



When a brand sees itself as human, and not infallible, trolling becomes a non-issue.

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We are the most watched Bengali entertainment channel.



What's the most interesting thing you've done outside of work in the last 12 months?

Travel-related deep dives of a different kind were the highlight for me. I've had the opportunity to spend a disproportionate amount of time in dialogue with people across India. Delving into these cultures and stories opened up rich and fertile avenues for work. I also discovered new things about myself.

Name a brand marketing executive or corporate personality - Indian or international - you admire. And tell us what about her/him is admirable.

Undoubtedly, Fernando Machado who led Burger King to the 'Creative Brand of the Year' pedestal at Cannes 2019. The work is great from the perspective of brand design, purposive advertising, and retail promotions delivered across regions. I admire his ability to make a real business impact through audacious solutions that are at the intersection of creativity and technology.

Be it delivering consumer experiences through a mere wrapper or virtually burning a competitor's ad, I love the passion, experimentation and camaraderie that he and his team share.

What was the biggest challenge you and your team faced in the last 6-12 months - and what did you learn from it?

With the New Tariff Order implementation, television viewers have suddenly been forced to shift from low involvement monthly bill payments to high involvement active channel subscription. The entire distribution value chain has shifted from B2B bulk subscription to a B2C choice-based purchase decision. That has been a challenging task.

With each family making its own SKU of the product, there has been an explosion of options. We have new challenges being thrown at us with the plethora of packs that cable operators and DTH players are providing. With each month's purchase cycle, we are trying to simplify the decision making for consumers.

The biggest learning is to just up your game. If you have a product they love enough, they will sit up and seek it despite all obstacles.

Which outside forces or trends impact consumer behaviour in your category most? Give an example.

I think the expected answer is - the second screen explosion and growth of digital. But that is just about "how" people are consuming content. The real impact comes from "what" they want.

In the context of "how", we see it as a multiscreen, hybrid consumption reality. Maximising screen hours is our primary objective. In the

context of "what", the thing that impacts our category the most is the cultural milieu - shifting values, aspirations, belief systems, tensions and dreams. It's critical for us to have a deep cultural understanding and pulse on the zeitgeist of each region we operate in.

Marketers across segments have fetishised the millennial. But hand on heart, which demographic will drive growth for your brand over the next 12 months?

We are a network for everyone in the family. We cater to various segments and have content across genres. I don't think there is a demographic cut I can talk about as our focus, but our growth story definitely comes from our wins across regions. Our network share has grown from 18.0 per cent to 19.7 per cent over the last year, with regional channels contributing 87 per cent to the growth. Our one fetish is winning over the many Indias and Bharats.

Nowadays brands get trolled all too frequently on social media. As a marketer, have your views on trolling changed in the last couple of years?

As pedantic as marketers are about their brands, and despite the hours they spend agonising over their next social media post, I do think we have loosened up the controls a bit. When a brand sees itself as human, and not infallible, trolling becomes a non-issue. You are allowed to make mistakes, apologise, laugh at yourself and move on, as long as you aren't doing 'corporate brand speak'.

If you could advertise on only one medium for the next 6 months, what would that be - and why?

Some of the best work we have seen has used the power of a single medium. However, if I really had to pick one medium, it would definitely be television. TV gives reach, influence, engagement and a lean-back, frictionless orientation to advertising. But the time has come to reinvent the way we use TV for communication. We must go beyond the 30-second TVC and must maximise ROI for our marketing dollars.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

We don't have 'agencies'; we look at them as brand partners who give us strategic business solutions. Their challenges are the same as ours... we agonise about the same things. Today, audiences are fragmented, they have short attention spans and a plethora of choices. They can do exactly as they please with technology at their disposal. Formulaic solutions are no longer able to cut it, be it creative, media or PR. ■

**WEST BENGAL
HAS
CHOSEN**

ZEE বাংলা

We have a lion's
share of 44%*
across Bengal.

*Source: BARC, All WB, NCCS 2+, Q1'20