

# Symbolism of Operation Sindoor - Lessons in strategy for Corporates

In business—as in politics—symbols can shape narratives, drive engagement, and inspire team unity. Our Government's use of symbolism during **Operation Sindoor**, a recent counter-terror operation, offers not just a geopolitical message but also rich strategic takeaways for the corporate world. This operation exemplifies how leaders can align **vision, values, and action** to build resilient organizations.

### Effective branding: Operation Sindoor

**Symbol** *Sindoor*, the vermillion mark symbolizing marriage and protection in Indian tradition.

**For Corporates**, it's a lesson in branding with purpose. Naming the operation *Sindoor* wasn't incidental—it carried a cultural resonance, evoking the protection of women, families, and national identity. Similarly, in business, **naming a product, project, or initiative should reflect deeper values and purpose**. When the name aligns with purpose, it builds emotional equity and reinforces internal alignment. Names can unite teams, inspire action, and anchor meaning during crises.

### Flipping the Narrative: From Victimhood to Resolve

There is a lesson for Corporates on how to transform external threats into resolve to succeed. Terrorists used women as messengers of fear; India responded by elevating women as messengers of strength. The enemy's narrative was rooted in misogyny and division. But India countered not just with arms, but with **symbolic clarity**—having two senior women officers lead the operation's communication. This flipped the narrative completely.

Similarly, a corporate, when faced with external attacks—market disruption, bad PR, or cultural backlash - shouldn't **just respond tactically, but also with narrative clarity**. Use challenges to reinforce your culture, diversity, and values. Let the message be: *This is who we are!*

### Leading with diversity and pluralism

Two women. Two uniforms. Two faith. One purpose. The deliberate choice of spokespersons to brief the nation on Operation Sindoor reflected a **clear intent**: to send a message of unity beyond caste, religion, or gender. For businesses, representation in leadership—especially during key moments—sends a powerful cultural message to both internal and external stakeholders. It is important to elevate under-represented voices to reinforce inclusive leadership. Corporates must **make diversity visible in leadership**, especially in high-stakes situations. It's not performative when it's authentic—it's a declaration of strength and credibility.

Where the terrorists sought to divide, India's leadership showed that **pluralism is power**. In the corporate world, teams with diverse perspectives outperform homogeneous ones—**not despite their differences but because of them**. It is critical to build cultures where **diverse voices aren't just included—they are empowered**. Operational resilience grows when inclusion is not a policy but a practice.

## Our Views

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#### Final Reflection: Victory Beyond the Battlefield

Critics may call symbolic gestures performative. In our government's strategy, they are integral. Operation Sindoor shows how **cultural signaling can be part of operational success**. For businesses, this means seeing internal communications, rituals, values, and cultural symbols as **strategic assets**—not fluff. Culture and communication are part of main act—not side acts. It is important to invest in **symbolic clarity**. From town halls to internal campaigns, your language and visuals must reinforce strategic intent. Culture isn't built on slides—it's built on **repeated, resonant signals**.

**Operation Sindoor** wasn't just about neutralizing terrorists—it was about **owning the narrative, redefining symbols, and asserting a cohesive identity**. For corporations, this means thinking beyond quarterly goals. It means understanding that **your story, your values, and your symbolism shape how the world sees your brand—and how your employees believe in it**.

In a noisy, divided world, **symbolism isn't decorative—it's strategic**. Use it wisely, and your organization doesn't just survive disruption—it thrives through it.

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