1 Purpose of the study**

Studies have revealed that Bank brands require a different strategy, as opposed to that of physical goods especially due to the intangible nature of services, (Heidi & Schultz, 2001). Moreover, an essential element of a service is the people involved in delivering the service. The involvement of employees in a brand strategy has been found to contribute to building brand equity; in view of this, several firms have turned to internal branding as a primary branding strategy. This involves resources.

The objectives of this research therefore are aimed at examining the importance of internal branding; finding out to what extent it supports the building of brand equity; investigating how employees of financial services in Ghana support brands.

### **1.2 Research questions**

In the light of the foregoing the research is aimed at answering the following questions.

1. Does internal branding plays any important role to the corporate image of banks in Ghana?
2. Are the banks in Ghana engaged in internal branding activities?
3. How does Internal Branding measure the effectiveness of competition in the banking industry?

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this research therefore are aimed at

1. Examining the importance of internal branding in the context of the banking industry in Ghana.
2. To determine whether the concept of internal branding is being practiced in the banking industry in Ghana.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of internal branding as a source of competitive advantage in the banking sector.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

There has been increasing discussion of the way in which quality of experience and brand equity is developed in the banking industry. This

chapter aims to review the banking industry and brand equity literature, thereby providing a conceptual framework for understanding banks brands. It also seek to explain benefits of internal branding in the banking industry. Because of the intangibility, inseparability, variability, and perishability of banking services, there are numerous ways to evaluate customer perceptions of the brand.

Developing the organisation brand from inside has been acknowledged as an important area of research in the marketing literature (Judson et al., 2006). From a resource-based perspective, it is suggested that “organisations can gain competitive advantage through their unique combination of resources, with people as the most important asset” (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, Leberecht, 2004, p.6). Aligning the behavior of employees with brand values, so-called ‘internal branding’, has been recognised as a new phenomenon which has become important for service industry in the present increasingly competitive markets (Judson et al., 2006; Whisman, 2009). It seems that they are increasingly employing some kind of marketing activity and branding programme (Ivy, 2001; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Bunzel, 2007), even though these tend to be unsystematic in nature (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Maringe, 2010). According to (Mark 2006), strong brands can be created by connecting products/services to activities which create meaningful associations or representations of the brand.

The view that the internal branding literature has lacked focus and definition (Mahnert & Torres, 2007) is reflected in the differing definitional emphasis evident within the branding literature. Definitions range from referring to internal branding as a means of creating powerful brands (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007), or the attainment of competitive advantage through people in the organisation (Jacobs, 2003), to seeing internal branding as the activities employed by a company to ensure intellectual and emotional commitment to the brand (Thomson et al, 1999, Thomson & Hecker, 2000).

Alternatively, the view of internal branding as an activity that enables disparate organisations to come together and ‘speak with one voice’ (Einwiller & Will, 2002), has resonance in the current research context. The conceptualisation of the internal branding process as a two way communications process is also highlighted for successful internal branding. For example, (Totsi & Stotz, 2001) view internal branding more as an iterative process, rather than a series of communication events. They argue that this iterative view of the internal branding process is necessary for the fulfillment of brand promise. Similarly, (Vallaster & De Chernatony, 2005) found that institutionalized feedback loops that embed the internal branding process support the identification and removal of inhibitors of the process. (Mahnert &

Torres, 2007) emphasise three core principles within their conceptualisation of the internal branding construct that are commonly emphasised within the wider branding literature. Firstly, that committed employees reflect and deliver desired brand values to consumers. Secondly, that effective communication results in the brand promise being realised both internally and externally, and thirdly, that internal branding needs to permeate all levels of the organisation to align the behaviour and attitudes of management and staff.

Internal branding is the promotion of the brand to the service employees with a belief that they would be better able to sustain brand standards in delivery process if they positively identify with core brand values. The concept of internal branding was adapted from (Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, & Wilson, 2009) who described internal branding as a function of training, orientation, group meetings and briefings.

American Marketing Association (AMA) has defined brand as any name, expression, sign, symbol, design individually or in combination that is used to identify the product or service of one seller and to differentiate it from other (Keller, 2008). Branding was also taken as a concern of product strategy (Kotler, 2000) and a signal of product's implicit qualities (Kapferer, 1997). Recent authors (Keller, 2008; Reichheld, 2001) defined brand in terms of its various emotional and rational dimensions. Branding services was explored long ago, however it increasingly become an area of particular interest from last decade. Services are intangible offerings traditionally defined as actions or performances (Berry, 1980). Complexity of service process lies in its features like heterogeneity, perishability, intangibility, requirement of customer involvement and its limitation to be produced and consumed simultaneously (Lovell, Wirtz, & Chatterjee, 2007). They also argued that service branding decreases perceived risks associated with consumption prior to experience. (Dobree & Page, 1990) described service branding as five phase process; developing a brand proposition, managing internal barriers, evaluating the service delivery by comparing it with proposition, taking improvement actions and expansion.

