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EDITORIAL

I have a confession to make. While putting together the first two editions of the CMO Special Issue, an annual project we began two years ago, I was grappling in the dark. Despite reading over 100 interviews, across two editions, with CMOs who run some of the hottest brands in India, I still couldn't confidently explain how the mind of the modern day marketer truly works. But now, with the third and current edition under our belt, I think it's safe to say I'm finally getting a hang of this. I feel like I know the Indian CMO intimately... fears, hopes, gripes and goals.

Like last year, we classified our 55-plus interviewees by product group – FMCG, automobile, handset, durables, e-commerce, fashion, media, BFSI, QSR/retail and, for the first time, OTT. Unlike last year, we decided to loosen up a little and have some fun with our questions; while staples like category trends, social media woes, professional challenges and agency partnership-related questions were retained, we also asked our marketers to tell us about the coolest thing they did last year – and here's the clincher – outside of work.

The answers we got gave me intense FOMO – Millennialese for the fear of missing out. Some ran marathons around the world, while others sang in music bands, swam with sharks, went mountain biking, slayed at volleyball competitions and meditated on hilltops. It was fascinating to read about the parallel lives marketers lead when not fretting about the health of the brands they run and worrying about grabbing a slice of the consumer's attention.

The other two questions we're tickled pink to classify as fun include those about corporate personalities our interviewees look up to and animals they think their brands resemble, in spirit.

Common themes thrill me; in 2017, the thread that ran right through all 50 interviews was "ROI". In 2018, it was "content". This year, no points for guessing... it's "Millennial".

Sit back, relax and enjoy the 3rd edition of our CMO Special, a bumper issue that we at afaqs! Reporter are over the moon to bring you.

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CONTENTS

FMCG

Sukhleen Aneja
Reckitt Benckiser

10

Rajeev Jain
Dharampal Satyapal Ltd

14

Sumit Mathur
Kellogg

16

Hitesh Malhotra
Nykaa

18

Poulomi Roy
RSH Global

20

Kedar Apte
Castrol

22

Anupam Bokey
RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group

24

Rajat Gupta
Procter & Gamble

26

Nadia Chauhan
Parle Agro

28

Karthik Srivatsan
Procter & Gamble

30

Somasree Bose Awasthi
Godrej Consumer Products

32

Chetna Soni
Procter & Gamble

34

Krishnarao S Buddha
Parle Products

36

S Prasanna Rai
Wipro Consumer Care & Lighting

38

Ritu Mittal
Procter & Gamble

40

Peeyush Bachlaus
Kansai Nerolac Paints

42

AUTOMOBILES

Shashank Srivastava
Maruti Suzuki

46

Bishwajeet Samal
Volkswagen

50

Pallavi Singh
Former MG Motor India

52

Vivek Nayer
Mahindra & Mahindra

54

Narayan Sundararaman
Bajaj Auto

56

Ankur Kansal
Jaguar Land Rover

58

Rahul Pansare
Jeep India

60

Tarun Jha
Škoda

62

**FASHION/ACCESSORIES/
APPAREL**

Debosmita Majumder
PUMA India

66

Karan Kumar
Fabindia

70

Shantiswarup Panda
Raymond

73

E-COMMERCE
Srivats TS
Swiggy

76

Angad Bhatia
Indiatimes Lifestyle Network

80

HANDSETS
Anuj Sharma
Xiaomi India

86

Vikas Agarwal
OnePlus

90

MEDIA
Prathyusha Agarwal
Zee Entertainment Enterprises

94

Prashant Panday
Radio Mirchi

98

Sanjeev Bhargava
Brand TOI

100

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CONTENTS

DURABLES

Amit Tiwari	103
Havells India	

Sanjeev Gauba	106
Kent RO Systems	

Anshuman Chakravarty	110
Orient Electric	

Nandagopal Nair	113
V-Guard Industries	

Sandeep Shukla	117
Jaquar Group	

Anirudh Pandharkar	119
VIP Industries	

BFSI	
Asha Kharga	122
Axis Bank	

Karthi Marshan	126
Kotak Mahindra Group	

Sujatha V Kumar	130
Visa	

Dinesh Menon	132
State Bank of India	

Chandramohan Mehra	134
Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance	

Anjali Malhotra	136
Aviva Life Insurance	

Pankaj Gupta

HDFC Life

138
Aalok Bhan

Max Life Insurance

140
OTT
Abhishek Joshi

MX Player

143
Prashan Agarwal

Gaana

146
Manav Sethi

Eros International

149
Rahul Mishra

Shemaroo Entertainment

151
Divya Dixit

ALTBalaji

153
Vishal Maheshwari

Viu

155
Neha Ahuja

Spotify India

157
QSR/RETAIL
Prashant Gaur

Pizza Hut India

160
Moksh Chopra

KFC India

163
Ritesh Ghosal

Croma, Infiniti Retail

165
Uma Talreja

Shoppers Stop

167

Section sponsored by





Our consumers are not limited to millennials, but fall across age groups.

SUKHLEEN ANEJA

Marketing Director, Hygiene Home | RB South Asia

**ONE MAN
ONE SHOW**
THAT GOT INDIA TALKING

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

Bolivia's Salar de Uyuni is probably one of the most interesting things I have done, not just in the last 12 months, but in my life thus far. It's the largest salt flat on earth and being there feels like being on a different planet. For me, it was an unforgettable experience. Everything around us was made of salt and the fact that the country has kept everything so pure, pristine and beautiful is a revelation.

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

RB has always stood for purpose-driven initiatives that make a difference to people's lives. Our aim is to create a cleaner world by bringing innovative solutions to billions of homes through behavioural change and education. We were the 'swachhta partners' at the Maha Kumbh 2019. Maintaining hygiene and sanitation on-ground was a tremendous challenge. To sensitise and educate Indians about toilet hygiene was an even bigger challenge. We used multiple mediums to reach out to the people, including traditional methods like 'nukkad nataks', wall paintings with direct messaging and posters inside toilets.

