

# Organizational Improvements by Brand Building Strategies in Axia Academy

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#### **Abstract**

The training industry is a very competitive and an established market. Lots of corporate training company are introduced yearly and even there is exhibition to showcase the upcoming releases. With lots of corporate training companies around the country, some of the company even need to end their operation because of so many factors. Since the market is getting more competitive and changing daily, new comer like Axia Academy Sdn Bhd (AASB) need to find ways to survive. They are facing strong challenges and competitions in the dynamic market. Sales and Marketing Department need to come out with effective plan, Human Resources Department need to recruiting suitable talent and Finance Department need to strengthen cash flow that deeply impact on its daily operation system. Therefore, by using SWOT analysis strategy, AASB has gone through comprehensive exercise to look indepth for solutions. Strategies involved in market positioning and decision making has been recommended to overcome in Sales and Marketing Department. Human Resources Department has been recommended to leverage on latest technology, while Finance Department to use smart accounting to strengthen company's cash flow. Good service, competitive price and good quality of are some of the minimum requirement needed from consumers. Building brand equity is the major essence to gain customers in a faster track for Axia Academy. This has been a big challenge from timeline, to retain customer's confidence and loyalty towards its services.

#### **Keywords**

Corporate Training Industry, Brand Equity, Challenges, Marketing Plan, Cash Flow.

# **Objectives**

The case takes place in Axia Academy Sdn. Bhd. (AASB); a people development, education and business consulting company located in Penang, Malaysia. There is a need for AASB to improve its marketing strategies to meet customer requirements and needs, since the corporate training industry is growing and becoming more challenging.

After discussing this case, students will be able to understand:

- 1) Strategies involved in market positioning and decision making.
- 2) Importance of human resource's department role and ideas to the successful talent acquisition.
- 3) Impact and effect of using smart accounting in organisation.

#### Introduction

James Tin is becoming increasingly frustrated since his appointment as the Chief Executive Officer of Axia Academy in March, 2017. He had changed multiple strategies and tried to make improvement on marketing ideas such as "Arts of Marketing" by renowned guru, Professor Phillip Kotler. As a new company, he needs to find out additional suitable strategies to market his company.

In the existing plan, there are multiple element involved, from the basic marketing mix to complicated theories in arts of marketing. James Tin has proposed suitable strategies and ways to make necessary changes. Since March 2017, a team of strong alliance led by Axia Academy's Executive Director, Miss Guo Aixia has tried to implement the idea of market positioning and high efficient promotion to reach customers' attention. It seems that the customers are attracted by the new market positioning by AASB.

James Tin has been mulling ways to address a number of serious challenges in order to grab the business opportunity. Lengthy brainstorming sessions with his staffs concluded that immense overhaul of the current strategic plan should be modify to reach maximum level of efficiency. Since the company do not have constant revenue for the past few months, many strategies and decisions need to change, the staff of the company also need to change and align to the company's vision, mission and goal. Therefore, the company need to further understand its market positioning, so as to measure and improve its revenue, differentiate and identified the existing market strategies and customer demand as well as understand the challenges faced by the company with the help of the consultation team.

Hence, the board of director of AASB would like to solve the issue comprehensively as any prolong of those will definitely impact the revenue of the company. Failure for James Tin to identify quick solutions might greatly hamper his company's future expansion plan and seriously impact the business strategy he had planned throughout the months. So, he is under tremendous stress to deal with the situations and regain company's competitive strength.

# Protagonists of the Study

The Chief Executive Officer of Axia Academy, James Tin, grew-up in Kelantan, East-Coast of Malaysia. He completed his primary and secondary education from SRJK (C) Chung Cheng, Kota Bharu, Kelantan and SMJK (C) Chung Cheng, Kota Bharu, Kelantan respectively. He further his Form Six studies in Sultan Ismail College, Kota Bharu, Kelantan. He received an Honorary Degree in Business Administration from Open University Malaysia, and further obtaining a Degree in Master in Business Administration from the same University. Currently, he is one of the Doctoral (DBA) candidate of Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah Darul Aman.

He started his career as Central Depository System Executive at Faiz Securities Sdn Bhd, Kota Bharu, Kelantan for seven years. He left the capital market industry to get involve in sales and marketing industry in Kuala Lumpur for ten years. After graduated and get his Bachelor Degree and MBA, he joined RHB Investment Bank and was appointed as one of the branch manager in Penang. After six years of service in RHB Investment Bank, he resigned and joined Axia Academy Sdn Bhd as a Chief Execitive Officer until now.

Miss Guo Aixia, Executive Director of AASB, a very gorgeous multi-languages spoken Chinese citizen set-up her own corporate training company in Penang, Malaysia early 2017. She is among the pioneer in achieving "One Belt One Road" vision by China Premier, Mr Xi Jing Ping to connect the whole Euro-Asia into one big business rim. Graduated from Urumqi University, Xinjiang, China with major in Russia Language, Miss Guo Aixia started her career as a Russian Language interpreter in an international trading company at border city of Horgos, Xinjiang, China.

She moved to Guangzhou, China to set-up her own trading company in year 2000. After fifteen years of hard work, now her company has established among traders and business partner from Russia and other Russian speaking countries like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan. After China President Xi announced his vision to realised modern "One Belt One Road", Miss Guo had deciced to grab the opportunity to expend this great idea and opportunities outside her own homeland. She came to Penang, Malaysia in 2013, and after three years of observation, she decided to form a professional corporate training company to become a middleperson company to bridge top people between the two countries.

#### **Industry Background**

In response to the rapid technological changes and the increasing knowledge intensity of the economy, continuous efforts are being made to develop a knowledge society culture among Malaysians. Lifelong learning is regarded as critical for the country's drive towards a knowledge-based economy, establishing community colleges, open universities and distance education; and encouraging employers to promote lifelong learning through training and retraining.