Practicing managers, however, see a brand much more than the view held by the AMA. A brand is seen in terms of having actually "created a certain amount of awareness, reputation, prominence, and so on in the marketplace" (Keller, 2003). In fact, it is seen as the tangible and intangible benefits provided by a product or service or what is referred to as "the entire customer experience" (Gilmore, 1997). As (Clifton & Maughan, 2000) posit, a brand is a "mixture of tangible and intangible attributes, symbolised in a trademark, which, if properly managed, creates influence and generates value". This view thus goes beyond the generic product if you like. It introduces the managerial implications of the brand. Thus, it is not enough to

create a product or trademark as it were. Whatever is created can only bring the much-needed influence and generate value, if the brand is managed properly.

## 2.1 Importance of Brands

Today, brands play an integral role in the marketing strategy of the firm. Aside the fact that it is the ultimate cash flow driver, (Doyle 2000) it has tremendous benefits to the manufacturer and the consumer (Keller, 2003).

To the client, the brand helps in identifying the source of the product, which in turn, assigns responsibility to the product maker (Keller 2003); (Debra & O’Cass 2001). Furthermore, brands reduce consumer search costs (Kapferer 1998) perceived risk, (Keller, 2003) and signals the quality of the product (McNeal and Zerren 1981). Again, it promises a bond, or pact with the manufacturer (Keller 2003) as was evidenced in the New Coke Fiasco between Coca-Cola Corporation and the American public (Keller 2003:6).

For the manufacturer, brands serve as an identification purpose, in that it simplifies product handling or tracing of the firm (Kotler 2003). It is also a powerful means of securing competitive advantage (Johnson & Scholes 2003), and further represents valuable pieces of legal property capable of influencing consumer behaviour such that it provides the security of sustained future revenues to their owner (Keller 2003). Brands have generated and propelled merger and acquisition battles (Aaker 1991) such that large multiples are paid for brands (Gilmore 1997). Nestle paid £ 2.5 billion (more than five times the book value) to win control of the Rowntree group in 1998 (Gilmore 1997:2); (de Chernatony & McDonald 1998). Brands also reduce acquisition cost, create relationship between consumer and producer, increase loyalty and finally attract premium price (Ritson 2002)

In the branding literature, there is a general assumption that a favourable brand image has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. (Andreassen & Lindestad 1998 b) proposed that image affects customer satisfaction through a filtering effect. Likewise, (Davies et al. 2003) suggested that brand image correlates with customer satisfaction. Brand image has been recognized as an important antecedent of customer satisfaction. Hence, a positive bank brand image will tend to generate high customer satisfaction in the bank. The first hypothesis is described as follows:

H1: Bank brand image has a positive effect on customer satisfaction. In addition, it is apparent from preceding studies that brand image has direct and/or indirect positive effects on loyalty or behavioural intention. (Fry 2002) discovered that brand image has a direct effect on loyalty. (Chun 2002) found, in contrast, that brand image has an indirect influence on loyalty via customer satisfaction.

Moreover, brand image could have both direct and indirect effects on loyalty (Andreassen and Lindestad ).Nevertheless, brand image can be certainly viewed as a predictor of customer loyalty. Thus, in the banking context, a positive brand image appears to stimulate customer loyalty. The second hypothesis is thus:

H2: Bank brand image has a positive effect on loyalty as measured by re-visit intention.

In line with (McClure,Laibson, Loewenstein and Cohen 2004), consumers' awareness of a brand has a substantial impact on their consumption experience. That is, when customers have a positive attitude towards a brand, their awareness of the brand tends to positively influence their consumption experience. In addition, (Hoeffler & Keller 2003) argue that the advantages of a strong brand arise when consumers are purchasing a product/service for the first time. In this case, customers are uncertain of or unfamiliar with the choices of the product/service. (Keller 2007) agrees, saying that the main roles of branding strategy are 1) to 'clarify brand-awareness' by improving consumer understanding and communicating similarities and differences between individual products and 2) to 'motivate brand-image' by providing general guidelines to management about which brand elements to apply across its product. (Davis and Dunn 2002) note that brand can drive an organisation's success. They stress, however, that the most effective way to deliver brand to customers and stakeholders is to ensure that all employees should "work in a cohesive and consistent way to support the brand and its promise to guarantee that customers and other stakeholders are always satisfied and even delighted with their brand experience" (Davis & Dunn, 2002, p.4).

## **2.2 Service Branding**

Several contextual frameworks have been developed in an attempt to understand how consumers think about, and respond to brands (Kapferer 1992); (de Chernatony 1993); (Keller 1993). However, these models have only conceptualised the brand in terms of physical goods, with little reference to the branding of services (Turley & Moore 1995). Yet the service sector accounts for over two thirds of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of developed economies (Lovelock, Vandermerwe & Lewis 1999). The service sector has not only spanned economic growth but has also challenged the traditional approach to doing business (McDonald, de Chernatony and Harris 2001). For instance, privatisation has transformed the BT brand "from a sluggish monolith" (Gilmore 1987) to a world-class performer (McDonald et al 2001). In fact, changes in the service sector have affected the strategies of manufacturing companies who created profit-centres. Ford and General Electric have diversified into financial services

through the development of credit financing and leasing divisions (McDonald, de Chernatony and Harris 2001). Although there is considerable literature available on strengthening product-based brands e.g. (Aaker1996); (Keller 1993) and there is much published about the differences between products and services (Cunningham, Young and Lee 1997), it does not come in handy, when seeking to successfully develop services brands.