The team learnt a lot at various stages of this mammoth task. We learnt how to manage millions of people from different countries and backgrounds, for example. We also realised that as a brand, it is our responsibility to educate as many people as we can about living healthier and cleaner lives.

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

India is growing at a rapid pace, digitally. Smartphone penetration is growing much faster in rural India and non-metros. With an overall penetration of 40 per cent, social media platforms are one of the biggest driving forces that are fuelling this growth. Consumer preferences and buying patterns are evolving as per the digital communities that they are a part of. With visual content playing a dominant role with consumers, user experiences, reviews and ratings have become increasingly significant.

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

With a range of brands in our portfolio, like Harpic, Lizol, Vanish, Mortein, among others, our consumers are not limited to millennials, but fall across age groups. The key demographic that will

be driving growth for us comprises individuals who are seeking hygiene and home care products that are efficient, effective and truly deliver the brand promise. They are consumers who purchase products that make them feel home proud and understand that cleanliness leads to a healthier lifestyle.

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?

While the social media boom has made communicating with consumers easier and faster in real-time, the challenge of being trolled is faced by brands on a daily basis. The situation, if not handled sensitively, can lead to disregard for the brand and/or the individual. It would be best to respond respectfully and take the conversation offline, but there might be times when it would be ideal to ignore the trolls if they are overtly disrespectful.

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

While every medium is important for us in terms of reaching out to our audiences, television continues to be the most effective medium in India to gain maximum outreach. This medium is ideal for creating awareness and maintaining brand equilibrium.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Consumer attention is short lived and that's our biggest challenge. Trends, preferences and loyalties are changing. While this is a challenge, it also motivates us to deliver better products and solutions. ■

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राजत शर्मा के साथ





The love for 'Indian-ness'
has impacted our brands
favourably.

RAJEEV JAIN

Vice President – Marketing | Dharampal Satyapal Ltd

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7:30 AM DAILY

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

Being a firm believer in India's rich heritage, I decided to take to natural solutions for stress management last year. I have started practising naturopathy, meditation, yoga and pranayama religiously to de-stress, detoxify and bring positive changes in my life. These have not only improved my health, but have also affected my thought process, value system and work efficiency.

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

I admire Mr Rajiv Bajaj immensely. I love attending his sessions and watching his videos. He is an extremely frank, honest and vivid orator. His concepts about business and marketing are clear and he articulates his thought process extremely well. He has successfully implemented various insights of management gurus in actual practice. Today, under his dynamic leadership, Bajaj Industries is one of the fastest growing auto companies and has made its mark at the global level too.

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

The biggest challenge we, or other marketers, are facing is developing brand recall in a cluttered media environment. Media consumption habits of consumers are changing very fast. Earlier, TV was the single most dominant source of entertainment. But now, consumers' time is fragmented between TV, digital and mobile. At the same time, TV is becoming heavily cluttered with the advent of new advertisers and the increasing spends of existing clients.

Every consumer is exposed to hundreds of ads on a daily basis. Consequently, it is becoming difficult to build brand recall amid so many ads. Even if consumers notice the ad, it is not easy to create a connect with them. To bring the brand into their consideration set, you must have a differentiating proposition.

The learning we draw from this is that it is difficult to build a brand by relying only on TV media. One needs other means of brand building activities to support communication on TV. An integrated communication mix (including BTL, digital and mobile) is important.

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

We have observed a preference towards Indian and natural prod-

ucts. This love for 'Indian-ness' has impacted our brands favourably. We've all grown up with certain tastes, and when we find the same tastes in a branded, hygienic form with value additions, it gets immediate acceptance.

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

Different brands have different growth segments. We can see an increasing acceptance for our brands in lower socio-economic groups. This is due to the increasing penetration of media in the interiors, rising aspiration levels and increasing income levels in lower NCCS segments.

The share of NCCS A, B and C has increased from approximately 59 per cent as per IRS 2017 to 62 per cent as per IRS 2019. The share of NCCS D and E has decreased from 41 per cent as per IRS 2017 to 38 per cent as per IRS 2019. This means more people have moved into the upper NCCS segments. While our brands are doing good in NCCS A and C segments, a lot of potential for growth exists in lower NCCS segments too.

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?

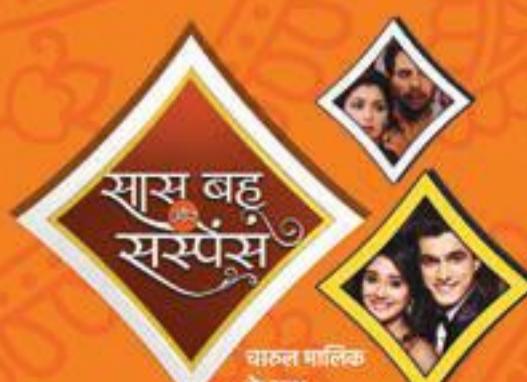
Trolling definitely impacts brands, mostly momentarily. But sometimes, it may have a more long term impact. Good brands have both positive and negative advocates. Sometimes negative trolling fuels positive advocacy too. Thankfully, consumers are mature and evolved these days, so most of the time, trolling is not taken too seriously.

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

For our established brands, it would be digital. We are extremely bullish on influencer activity as it is credible and can generate immediate sales. It worked for our Pulse candy brand. However, to generate positive advocacy, the product has to be great. Consumers nowadays check other consumers' opinions on products and services before purchasing. The feedback of micro-influencers may be more relevant and credible than claims made by celebrities in ads.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

In advertising agencies, the acquisition and retention of quality talent across all functions (creative, strategy and client servicing) is one of the biggest challenges. ■



**THE
TV TALES
OF INDIA**

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2:30 PM DAILY



Kellogg's has gone against the odds and created a niche for itself. It is like a Koi Fish.

SUMIT MATHUR

Director – Marketing | Kellogg South Asia



WHERE INDIA DEBATES SENSIBLY

क्रूडीयर
सौरभ शर्मा के साथ

INDIATV
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6 PM WEEKDAYS

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

Recently, I read the book 'Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life' by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralle. It beautifully shines the spotlight on something so relevant - nurturing and sustaining focus, social ties and a larger sense of purpose in life. It talks about how to centre and steady yourself, even while things keep changing around you.