The Eighth Malaysia Plan, 2001to 2005, and the Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006 to 2010 had sought to develop human resources in line with developing Malaysia into a knowledge based economy. In this regard, priority has been given to increase the supply of highly skilled and knowledge manpower through efforts such as:

- Reorienting the education and training system so that knowledge, skills and expertise acquired can support the knowledge-based economy. Priority has been given to the teaching of science, mathematics and languages as well as the development of critical thinking and entrepreneurial skills.
- Increasing the overall capacity of education and training institutions through the expansion and upgrading of existing institutions as well as the establishment of new ones. More advance skills training centers in specialised fields have been established in view of the greater demand for highly skilled workers. Community colleges have also been set up throughout the country to provide training to school leaving youths, workers and the public. The Skills Development Fund has been enhanced in order to promote and increase accessibility to skills training in the country.
- Improving the quality of education and training delivery system by strengthening coordinating and monitoring mechanism, reviewing and standardising curriculum, introducing new subjects, courses and program, giving more flexibility to public institutions to review and design courses in collaboration with the industry, as well as increasing the supply of qualified teachers and instructors.
- Developing and promoting Malaysia as a regional center of educational excellence by encouraging the development of centers of excellence, improving the adequacy and quality of teaching staff, as well as strengthening research and development capabilities within institutions of higher learning. These institutions are also encouraged to promote aggressively their programs abroad.
- Reinforcing positive values through the education and training system, including good work ethics, diligence, integrity, tolerance, gratitude and pursuit of excellence.

Various policies and strategies have been introduced to encourage firms in Malaysia to play a bigger role in training their own employees, the most prominent of which is the Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF) which became operational in 1993. The HRDF was introduced through the enactment of the Human Resources Development Act in 1992. It provides for the imposition of a levy on employers to be collected into the HRDF, as a central pool of training fund. The Fund aims to enhance private industry role in the provision of training in Malaysia, complementing the government's effort to increase the supply of trained skilled workforce in the country. It basically promotes retraining and skills upgrading for the workforce in selected industry sectors. The Act also provides for the creation of a Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), with representatives from the private sector and responsible government agencies, and a Secretariat to administer the HRDF schemes.

# Company Background

Based in Penang, Malaysia, AASB is a Corporate Training, Human Development and Business Consulting Company incorporated since 2017. The company specialise in Professional Training and Human Capital Development, for both management and technical skills; in addition to the extensive industrial experience in Human Resources Management. It has a pool of experts in its faculty specializing in specific areas that serve organisations of numerous industries.

Axia Academy's mission is to design and deliver high impact of professional programs in people development environment. The vision is to deliver continuously professional education and training solutions. To accomplish its brand direction, AASB has set-up goals to:

- a) make a difference by making lives better.
- b) integrate in everything that they do.
- c) educate that makes a difference.

AASB work together with other companies as smart partnership in providing hands-on solutions to help solve day to day business challenges such as developing by their human capital, branding, advertising their image and marketing their products. AASB believes in a comprehensive approach that is becoming a part of their client's business and knowing as much about their operations and challenges as possible.

AASB offered training and learning classes that are tailored to provide solutions to help increase the productivity, performance and profitability of the manufacturing, transport, banking, trading, hospitality, oil and gas, insurance, banking, property and services related businesses and organizations. AASB believes in customising and developing specific solutions through a collaborative process designed to identify a client's needs, requirements and objectives. The unique approach combined with the strong faculty of experts, competent certified professional trainers, and multi-lingual facilitators puts its classes and workshop in the position to establish the program of its business.

Through the connection and experience working with other industries, AASB truly understands the current companies' training needs. The companies no longer needed a theory-based training but a practical training with applicable knowledge. It is with this in mind that AASB incorporates to improve the current trend in the industrial training sector. It is a catalyst for attaching the missing linkage between the knowledge learned, and the practical work applications, with the ultimate goal of providing a long-term solution to the company. AASB needs to listen and understand its client's issues and business objectives. AASB works together with its customers to provide the necessary skills, so as to achieve the competitive edge.

AASB always believe that training does not stop at preaching in front of a whiteboard. They stress on hands on application, real live experiences and front end technology. Each consultant is matched to the requirement of the client. They are specialist in their own field who have substantial experience and are able to share gems. These will bring their client to the front end of technology right in the heart of their company, empowering their staff with global industrial knowledge and current practices.

## Organisation Background

Located in Penang, Malaysia, AASB has four different divisions. The Sales and Marketing Department team played a vital role in the penetration of domestic market which is viewed as a huge breakthrough in the company's overall revenue. They encompasses business strategy to advertise the company products to the customers, internally and outsource.

The Human Resource Department develops, advices and implements policies pertaining to the effective use of company employees. It ensures that the right balance of staffs are employed in terms of expertise and experience, facilitate and conduct the training program to develop the competency of the employees to align with the mission of the company. The department normally work closely with other departments to provide consultations, defines and implements various policies e.g. working conditions, performance management and disciplinary procedures, and the compensation and benefits of the employees. Another important role of human resource department is to conduct recruitment, identify the hiring needs and facilitate the hiring process. The Finance Department of the company is responsible for the daily business's transactional accounting, managing the cash flow of the company to ensure sufficient cash is available for day to day payment and assisting management to make strategic decisions by providing useful financial information.

The Operation Department is responsible for the company's running operation as well to meet the expectations and needs of the company itself. The department works together with sales and marketing department to identify potential customers. Operations department has a broad and specific responsibilities. It includes monitoring and analysing the current system of production or provision to check its effective, and working out a strategy for improvement. It manages day-to-day activities, analysing statistics and reading and writing reports. The department liaison with other department members, including interacting with managers of different departments of the company, presenting findings to stakeholders and higher management as well as training and supervising new employees and tracking and measuring staff performance.

# **Company Operating Model**

#### Leadership

In the past, organisations were only expected to be effective, efficient, and profitable. In today's connected global economy where constant, rapid change is the name of the game (Kruger, 2012), past expectations are just the tip of the iceberg. Organisational leaders and managers face new challenges as they strive to help their teams cope and succeed in the face of regular, ongoing change. Many organisations promote the erroneous belief that leaders are born with some innate, supernatural qualities, while managers are merely mortal humans with great organisational skills. However, AASB believe it is not true.

Effective leaders do have to listen to all their stakeholders, employees, board members, stockholders, clients, collaborators, and partners. Leaders must also learn how to increase their emotional intelligence while leading from their core values. Leadership development and management development matter because necessary skills can be taught to anyone and mastered by anyone who is willing to develop himself/herself consistently and be disciplined about it.