One of the challenges of service marketing is that relative to products, they are more intangible (Kotler2003). There is therefore the likelihood of variety in service quality depending on the particular person (Keller, 2003). This variety in services is considered a plus. For instance, competitors easily copy products; service is not. Since services depend on the culture of the organisation and the training and attitudes of its employees, it is more difficult to build and sustain successfully but is more difficult to copy (Albrecht & Zemke, 1985); (Doyle, 1989). Indeed Doyle stated, “service is perhaps the most sustainable differential advantage” (1989 p.87) in building successful brands

### **2.3 The Challenge of Corporate Services Branding**

According to (Balmer& Wilkinson, 1991), strong corporate image is the most effective form of differentiation in financial services. A clear example is the successful entry of Tesco into the financial services. However, service-based brands have not kept pace with the growth of the service sector (McDonald & de Chernatony1998). They emphasize that service brands are characterized by multiple interactions, as consumers frequently have to talk with several people in a service firm. However, they posit that where management works with staff to ensure consistent style in behaviour, this is largely reduced. Such is the challenge in service branding. Moreover, financial services companies along with all service providers need to realize that brands are even more important than for goods since consumers have no tangible attributes to assess the brand (Kotler2003). In fact, it is harder to communicate the values of service brands, (Harris 2001). An effective route, argues (de Chernatony1998), is to convey the values of a service brand through the “way the company does things”. The brand personality (Keller 2003) therefore, cannot just be communicated through a press or television advertisement (Kotler 2003), (Aaker1996). It also depends very much on everyone in the company, from the CEO to anyone who has contact with customers, since “staffs are an integral part of service brands” (McDonald & de Chernatony, 1998).

In the developing economies such as Ghana the services sector has developed relatively late and quickly, (Frimpong2001). While the services sector in developed economies has been emerging for several decades (McDonald, de Chernatony and Harris 2001), the developing economies



have traditionally been focused on both the primary (agricultural) and manufacturing sectors. Over the 1990s, the service sectors in the developing economies developed rapidly to provide the infrastructure for market based economies, such as banking, professional services, and marketing services (market research, advertising, etc.). In summary, the service sector of the developing economies such as Ghana provides a challenging environment in which to examine the reliability and validity of the internal branding.

## **2.4 BrandLoyalty**

Loyalty is a core dimension of brand equity. Aaker (1991, p. 39) defines brand loyalty as the attachment that a customer has to a brand. Grembler and Brown (1996) describe different levels of loyalty. Behavioural loyalty is linked to consumer behaviour in the marketplace that can be indicated by number of repeated purchases (Keller 1998) or commitment to rebuy the brand as a primary choice (Oliver 1997, 1999). Cognitive loyalty which means that a brand comes up first in a consumers' mind, when the need to make a purchase decision arises, that is the consumers' first choice. The cognitive loyalty is closely linked to the highest level of awareness (top-of-mind), where the matter of interest also is the brand, in a given category, which the consumers recall first. Thus, a brand should be able to become the respondents' first choices (cognitive loyalty) and is therefore purchased repeatedly (behavioural loyalty) (Keller 1998).

(Chaudhuri & Holbrook 2001), mention that brand loyalty is directly related to brand price. (Aaker 1996) identify price premium as the basic indicator of loyalty. Price premium is defined as the amount a customer will pay for the brand in comparison with another brand offering similar benefits and it may be high or low and positive or negative depending on the two brands involved in the comparison.

## **3.0 Research methodology**

The chapter explains the research design and method the researchers employed that most appropriately helped in the collection of data for the study. As stated by (Miles & Huberman 1984), knowing what you want to find out leads inexorably to the question of how you will get that information, guided the researchers in selecting the methods for the research.

(Silverman, 2000 p.79) defines methodology as how one will go about studying a phenomenon. According to Mason, methodology is a general approach to studying research topics while methods are specific research techniques. He argued that, the choice of method should reflect an "overall research strategy" as your methodology shapes which methods are used and how each method is used (Mason, 1996:19). The researchers, decided in this research study to use the qualitative method in order to

produce a valuable conclusion. In the light of this, an assessment is made on the data collected from the Banking industry in Ghana to ascertain the extent to which the concept of internal branding is applied in various banks.

As far as branding is concerned, from the point of view of employees, analysis is carried out using a simple frequency analysis of the findings and the total presented as the percentage of the entire sample population. To give a better picture of the situation, books, articles as well as periodicals were consulted to help the researchers make better recommendations of the situation under research. After a successful research in to the problem and other activities, generalization of the results was made to other organizations to give a true representation of the impact of internal branding.

