

## “How brands can live long and thrive”



Weekly Learnings 19 / 2024

Does a 100 year old celebration brand message excite Consumers?

I did this podcast with Chitra, Ambi for HBL.

1. My answer is mostly NO.
2. I base my view on facts. I looked at categories from 100 years ago and the relevance of the category and the brand that's been around for 100 years. Because a brand survives for 100 years doesn't make it a great brand.
3. Look at categories that existed 100 years ago - Airlines, Postal services, Cars, Newspapers, Whisky, Tea, Radios, Banks, Cycles, Football Clubs, Luxury brands and Universities to name a few. Most airline brands are dead, all radio brands disappeared, all cycle brands gone, a few bank brands remain like SBI, all newspapers are struggling.
4. I have attached pictures of various categories. Two surprising categories - The luxury brands have won over 100 years and the University brand has done well. I think the luxury brands stayed relevant, focused on innovation and design, never succumbed to the temptation of dropping price. Luxury brands are managed tightly by the owner and the creative head of the brand. They knew and understood what the brand stood for unlike many marketers of today.
5. University brands respond to the change of discipline in society and update their courses and degrees to stay relevant. So, there is an external perspective that's built in.
6. Many brands of the past didn't understand two things - a. What irrelevant extensions could do to hurt global brand value and b. The ability to reimagine the space they could occupy ala Ted Levitt's famous 1960 question - 'What business are you in' ?
7. Look at 100 year old brands globally and some in India - Bata, Shalimar Paints, Dunlop, Harley Davidson, Boeing, Kirloskar, Kellogg's, Colgate, Levis, Brooks Brothers, GE, Philips, RCA, Harrods, Macy's, JC Penney, LV, Omega, Cartier, Ford, Mercedes, Chanel, Gucci, Prada and Burberry. You respect and admire only a few.

8. The challenge for legacy brand marketers is to think like architects of the brand rather than like security guards of the brand. When a new trend or technology comes in, most legacy brands phew phew them. Manyavar created the ethnic apparel space in India when many legacy brands just scoffed at them.

9. Legacy brands also die because they choose the wrong ecosystem. Nokia died not because of consumers but a poor strategy from Nokia and Microsoft. Nokia had a 32 pc share of the handset market when they tied up with a 4 pc share windows operating system brand. And then, confusion. Nokia married Windows but wanted to date Android!!

10. GE another legacy brand died because they started believing their own hot air.

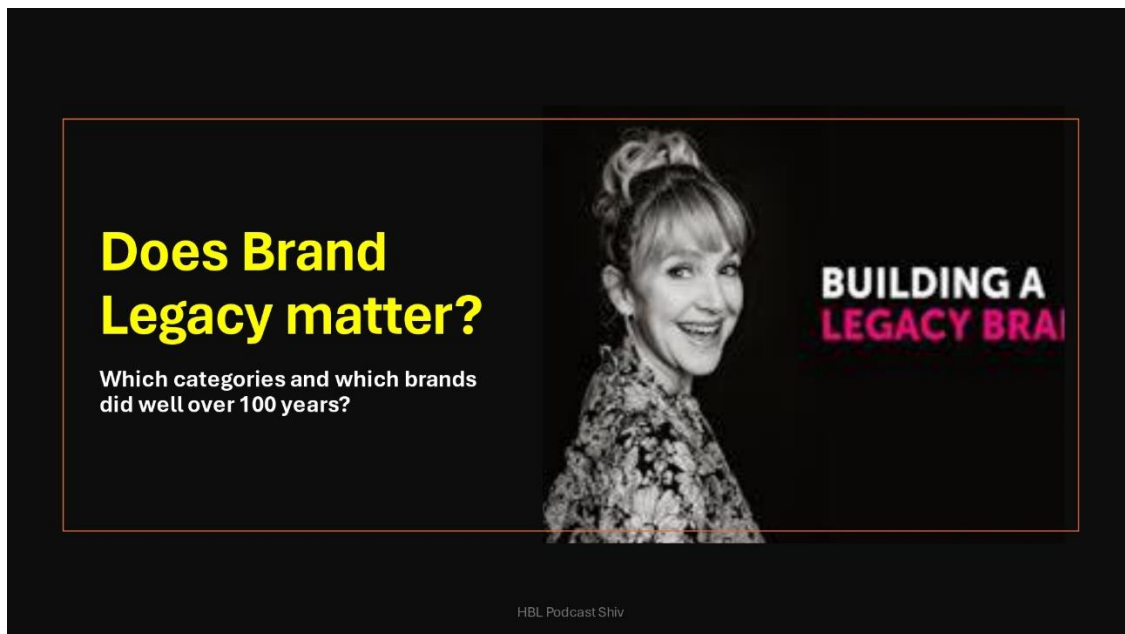
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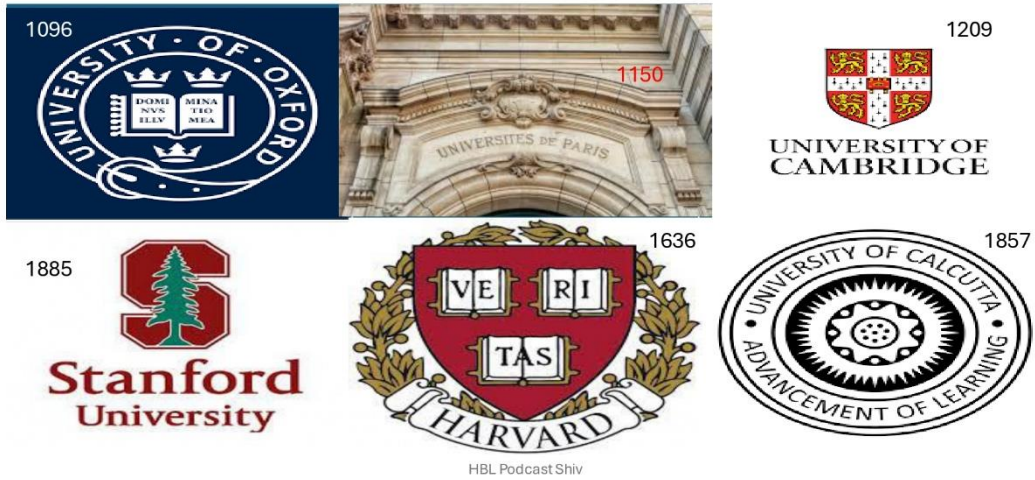
13 May 2024