## Customer Experience Management

Customer Experience Management (CEM) is a concept that describes how a company takes control of how it interacts with its customers. Typically, each group in an organisation will build

out customer interactions from its own perspective that of the various silos. CEM is about viewing and then improving the interactions between their business and customer entirely from the customers' perspective and across the entire journey they have with their business (Baker, 2013). Why do this? Well, the ultimate aim is two-fold: to build customer loyalty and positive word of mouth; and to reduce customer churn and detractors who speak negatively about their business. Hence, better business results!

## Team Effectiveness

At AASB, it always believe a successful company relies on effective teams to meet the needs of its clients and fulfil the organisation's purpose. Team Effectiveness describes a planning process which, by exploring mutual expectations, helps a functional team to perform optimally by defining their vision or strategy, short and long term goals, critical success factors, roles and responsibilities. It also aims to enhance relationships by creating an improved understanding of working and communication styles and roles, thus building trust, team cohesion and congruency.

By analysing individual and team strengths and weaknesses, AASB can helps identify the role duplication or gaps, and provide focus and direction. High performance teams do not just appear; they are developed and nurtured by themselves. Leaders with vision cannot guarantee the development of such high performance teams, nor can members who desire to be part of such teams. The development of high performance teams takes the combined efforts of visionary leaders and motivated team members. In addition, facilitators with expertise in team building are needed.

#### Strategic Brand Management

Strategic Brand Management is pretty crucial in case of the modern day business world as brand is the most distinguishing aspect of a company (Keller, 2013). It has been observed that in the present day business world, it is quite difficult to make a proper strategic brand management plan, as there is pressure from several quarters. The concept of strategic brand management is important one in the context of the present day business world.

The significance of the process of strategic brand management is linked in some way to the importance of the brands of the companies. The brands are of utmost importance to the business owners as well as the consumers. This is because of the fact that the brands are the distinguishing features of the companies and separate a particular company from other companies that offer similar services.

Just like Total Quality Management (TQM), strategic brand management is an integrative philosophy of management for continuously improving the quality of products and processes. Strategic Brand Management is a long-term and integrative approach that the company adopts in creating, developing and managing its brand. The Strategic Brand Management process adds value to the company's products and services by creating a unique identity in the marketplace. It allows the company to differentiate itself from its competitors, and communicate its message and market position in a consistent and holistic manner.

# **Company Product and Courses**

## Personal Development Leadership

The primary purpose of this Personal Development Leadership is for working adults' course. It helps the course participants to discover their purposes in life and to utilise their potentials to apply a systematic formula of success principles to be more productive, happy and successful in their personal and professional lives. This life changing proven course has helped a person from a 'nobody' to become 'somebody' who are useful to one's family, company and society.

## Effective Managers of this New Age

Management is about people, not just part of the systems of an organisation. Today's effective managers are those who can get their people to work together in harmony and productively to achieve the objectives and goals of their respective departments and organisations. The challenge today is to adapt and apply these skills during this very competitive world of business in order to achieve the highest degree of productivity, quality and profitability. It is geared to develop their attitudes and confidence to apply theses skills to be more effective managers of this New Age.

## World-Class Leadership Skills of this New Age

This power-packed course is to enhance the knowledge, skills and competencies of the course participants to become outstanding leaders of this New Age of their respective teams, business units and organisations. They will be strengthen and inspired mentally and strategically to bring out the very best in their people for better work performance and higher productivity.

# Advanced Leadership

Today's leaders whether they are company directors, business owners, managers, executives and supervisors, in order to advance in their careers and businesses, they must constantly expand and widen their horizons and develop new leadership skills and best practices. This intensive course assesses their leadership capabilities needed beyond their familiar knowledge and skills and effectively deals with current and future leadership challenges that they are bound to face and overcome effectively.

## Effective Supervisory Skills

Managing and leading people successfully in today's extremely rapid and often bewildering pace is a critical requirement for any supervisor. To get the best out of people, to understand and demonstrate what it means to be a leader, to build a total quality winning team, to motivate and develop their people, to show initiative, be pro-active and to act as role models by example are what this two-day highly interactive training program teaches when they return to their workplace.

# **Professional Selling Skills**

A powerful proven course that is designed to enable salespeople to motivate their prospective customers to buy their products or and services. They will learn the latest art of motivational salesmanship i.e. participative and relationship selling, whereby they will enhance their sales knowledge and selling skills, and establish a closer working relationship with their customers.

# Break-Thru' Sales Performance

"When the going gets tough, only the tougher keeps growing!" will be the main focus of this power-packed course for the salespeople during these tough times. The salesforce must equip themselves with a tougher mentality, successful selling strategies and superb inner power to break-thru' the mental barriers that are preventing them to achieve their sales targets and goals.

# Sales Force Management

This result-oriented course is designed for sales leaders who need to plan, organise and execute the sales management process to achieve the sales targets and goals of their respective sales teams and organisations.

# **Tele-Marketing Skills**

Learn to sell in the most cost-effective way by acquiring the essential skills to be a more professional and effective tele-marketer using the telephone. This course will help participants to appreciate and master the effective use of the telephone to achieve more sales.

## Quality Customer Service

This often-requested course will explore the essential skills required to meet and even exceed the needs and requirements of the customers. It is the necessary customer service standards and skills to make a good first impression and to show that they really care to fulfil their customers' needs and wants. Participants will be motivated to provide excellent service in order to satisfy and even delight their customers.

# Customer Care and Satisfaction

Customer care and satisfaction is a total approach to maintain and retain the loyalty of the customers. At the end of this course, participants will be able to understand the importance of improving customer satisfaction and delight, know their roles and systems of caring, providing, maintaining and increasing a loyal customer base.

#### Successful Negotiating Skills

The ability to negotiate a favourable position while allowing the other party to achieve their own goals is essential to a person's personal and professional success. The knowledge and skills shared are field-tested and participants will experience hands-on practice of the methods shared in order to create a win-win outcome for all the parties concerned. Definitely this is one of the favourite courses requested by individuals and organizations.

#### Effective Communication Skills

Communication is a complex process that continually occurs at all levels in every organisation. Communication skills are one of the essential factor that binds people together to work in harmony and productively. The abilities to present, to speak, to listen, to provide proper feedback, and to encode a response are essential, if you are to succeed and even to survive in the business world. As the world becomes increasingly dependent upon what others say and do and how they say and do, the need to communicate effectively with others becomes absolutely vital. Even organisations have come to recognise that incalculable losses can result from the time and effort wasted by all personnel in poor attempts to communicate with their internal and external customers.