A qualitative case study approach was considered a better option. A key strength of the case study method involves “using multiple sources and technique in data gathering process” (Hancock 2002), which is what this study hinges on. It allows also for an entire organisation to be investigated in depth and with meticulous attention. As a research design, the case study claims to offer a “richness and depth of information not usually offered by other methods”, by attempting to capture as many variables as possible. Case studies can identify how a complex set of circumstances come together to produce a particular manifestation. It is highly versatile research method (Hancock, 2002) and employs any and all method of data collection from testing to interviewing.

### **3.1 Research approach**

A sample of about 200 respondents were chosen and investigated for the purpose of the study. Out of these, only 182 questionnaires were retrieved. The method for conducting the research was based on the perception of the participating employees, hence the likelihood for data inaccuracies due to misinterpretations. Since the research is restricted to a particular country(Ghana), the generality of the finding was considered carefully.

To ensure absolute control on the collection of the data, the research was based partly on secondary source and to ensure a genuine interpretation. Sources such as journals, magazines and textbooks were also used as source for this study.

A well-designed questionnaire was therefore important, especially ensuring that it was worded in simple English and an unambiguous manner to avoid this problem. It must be noted that in survey research the validity and reliability of the method must be paramount. (Babbie 1990, p. 133) describes validity as “the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration”. He also defines reliability as “a matter of whether a particular technique, applied

repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time.” Consequently, the good sampling technique used in this research makes it very credible (Kvale, 1995).

### **3.2 The population sample**

The research canters on the financial service providers in Ghana. This was considered because the financial sector in Ghana recently has seen aggressive competition due to deregulation of the Banking industry in Ghana. In an attempt to encourage competition, growth and liberalise the Ghanaian banking industry for economic development, the Central bank of Ghana introduced the “Universal banking licence” to allow banks to operate in commercial, development, corporate and investment or merchant segments without the need for separate licences.

There are over twenty nine (29) banks in Ghana however, in view of this research, only five of them were selected by the researchers. They include; Ghana Commercial Bank, Agricultural Development Bank, Barclays Bank (Ghana Limited), Eco-bank (Ghana Limited) and Merchant Bank Ghana Limited. They were chosen because they are the largest indigenous and foreign financial institutions in the country. They all have their headquarters in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. These companies employ quite a substantial number of people. They tend to be in almost all the capital cities in Ghana. 40 questionnaires were sent to each of the above mentioned banks.

### **3.3 Sampling procedure**

In administering the questionnaire, a simple random sampling procedure was used to pick respondents. In all 200 questionnaires were administered, and 182 were received as stated earlier. In designing the questionnaire, a desk research was carried out, examining secondary materials in the area. This included academic and organizational research, media reports, and publications specializing on excellence in brand and business management.

The theories gathered were then structured into a two-part questionnaire, which were administered as a primary research involving exploratory interviews with employees and managers of selected Banks in Ghana. The two-part questionnaire ; one for managers and the other for non-managers was aimed at obtaining a two-sided view of whether internal branding is considered relevant in these organizations.

The research exercise involved interviewing some key workers of the companies. The purpose was to get in-depth information about the study as interview lends itself to being used alongside other methods as a way of supplementing other data-adding detail and depth. The semi-structured type

of interviews were used which allowed respondents to expatiate on issues but where the researcher kept the flow going by asking relevant questions on his lists of topics, the answers were open-ended and there was more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest.

There were some setbacks in this approach and the research might not be an accurate sample frame, however, because fair representatives were involved, and the confidence among the interviewee was higher, it can be said in confident that, the out- come was the true reflection of what is going on.

It must be noted however, that the Banking industry employs huge number of the population in Ghana, for that matter, it was the researchers' responsibility to focus on this area of research explicitly to review the loopholes which when left unresolved could lead to dire consequences for the industry, there by leaving many people unemployed.

Since the implication of the research was for an organization to seek to provide a healthy service for customer satisfaction and also for the organization to benefit from economic success, it was important not to exaggerate the report that could lead to conflict of interest.

Since the research also seek to view the management attitude and philosophy towards internal customers as well as the external customers, there is the possibility of managers being biased, therefore, the researcher prevented the cultivation of lengthy report that could underestimate the validity of the research study. In summary, this chapter analyzed the methods adopted in gathering data necessary to achieve the research objective.

### **3.4 Results and Discussion**

The chapter analyses the responses given by respondents through the administration of structured questionnaire and interview conducted. In order to make interpretation and analysis easier, tables are presented first, followed by its interpretation and analysis.

Out of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 36 were retrieved from Ghana Commercial Bank, 38 from Barclays Bank Ghana Limited, 32, from Agricultural Development Bank, 37 from Merchant Bank and the remaining 39 were retrieved from Eco-Bank Ghana Limited. 182 questionnaires out of the 200 sent out were received. The questionnaires were in two parts, 20 for management of all the selected banks. All the 20 sent to the management of the banks were retrieved. This is represented in the table below.