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

I admire my consumers and the young people in my team. Both keep me rooted and inspired. When I observe the channels they communicate through, the nature of content they are consuming and how they are constantly evolving, I learn a lot.

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

Kellogg's has gone against the odds and created a niche for itself. It is like a Koi Fish. In Asian culture, they are a symbol of strength and persistence due to their ability to swim upstream, leap up waterfalls and transform into a strong and powerful golden dragon. They represent the overcoming of obstacles, prosperity, and independence, all of which are in line with our brand purpose and is reflective of how Kellogg's has been resilient enough to swim against the stream.

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

We live in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world. Consumer preferences change faster than seasons. The challenge for marketers is to embrace this, be resilient, and thrive in a consumer driven market. To address the short attention spans of consumers, we deploy agile marketing, whether it's in the context of the category, consumer dynamics or the external environment.

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

Today, the breakfast market is influenced by a mix of nutrition and convenience; consumers are both health conscious and always on the go, but unwilling to compromise on taste! And they have a soft corner for the food they have grown up eating, thus giving rise to a demand for 'traditional' flavours. Examples of our Indianised variants include thandai badaam, kesar pista badaam and rose badaam – all have been frequent accompaniments of milk for years, in ice-

creams, kulfis, and milkshakes.

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

The core audience for Kellogg's cereal is the homemaker; we want to make the category relevant to them. Interestingly, the definition of 'a homemaker' is changing. More and more women are stepping out of the house to work, planning their home chores, simultaneously hitting the gym... Unlike earlier, the homemaker gives herself as much importance as she gives her family. She has many traits of a millennial. This is an opportunity for us to partner with her; for example, we offer a nourishing solution to her time-pressed mornings.

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?

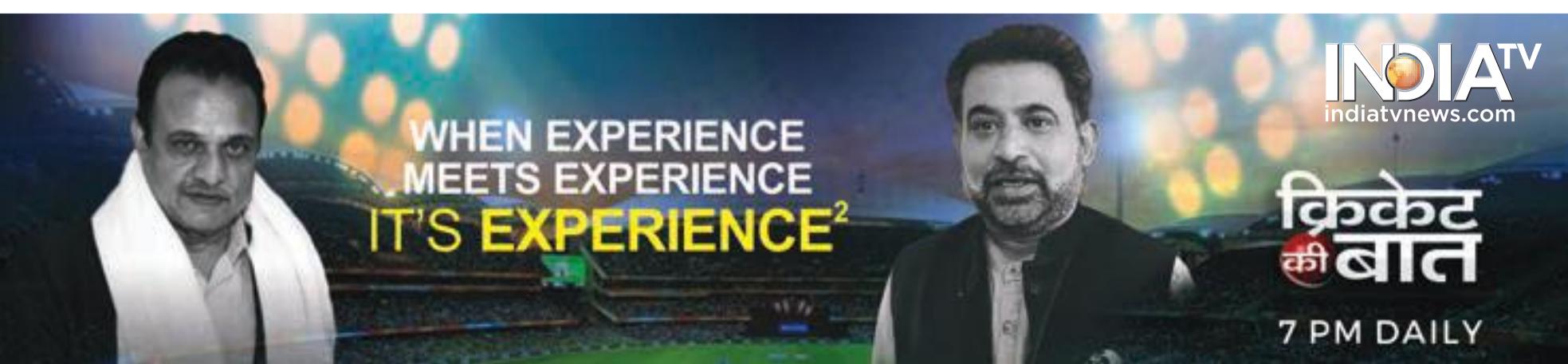
Social media is a great asset, but marketers have to accept the fact that it comes with its own set of challenges, trolling being one of them. As a diligent brand custodian, one must have a framework in place to deal with these challenges. At Kellogg's, we have a clear response mechanism that dictates how we tackle such issues. The most important factor is – there will always be a positive and negative side to things. It's best to be prepared for both.

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

While television remains the primary medium, if given the choice of only one, it would no doubt be digital platforms which allow a brand to engage with different demographics and reach potential customers. With smartphones and 4G becoming ubiquitous, the role of digital is indispensable in creating brand awareness. Video is the most preferred medium today, and digital platforms allow optimal use of video.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

The most common grouse agencies have is the lack of a concrete brief from their clients. The onus lies on brands to be absolutely clear about what they expect from the agency – creative or media planning. The clearer you are on the job you want to get done and the behavioural change you are trying to get, the better the agency's output will be. Once a clear brief goes out, let the agency take over and work its magic. ■



**किंकरं
की बात**

7 PM DAILY



There's an influencer overload in the market.

HITESH MALHOTRA

CMO | Nykaa

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. ■

**ONE MAN
ONE SHOW
THAT GOT INDIA TALKING**

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What's interesting is the way some myths or fads temporarily disrupt consumer behaviour.

POULOMI ROY

Chief Marketing Officer | RSH Global



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

I am raising a two-year-old Gen-Z; fulfilling as it is, trust me... it is interesting to observe how he stimulates change in a millennial household with millennial adults.

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

At a global level, I have always admired Indra Nooyi. I have known her through her interviews and love the honesty and candour with which she addresses each question. The way she manages her personal and professional life is incredible.

Harsh Mariwala is the other person I look up to. His story, of transforming an unbranded coconut oil into a branded one in plastic bottles, and then growing the business to what it is today, is worth listening to again and again.

Among the younger lot, Manu Kumar Jain from Xiaomi is somebody who wears his brand on his sleeve; he is the biggest endorser of his brand and that's something only a passionate marketer can do.

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

Quite literally, a "lambi race ka ghoda" – we are here for the long haul!

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

One challenge was launching our summer campaign amid media mayhem; channels not being free-to-air caused huge disruption in data, which obviously affected brands like ours that are large spenders on television. When you do not have any stable data to fall back on to plan your campaign and you have ₹60 crore at stake, the pressure is huge.

My belief was strengthened during this phase. No book or person can teach you how to be a wholistic marketer; you acquire that knowledge over years of work. In the face wash category, we clocked a volume growth of 10 per cent, at par with category growth of 11.2 per cent (Data Source: Nielsen, MAT March, 2019).

