



How Marketing Strategies of Ideas by Gul Ahmed Capturing Their Consumers

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18415/t4vgbt48>

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the marketing strategies of Ideas by Gul Ahmed by which they capture their customers and turn them into their consumers. The focus of the study is on the customers of apparel industry, and how the different marketing strategies affect them and influence their consumer buying behavior to change into the consumer. The result indicates that one of the marketing strategies of Ideas by Gul Ahmed is to penetrate the market by using the psychological pricing strategy as their marketing strategies that influence their consumer buying behavior. During the visit to company we come to know that the online presence and marketing strategies influence the consumer behavior in a different manner which potentially increase their conversions and attract every person who can afford the product. This topic helps people to understand the how can effectively marketing strategies can affect the consumers, and their behavior. This report is reliable for the students or employees to take inspiration for their work or they can use it as the purpose of research on consumer buying behavior.

Keywords: *Marketing Strategies; Consumer Buying Behavior; Social Media Marketing; Brand Image; Customer Engagement; Ideas by Gul Ahmed*

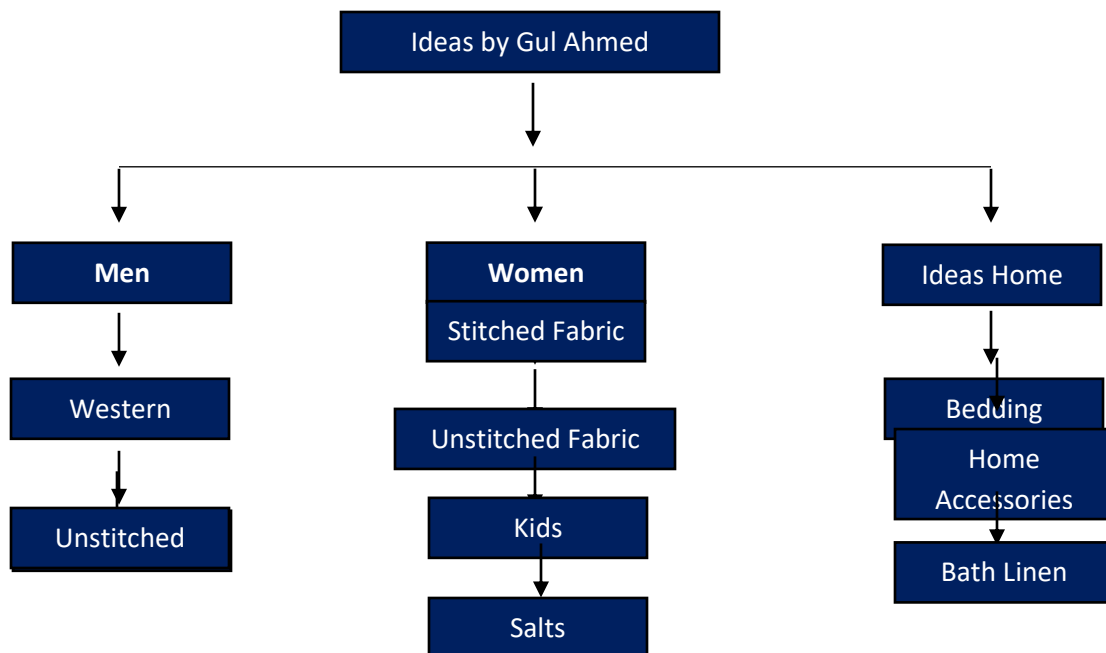
1. INTRODUCTION

Gul Ahmed Ideas, the owner of Gul Ahmed is Haji Ali Mohammad. They have been serving in the industry of textile since 1900s. In the early 1900s, they are just involved in trading in textile. However, later they were entered in the pasture of manufacturing with the brand name of Gul Ahmed Textile Mills in 1953. It has been more than 10 decades that they are been serving in and as a textile industry. Gul Ahmed Textile Mills was working as a private limited company

in the start. The number of employees of Gul Ahmed textile mill is 7000. They are not just catering the textile industry, but also secure the position has been a number 1 in retail industry as well. Ideas by Gul Ahmed or Gul Ahmed Ideas is the recent retail attempt to cater the new market of clothing products, or they established it by considering continues development in the retail industry of clothing and textile. Gul Ahmed Ideas offer different value-added products at low prices as there is huge increase in the prices of cotton and they tried to change the definition of retail by introducing the different products for home, bedroom, men, and women. They started this journey in 2003, and now they are standing in the retail industry with more than 100 outlets nationwide with national and international customers.