Table 1: Questionnaire retrieved

| Banks                   | Tally | Frequency% |
|-------------------------|-------|------------|
| Ghana Commercial Bank   | 36    | 20%        |
| Barclays Bank Ghana Ltd | 38    | 21%        |
| Agricultural Dev. Bank  | 32    | 18%        |
| Merchant Bank Ghana Ltd | 37    | 20%        |
| Eco-Bank Ghana Ltd      | 39    | 21%        |
| Total                   | 182   | 100%       |

Source: field survey (2014)

The above table represents the questionnaires retrieved from the selected banks for the research. Out of the 182 questionnaires retrieved, 20% was from Ghana Commercial Bank, 21% from Barclays Bank Ghana Ltd, 18% from Agricultural Dev. Bank, 20% and 21% were received from Merchant Bank and Eco-Bank respectively.

Table 2: Department Responsible for Internal Branding Strategies

| Department         | Tally | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-------|----------------|
| Marketing/Sales    | 11    | 55%            |
| H R/Administration | 7     | 35%            |
| All Departments    | 2     | 10%            |
| Finance            | -     | -              |
| Total              | 20    | 100%           |

Source:(Field Survey 2014)

The table above shows one startling discovery from the field research, which revealed that in spite of the all-team concepts being mooted by management and branding authorities, there still exist some problems in the firms. For instance in determining the departments responsible for internal branding, out of the 20 respondents in the manager's category, 55 % mentioned the marketing/sales departments. A further 35% mentioned the human resource/administrative department while 2 out of the 20 representing 10% attributed this task to all departments.

Several authors on internal branding, including (Davis & Dunn, 2002) have argued that for internal branding to succeed, it must permeate all departments. In fact, they posit that there must be a total management buy-in. To this extent, one can thus argue that to leave such an important task to one department is counterproductive. Indeed, there ought to be a total team support. With this development, no wonder, most of the financial service providers in Ghana do not have any brand management team in place.

Some of the management team were contacted in the form of interview to find out whether or not, there was a brand management team. About 66% mentioned that they had no brand management teams while 33% said they had one.

It is important however to differentiate between the local and foreign banks in this matter. Banks like Barclays, Standard Chartered and Stanbic have foreign components. In fact they are international banks and therefore have most of their strategic directions emanating from the parent companies.

The table above is represented graphically in figure 1.

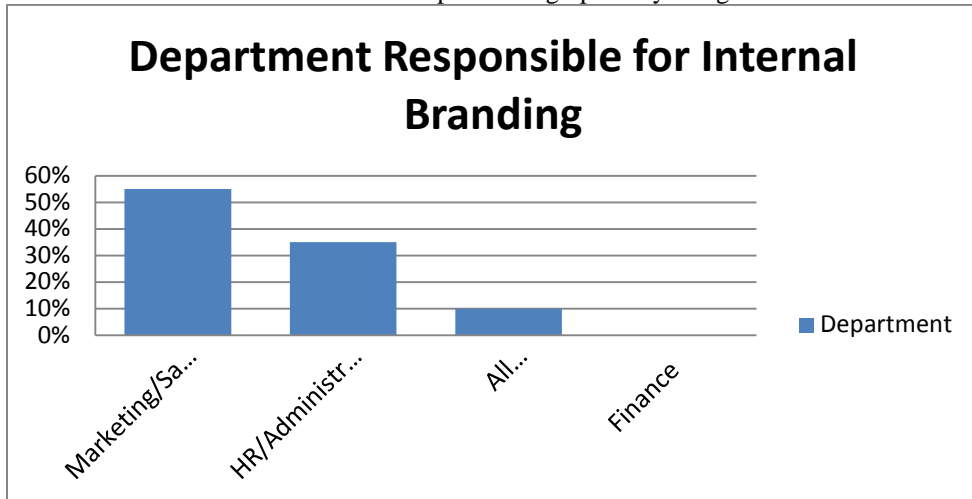


Figure 1.Source: (Field Survey 2014)

### 3.5 Organizational View on Branding

Managers were asked about their view on branding. Out of the 20 responses received, ten of them, which accounts for 50% said it is treated as a marketing-level issue. 33% of the respondents however saw it as primarily a communication responsibility, while 17% mentioned it was one thing that needed a total staff involvement.

The above makes interesting discussion. Indeed, branding is indeed a communication activity. However, it is in the domain of the marketer who strategizes and gets other functions to accept it. None of the respondents mentioned that branding is seen more and more as a top-level business issue. This is not surprising judging from the 66 % above who reported that they had no brand management teams in their organisation. This being the case, it follows then that, branding will not attract the attention and energy of top-management. This is worrying particularly for the internal branding process. Almost all brand gurus are unanimous on the fact that branding, be it external or internal must involve all, especially top-level management (Aaker, 1996); (Keller 2000), (Davis & Dunn 2002). The financial services were unanimous on the importance of communication in building the brand, especially internal branding. Several of them thus use different channels in reaching employees. These include; memos, meetings, intranet, and newsletter. Aside the above channels, managers mentioned that they used

phone calls and face-to-face briefings, all in a bid to engender communication.

