

# Superbrands to be launched here

Superbrands, the UK based independent authority on branding, which promotes the discipline of branding and pays tribute to exceptional brands all over the world, recently commenced operations in Sri Lanka.

The Superbrands organization which will launch the programme in Sri Lanka next year is the ONLY organization that acts as an independent arbiter on branding.

Since 1994, this company has been successfully publishing a prestigious series of books, which identify and pay tribute to the strongest brands in the world.

Although the concept began in the UK, it has now spread across the world in over 50 countries.

Says, Ruchi Gunawardene, CEO of Superbrands Lanka Limited, "A Superbrand offers consumers significant emotional and / or physical advantages over its competitors which (consciously or sub-consciously) consumers want and recognize and is willing to pay a price premium for.

The objective of this exercise is to recognize those brands which have

been successful in Sri Lanka by virtue of the strong emotional link which they have built with their consumers."

The Superbrands organization was formed in the mid nineties in the UK with the aim of promoting the discipline of branding.

To achieve this aim it was decided by the founder that the best means of promoting branding was to actually illustrate with examples those brands that have achieved success, how they have done so and the contribution that the brand plays and has played within the overall business.

The brands are selected through a process, which involves independent and voluntary panels of experts, known as the 'Brand Council'.

These experts come from a range of backgrounds, including entrepreneurs, PR, advertising, market researchers, and of course managers from major brand focused companies.

Bringing their knowledge of the local market and branding, these experts are the foundation of the organization and its authority.

Each Council member truly is an unquestionable

leader who has a significant standing within the industry and is highly rated by his/her peers.

They are well-respected senior figures who have the experience and whose opinions are valued.

The Brand Council for Sri Lanka, headed by the Council Chairman, Mr. Bardley Perera is in the process of being set up and consists of highly respected individuals from the Sri Lankan business community who will identify and evaluate both global and local brands active in Sri Lanka which they believe, qualify for Superbrands status.

Says Sharmila Cassim, Director Marketing of Superbrands, "We plan to launch the inaugural edition of "Superbrands" in Sri Lanka in November 2006 with about 100 brands featured in the inaugural edition.

The launch of the Superbrands publication will be followed by the distribution of the book and a prestigious tribute event to recognize Sri Lanka's Superbrands. The process of judging and selection however, will commence this month"

The starting point is to

make a list of all the brands that are available in Sri Lanka. They are then short listed to include only brands which have a business presence here (i.e. excluding baggage imports, those imported directly by retailers etc.) and those which have a marketing programme in this country.

The brands would be a mix of local and international brands.

The programme will be recognizing only consumer products and services in this phase while corporate and business to business brands will be considered as a separate programme.

Concludes Ms. Cassim, "By making the learning's from Sri Lanka's Superbrands more widely known amongst businesses, we hope that this would be a catalyst to bring about greater brand excellence in this country".

Superbrands Lanka is a subsidiary company of STING Consultants, Sri Lanka's leading strategic marketing consulting firm. In addition, STING Consultants subsidiaries include the branding consultancy and Brand as well as an alliance with Brand Finance.