1.1 PRODUCT

The products of Ideas by Gul Ahmed consist of readymade men's wear, readymade women's wear, and the products of Ideas home. More information is given below in the form of chart:



1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Research is done to gain detailed information and to develop knowledge about a specific field or study. It is a support to a successful business. A research project is a scientific method to answer the question on which the research is carried. The organization, which we selected, is, "IDEAS BY GUL AHMED."

Gul Ahmed holds 80% of the shares in the textile industry. It generates most of its revenue by exporting and has the least ratio of imports in the industry that means most of its raw material is within Pakistan.

Their trademark is excellence in quality and services i.e. in every operation quality is the top priority. Their products are accepted and recognized worldwide. Gul Ahmed is the first company in the textile industry that was listed in stock exchange in 1970-71 and is still leading. They have the largest plant with high quality machinery for weaving, yarn dyeing, stitching etc.

they have massive production that makes leads them to the top in the industry. Gul Ahmed is not only leading the textile industry but also it leads in retail business. Although it is a domestic firm but it is globalized as compared to other domestic firms that are international only. With their diverse product line, they have captured the market in a short span of time. As compared to its competitors, Gul Ahmed's yearly revenue is much higher.

1.3 INDUSTRIAL BACKGROUND

1. Political Factors:

- **Uncertainty:**

Political uncertainty plays a crucial a role in any industry. While considering the textile industry have a huge impact of political uncertainty on them in a way that recent government have implemented enormous amount of taxes, duties & other implied taxes. While on the other hand, they shut down the free tax holiday for the next 10 years as well. Another impact on textile industry is rebate and tax back is one of the most popular term in textile industry but recent government discard these policies by which most of the companies and even entire industry face huge implications in export.

2. Economic Factors:

- **Currency Fluctuation:**

Currency fluctuation plays an important role especially in textile industry when you are importing the raw material from any country. There two different scenarios and that are currency valuation and currency devaluation. Whenever there is increase in the price of currency, mostly textile industry witnesses the profit when they are exporter because they are paid in international currency. On the other hand, when there is currency devaluation, they will not be going face loss because they are on their breakeven point.

- **Inflation:**

Inflation is one of the most contributing factors in economy. Inflation can increase and decrease the market share, sales, and almost everything. While we are discussing the textile industry of Pakistan, people with minimal purchasing power and products are on highest prices. Directly or indirectly, company or industry will be going to face loss.

3. Social Factors:

- **Religion and Culture:**

The products are manufactured by an industry should not violate the norms of the society and must be available for all the people belonging to different casts, cultures and religions. This is vital to develop goodwill and popularity among the target consumers of that particular state.

- **Age Distribution:**

Age distribution is among the important social factors. Textile industries have a vast range of consumers that are divided into age groups and every group's needs and wants are keenly observed. Especially the youngsters, Pakistan is densely populated and most of its population has youngsters so they are mostly in the targeted consumers' list.

- **Consumer Behavior:**

As people are being aware of the quality matters, they are likely to buy products of best quality and prefer brands over locals and the imported brand products this is the cause of the rapidly changing consumer buying behavior. Inflation also has an impact on the buying behavior of the middle class and lower class.

4. Technological Factors:

- **Power Failure:**

Power failure is the major drawback in the textile industry. Pakistan is facing energy crisis, due to long period of load shedding and increasing rate of electricity the textile industry has been facing downfall in the past years.

- **Online Shopping:**

Online shopping has brought a revolutionary change in the pattern of buying and selling. Most of the textile companies in Pakistan have established online stores so the customers can easily buy them and receive them at their doorsteps and it is less time consuming so the people have now shifted to online purchasing rather than going on their own.

- **Increase in Competition:**

With the advancement in the technology, industries are developing and adapting to the new machineries with modern day technology. Competition is increased as companies are competing to put forward the best quality products and to strengthen their position in the market place with a good reputation.

5. Environmental Factors:

Changes in environment and climate have a strong impact on the economy. The product preferences of the consumers also change according to the seasons and trends.

6. Legal Factors:

- **Direct & Indirect Taxes:**

If we look 5 years back the direct tax rate was 15% on the direct income, but now in 2019 the direct tax rate is 29%. Textile Industry in Pakistan also enjoy some benefits against these taxes, but on the other hand, they suffer a lot, because the govt. of Pakistan is giving all the benefits and consideration to their citizens against the taxes they are taking. While on the other hand, the indirect taxes are those, which varies from seller to seller. Five years before the indirect tax rate was 9% which is included in the sale, but now in 2019 the tax rate is 17% which caused a huge loss on their sales in retail.

