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overload in the market.

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

I like travelling. I've travelled to at least four countries in the last 12 months - Hungary (Budapest) and Austria (Vienna). I did a tour of the Middle East tour as well - Kuwait and Dubai. Finally wrapped it up with a tour of the East - Indonesia and Thailand.

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

I admire American marketing specialist Guy Kawasaki. He has written various books, including a bestseller on Silicon Valley and venture capitalists. He's an ex-Apple employee who used to work closely with Steve Jobs when Apple products were being designed, and I think he's fantastic when it comes to being an evangelist of consumer marketing trends and new ideas.

**If your brand were an animal, what would it be - and why?**

I think we would be a unicorn. Not a unicorn in the language of corporation and e-commerce, but a unicorn which is a mystical, magical and beautiful creature that everybody wants to get their hands on and are intrigued by.

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

We learnt how to work efficiently with influencers. There's an influencer overload in the market. Every influencer is contacted by multiple brands; when that happens, the trust factor starts going down. If one influencer is promoting 10 brands, then users don't know which story to believe. I think we are also partially responsible for over-bombarding people with a lot of influencers.

We have something called the Nykaa Affiliate Program, through which we encourage people to sign up as micro-influencers for Nykaa and talk about us on their social media pages. They make a commission on the total sales that they deliver through their content on social platforms. It works because they don't have the motivation to publish something wrong.

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

Right now, globalisation of content is making the biggest impact. Earlier, exposure was limited to a certain type of content made by local creators. Now, that division is gone, thanks to social media and OTT apps. Something that's trending in the US or Germany or Nor-

way, created by a local content creator there, will reach India within seconds. The reach and spread of content has become global.

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

Anyone born after 1980 is a millennial and that's a really broad context. The next growth driver in the market will be people born after 1992 - they will decide the journey of the brand and how it fares.

**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?**

I think every brand that's on social media needs to be mentally prepared that whenever they falter in terms of customer service, there will be a certain set of influential people who may use their influence to talk against them. That's something we need to take in our stride and move forward. When you publish something, and it has, say, 2,000 likes and 12 mean comments, don't base your judgement solely on those 12 mean comments. As long as there are more people who recommend your brand online, than those who don't, the trolling shouldn't bother you.

When it comes to disgruntled customers, make sure there's a 'first response' that they receive immediately, so that it doesn't get out of hand. Connect it to your top class ORM and customer service practices and ensure the problem is resolved and the comments are taken off. How quickly and how efficiently your customer service reacts to online complaints can control the level of trolling.

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

I would pick OTT apps. Viewing is shifting from television to apps like Hotstar, Voot, Amazon Prime Video, etc. You have your target audience sitting there, consuming hours of content; you have their undivided attention. In the next six to 12 months, this is one area we'd like to focus on.

**What do agency partners grumble about most, today?**

We don't work through agencies except for TV media buying. The thing they grumble about most is aligning objectives, I suppose. It's not easy to get an agency aligned to your numbers and objectives. There's a different way in which they look at numbers and there's a different way in which you look at numbers as the owner of a brand. That's the biggest challenge, but we try to find a mid-path. ■

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