

BoB paints 3 brands with one brush

The bank unpacks a new identity kit, aims to create awareness, and present a united front for all stakeholders



The first phase of a three-part campaign is all about building awareness about the new entity

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Even as Bank of Baroda (BoB) goes all out to emphasise the transition underway to bring Dena and Vijaya Bank into its fold is harmonious, a glimpse of just how fraught the task is was visible last month when Karnataka chief minister, HD Kumaraswamy made the merger an election issue. “Was the Dakshina Kannada bank, Vijaya Bank making a loss (that it had to be merged)?” he blustered at a political rally.

His question may have been buried in the cacophonous din of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, but the spectre of potential fissures that Kumaraswamy’s question raised, haunts everyone. Especially as BoB launches a campaign to familiarise customers and employees with the new dispensation.

The overriding theme in the ads is that this is a merger between equals, even though there is no doubt that the bank

in charge is BoB. The campaign has three children donning the colours of the three banks. Bank of Baroda (vermillion), Vijaya Bank (yellow) and Dena Bank (blue) and its tagline is ‘*Ab saath hatn teen, behtar se behtareen*’ (Three together, better than the best).

O Kaul, general manager-Marketing and Wealth Management, BoB, said “The entire communication focuses on the coming together of the three banks as one. Special care has been taken to give equal prominence to all three brands and their colours.”

Dipika Narayan, vice president and executive business director with JWT, the agency that designed the campaign said the bank gave them a simple brief. “Announce the amalgamation. But be mindful that all key stakeholders across the three banks: customers, employees and investors across geographies should be communicated to effectively and that they feel good about it,” she said.

The team saw two ways to

approach the project. Either focus on the scale that the merged entity would achieve and the game changing aspect this embodied or focus on the collective power of three. “Everyone felt that we needed simple emotions to be leveraged that could go beyond making just a grand statement, to instilling a sense of pride and belonging. Which is why ‘Power of 3’ (the campaign theme) — that ensures all the three entities are given their due recognition with the promise that together the future will be better,” said Narayan.

This is perhaps one way of keeping potential clashes at bay, especially the kind being presaged about Vijaya Bank. Founded in 1931 by the late A B Shetty, a local politician and philanthropist and a group of farmers in

Karnataka, the bank has a strong hold in the communities it serves. Also the brand name and its mascot have national recall. Post-merger its identity will have to give way to that of BoB, which could lead to problems with in and with customers.

Narayan said that it was important to lead customers gently into the change. For the time-being, the logos, signage, cheque books and cards, website url, apps, etc will continue as is. In signage and wherever else possible, there will be a line, ‘Now Bank of Baroda’ and the focus will only be on the celebratory message of ‘Power of 3’, she explained.

The campaign has been divided into three phases—awareness, engagement and relationship building. The first phase is ongoing, which is a part of the overall 360 degree amalgamation awareness campaign. The second phase shall be an engagement campaign wherein customer testimonials and success stories shall be shared

and engagement shall be built around that. The second phase shall overlap with the conclusion of the first phase to maintain continuity and leverage on the momentum. The third phase shall build relationships with prospects via product promotions and business conversion.

The entire process is expected to last, anywhere between 12 to 18 months. The bank is deliberately taking it slow. Rushing through could bring everything toppling down said experts, pointing out some lessons to be drawn from the SBI experience.

How big a role has the SBI merger played on BoB? None wants to talk specifics but Narayan said, “The uniqueness of this amalgamation is historical. We did not have any precedent that we could follow.”

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DIPIKA NARAYAN
V-P & executive business director, JWT