- **Government Facilities:**

If Government takes different taxes from their then mostly, they are paying back in the form of benefits as well. For example, Govt. of Pakistan offering the facilities like FREE TAX HOLIDAY FOR 10 YEARS, Rebate, & Tax back.

1.4 AREA OF INVESTIGATION

The area of investigation of our report is marketing. We have selected marketing because every brand especially a brand like Ideas by Gul Ahmed faces a lot of problems and flaws in which we figure out what is wrong. As we know Gul Ahmed is the giant leader of textile industry, and Ideas by Gul Ahmed is the leader of retail business in clothing and apparel industry.

1.5 PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:

The purpose of research in this report is to identify the reason of gap between the brand, and its consumers. As we, all know that marketing plays a crucial role for any brand, it make a brand or it can ruin a brand. Therefore, in this research we are doing research on the problems and obstacles that are faced by the Gul Ahmed from a marketing perspective.

The another purpose of this research is to find out the solutions that provides them better assistance what they need to do in order to target more customer by converting them into the consumers and got to know their potential customers.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

A methodology is the thought process of any research or data to further evaluate and analyze the data or the topic; it gives the reader a brief idea about the research you have conducted in a complete manner. It has further processes by which it can be done.

- **Qualitative:**

For Gul Ahmed, definitely quantitative analysis was not fit in, so we go for the qualitative to understand the behavior, acts, symbols and other substantial amount of information, which we gathered. Qualitative analysis always provides the deep thought or more like a pictured information that is very essential for our research mode.

- **Observations (Focus Group):**

The research over the Gul Ahmed was very big sphere for us, but thanks to the focus group, our observation was totally based over them. The way they cooperated with us was highly remarkable, we gathered all the substantial material from the focus group, which includes the HR managers, the employees working there that totally helped us to complete our report.

- **Primary Data:**

Our research method is based on primary data, we as students we go after the Gul Ahmed employee and the customers directly to gain the information by our own for the sake of our research. Then we elaborate the information we get from the Gul Ahmed, and the data we have collected from direct customers of Gul Ahmed. In addition, we analyzed and elaborately precise it and remodel the data to our research report.

- **Sampling Plan:**

The sample on we are going to perform our report is preferably link with the Gul Ahmed's apparels.

- **Target Population:**

The target population is directly link with the people who buy Gul Ahmed's apparels and the consumers who utilize it in a manner. The scale would have been relying over the upper middle class.

- **Sampling Units:**

Gul Ahmed is a very prestigious brand in our society and not everybody can afford it, so basically what we're going to do for sampling unit we will go to the elite class and upper class to be the part of this research because it's better to indicate the information from those who are used to be familiar with them on a vary contrary base.

- **Sampling Size:**

The sampling size would depend over the category of field we are discussing, for apparels we would go for Gul Ahmed entitled people because they can brief us in many ways and clear the upcoming thought process, the questions, the problems and the strategies in a very great way that would be very effective and efficient for the research as well.

- **Sampling Process:**

We will choose the respondents through the focus group, likewise we will interview them and gain the essential credentials from them and pursue it in our report.

3. CONTACT METHOD:

- **Telephone Interview:**

This way of communicating is very effective and efficient; we can gain much information as possible and through this level of adversity would be maintained. Sometimes on telephonic interviews we can get accurate information, because the other person is not hesitant about anything and he/she would blow out the pros and cons in no time.

- **Personal Interview:**

This type of interviewing process is very derived and effective as well because when we go for personal interview the respondent you chose would be kind of confident and would like to share the problems, the good things, maybe he/ she might be a little hesitant but the interviewer might know that if he/she is telling the right thing or not.

- **Ethical Considerations:**

Gul Ahmed considers their social and ethical responsibility with sincere and intense conviction. They are working on almost every domain like developing the community, providing awareness and assistance regarding safety, health & environment, offering equal opportunity for employment. As for a lifestyle brand, their contributions towards the betterment of environment

