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**SANJEEV BHARGAVA**

Director | Brand TOI



We have won  
an incredible 56%\*  
of male viewership

\*Source: BARC, WB Urban, M 22-50 AB, Q1'20

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

I went on a spiritual trip to the Kumbh Mela and discovered a completely new side of me!

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

I encountered Alyque Padamsee in my formative years and I believe he was an exceptional person. In addition to being a creative genius, he was a fantastic leader of men, with fabulous organisation building skills and a very grounded business head on his shoulders. A heady mix that led to the phenomenal success of Lintas in the good old days!

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

The crest of TOI has two elephants in it. And it would be apt for me to draw the analogy from there. Like an elephant, TOI is large and dominating the media landscape. Like an elephant, it has a benevolent and gentle influence on the world around it. And like an elephant, when it decides to blow the trumpet, the whole world sits up and takes notice!

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

As a media brand, the biggest challenge is always enhancing the involvement of the reader with the brand. In today's multidimensional media space, this relevance is gained not only from the news we publish, but also from the engagements we do with the reader on issues close to her heart.

The Lok Sabha elections were the biggest event in this country and relevant to both the reader and to the news world in general. And it is here that we managed to create a strongly relevant and constructive platform of engagement called the 'Lost Vote'. And the support we got not only from the readers but by the polity and the establishment as well goes to show that a constant hunt for relevance can pay dividends to business as well.

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

Rising affluence, rising English literacy, expansion of the urban geographies and rising consumerism are all forces that positively impact business. At the same time, proliferation of competitive

forces, especially in the technology space, are the biggest threats we have to be guarding against.

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

About 30 per cent of our readers are women. There is no reason why this number cannot be 50 per cent. Given that the spending power in this country is now gradually shifting towards the women, this cohort is increasingly important to us. The female members of affluent households are within reach and they will drive the growth of our brand over the short and medium term.

**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?**

Troll management is now a process that every organisation must devise. A standard operating procedure with clearly laid down guidelines akin to a PR SOP is what is necessary in today's world and that is exactly what we have.

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

I have always maintained that every medium and within the medium, every brand has a definitive role to play in a scientific media plan. There are impact strategies, there are reach strategies, there are reminder strategies and there are several tactical strategies that can be deployed depending on the need of the brand.

An intelligent press plan can deliver immediate targeted reach, impact, credibility and even a sustained campaign both locally and at a national level.

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

Data insufficiency and data reliability have been the biggest bug bear of agency partners as they are unable to make scientific decisions in the absence of this data. With the IRS becoming a quarterly feature, print has finally come back to being a measured medium.

And hard data like AIR and TR with detailed reader profiling by geography will be a great help in the times to come in helping the agency partners to make educated suggestions on the media plans of their client brands. ■



We are the undisputed leader in all prime time slots\*

\*Source: BARC, WB Urban, NCCS 2+, Q1'20 (16:30 - 23:30 Hrs)