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## Universities > 100 years



## Auto brands > 100 years



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Whisky brands > 100 years old

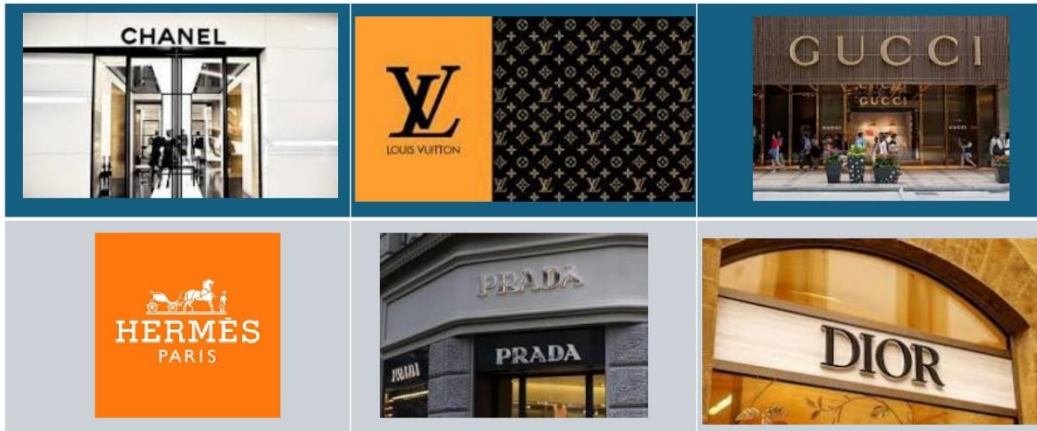
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## Airlines > 100 years

1919		1925		1923	
					
		1920		1923	
	<p>The First Airline In The World, 1909</p>				

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## Luxury brands > 100 years



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## Luxury watches > 100 years



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## Newspapers > 100 years

1851  
**The  
New York  
Times**

1889  
**WSJ**



1878



1838

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## Soaps in India



1929



1940



1918



1922



1940s



1922

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## Legacy Brands

1853



1902



1622



1818



1858



1849

**Nokia started in 1865, a legacy brand**

**In 2011 Nokia a 32 % share mobile phone brand partnered with MS Windows which was a 4 % operating system brand.**

***Nokia married Windows and tried dating Android. Neither worked.***



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**GE started in 1892, a great US brand**

**Reinvented brilliantly many times before imploding.**

***GE started believing its own Hot Air in the last few years.***



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## **Legacy - Thinking to succeed**

- **Is the legacy brand growing the category or expanding the category**
- **Is the legacy brand embracing new technology into products, services and business model?**
- **Is the legacy brand willing to rethink its brand footprint?**
- **Does the legacy brand have the best talent working on it?**

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**A 100 year story is a manufacturer and a manufactured idea, it is not a consumer attraction idea. It just says the brand has been around.**

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