We signed on the new age OTT sensation Mithila Palkar as our brand endorser. This move was questioned by many because we were leaving behind a popular Bollywood face for a young, new influencer. But the move paid off – the VTR (View Through Rate) of the ad on YouTube was 46 per cent; the general thumb rule is to expect a 15 per cent VTR.

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

The personal care category is still at a nascent stage in India, as compared to countries like Korea, China or other European nations. It's growing, and this growth is fuelled by an increase in disposable income.

But what's interesting is the way some myths or fads temporarily disrupt consumer behaviour. For example, people do not even know the full form of SPF, but there is this myth that the higher the SPF, the better it is. Similarly, every now and then, we hear about ingredients that are suddenly trending, but no one can prove their effectiveness. Therefore, it is easy for brands to bring in some fancy story or ingredient and change consumer behaviour.

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?

Brands are trolled, especially when a celebrity endorses it – because their personal lives are so public today – or if it makes a disruptive claim that's not substantiated. If the brand does not fulfil its promise, the trolling is fast and loud. But what is worth observing is that the brands listen these days and, mostly, revert with logic.

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

For us, it would be television because it still gives us the highest reach. We are a 30-year-old company and started marketing ourselves approximately five years ago. We compete with multinational giants that have been around for over 50 years. Hence, we realise that our awareness and consideration still needs to grow.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Earlier, an idea was media neutral; it was appreciated for what it was. But today, agencies are asked to ensure an idea is "insta-friendly" first. My sympathies are with them. ■

**INDIA'S BEST
ASTROLOGY SHOW**



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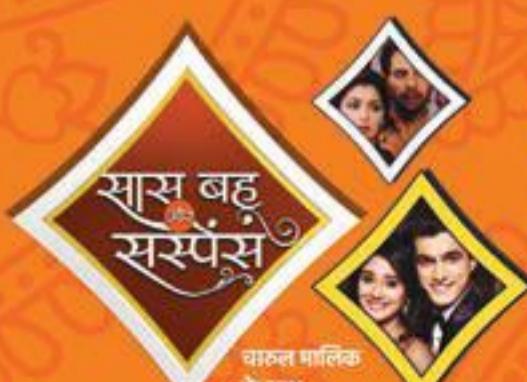
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The 'first jobbers' category will continue to drive personal mobility (cars and bikes) in urban India.

KEDAR APTE

Vice President, Marketing | Castrol – India and South Asia



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

I have been fortunate to have travelled a lot in the last 12 months. I love travelling to different countries, meeting people and experiencing cultures. My trip to Japan was fascinating; I witnessed a very different culture, one that has immense respect for others.

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

If I had to pick one person, it would be Nitin Paranjape from Unilever. He is one of the professionals I have utmost respect for. What I love about Nitin is his humility and his connect with people across the organisation. I am hugely inspired by his ability to think big and demonstrate commitment through his own behaviour.

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

Castrol makes millions of people around the world move swiftly in their vehicles. So, the animal that comes to mind is a cheetah, with its power and agility. It's a strong brand that's constantly adapting to seize different market opportunities.

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

One of the challenges marketers always face is balancing between long-term and short-term goals. They have the task of building brand imagery as well as generating demand. This challenge becomes even more prominent when the market slows down. The objective of every activity should be well defined and KPIs must be clear. While I know it may sound simple, we need to practice this with rigour and keep challenging the team on how they prioritise activities and find this balance.

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

We, at Castrol, invest in strengthening loyalty for our brands by focusing on both rational product benefits as well as on emotional affinity with consumers and influencers, in a language that is relatable. For instance, in cities, cars encounter frequent 'starts' and 'stops' as part of urban driving; we launched Castrol MAGNATEC with DUALOCK molecules that provide protection in such a start-stop environment. We used a car 'crying in pain' to explain the stress of stop-start conditions to position our brand offering.

For our largest selling two-wheeler brand Castrol Activ, we took

the brand benefit of continuous protection to greater heights by being a spark for positive social change among the youth, with themes like cleaning beaches and voting.

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

I completely understand why millennials are the main target audience for several brands. We use different strategies for different categories and market to both consumers and influencers. We play across B2C and B2B segments.

The B2C segment includes cars, bikes, trucks and tractors. Penetration in the cars and bikes category in India is still low compared to many other countries, and will keep on growing. In India, one new bike is sold every two seconds, and one car is sold every seven seconds. Overall, the 'first jobbers' category will continue to drive personal mobility (cars and bikes) in urban India. In rural India, growth will not be restricted to the youth, but will be more broad-based as rural income rises.

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?

Today, being on digital is not optional. Brands need to be mature enough to accept trolling. Consumers may be more inclined to post about their 'not so good' experiences but may not be generous about sharing their 'wow moments'. Brand marketers must use active social listening tools to pick up customer feedback. Mindset wise, marketers must guard against the tendency to be defensive, and must accept the brickbats with the praise.

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

TV is the main medium. Unless brands are niche, TV gives marketers an opportunity to get instant and unparalleled reach and impact.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

One thing agencies have a grouse about is clients being unclear on what they want to do. Some marketers have a secondary and tertiary target audience and want to achieve multiple objectives through the same communication. Marketers need to be more single minded and I like agencies that appropriately challenge clients on the real objectives and insights for a winning campaign. ■

WHERE INDIA DEBATES SENSIBLY

कुरुक्षेत्र
सोहेश शर्मा के साथ

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6 PM WEEKDAYS



Today, the main role of a CMO is to create an ecosystem of different agency partners.

ANUPAM BOKEY

CMO | RPSG FMCG – RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group

An advertisement for India TV's 'Cricket Ki Baat'. It features two men, one in a white shirt and another in a dark suit, set against a background of blurred lights and stadium seating. The text 'WHEN EXPERIENCE MEETS EXPERIENCE IT'S EXPERIENCE²' is displayed prominently in the center. The India TV logo and website 'indiatvnews.com' are in the top right, and the show title 'क्रिकेट की बात' is in the bottom right. The tagline '7 PM DAILY' is at the bottom right.

