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there existed a client and there
existed impossible deadlines.

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

I've always been a sports junkie and cricket is something I've grown up watching, and playing professionally. Amidst some high octane action following the brand launch for MX Player, I finally took some time off to go back to doing what I love. I've started running again; it truly teaches you so much about yourself. There's a sense of euphoria and 'awesomeness' at the end of a long run!

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

I really admire David Aaker; he is a marketing guru in the true sense of the word. The fact that he has stayed relevant over the years is awe-inspiring. His insights on consumer behaviour, building and managing a brand, and the importance of innovation are inspirational. His teachings are not just theories; they're applicable in practice.

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

The image that comes to mind is that of a majestic peacock. We're colourful and creative in terms of our categories, languages, formats and range of content. We're open to spreading our feathers and exploring new opportunities and partnerships.

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

The uphill task was driving user engagement for an app that was once hailed for its offline playing capabilities. Our vision was to build a platform that caters to every entertainment need of the discerning viewer - from playing a video in any format to watching stories in multiple languages/across genres or listening to music. That's where our brand philosophy "everytainment" came from. Introducing it to our viewers was a challenge, but it has paid off.

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

Consumer behaviour sees a shift on two occasions - national, topical events or a hyper-external competitive environment that eats into your share of the pie. For example, the 2019 Lok Sabha elections occupied large mindshare across the nation; it's then down to how your platform decides to regain the attention of the viewer. On MX, we created a campaign called #ElectionsOnMX to increase the inflow, and curb the outflow, of traffic on the app during that month.

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 strive to cater to the entertainment needs of all our viewers, across ages, but hand on heart, it is the millennials who rule the

OTT roost. The strategy will always be to cater to them, especially in the regional belt and the larger heartland.

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?

How a brand is perceived is completely subjective; it depends on the consumer's discretion to feel either positive, negative or neutral about it. In my opinion, the fact that a consumer cares to troll your brand highlights a certain sense of engagement that he/she feels for the brand. This creates a two-way street for constructive feedback. That's how I felt a few years back and that's how I continue to feel.

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

Digital and social are the fastest-growing marketing channels. Today, the target market is largely online. Digital allows you to reach your audience on-the-go, wherever they are, whenever they are online. A piece of content can be shared across platforms, with a call to action.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

A long time ago, in a faraway land, there existed a client and there existed impossible deadlines. This story narrative has not changed and from the looks of it, will never ever change! ■