are remarkable. They have installed the liquid effluent plants in 2007 for water treatment. This plant treats almost 1 million gallons of water every day. To control the gaseous emission in the atmosphere, Gul Ahmed has affiliated cycle power plant, which was first on its kind in the Pakistan textile industry. HRSG is used to turn exhaust flue gases into steam and reduces the heat content of these gases. In addition, the waste produced by Gul Ahmed mills is completely non-dangerous. Building out the roads, drainage systems, & footpaths, installation of drinking water taps, & streetlight are few of their many contributions concerning the need for community development. They also believe in providing a better life to their workers by spreading health awareness towards many major health issues, training sessions for personal safety and works place hazards. Besides this, they understand the importance of people in forming a business. Gul Ahmed's hiring criteria is completely merit based. They have an aim for empowering women, people with disabilities and overseas candidates. They hire disabled people through NGOs to help them grow, and about 1000+ empowered women employed at various position. Gul Ahmed considers the ethical responsibility as a key ingredient in attaining the success. Gul Ahmed always put its efforts towards the community and always try to put work for its development. it collaborates with different regional companies and take part in different projects related to construction of mosques, installation of drinking water taps and street lights and so on. Gul Ahmed also have a very serious view of the making of healthy and clean environment it is complete green company. It installed efficient treatment plant in 2007, which treat, 1-Million-gallon wastewater per day it is also the FIRST combined cycle power plant in textile industry.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

We have conducted a research on How Marketing Strategies of Ideas by GulAhmed Capturing Their Consumers. The reason was conducting the research or consultation research on this topic for a brand like Ideas by GulAhmed is to provide them a solution in which they are lacking. In the search to find the facts about our research, we have been to different brands for getting responses anonymously for our project. Social media marketing is indispensable for attaining favorable marketing outcomes for the success of a brand. Clothing brands have a well-planned and efficient social media marketing strategy. However, there is always room for improvement. A bunch of employees from three well-known brands was asked to fill a structured questionnaire to provide their views on what they think of their social media marketing. The evaluated results demonstrate the following:

We started with the question that which social media marketing strategy would perform better in lead generation, mostly the answer we got from the interviewer is the Dynamic product ads or you can say paid ads, which exclusively based on the consumer's data or online shoppers. These ads are based on the date like personal preferences, buying patterns, previous purchase, demographics, geographic, and behavioral date. We have similar answers from different brands, which are dynamic product ads and viral marketing. The concept they gave us on viral marketing is that the strategy and campaign should be relatable to the people and the pattern how they interact with things in their daily lives. We have been to Almirah, Junaid Jamshed and Sanaula Store. They have shared some of their success stories in which the stories were based on the target achievement and maximizing the numbers and lead generations which were totally based on the paid ads, and viral marketing. Recently J. casted different celebrities and they have found that celebrity endorsement has played a very significant role in maximizing and generating

revenue for them. On the hand, blog post and email marketing and ongoing tools that every brand uses in order to maintain the image in the mind of their consumers and customers or to let them know about the ongoing promotions and activities that the brand is doing like launching new collection, coming up with new trends and suggesting new looks to their frequent customers. Apart from this usually audience or consumers comes from the digital channels from organic source as well.

Some of the respondent's states that blog posts in which SEO and SEM comes under plays significant role in the ranking on different search engines through many different keywords. Usually clothing brands make sales with the campaigns like discounts, promotions, and giveaways.

We asked the question to the participants that how can we reduce the communication gap between a brand itself and its customers on different social media marketing platforms, the answer we received the most of all is through effective community management, it is the process to build a community between customers, employees and associates by interacting in different ways. It is the way in which brands connect with the audience and form a network to grow. It is beneficial for a brand to manage an effective communication with its customers in order to flourish and build its brand image. An effective community manager should have qualities such as empathy, creativity, interactive skills, tolerance, patience etc.

Effective community management skills can successfully engage a large pool of customers, it enhances the brand's image and makes it stand out in the market and makes the brand familiar among the audience. We further wanted to know from our participants about how a clothing brand can maintain the relationship with their customers on social platforms that will lead to repurchase and which factors can be considered in this regard?

In response to the question, the answer we received is retargeted ads. Such ads are for remarketing the brand through online advertising front of visitors who visit websites. This tool helps the brand to reach as many customers as possible and be visible to them it plays an important role in building a good relationship with the consumers and they are most likely to repurchase their products. Most of the clothing brands like J., Almirah, Sanaullah etc use the retargeted ads online.

While on the other hand, we have discussed the issues and hurdles that mostly faces while doing promotions on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube ECT. Most of the respondents replied that due to targeting wrong audience we often found the decline in organic reach of a content and sometimes brands create non-engage able content that can be the issue in promotions. There are different social media platforms are being used for brand promotion like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Therefore, we asked them, which, according to them, is the most suitable platform for promoting a clothing brand. Most of them picked Instagram; however, some of them were also in the favor of Facebook. When we asked them why not WhatsApp Business as it especially made for businesses, they stated that it is best for engaging with customers but not for promotional marketing.