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

I've dedicated the last couple of years completely to work. We built brand Too Yumm! from scratch. The brand was growing fast and needed 24X7 engagement.

Due to my hectic schedule, last month was the first time I managed to take a couple of weeks off and go on a vacation with my family. I spent time teaching the first strokes of swimming to my younger daughter – that was the most fun I have had in a long time.

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

Former global CEO of Unilever Paul Polman has left a meaningful impression on me. He drove the agenda on sustainability as a purpose in Unilever and has convinced many other companies to do the same. I implemented this learning while working on (HUL) brands like Pureit, Sunlight, etc.

I also admire Mr Sanjiv Goenka, chairman of RPSCG, for his ambition to build an FMCG business worth ₹10,000 crore, from a start-up. His ambition and conviction help me find my own purpose with brand Too Yumm!.

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

Today, Too Yumm! is like an eagle – exploring the terrain, looking for opportunities with sharp sight, and attacking with speed before soaring to a point that's out of everyone's reach.

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

We ended up winning over a dozen accolades for our strategy, marketing, communication, design and purpose, for Too Yumm!. Some of the titles under our belt are 'The Best Structure and Surface Design' in Rio, Brazil, 'Eat Right Award' from FSSAI, 'The Top 50 Transformational Brands in India' from WCRC in London, and 'Product of the Year' and 'Food Innovator Award' from Annapoorna.

Over the past few months, growth in the FMCG category has slowed down drastically. For a new brand like ours, sustaining growth has become a challenge. Our differentiated proposition has kept us ahead of the game. This is, perhaps, motivating competition to distract us via legal routes and trade tactics. But it has increased our conviction to stay on the course of health. To tackle the industry slowdown and competitive challenges, we're revising our strategies and redirecting our efforts.

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

Two trends in particular are important: First, a conscious move towards healthy snacking; consumers are making lifestyle changes through fitness bands, fitness apps, sports, diet, etc. The second trend is the quality and quantity of content consumption, across TV (IPL, ICC World Cup, other sporting series) or digital. This content consumption is typically accompanied by snacking. The perfect TG for Too Yumm! comprises 'guilty snackers' who binge on unhealthy snacks and are looking for guilt-free, healthy binging options.

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

Millennials or Gen-Y are a large part of the demographic we reach out to for Too Yumm! and rightly so. Millennials are the go-to audience because they are open to experimentation. We're seeing higher awareness from Gen-Z too, as their eating habits are not so ingrained and they're far more aware of healthy choices. We see the strongest equity for Too Yumm! in these age-bands. They're the key influencers for the 'snacking' purchases of a household.

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 don't think trolling has changed too much over the years but the numbers have gone up. There is a need for brands to be sensitive and serious about this 'digital power' that's in the hands of so many consumers. Brands need to be aware and responsible.

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

For a mainstream FMCG brand, TV remains the biggest medium for driving reach and awareness, and will continue to be the dominant media of choice. But today's younger audiences view content on multiple screens, so a combination of TV and digital optimisation is imperative to drive efficiency of media investments.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Every agency has issues they are unhappy about. In the past, when one or two media vehicles were relevant, one agency was able to deliver it well. Today, the main role of a CMO is to create an ecosystem of different agency partners and get them to work cohesively. This may create some friction. ■

