

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Co's the body, brand the soul

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TIT'S a single thought that catches the soul of the brand." Don't build a brand around your product, or company — align your organisation around your brand values. That's the trick to creating long-lasting brands, in an age of brand today, gone tomorrow.

"Branding is not about a name or corporate identity but serious business, which helps in bringing long lasting values," said Eric Joachimsthaler, author of *Brand Leadership* and CEO of Brand Leadership Company, a US-based brand consultancy firm. The classic model of building a brand is finding areas of weak sales, researching consumers and retailers and then developing and implementing programmes. How you do it these days: identify what the brand stands for and then align the organisation to the brand values.

For example amazon.com could have been just an online book store but it has portrayed itself as an online shopping experience.

"There is a huge glut of garbage on the internet," declared Christina Cheney, president & CEO, Simmedia, an international e-biz designing firm. While co-branding is one strategy that will help in building an online brand, it is important to "always monitor the services and track the levels of satisfaction of that service to prevent a dilution of your brand," advised Ms Cheney.

A word of caution from Ms Cheney, who's got the likes of Apple Computers, Citicorp, and IBM on her client list: Don't mistake your corporate identity or marketing for your online brand. Other gems from the Cheney files:

- Navigation is brand. The usability and interface of the site is important.
- Content is brand. The quality control over the online content should be just as much as goes into the mak-

ing of the annual report or an advertisement.

While Ms Cheney and Mr Joachimsthaler went about the business of building a brand, minister for law, justice & company affairs, Arun Jaitley called for building better delivery mechanisms in every channel of communication; be it print, radio, television, and internet. "The route to success lies in effective delivery mechanisms, and not just providing content," he said.

That's the latest international thinking on the branding behind the screen, brought to you by the Times Media Mall, a media and convergence seminar organised by The Times of India and TFCI in Mumbai.

President of the Times of India Group Pradeep Guha, in his keynote speech, said, every medium creates a positive turbulence in the media industry. "The idea should be to embrace change. It's not a big fish eating a small fish, but a fast fish eating the slow fish," he added.



BRAND IS THE MAGIC WORD: Arun Jaitley with Eric Joachimsthaler and Christina Cheney at the inauguration of the Times Media Mall in Mumbai on Thursday. — Pic by Bharat Chanda