For internal branding to succeed much depends on internal communications. The frequency table was therefore used to assess the role and effectiveness of internal communications. 65% of the sample that responded mentioned that internal communication played a critical role in supporting their brand building efforts.

Table 3: Role of Internal Communications in internal brand building

| Role of Internal Communication                | Tally | Percentage% |
|---|-------|-------------|
| Internal communications plays a critical role | 13    | 65%         |
| See the need but working on it                | 5     | 25%         |
| Internal Communication not yet our strength   | 2     | 10%         |
| Total   | 20    | 100%        |

Source: (Field survey, 2014)

This assertion is also supported by Blumenthal (2002) who argues that for internal branding to thrive, there must be internal communication to staff till them “hear, breathe and live brand”. Of the remaining 35%, 25% reiterated that they see the need for internal communications and are working on it. A further 10% revealed that internal communication was not one of their strengths. What the above seems to suggest is that, of the respondents, it is only the 65% who succeed at internal branding. Although the other 25% who are working at their internal communication seem to be striving, they have not reached there yet. They will therefore, for now, be concentrating on only external communication something that does not augur well for the build-up of internal branding. The above table is also represented in figure 2 below.

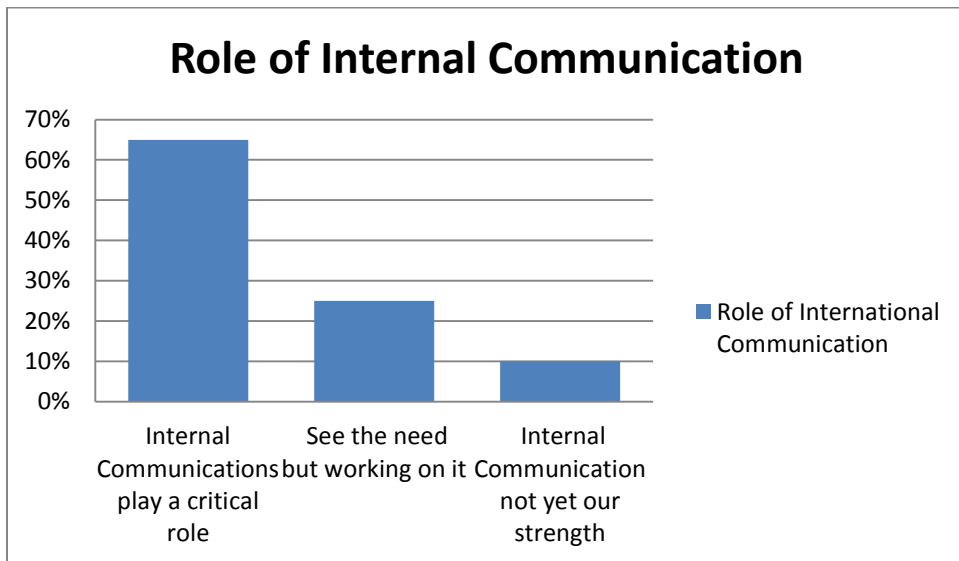


Figure2. Source: (Field Survey 2014)

Table 4: Level of trust for Organization’s brand(s)

| Level of Trust for the Brand | Tally | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Completely trust             | 131   | 72%            |
| Trust quite a lot            | 24    | 13%            |
| Neither trust or distrust    | 24    | 13%            |
| Somewhat distrust            | 3     | 2%             |
| Completely distrust          | -     | -              |
| TOTAL                        | 182   | 100%           |

Source: (Field Survey 2014)

In assessing the level of trust for the brand, 131 respondents, representing 72% said they trusted their organizational brands completely. A further 13% said they trusted the brand quite a lot. This indicates that majority of the respondents are in support of the brand, this is considered a good sign for internal branding. With three-quarters of staff trusting the organizations brand means, there are the same number who can be converted to brand evangelists and ambassadors. This finding is significant and calls to question the assertion made by (Hiscock, 2002). In his research, (Hiscock2002) said about 30% of UK employees are brand neutral or are just not interested in their company's brand, while a further 22% are brand saboteurs, actively working against the brand culture.

In making this judgement however, one is careful to add that, the current work was conducted in Ghana, and the conditions and situations vary. However, the difference in number is worth researching further. Perhaps employees in developing countries, Ghana inclusive trust their organisation’s brand. This is represented by figure 3 below.