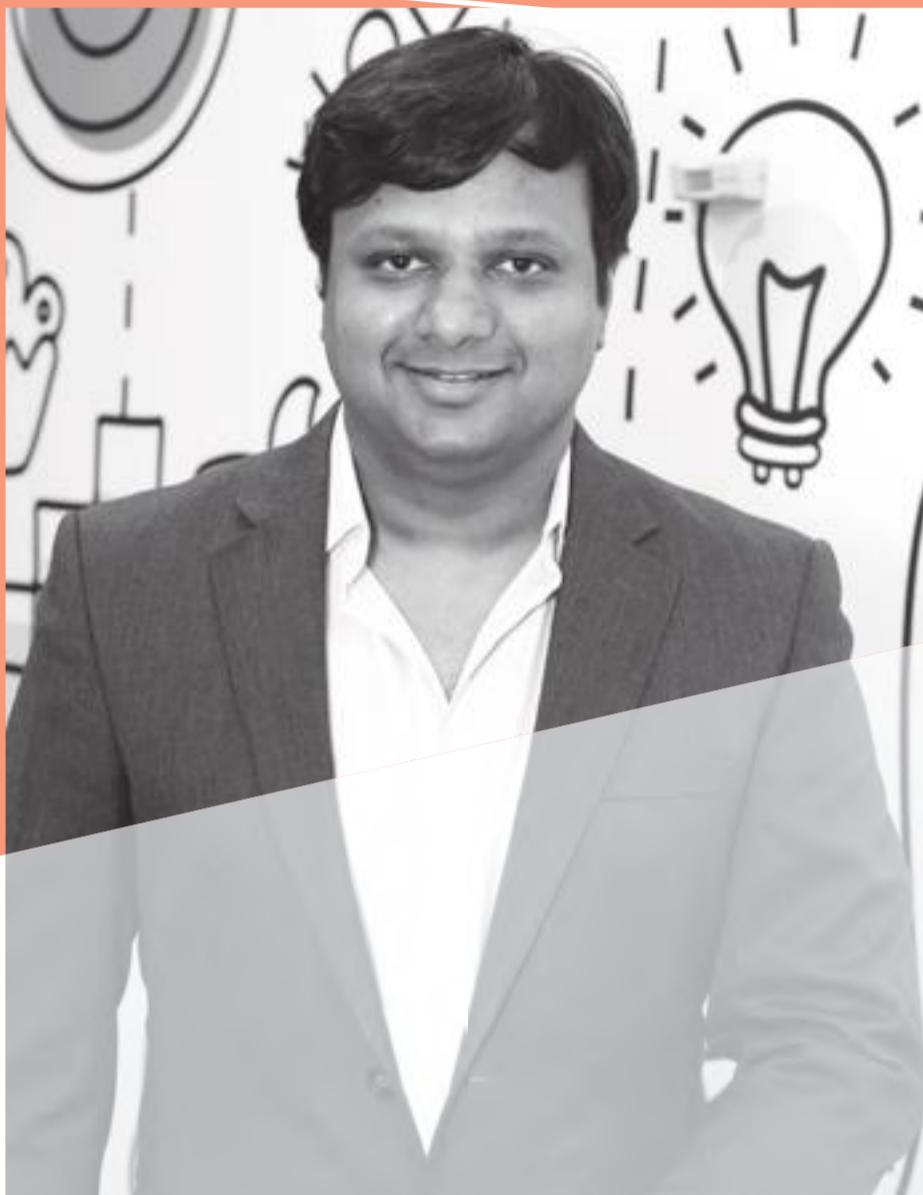


9 PM RAJAT SHARMA LIVE
PURE NEWS. NO RHETORIC



INDIA TV
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9 PM
WEEKDAYS



Clients always get the creative
that they deserve.

RAJAT GUPTA

Country Category Leader - Baby Care | Procter & Gamble

**ONE MAN
ONE SHOW**
THAT GOT INDIA TALKING

**आप की
अदालत**



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

I started kickboxing this year; it's been a great way to stay fit and is also a massive stress buster post work.

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

I truly admire Shantanu Khosla (former P&G India CEO for more than 10 years). His in-depth understanding of the Indian consumer and sharp focus on the most critical issues always helped uncover innate consumer insights that eventually translated to big brand building ideas. But most importantly, it was his humility that made him the most respected leader for an entire generation of P&G managers.

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

Our biggest challenge this year was to continue the exponential year on year growth on Pampers that we have seen over the last few years (almost doubled the business size over the last three years). Add to this a context of an unprecedented competitive environment with multiple new brand launches and deep promotions.

The biggest learning that I draw from this year is that if the brand stays focused on the consumer and keeps a razor-sharp focus on strengthening each business fundamental, it can emerge as the winner, however tough the context or external ecosystem.

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

With the new generation of millennial parents, we see a clear shift towards shared responsibilities and equal parenting. With our 'It Takes 2' campaign, we sparked the conversation around the fact that 'Happy, healthy babies need both mom and dad from Day 1'; because the insight was so close to the consumer, the response from both moms and dads has been phenomenal.

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

Diapers is a unique category - consumers are entering and exiting it every day. For us, it is imperative to win every day with new parents across touchpoints, and most importantly hospitals. Given that the millennials are and will be the new generation of parents, nurturing

brand love for Pampers with millennial parents continues to be a key driver of our success.

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?

Fortunately, we have never experienced any notable incidents of trolling on social media. I feel it is important for the brand to stay honest and genuine on social media, and on any other touchpoint for that matter. For the rest, one can ignore the trolls.

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

If I must choose only one medium, it will be TV. In a mass category, TV continues to be the biggest driver for brand awareness and consideration.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Agency partners crave for clarity of consumer understanding from brand teams, which then gets distilled into a simple and clear brief. As they say, clients always get the creative that they deserve. ■

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You can't sit back just because you've achieved a certain level of growth.

NADIA CHAUHAN

Joint MD and CMO | Parle Agro

INDIA'S BEST
ASTROLOGY SHOW



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आचार्य इंदु प्रकाश के साथ

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

I travelled to Europe, Switzerland and Spain with my family. When we were in Switzerland, for the first time, we did a road trip to the St Bernard Museum which is dedicated entirely to their national dog. Considering that we are an animal-loving family, it was quite the experience for us!

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

That's a challenging question...

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

If my brand were an animal, it would be a horse. They are incredible creatures – powerful and intuitive.

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

The last five years have been dynamic for us and our pace of growth has been incredible. However, this growth comes with its own set of challenges. You need to work harder and faster in order to keep up with and maintain that pace. You can't sit back just because you've achieved a certain level of growth; you need to do what has to be done in order to maintain that pace.

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

Purchases in our category are mainly impulse-driven. Top of mind brand recall, visibility and distribution are some of the external factors that determine consumer behaviour in our category.

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

That depends on the portfolio. Our portfolio has a wide target audience and the youth is definitely a key brand growth driver in our segment.

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 a brand, we have not personally experienced trolling. Social media has become a place for people to express their views freely.

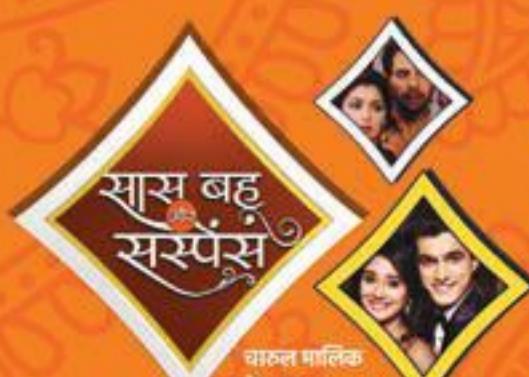
A few years ago, if someone expressed feedback about our brand, there would be nobody around to listen to it. Now, it has become a place of conversation between the brand and consumer. If we had to use social media to talk to our customers, we would do it to address them on a personal level.

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

If we could advertise on only one medium, it would be television, without a doubt. Ours is a mass brand so television offers visibility and huge levels of penetration in a way that is cost effective.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Our agency partners don't grumble at all! ■



**THE
TV TALES
OF INDIA**

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2:30 PM DAILY



As brands, we've spent
30 years telling people
what we want to say.

KARTHIK SRIVATSAN

Country Category Leader - Grooming | Procter & Gamble



WHERE INDIA DEBATES SENSIBLY

क्रृस्कलीवर
सौरभ शर्मा के साथ

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6 PM WEEKDAYS

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

Louis V. Gerstner, the CEO of IBM in the '90s and early 2000s who led the company through a very tough phase and turned it around from the brink. He was a great change agent, and I've learnt the importance of focus and culture in big companies through his book 'Who Says Elephants Can't Dance'.

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

Gillette, without doubt, is a man. Our ethos and purpose is to be every man, understand other men and serve every man.