As for assessing consumer behavior, what must be the focus of a clothing brand among sales, reviews, and engagement with customers? The majority said that engaging with customers is effective in this regard; however, a few also said that evaluating overall sales might give an insight into customer behavior.

Lead generation is immensely crucial for the success of businesses. Various practices like paid ads, social influence, and celebrity endorsement are being followed for this purpose. As per our participants, social influence and celebrity endorsement are both an effective way of maximizing the impact of social media marketing. As far as marketing issues are concerned, showing content that is irrelevant to the buying habits of the target audience is the main issue encountered. When it comes to risk factors in social media marketing, most companies face issues like their marketers targeting the wrong audience, lack of knowledge among the target audience and competitive exposure of the market. Most of our participants evaluated that lacking competitive exposure is the biggest risk among all these, yet, in some cases targeting the wrong audience is also a risk.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- For online experience, we found that previous online experience of consumer really effects brand trust with respect to delivery, quality, online presence, way of advertising different communities and audiences.
- To build strong brand image on different online marketing platforms, the flow of information from the beginning to the end should be very valuable, effective, efficient and relevant. The checkout system should be very easy like one-click checkout.
- Gul Ahmed should engage their pop up ads in every single social media platform, that every individual can get direct attention from Gul Ahmed regardless of age, gender, interest, behaviors, and Geographic's.
- We recommend to Gul Ahmed that they should give it try to Dynamic Product Ads which targets audiences based on they interest and behaviors. According to the research, these ads performs better than every kind of ads.
- Gul Ahmed should spend on targeting the Pakistani audience or trying the split test which leads to them have proper knowledge about their potential audiences.
- The another recommendation would be that they can use Celebrity endorsement for the Pakistan region because in Pakistan they set trends and people usually follow them social media platforms.
- After doing the research on marketing strategy of Ideas, what we observed that, Ideas by Gul Ahmed's more focus is always on unstitched or western clothing, Ideas by Gul Ahmed should target young audience of both genders in order to have a rapid increase in sales and revenue because nowadays the one shopping online on a great number are young people and Ideas focus over kurti's or shirts is very low as compare to unstitch and western clothing.
- Ideas by Gul Ahmed's more focus is over holdings and Bill boards which has been outdated marketing strategy, Ideas should focus on Online marketing by engaging YouTube in it, Showing Ads over YouTube just of 3 to 4 sec before any video will give a great impact in re-engaging customers to look and recall Gul Ahmed just Showing name of Ideas in 2 to 3 sec Add just like Food panda is doing.

6. CONCLUSION

The response from the consumers are substantial and prolific for Gul Ahmed, it is a game of technology and gigantic trust. Which we are sure Gul Ahmed is maintaining and they are

fulfilling the demand of their target market so well. Other brands are not expanding like the way Gul Ahmed. Just because they made very easy access for their customer, nowadays the trends are changing on a daily basis. People are buying clothes from online as compared to retail outlets. Gul Ahmed always play the game on a high horse and provide the same quality and relevant experience of buying the clothes from online store and that is the win for Gul Ahmed. Gul Ahmed caters not only the upper and elite class but they are also catering the middle class as well. They designed their pricing strategies in a way that everyone can afford it irrespective of any class. Unlike other brands, Ideas by Gul Ahmed provides a best customer services to their customers. From a marketing point of view, they always try to connect with people on digital and conventional platforms that can online live sessions and on ground activations and brand launches as well. Usually people who are going to shop some home accessories we have found that everyone recalls the name Ideas by Gul Ahmed. Studying Gul Ahmed for last few months due to research and we came to know that Gul Ahmed is working great in engaging their employees towards smart work with all efforts by giving them all the luxuries and satisfactory to work in a pleasant environment which is very good for Gul Ahmed.

7. SELF REFLECTION

We decided to choose Gul Ahmed because it is a one of the most renowned companies; we visit there for the very first time. The brand manager received us, and most importantly, the person we spoke to and ask our queries about was very down to earth he gave us very detailed answer of our questions and satisfied our queries and provided us enough knowledge for our research.

This was very helpful for us to work on the research project, like collecting the data and comparing the data with one another, he gave us the positive and accurate findings. For us it was the most amazing and very informative visit that helped us in a manner full way.

Secondly, the location and ambiance was very good. The environment was stress free and the employees were calm and composed. All the departments are well organized, aligned and disciplined efficient no conflicts can be seen each department has its unique tasks, goals or planning's. The collective goal of all the departments is to flourish the firm.

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