# Effective Public Speaking

Many people go about their jobs or business, without realising the urgent need to improve and polish up their communication skills especially public speaking and presentation skills. This powerful course is for those people who want to speak accurately, clearly, confidently and convincingly in any public event. Definitely one of our signature courses for entrepreneurs, business owners, managers, supervisors, sales and marketing executives and professionals from various businesses.

#### Changing Mindsets and Managing Change

This power-packed course is designed especially for professionals and leaders in every organisation who are willing to embrace every change by changing their mindsets for continuous improvement, and rise up to any challenge successfully. This popular course will help them to be more productive and respond quickly and positively to change. It also helps to enhance their moral, competitive drive and esprit de' corps, of everyone in order to maximise their work performance, leadership capabilities and productivity.

#### Break-Thru' Peak Performance

Peak performers are those achievers, who perform with their very best of their abilities with consistency and achieving their desired results. This life-altering course with performance-based strategies and result-focused solutions will help course participants to break-thru' their mental, physical and emotional barriers that are blocking their path to achieve better outcomes.

# World-Class Coaching Skills

This course is designed for any leader who influences, manages, directs, supervises, teaches, coaches, or motivates others to perform better in any field of human endeavour. People have different strengths, shortcomings and personal lives that will affect their abilities to perform better at work. This interesting and effective course will help to educate and inspire people to perform better in spite of obstacles, problems and disappointments. This course also helps to cultivate and adopt the characteristics and skills of world-class coaches.

## Coaching, Counselling and Mentoring

This insightful course explores the attitudes, traits and core skills needed by leaders who are directors, managers and supervisors, providing proper support for the professional development, performance and growth of their people. Coaching helps your people to improve their ability to do their current jobs and to increase their potential to do more in the future. Counselling helps to address problematic workers, and mentoring is a process whereby you work with selected people to nurture and groom them to become future leaders.

#### Be An Outstanding Professional At Work

This very popular course is to help participants to be more professional and outstanding in upholding their roles, responsibilities and functions in their jobs. They will acquire the right attitudes, work values, and result-driven behavior to be top professionals and achieve higher productivity. More importantly, they will learn to have meaningful purpose, passion, joy and pride in their work. They will learn to love what they do, and do what they enjoy to produce excellent results.

## Managing Conflicts and Difficult People

Managers, executives and supervisors must learn to handle and manage effectively all types of difficult behavour of people. Human conflicts may also arise due to differences in attitudes, values, beliefs, ideas, behaviour and perceptions of people during stressful work situations. This powerful course will systematically take the participants step-by-step to understand and respond positively to the various types of behaviour of difficult people. They will also learn to identify, manage and handle conflicts that may arise amongst their fellow-workers in order to instil a positive motivating work environment for everyone.

#### **Issues/Problems**

#### Sales and Marketing Department

The Sales and Marketing Department had been reporting seeing issues for the past few months but still see no sign of improvement. The problem is centred among the department who is

responsible to market its product and to reach its targeted prospects. The department has known what had happen with the market; AASB is facing strong challenging and competing in the dynamic market. The terms such as "hyper competitive" or "fast moving" have been around for number of years, the speed of change at the customer and competitor level is accelerating at unprecedented levels. At the customer level, this is reflected in the "location based" marketing based on mobile apps, real-time tracking of customer behaviour, and continual advancement of new, nimbler competition.

"There are lots of excitements going on and you will never know what is the next issue or task you will be getting. Bottom line, we must all acknowledge that this is all about converting our good service to our customer. When customer is happy, they will continue to call us for trainings, and they pay us money. With the money, then only the company can pay every employee's salary. We must always deliver what we have committed and it must be a quality work from us."...message came from company's Executive Director, Miss Guo Aixia.

The department staffs are feeling the burden now. They need to act fast to discuss and communicate so as to find the solutions in the short period.

# **Human Resource Department**

The Human Resource Manager, Miss June, who is responsible for the talent requisition and also employee development has been struggling since March, 2017 where employee turnover rate see an upward trend. It has increased from 20 percent to 40 percent, which create a bad reputation to the company. Whenever there are employees leaving the company, it is a loss to the company as great skills employees are not able to be retained.

"CEO: Hello Miss June, please update me on the new recruitment."

Miss June: Mr. CEO, looking at the trend now, it is very difficult to get new staffs. Even with the help of the hire staffing and recruiting companies, it's not moving any further, but it will make the situation worse. We are paying them for nothing!

CEO: Get all our managers to help, let them know our current situation and let's do something before it is too late. Please get ready for a contingency and recovery plan!"

## Finance Department

"Boss,

We are running into another serious issue, which would most likely impact the operation of our company. Our working capital now is in a critical level. If sales and marketing team cannot bring any revenue in the short term, we all will be in trouble. Hope to get favourable response from you.

Thanks and regards,

Helen,

Finance Manager."

An e-mail from AASB Finance Manager to CEO.

The mentioned above was just part of the issues. The middle team did not do any better than just escalate their problem to their CEO. Every member of this relatively management team was battling for career survival at this critical stage.

Issues start to swarm AASB's CEO, James Tin. Sales and Marketing Department team performance did not meet company's expectation, HRD facing critical issue of getting talent, and Finance Department are under fire with company's cash flow.

"I never experience such a tough situation before; things do not look good at all. The whole operation team are working extra hard to try putting off the fire. They are working their hearts out but I just don't see how the situation can be turn if we keep going that mode. Don't get me wrong! I don't want my career to end over here. I work late nights and sometime overnight but not like this one as we don't foresee converging point."....James Tin expressed out to Miss Guo Aixia during their company directors meeting.

"James, please ask yourself! Is this a marketing's job or someone else's too? If so, who? What are the costs and benefits of different approaches in doing so? Is it simply trying to become more agile and respond quicker when changes occur a viable alternative to trying to better predict marketplace dynamics and change? For us, to get a seat in the training industry in Penang, we should first focus on building brand awareness...."

So, during the meeting, three major problems have been identified in their company which are:

- 1) Strategies involved in market positioning and decision making.
- 2) Importance of human resource's department role and ideas to the successful talent acquisition.
- 3) Impact and effect of using smart accounting in organisation.