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

The world around us is changing fast. The challenge for us, as a brand, is to embrace it and yet be focused. Treading this thin line is what we continue to learn every day.

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

The move from reading to viewing is a big change. From a time of reading and imagining what they want, consumers have a very clear visual picture of what they need. For example, if consumers desire a certain hairstyle, a few years ago, they would see it on TV and go tell their barber that. After that, they'd leave it to the expert's interpretation. Now, they take their phones out and show the images from all angles to get exactly what they want. They always had the power to choose; now they have the tools to do it.

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

Our brand exists to serve every man. We cannot afford to think of growth narrowly over three, six or 12 months. For Gillette, people born in this century have started turning 18 this past year; they voted now and are figuring out what sort of men they want to be – and this includes shaving. They will be a big focus for us and we will strive to serve them and meet their needs, as well as the needs of every other man in India.

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 brands, we've spent 30 years telling people what we want to say. Over the past five years, it has become a more level playing field where consumers have a platform to do this too. For Gillette, anything the consumer has to say about us is important. We prefer to be humble and give their opinions time and credence, just as consumers have done for the past 30 years.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Easy, one copy duration. With time no longer being a constraint, there is always room for a healthy debate on what the right duration to convey a great thought is. ■





Consumers are more willing to experiment, upgrade to newer formats, and also pay a premium.

SOMASREE BOSE AWASTHI

Category Head | Godrej Consumer Products



9 PM RAJAT SHARMA LIVE
PURE NEWS. NO RHETORIC

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9 PM
WEEKDAYS

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

I have always had a passion for music. However, with work and family responsibilities, I somehow lost touch over the years. So sometime back, my husband and I started taking guitar lessons. Now, it has become a ritual to have a weekend jam session with family, with the guitar or on our karaoke system. You may find some of my performances on my social media handles and YouTube channel!

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

Among international personalities, I admire Jack Ma for his tenacity, his resilience, for the way he could rise up after multiple failures and stick to his belief, and finally, for his ability to make it big with a multinational technology conglomerate. Closer to home, I admire Mr Adi Godrej for the values, respect and trust that he stands for, and on which his entire empire Godrej Industries is based.

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

A leopard, for its speed and agility, since that's the need of the hour in an evolving world. Unless one learns fast and adapts faster, one can become irrelevant in this "jungle".

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

I handle the personal wash portfolio at Godrej Consumer Products, which includes marquee brands like Cinthol and Godrej No.1. The biggest challenge in the soaps category is – because it is a 100 per cent penetrated category, growth is based primarily on market share gains. What made the problem worse in the last six to 10 months is, given the benign commodity price, a lot of smaller soap brands made headway using tactical methods like high retailer margins and deep consumer offers.

The learning I had was that if a brand has strong equity and consumer preference, then no amount of below-the-line tactics by competition can affect it. Our soap brands were among the highest share gainers last year, despite this adverse scenario, while most key players lost share.

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

Consumers are becoming more aware and health conscious. There's a rise in the popularity of herbal, natural and Ayurveda-based

products, not just in soaps, but across categories. Consumers are more willing to experiment, upgrade to newer formats, and also pay a premium for the same. For instance, we're sensing a rise in the body wash category, which is perceived to be more hygienic, better for skin, thus worth being more 'premium' than soaps.

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

Millennials are the first global generation of digital natives, the first to witness and leverage technology and the internet for shopping. Being better connected to information and being the chief wage earners in the household, Millennials have significant spending power and greater access to products and services. This trend is expected to drive the brand for the next 12 months, especially in the case of discretionary segments.

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?

Social media has exploded with active users. It's a platform where people express themselves and share opinions. This used to happen in the past too, but the scale and speed have increased tremendously. Practically any issue can become a movement within a few hours! For our digital teams, real-time social listening has become important to douse down any fire that might erupt.

Marketers have to be careful about the content they put out there for their brands. It has to connect with the brand values. While "topicality" is the buzzword, brands must be clear about the 'go' and 'no-go' areas. There should be no compromise on creative distinction and differentiation.

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

Digital, beyond doubt. Ownership of mobile phones across the length and breadth of the country, including rural areas, has significantly increased. This allows marketers to reach out to consumers with customised content. Consumer data enables us to sharp-target, re-target, and close the loop by enabling purchase through e-commerce or direct-to-consumer channels.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Our willingness to push the needle to take a larger risk with creative thinking on the brand. ■

**ONE MAN
ONE SHOW
THAT GOT INDIA TALKING**

**आप की
अदालत**

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We've always focused on the younger consumers as that's the age when menstrual habits get set for life.

CHETNA SONI

Country Category Leader - Feminine Care |
Procter & Gamble



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

As a part of the 'P&G Shiksha' program, I had the fantastic opportunity to visit a school in Dahanu village near Mumbai. I was there with a team from P&G to help build a wall in the school, keep water away when it rains and prevent the school from closing down during monsoons. This experience gave me immense satisfaction of making a difference, as small as it may be, to the lives of these children, and helping them continue their education without interruption.

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

Shantanu Khosla, who was the CEO of P&G India for over a decade, has been a massive source of inspiration and learning. Shantanu is a much-revered leader, not just of businesses, but also of the people. I admire his sharp strategic thinking, his single-minded focus on the most critical consumer fundamentals, and above all - a strong sense of personal integrity.

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

The level of competition in the feminine care category has intensified recently, with many new brands entering the space. We have embraced this challenge and have risen to it. We have been able to maintain our leadership position by raising the bar on product superiority, packaging, go-to-market strategy and communication.

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

There has been a heightened level of interest and awareness in menstrual hygiene in India. The government championing menstrual hygiene is playing a positive role in driving this cultural change. Advocacy for sanitary napkins coming from a local Anganwadi Amma is compelling and goes a long way in driving adoption for menstrual hygiene. We continue to educate young girls across the country on menstrual hygiene and health, and reach out to five million girls annually through our education program.

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

At Whisper, we've always focused on the younger consumers as that's the age when menstrual habits get set for life. Girls enter-

ing puberty, being the consumers of tomorrow, are a core target audience for the brand. Mothers of adolescent girls also play a very critical role in choosing their sanitary protection, and hence, they are also a core focus for us.

