

**Near impossible for MIC to re-brand
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Ragunathan**

I refer to the Malaysiakini report MIC's top agenda: Rebranding through rejuvenation.

MIC? Re-brand? Do these people even know what they are talking about? While it is interesting to know that MIC is seriously considering re-branding itself, the fact remains that MIC remains the consummate antithesis to every principle that branding espouses.

To begin with, the exercise will be one in futility fundamentally because the very idea of re-branding has been completely misunderstood by the top brass at MIC. These people, who by their very nature have the habit of using their forked tongue as they please, can never re-brand MIC and regain the glory they once basked in. The call to release the Hindraf 5 is a recent case in point.

Do they know what re-branding really entails? I seriously doubt it. But it sure looks like they have been had as they continue to operate in denial. To begin with, the core of branding must resonate with the needs, perceptions and concerns of its target audience.

Any exercise in re-branding must be based on a reality check. And the results must be accepted with absolute good faith. A brand must listen, engage and deliver a great experience, and the MIC leadership fails on all three elements.

Branding has much to do with not taking the target audiences for granted. And right now, the super-tsunami of Makkal Sakthi (People's Power) is battering the MIC brand - or what's left of it.

Therefore, for MIC to stand any chance of it re-branding itself, it must be rid of the contagious disease that it is afflicted with. And here are the ways in which MIC can stand any (but I am afraid remote) chance of being accepted by Indian Malaysians.

1. Samy and Subra must retire and fade into oblivion. That will certainly turn the tide somewhat, at least.
2. Their circle of cronies must fade into oblivion as well. Serious sanitising within the main party and the top echelons of the youth wing is a must.
3. They must account for the plunder of RM100 million of the community's wealth invested in Maika Holdings.
4. And the Telekom shares? Bring those involved to justice.
5. Samy must stop making remarks that are outmoded and viewed blatantly as lies by Indian Malaysians. So what if he says the truth? The people do not believe him anymore.
6. Engage the people, listen to their concerns and act accordingly. That has never happened. Its always been 'My way or the highway' with Samy.
7. Equip the party with educated professionals who can craft and implement strategic plans to move the community forward. Not social wings with leaders that have a penchant for

parading themselves before the media and extolling the so-called virtues of Samy Vellu and his cronies.

8. Make way for a new generation of leaders who can turnaround the party and lead.

9. Craft a brand platform that is all about sincerity, selflessness, service above self and a great future; and works to live its values.

All said, none of the above will become a reality unless Samy and Subra fade into oblivion. But all may not be lost. It seems as though the current line-up has managed to accommodate one well-meaning decent professional.

The hopes of the MIC may rest upon the shoulders of Dr Subramaniam, the human resources minister. For the moment, he comes across as a well-meaning, decent professional. Perhaps he should move to the helm and make material changes to the MIC.

But then again, will Samy and Subra fade into oblivion. Power certainly is seductive for these old boys. Will they ever get real and disengage?

Woe betide the MIC brand; and a brand it is not certainly.

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