## **Problem Analysis**

Problem Analysis determines the degree of the problem and if the problem is a genuinely related to the specific area under investigated. For example, RHB Investment Bank requested a study to estimate overhead cost to efficiency per staff in a branch. In this case, AASB use SWOT analysis to identify their problems.

#### **SWOT** Analysis

According to Gregory (2017), SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool that helps a business owner identify his or her own strengths and weaknesses, as well as any opportunities and threats that may exist in a specific business situation. A SWOT analysis is most commonly used as part of a marketing plan, but it is also a good tool for general business strategizing, and to use as a

starting point for team discussions. A SWOT matrix is usually depicted as a square divided into four quadrants. Each quadrant represents one element of the SWOT analysis which is Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Therefore, James Tin take all the elements and ideas that he has and starts to plot it into the right quadrant shows in **Table 1**.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis for AASB

#### Strength Weaknesses 1) Highly motivated young age team 1) Take long time to build reputation in members, with average age not more the industry. than 30. Latest technology helps to 2) Lack of operating capital. reach customers. 3) Existing young talent lack of 2) Leverage on existing technology in exposure, working experience. building brand equity. 4) Pricing not competitive. 3) Wild network coverage domestic and international. 4) Demographic competitiveness. **Opportunity Threat** 1) One of the top corporate training 1) Strong industry peers competition. company in Penang by creating value 2) Economy downturn. 3) Not enough technical support from to existing customers. 2) Cross-industry corporate training local authority. programs. 4) Many restriction of syllabus from the 3) Expand business to other region, Government. domestic and international. 4) Sharing resources with other talent among the same industry.

# Strategies Involved in Market Positioning and Decision Making

The next day after the meeting, James Tin immediately call his sales and marketing team for an urgent meeting. He knows that he need to act fast and need to align everyone in the team to have the same objectives. Everyone in the department seems to agree with him. They had pointed and identified out some points that need to focus on. It seems that the sales and marketing team of the company is the main issue of the company. Having a smart, professional and driven sales team is a crucial part of company's growth. Primary function in doing sales is to educate, support and convey the benefits of the business. The team believe, by having good strategies can improve company's revenue and its cash flow. Hence, the sales and marketing propose with these inputs:

#### Email

Having a database of emails is definitely valuable for a business. It provides marketing with the ability to target certain segments of clients and send tailored messages. Getting the right product information at the right time can be extremely profitable for a business, inviting clients to choose over their competitors even in the pre-sale stage. Another reason through email marketing has value for business owners is that it is an easy way to start reaching consumers on mobile without investing a lot in new technology or software. According to an April report from Pew Research Center, fifty two percent of US cellphone owners access their emails from their phones. On the other hand, according to MCMC in Malaysia, there are seventy five percent of cell phone owner access their emails from their phone. Email marketing also works with other mobile devices. Forrester Research released a study that found forty two percent of retailers' email messages were opened by consumers on their smartphones and seventeen percent were opened on tablets. This means that nearly three out of every five email marketing messages doubles as a mobile marketing message.

The best reason to use email marketing is that it is easy, effective, and inexpensive (Roesler, 2014). Email marketing allows business owners to reach a large number of consumers at a rate of few Ringgit per message. For small-business owners on a budget, this makes it a better choice than traditional marketing channels like TV, radio, or direct mail. The point of all this is that email may be an old tactic, but it remains a vital one. It is relatively easy to get started with email marketing, so there's no excuse for business owners to not taking advantage of this tool. Understandably, business owners may be too busy to handle the email marketing on their own, but this is something that any Web marketing professional can help with.

# Effective Advertising

Advertising can be a good process for a salesperson. It provides information, educate the client, excite them about the possible new opportunities and allowed them to sign up for either a demo or a trial. Placed strategically, advertising can reach extremely large amount of target market; being a highly effective form of lead generation for a company.

There are different types of advertising that can fit it into company's strategy. Traditional routes like television ads can be quite expensive so it is worth exploring other options like social media sites (like Facebook) where they sponsor updates to market their product to targeted audience.

Advertising is the branch of marketing that deals with communicating to customers about products, brands, services and companies. The Internet, as a global communications medium, provides advertisers with unique and often cost-effective ways of reaching advertising audiences. Advertising on the Internet is certainly a necessity for modern businesses, especially those that do business outside of their local community. Consumers use the Internet for more than simply entertainment or information, as they do with radio, television, magazines and newspapers. Consumers use the Internet to assist them in nearly every aspect of life, creating countless opportunities to place relevant, targeted ad messages.

The Internet's allow's advertisers to reach significantly more people than traditional advertising media at a fraction of the cost. Internet advertising is ideal for businesses with a national or international target market and large-scale distribution capabilities. As a rule, the more people

your business serves, the most cost-efficient internet advertising can be. Internet advertising can also be more targeted than some traditional media, ensuring that your messages are seen by the most relevant audiences.

# Referral System

Nothing sells better than a referral (Black, 2015). With more than sixty percent of the research being done by a prospect before they even contact a sales-person, one third party endorsement can sometimes be more powerful than hundreds of presentations. Using the correct approach, a suitable referral system can be a great source of high quality leads. There are plenty of choices for implementing referral systems at organisation, encouraging clients to refer them to their colleagues in their networking circle. Anything from free product, to a subscription, a points system or a competition to win a trendy gig ticket, can drive referrals and provide companies with leads they never dreamed of.

Referral marketing can build a lot of satisfied customers. In fact, the cycle self-perpetuates with satisfied customers referring their business to other interested customers. Thus, the process starts from professionals referring their business to customers, but continues with satisfied customers bringing in more leads. Professional networking via referral marketing can also increase sales revenue. Referral marketing does not have a role at every company, which is why James Tin, the CEO determine which method of marketing will produce the best results and the highest ROI AASB.

A good referral marketing system can quickly multiply. People feel more comfortable when a product or service is recommended by someone they know and trust. This is especially true if the product or service is expensive. Referrals do not involve direct selling. Instead a satisfied customer sells the products and services for the company. If a satisfied customer tells a close friend about a certain business, then their trust is immediately transferred to the company, irrespective of if he has heard about it or not.