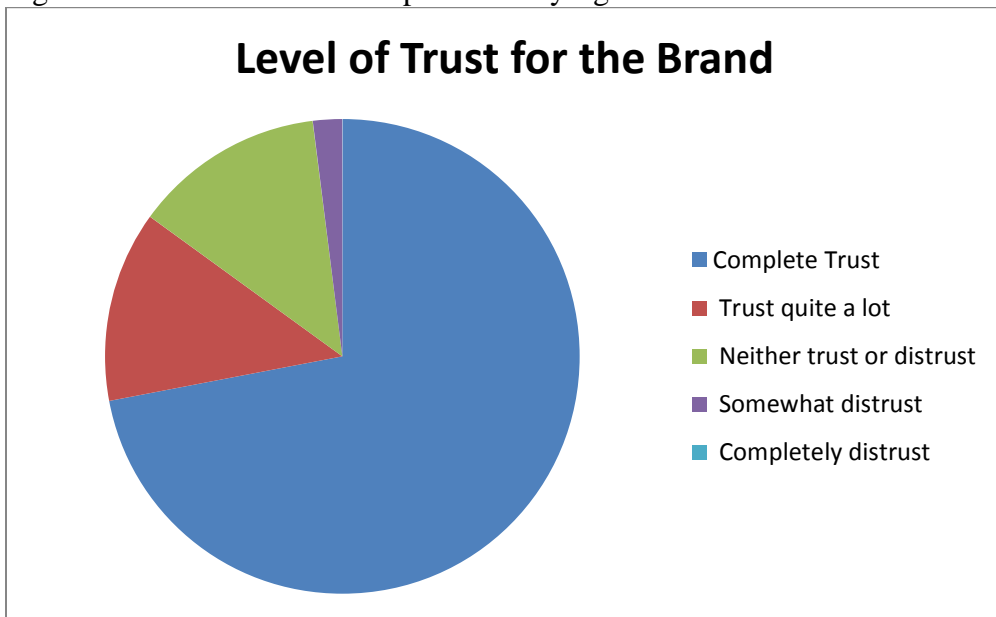


Figure 3. Source: (Field Survey 2014)



The research also sought to understand the extent to which employees believed their organizations could deliver on its promises.

Table5: Level of believe on company’s ability to deliver on its promises

| Level of Believability | Tally | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly believe       | 110   | 60%            |
| Partially believe      | 70    | 38%            |
| Indifferent            | -     |                |
| Do not believe         | 2     | 2%             |
| TOTAL                  | 182   | 100%           |

Source: Field Survey (2014)

Of the sample population 60% agreed they strongly believed in their organization’s ability to deliver on its promises. 38% also said they partially believed the above question. This totals 98%. However, 2% of the respondents said they do not believe in their organization’s ability to deliver. Interestingly however, this 2% of the population said they felt very enthusiastic about their organization’s brand. This again is at variance with Hiscock (2002) findings which points at 22% being brand saboteurs. None of the respondents however, felt indifferent about the brand. This is good as there would be no “sitting on the fence”.

#### 4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The research sought to examine the effectiveness of internal branding campaigns in the banking industry in Ghana. It also largely investigated whether messages sent out to external customers were consistent with internal happenings. As (Brookes 2000) recalls “brand position falters when changes in the inside do not align with the new message to the customer”.

Internal branding is the process of exposing employees to branding communication so that they better identify with the core brand values. This study further, aimed to investigate the role of internal branding as a device to promote and enhance a service employee’s quality commitment. Quality commitment is the employee’s identification and loyalty with brand’s quality goals. Survey conducted in this regard showed moderately positive impact of internal branding on service employee’s quality commitment.

Contrary to the assertion held by branding authorities like (Davis & Dunn 2002) and (Coyler2003) that internal branding needs a total team support, the field research revealed that largely, internal branding does not enjoy the total team support. It is not surprising therefore that 66% of management of financial services in Ghana do not have brand management teams. This however precludes the foreign banks like Barclays and Stanchart who have brand management teams outside the country. In fact, their branding activities are directed from regional centres.

The study revealed that branding was either marketing or a communication issue. This thus tallies with the earlier finding that 66% of the management investigated did not have brand management teams. In fact, none mentioned that it deserved the attention of top management. This being the case, it follows then that, branding will not attract the attention and energy of top-management. This is worrying particularly for the internal branding process. Almost all brand gurus are unanimous on the fact that branding, be it external or internal must involve all, especially top-level management (Aaker1996); (Keller 2000), (Davis & Dunn 2002).

It was also revealed that the financial institutions in Ghana have come to terms with the Internal Branding concept, such that most employees trust what their brands stand for and will also recommend clients and job seekers to their companies. It was also established that internal branding contributed to the overall organisational strategy of most financial institutions in Ghana.

#### **4.1 Recommendations**

Successful brand enable companies to monitor as well as manage the health and stability of their business over time. It deserves constant monitoring and periodic measurement. This would include;

- Conducting periodic assessments of internal brand perceptions against key objectives
- Tying increased brand alignment to business unit or departmental results
- There must be a direct link to brand-building efforts and business results
- Business decisions and objectives must be aligned with brand metrics

Internal Branding activities should form an on-going part of the company's Human Resource and management functions. Successful employer branding, it is argued, reduces turnover (Boone 2000).

Financial Institutions should regularly survey their employees as surveys of employees can measure employees' attitudes toward the company and their perception of its goals and activities as well as their own place within the company. The surveys should become an annual event, demonstrating employer concern for feedback and diagnosing problem areas to be addressed in the following year.

Focus groups can also be used to elicit employee concerns and communicate company values. Although much branding activity involves the dissemination of information by the company to employees, a successful campaign will also provide regular opportunities for employee feedback.

