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July 6, 2011 Wednesday

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Jul 6, 2011

Don't stop at one brand award, winners urged

Reminder: Branding is a never-ending process

By Ian Poh

KEEPING UP WITH MARKET CHANGES

'Brand recognition is not an end in itself, it is a continual process in which you have to continually relook and reinvent to suit changing market conditions rather than just remain static despite market changes. Even after winning, we still want to do more to keep our brand appealing to consumers.'

Ms Pengene Lee, executive director of past winner Jollibean Foods



Mr Chan (centre) speaking at the launch of this year's brand awards. With him are (from left) Mr Adrin Loi, executive chairman of past winner Ya Kun International, Singapore Prestige Brand Award organising committee co-chairman Peter Ong, Asme chief executive Bryan Teh and Jollibean Foods executive director Pengene Lee. -- PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

BRANDING is a journey rather than an end in itself and businesses should be aware of that, said Mr Chan Chong Beng, organising committee chairman of the Singapore Prestige Brand Award (SPBA).

'Many past winners think they are finished with branding and don't participate again and we feel that is a waste,' he told an audience of 300 company representatives at the launch of this year's awards yesterday.

He urged companies to continue taking part, regardless of the outcome, since they would benefit from the process of preparing their brand strategies for the awards.

It is therefore not surprising that SPBA has seen a growing number of repeat participants over the years since its inaugural launch in 2002. Such participants made up 40 per cent of all participants in the last three years.

The SPBA, which is organised annually by the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (Asme) and Lianhe Zaobao, offers five award categories based on how long applicants have been around. The categories include one for regional brands established in at least five foreign markets.

It serves as a yardstick for small and medium-sized enterprises to benchmark their brand equity against their competitors as well as a springboard for them to pursue expansion plans both in Singapore and abroad, said the organisers in a joint statement.

Ms Pengene Lee, executive director of past winner Jollibean Foods, said: 'Brand recognition is not an end in itself - it is a continual process in which you have to continually relook and reinvent to suit changing market conditions rather than just remain static despite market changes. Even after winning, we still want to do more to keep our brand appealing to consumers.'

To take part, companies have to submit proposals on brand management and development. If their submissions are shortlisted for the final round, they will be interviewed by a panel of judges comprising senior management representatives from statutory boards and multinational companies, among others.

Participants must show how their branding efforts have contributed to the growth and development of their brand.

One company which is thinking of participating in this year's awards is food and beverage exporter Lim Siang Huat, which distributes drinks like Pocari Sweat within Singapore and to 10 countries in the region.



The company's executive director, Mr Jack Lim, said: 'Applying for this award is the first step in our branding exercise planned for this year, and if all goes well, it will be nice for our clients to know that their partner is recognised with this award.'

Mr Lim, who has observed that companies with strong brands tend to be profitable, added: 'Branding is less about what we want to do than what our customers want, and we intend to get brand consultants to find out what this is to better position and differentiate ourselves in Singapore and overseas.'

The deadline for applications is Aug 12, and winners will be announced in November.

pohian@sph.com.sg



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