#### Networking

Networking is one of the most essential personal skills for business people, but it is extremely important for entrepreneurs. Communication and strong presence in the entrepreneurial ecosystem are productive approaches which help to build strong relationships with other entrepreneurs from different age groups, nationality and fields of interest. Business networking events organized around the world bring together extraordinary groups of highly-skilled and talented entrepreneurs who are united around the idea of communication, sharing, creating and developing ideas and last but not least meeting with potential investors. These events attract people from different experience levels and backgrounds. All these people are looking for connection, inspiration, advice, opportunities and mentors. Networking is powerful in many different ways. Not only entrepreneurs will feel inspired and motivated after attending specific events or meet ups, but also many exceptional opportunities can occur if they impress potential investors or business partners.

People buy from people through networking. In most cases, "the better you know a person the better they like you." The department Manager noticed that this is a very good way in promoting its brand into his/her networking. There is a good chance for him to promote to best prospect through in his/her colleagues and college alumni, a gala organize by the charity the company's support or any other networking event that people within industry will attend. Moreover, by meeting a client the company's can make an impression that even if the company do not has a need for its product right now, it will get in touch if such an opportunity arises.

With a motivated group of business owners comes an abundance of opportunities. There are always lots of opportunities that come from networking and in fact this is where huge benefits of business networking. Opportunities like joint ventures, client leads, partnerships, speaking and writing opportunities, business or asset sales and the opportunities within networking are really endless. Networking provides great source of connections, and really opens the door to talk to highly influential people that they would not otherwise be able to easily talk to or find.

## Online Presence

With the whole of society moving online, it is vital for a successful company to has a website that is informative, easy to navigate and provides potential clients with everything they need to know about the business. Moreover, to increase potential client's, successful marketers have to focus on writing good posts on the targeted content related to the target market. This will make people to visit its website, and with the strategic and tactical landing pages; will let its customers obtain emails of new leads.

In actual sense, "brand building" actually means building a potential customer's trust in a company or product (Ghodeswar, 2008). Providing an online presence not only gives a customer access to company's product or service, but it also provides a way for the customer to "check out" on the company. Online reviews, interactions with other customers and the frequency and quality posts help to form a positive impression of company in the potential customer's mind, making a future sale more likely. The Internet encompasses a much larger area than the local to business' office or store. Website presence reaches out to everyone who passes by virtual doorstep, which could include people from right next door or from another country. Depending on specific industry and offerings, this could open up a much wider customer base than relying on face-to-face interactions would.

#### Meet the Decision Maker

It is important to identify and set a meeting with a key decision maker at target company at the earliest convenience. Most of the time, it would be The Vice President and above level executives, who have a yearly budget. One of the most important aspects of sales is getting in front of the decision maker. Most entrepreneurs have faced the situation of making a brilliant pitch, only to discover that all their time and energy went into convincing someone not authorized to pull the trigger.

Top level decision makers buy strategic or business fit, not product or solution fit. Therefore, they have willingness to invest more money to get solutions that help them reach growth

objectives or that align with cost-cutting measures. By getting to the top decision maker will give a chance to explain how their solution fits into the long-term goals of the company. At lower levels, managers are mostly concerned with how a product or solution meets the day-to-day responsibilities in their particular position. Even if the low-level person has purchasing power, his budget and willingness to spend it are less.

The advantages of connecting as soon as possible with top decision makers are clear. Company gain significant time efficiency, increase ability to be heard by authoritative buyers and has opportunities to sell higher value solutions. The company should not lose out to its competitors by it come to the main decision makers from the outset. It ensure should the company has the information it will want to hear before making the call. If the company do this, and if executed correctly, it will reap the rewards and be one step ahead of its competitors.

"Brilliant! Keep it up! Please do what is necessary to support other department as well and as front-liner, the future of the company depends on our team work. It is not a one person or one department's task, it is everyone's task."... Message from the CEO to all sales and marketing staff.

# Solution to HRD Role and Ideas to the Successful Talent Acquisition

Over the weekend, the HR Manager has sacrifices her family moment by cracking her head looking for suitable ideas to get new talent as soon as possible. She has a very tough task as she need to balance out between cost and ROI (return of investment) of the company. This is one of the most daunting tasks any company has to find employees and expand their team. She knows that building a great team is high on the priority list for nearly every company. However, employers nowadays has no longer the upper hand when hiring.

Today's most talented professionals have their choice, with companies fighting for their attention and services. Company has to attract talent to their organisation, and challenge must be met head-on, in innovative ways. The key point is to sell potential employees on the benefits of working with their company. This will makes recruiting more effective, and in truth, the best recruiting techniques has its roots in the most effective marketing tactics. Miss June has draft out her points to be presented to her CEO on coming Monday.

#### Take Advantage of Social Media

Social media profiles have become standard tools for researching and evaluating talent. Instead of looking only at candidates' résumés, the employer can thoroughly vet them by looking at their LinkedIn, Twitter and other social media profiles. Normally, those potential candidates' social media profiles can highlighted personal experiences and interests that tie into professional lives and skills, and may also show the person is a perfect fit. The company has to get current employees to participate by joining in on the conversation, shooting short workplace videos and generally spreading the word about the beneficial features of working there. This is because people want to think they are doing something meaningful and valuable. They want to change

the world one day at a time. A great company mission will also align with candidates' own personal values.

Social media is a great tool for tapping into that sought-after pool of potential candidates who are not actively seeking a new role but would be open to change if the right opportunity came along. This is particularly important when recruiting for "Hot-Cakes" roles, such as Salesperson or Marketing Personal, where good candidates are more likely to be snapped up quicker. Employers can also use social media in two ways when hiring: to recruit candidates by publicising job openings and to conduct background checks to confirm a candidate's qualifications for a position. To be sure, the use of sites like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook for vetting potential candidates is a contentious issue in the HR community. Some argue that the practice is unethical and violates candidates' right to privacy. HR executives who turn a blind eye to social media have argued that the views and opinions people express in their free time have no bearing on their ability to get the job done. Still, HR teams who turn to social media often feel the information and photos posted on these platforms is in the public domain, and it would be foolish not to use it.

