

Aly Zaker, renowned television personality and Chairman of Asiatic 3Sixty speaks on Marketing Communications at ULAB

Aly Zaker spoke to the ULAB community in a talk entitled **“Marketing Communications: As We See It”** on 27 February, 2013 at ULAB’s campus in Dhanmondi. Aly Zaker in addition to being a renowned television personality is also Chairman of the business group Asiatic 3Sixty and the firm Asiatic Marketing Communications Ltd, Bangladesh’ leading marketing communications company servicing the country’s leading brands.



Zaker began his talk with a textbook definition of communications, but then showed how practitioners in the industry view their practice differently. Quoting from David Ogilvy, he said, “When Aeschines spoke, they said, 'How well he speaks.' But when Demosthenes spoke, they said, 'Let us march against Philip.’” The point is that marketing communications is not about coming up with a good message but changing people’s behavior.

Zaker recounted the history of marketing communication in Bangladesh. In the early days the large international brands would determine marketing approaches from their offices in cities like London. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, they realized that marketing in Bangladesh needed to be Bangladesh specific. This represented a high point of marketing communications in Bangladesh, and it was during this time period that Bangladesh’s most prominent brands were established. Unfortunately, in recent years this transition from international to multinational has been replaced by regionalism. Mr. Zaker lamented the trend of taking marketing approaches developed in India and simply applying them in Bangladesh. Because such approaches do not understand the differences between the Bangladeshi consumer and even a West Bengal consumer, the approach is bound to fail.

His talk offered a primer for students and the broader community on marketing communications in Bangladesh. For example, he made a distinction between brand communication and social communication. In brand communication, a company wants to convince consumers to use its product rather than competitors. In social communication, on the other hand, the goal is much broader: to change the way people believe and act. So while brand communication attempts to convince consumers to choose a specific brand of toothpaste, social communication persuades them to use toothpaste in the first place. While most marketers apply brand communication approaches, Zaker provocatively asked if we would be better served by a social communication approach in Bangladesh?

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