It has also been established that employee relationship, as measured by internal branding, adds further equity to the total brand value and contributes to corporate brand strategy. In this direction therefore, it is suggested that managers' implement and monitor internal branding programmes, as a way of improving service delivery. Thus, for internal branding to succeed;

- management must support the branding process in person and with resources
- set the objectives of internal branding campaign;
- undertake regular checks;
- introduce rewards - intrinsic and extrinsic and measure to determine success or otherwise

### **References:**

- Aaker D (1996) *Building Strong Brands*, Free Press, New York.
- Aaker, D and Joachimsthaler (1997) *Building Brands without the Mass Media*, Harvard Business Review on Brand Management, *Harvard Business Review*, Boston, USA.
- Barney, J.B. (1991), Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 17, pp.99-120.
- Barney et al, (2001). The Resource-Based View of the firm: Ten years after 1991, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 27, pp. 625-641.
- Bergtrom, A; Blumenthal D and Crothers S (2002) Why internal branding matters: The case of Saab, *Corporate Reputation Review*, London, Vol 5, Iss.2/3, pp.133-142.
- Blumenthal, D (2002) *Employee branding, does it improve quality of life*, Brand Leadership Institute, England.
- Boone, M (2000) The importance of Internal Branding; *Journal of Sales and Marketing Management*; New York, Vol.152, No. 9, pp 36-38.
- Brooke, J (2002) *The Brand Inside*, Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK.
- Buss, D (2002) In Good Company, *Brandweek*, Vol.43, Iss. 20, pp 28
- Davis S and Dunn M (2002) *Building the Brand Driven Business; operationalise your brand to drive profitable growth*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, USA.
- De Chernatony L (2001) *A Model to Grow and Sustain Brands Strategically; Marketing*; 2001.
- De Chernatony L and Dall'Olmo Riley (1999) Experts' Views about Defining Service Brands and the Principles of Service Branding; *Journal of Business Research*; Vol.46, 181-192.
- De Chernatony L, et al (2002) *Building a Services Brand: stages, people and orientations*, Brand Management and Marketing Research Unit, Working Paper, University of Birmingham Business School, England

- De Chernatony L and Harris F (2000) Defining a Brand's Reputation & Identifying the Criteria used to assess a Financial Services Brand's Reputation: A Comparison across Stakeholders. Working Paper, Open University Business School, England.
- Doyle, P (2000) Value-Based Marketing Strategies for Corporate Growth and Shareholder Value, John Wiley & Sons Ltd; England.
- Doyle, P (2001) Shareholder-value-based brand strategies, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 20-30.
- Eyring, AR (2002) Inside-Out Branding for a Change, Interbrand, September 30, USA.
- Galligan C, Pearson, D and Wilson R 1992 (1992) Strategic Marketing Management; planning, implementation and control, Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford, England.
- Hancock B (2002) Trent Focus for Research and Development in Primary Health Care, An Introduction to Qualitative Research, Trent Focus Group, University of Nottingham, UK
- Hiscock, J (2002) The Brand Insiders, *Marketing*, May 23, pp. 24-25
- Hopelain J (2003) Brand metrics strengthen business health, *Marketing News*, March 31.
- Jankowicz AD (2000) Business Research Projects, 3 edition, Thompson Learning, London.
- Johnson G and Scholes K (2002) Exploring Corporate Strategy, Text and Cases, 6 Edition, Pearson Education Limited England.
- Kapferer J-N (1997) Strategic Brand Management; Creating, sustaining brand equity long term 2e, Kogan Page, London.
- Keller KL, (1993) Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity; *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57, 1-22.
- Kotler, P (1991) Marketing Management, analysis, planning, implementation and control, 6 Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.
- Kotler, P (2003) Marketing Management, 11 Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.
- Malcolm, et al (2001) Corporate marketing and service brands- Moving beyond the fast-moving consumer goods model, *European Journal of Marketing*, Bradford, England.
- Mitchell, C (2002) Selling the Brand Inside, *Harvard Business Review*, Boston, January 2002.
- Mullins L (2003) Management and Organisational Behaviour, 2e, Pearson Educ. Ltd. England.
- Pringle H and Gordon W (2000) Brand Manners, how to create the self-confident organisation to live the Brand, John Wiley & Sons, England.
- Pringle H and Thompson (1999) How Cause Related Marketing builds brands, John Wiley & Sons, England

Ritson, M (2000) Marketing and Human Resource collaborate to harness employer brand power, *Marketing*, October 24, page 8

Smith, J (2001) Brand metrics, your key to measuring return on brand investments, Prophet, USA.

Tosti, DT and Stotz RD (2001) Brand: Building your brand from the inside out, *Journal of Marketing Management*, Chicago, Vol. 10, No 2, pp.28-33

Turley, L. W. and P. A. Moore (1995), Brand name strategies in the service sector, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 42-50.

Webster, K (2000) Branding your Employees, Interbrand, USA.

Vallaster C and de Chernatony L (2003) Services branding: The Role of Leadership during the Internal Brand Building process in multicultural organisations, Working Paper, University of Birmingham Business School, England.