Whether an HR team incorporates social media vetting into their pre-hire screening process can be influenced by the industry, demographics of the workforce, public nature of the position and even the organizational culture. Yet, there are few universal pros and cons that HR professionals should weigh when decide whether to add social media to their screening tool kit, whereby a resume is a very small, static window into a potential employee's work experience and qualifications. In contrast, sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter allow candidates a dynamic platform for exhibiting their work. For instance, many journalists share links to their clips on Twitter, or even post samples of their articles to industry-specific portfolio sites. Graphic designers frequently will post samples of their work or pieces they find inspirational to social media, treating these sites like an evolving, informal portfolio.

#### Compensation Package

Money is important, but it is not the only thing top talent wants. They want a work environment that challenges them, allows for innovation, makes work more efficient but also provides worklife balance. This could mean paid time off (PTO), the ability to work from home, time to volunteer in their communities or the ability to take unpaid leave to pursue interests, to name a few. Deciding where to spend finite resources can be difficult though, especially for business owners who have never designed start-up compensation packages before. Therefore, the company should consider structures that promote additional work towards company objectives like bonuses and commissions, which can reduce fixed salary costs but still can meet prospective employees.

Efficient employment practices are inevitable towards the sustenance of goals by making sure that this important factor is set right on the path of productivity. There is no doubt that by employing the right kind of man for the right job can discard the wide space called ineffective business management. It is paramount to acknowledge and announce the total compensation to the company's employees. This needs to be done so that the significance of what the company are putting forth in compensation plan is clear and hence attracts and retains talent.

A compensation strategy may also include rewards for employees based on workplace performance. This may include a commission-based system that rewards employees for total amount of sales or for consistent positive feedback from customers. A reward system should be easy for employees to understand and attainable enough at its lower levels to encourage employees to work harder to reach higher goals.

Retaining quality workers requires a strategic plan for compensation that rewards employees for company loyalty. This is to encourage new employees to make a commitment to build a career with company business and deters established employees from jumping to other companies. Experienced workers will think twice about pursuing another opportunity if the new job also comes with a pay cut.

Perks and benefits can make or break company's ability to attract the best and brightest in the industry. Offering health insurance benefits to full-time workers should be part of the strategic compensation plan. It can combine health insurance with other company perks, including paid holidays and guaranteed paid vacation time, to attract more qualified workers to the company.

## Optimise for Mobile

One of the best ways to draw candidates is a mobile-friendly hiring process. Their apps or website should allow candidates to accept offers, hold live video interviews, complete referral tasks and self-schedule interviews. For retention purposes, they can also add functions for new employees: such as an interactive employee handbook, benefit registration, access to PTO balances and more.

Mobile evolution has placed the corporate training business in uncharted territory when it comes to hiring and recruiting this important demographic. In fact, according to Jobstreet.com, over 90 percent of job seekers are searching for work on their mobile device everywhere, even in bed, during their commute, in a restaurant, and at work. However, only fifty four percent of job applications are mobile friendly. On top of that, the results of the recruiting and hiring process dramatically improve when candidates visit from their mobile devices; yet most employers lose over ninety percent of interested job seekers when they do not offer a mobile-friendly process.

#### Expend Search Area

Today, advancements in cloud computing and videoconferencing have opened the doors to hiring remote staff members, so recruiters are no longer limited to candidates in close geographic proximity to the company. Technology allows for smooth collaboration and communication no matter where employees are located.

Using the service of job search company like JobStreet.com is another option to expand search area in new employment. Based on the survey results by JobStreet.com in year 2016, Sales and Marketing, Accounting and Engineering have been categorised as the top 3 specialisations that employers require most. They also fall under the top 3 most difficult to recruit specialisations because they are high in demand and companies have problems filling those positions. Some even suggested to find great employees at the charity events that they frequently attend. Quality people will normally show at these events. Industry panels and lectures are held all the time,

especially in larger metropolitan areas. Participating in or hosting a panel is a great way to not only position in the company as an expert in their field, but also find potential job candidates. Members of multiple industries can get together in this space to discuss ideas and collaborate, which could lead to the employment of someone who might not have been aware that the company is hiring.

Online job fairs are becoming a popular alternative to physical career fairs. These virtual events provide all the benefits of showcasing their company at a career fair, but without the travel commitment and large expense. Companies can also find out-of-area candidates who would not be able to attend an in-person event, allowing them to reach new faces that they would otherwise miss. Hosting an informal "networking night" will draw individuals who are interested in their company. Candidates will appreciate the ability to speak with potential bosses and co-workers in a casual, relaxed atmosphere, and learn more about the company from people they had actually be working with.

While social media recruiting is becoming less "unconventional" and more standard in today's job market, company can increase their chances of finding a good fit on sites like LinkedIn and Twitter by having their current employees help push the message out. According to Smith (2012), one of the key advantage of social media recruiting is that company can be targeted in most cases their network of followers is already familiar with your business and products. One of the challenges, however, is that it lacks discretion. For example, if the job in question has had a high turnover recently, an avid follower of the brand may wonder why this is so!

# Use Existing Employees to Market Company Brand

One of the best way to attract a candidate to join an organisation is to show off the people he or she will be joining there, since talented individuals want to work with top talent. Therefore showcasing the all-stars already on the team can help validate why other high-quality candidates should hop on board. They can also use their current employees as a recruiting tool by sharing their positive testimonials with prospective candidates.

Though the employee referral program might sound like a new concept, but it is quite an old way of recruiting the best fit for the position. It is the hiring process done on the basis of referral or a candidate referred by an employee of the organisation. The degree of success varied to a large extent and sometimes it took a long time to fill up the positions, whereas there were times when the whole recruitment process was completed within a matter of time. Everything has its own pros and cons and employee referral scheme is no different. There are companies where the employee referral program is not that popular and in some places the hiring is totally dependent on the employee referrals.

"Yes! Well done June! This is what I really want from you. You come out with an idea that is beyond normal HR people will do. I am so impressive with your idea. The combination between subversion and traditional way of getting solutions.".....This is how the CEO re-act when the HR Manager present this idea to him.

# Solution to Give Impact and Effect of Using Smart Accounting in Organisation

Meanwhile, at the Finance Department, the Finance Manager, Miss Helen make an urgent conference call to all her department staff to rectify the financial issues encountered and to come out with good solutions. The following is the message from Helen to all her staff during the conference call meeting:

"I've just finished a phone conversation with James, our CEO. He seems to be losing patience as the issue of our company's cash flow which are now in the critical stage! He is not happy with our previous strategies and current accounting methods. I know this is not only our department task, it involved everyone in the company. So now, I would like to call for brainstorming session to come out some comprehensive solutions and I expect all of you to be cooperative!

Cash flow in business is like the waves of an ocean, with revenue washing in and payments for expenses flowing out. A picture of cash flow is not easy to capture because the money in business is constantly changing. Still, a company need to handle its cash flow so it can discern trends in cash management and keep their company solvent. A company may have revenues and appear profitable, but slow collections of invoiced sales can impede its ability to meet its current financial obligations. Delinquencies in payments to employees, vendors and other creditors can grow to the point of putting the company out of business.

Cash inflow is the lifeblood of business and comes from sources like payments from customers, receipt of a loan, monetary infusion from an investor, or interest on savings or investments (Clark, 2014). Cash is also important because it later becomes payment for things that make business run: such as to pay expenses, employees, rent and other operating expenses. Naturally, positive cash flow is preferred. Positive cash flow means the business is running smoothly. High positive cash flow is even better and will allow to make new investments, whether it is for hire employees, open another branch and increase the company business.

During their teleconference, they highlighted two major components in order to get healthy cash flow, good organisation and effective planning. To restructure it, they suggest to make a list of all the one-time start-up expenses that the company has paid or expect to pay. This include incorporation fees, legal and accounting, licenses and permits, security deposit on a rental agreement marketing materials and signage, initial inventory or supplies, fixtures like cash registers, office supplies, furniture and equipment.

Next, the department has to determine monthly expected cash sources. These can be projected from sales and loans that are coming in at a certain date. A new business like AASB may want to project sales conservatively to outperform and has a better inflow of cash. History cannot predict the future, but it can paint a decent picture of what the future looks like and what business changes might need to make. Finally, top management need to assess monthly expenses closely. This can be a more technical because it is easy to overlook things and get a surprise if the company do not want to execute that.

It is also important for the finance staff to follow-up for payment from their creditors. Therefore, staff has to encourage the creditors to pay quickly by:

- a) Issuing invoices promptly and follow up on them regularly. This sounds simple, but many people avoid simply paying others (Clarke, 2014).
- b) Offering a discount or rebate for early payment. If company standard contract has a thirty day term, give a small discount for payment within 10 days.
- c) Structuring the payment with an upfront deposit or, if it is a long project, schedule payment intervals throughout the project lifetime. This will ensure that the company is getting some cash along the period.

James Tin, the CEO seems to satisfy with his team's outcome and solutions. The first changes that he actually need to do is from his company internal operation. Organisational communication standards grow out of the communication choices of executives, managers and other employees. Ideally, organisational communication facilitates sharing of information, event planning, project coordination and social interaction. Poor communication and non-functional communication systems leads to confusion, lowered morale and loss of productivity. Business leaders like him must create communication plans and information channels to ensure that employees are kept informed and in contact with each other.

#### **Conclusion**

The company's brand equity will also generates positive thoughts and feelings, especially among customers. This can add considerable value to the company business if suitable strategies has been used in market positioning and decision making. By using emails, effective advertising, referral system, good networking and online presence will creates greater opportunities. To meet the right decision maker is the most important aspect in getting sales. The importance of Human Resources Department role in taking advantage of social media, good compensation package, optimising for mobile, and expend search area are some important ingredients in talent acquisition. Leveraging on latest technologies can helps to improve Finance Department decision making. All the while, he never off-track from the company's mission and vision. James Tin always believe, a company with a great reputation has thousands of customers on the streets spreading the word for it. Compared to a lesser-known or less-reputable competitor, the firm with strong brand equity has less need to use marketing channels such as television, radio and search engine marketing to spread message, customers will doing that for free of charge.

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# **Appendices**

Appendix A: Axia Academy Sdn Bhd (AASB), Bayan Lepas, Penang.



Appendix B: AASB Berjaya Time Square Roadshow, Kuala Lumpur.



Appendix C: AASB Training Session, Bayan Lepas, Penang.









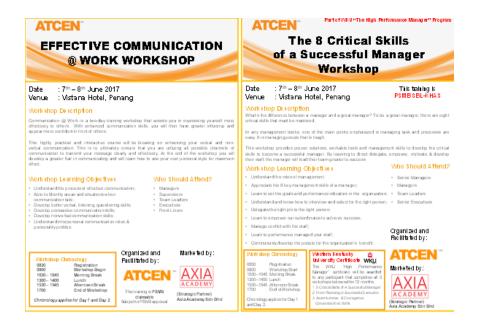


Appendix D: AASB Chung Cheng School Project, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

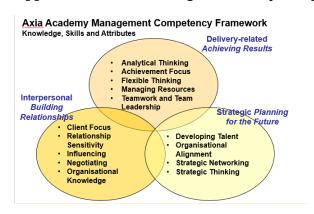




**Appendix E:** AASB Training Courses



# **Appendix F:** AASB Management Competency Framework



	Managing Me	Managing Others	Managing other Managers	Managing Functions	Managing Business
Management SKIIIS	Powering Self Performance	Effective     Supervisory Skills     Managing a High     Performance     Team (EQ Team     Management)	The 8 Critical Skills of a Successful Manager	Corporate     Entreprenuer- ship     Action Leadership	Transformati on Leadership
Man	Executive to Manager The Transition				
İ	Effective Communic ation Skills	Managerial     Communications     Assertiveness     and Conflict     Management	Coaching for High Performance     Coaching and Crucial Conversations     Performance Management Review     Strategic Leadership Communication		
Communication	Sales Presentation	Powerful     Presentation     Skills	Presentation with Impact	Presentation for Le	eaders (1 Day)





Contact	Centre	Customer Service (Face to Face)				
Team Leader	Manager	Team Leaders	Manager			
	Executive to Manage Creativity & Problem Strategic Thinking & Behavioral Interview	n Solving @ Work & Mind Mapping				
Managing the Branded Customer Experience						
Contact Centre     Assessment     Contact Centre     Contact Centre     Certified Call C (CCQM)	Awareness	Customer Service Coaching     Developing Face-to-Face     Interactions Quality Monitoring     Program				
Certified Contact Center Team Leader (CCCTL)	Certified Contact Center Manager (CCCM)					