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 firmly believe that brands have the power and a responsibility to drive social change. In our company, we call it being a 'force for good and a force for growth'. It is even more critical in our category with the many taboos that surround periods and menstrual health. We, as Whisper, have always stood for consumers unshackling themselves from age-old beliefs.

Sometimes, few people react unexpectedly, but that hasn't stopped us from focusing on the positive impact on the lives of girls and women in India. For every troll out there, there have been many more passionate advocates of what Whisper stands for. Seeing their feelings resonate with the brand's ethos and purpose is rewarding as a marketer and inspires us to keep going.

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

Honestly, it depends where our consumers are at, as they are at the centre of everything we do, including our media choices. The evolution of digital media has been fascinating for us as marketers. Digital media, even more so on mobile, reaches more homes than ever before, including large parts of rural India. There are nearly half-a-billion digital consumers in India, with around 200 million in rural areas. Digital isn't just any medium; I see it as a pertinent one-to-one communication platform, where we as marketers can customise a message, build on a series of brand messages, and even seek feedback on the product and brand.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Grumbling is too strong a word, but our agency team has been positively nudging us towards creating holistic business solutions. This has been inspiring for us and has laid the foundation of a lot of great work the brand has undertaken in recent months. For example, the launch of 'Whisper Choice Aloe Vera Freshness' – our creative partners Leo Burnett played a crucial role in the end-to-end process. From identifying unmet consumer needs to creating the final communication that brought vital insights to life, we co-created a proposition tailor-made for the Indian consumer. ■

**INDIA'S BEST
ASTROLOGY SHOW**



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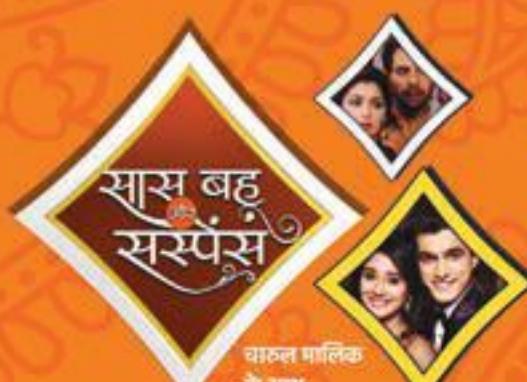
7:30AM DAILY



A good monsoon boosts consumption in general, especially in rural markets.

KRISHNARAO S BUDDHA

Sr. Category Head - Marketing | Parle Products



**THE
TV TALES
OF INDIA**

INDIA^{TV}
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2:30 PM DAILY

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

I recently went on a family vacation to Thailand and tried scuba diving for the first time. It was a fascinating and thrilling experience.

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

I have always admired Mr Kishore Biyani, founder of Future Group, one of the biggest Indian conglomerates. He has come a long way, from running a simple apparel retail business to founding Pantaloons to dabbling in film production. What I admire most is that Kishoreji has never been afraid of failure. He has always dreamt big, has led by example, and broken records every time.

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

A lion, because we have the lion's share in the market, and want to continue being 'king of the jungle'.

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

The biggest challenge we face is managing the massive opportunity and growth that's coming from the explosive e-commerce channel. We need to continuously monitor this channel and customise our products accordingly. We are exploring the introduction of 'exclusive' offerings for the e-commerce business.

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

We have observed the impact of seasons on our business. A good monsoon boosts consumption in general, especially in rural markets. Likewise, various government policies like infrastructure development, an increase in farmers' income, and employment generation, lead to huge growth rates for us.

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

Millennials and housewives have always been our key audience, and we believe both these segments will continue to drive growth for us in the future as well.

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 have witnessed both the positives and negatives of brand trolling. Things have become extremely sensitive in the recent past. Social media is a scalable platform for consumers to express their views on brands. While consumers are well within their rights to criticise brands that give false information or make false promises, trolling can also negatively impact brands that are trying to convey genuine messages.

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

Even today, television is the largest mass medium, with wider exposure and reach compared to other mediums. Television has pervasiveness, impact and targeting abilities, across urban and rural markets. ■



WHERE INDIA DEBATES SENSIBLY

कुरुक्षेत्र
 सोरेश शर्मा के साथ

INDIA^{TV}
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6 PM WEEKDAYS



The belly of the nation – lower middle class, especially in rural areas – is our core target group.

S PRASANNA RAI

Vice President, Marketing | Wipro Consumer Care & Lighting



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

I have been part of a volleyball team comprising men in their late 30s and 40s. It's a team we've put together... we've been playing tournaments, where we compete with youngsters – we have been losing most of the games, but it has been fun.

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

I admire all marketers who have built new brands from scratch and have been able to fight against established brands and make a mark. These journeys are all stories of clarity, focus, perseverance, failure, and course correction.

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

Eagle – always flying high fearlessly, with a keen vision that's on the lookout for great opportunities.

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

Over the last year, we have been looking at driving the e-commerce business in a big way. It involved putting together a team, customising our product portfolio, and making changes on the marketing front. A young team has driven this process, and the learning for me is – if you give a big challenge to a motivated team with enough elbowroom to operate on their own, then the kind of execution you get is amazing.

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

As the non-urban and rural crowd connects with the rest of the world, their increasing aspirations make them 'lucrative' consumers. With the democratisation of the internet, consumers have become tech-savvy and conscious of their preferences. As brands, we need to have an emotional connection with them.

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

For us, the belly of the nation – lower middle class, especially in rural areas – is the core target group. It will continue to be the growth driver for our brands.

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?

In the digital age, where opinions can be expressed at the click of a button, the biggest challenge is being prepared for every possibility. Backlash is inevitable; however, it is important to keep a unified front and be innovative in whatever you do. A troll, when dealt with in the right way, can enable a brand to break through the clutter of the internet.

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

My medium of choice for the next six months would surely be TV, as it provides the scale and engagement needed in our business. But if the question is about picking a medium focused on a specific target segment, and managing with very limited monies, then digital is undoubtedly the best platform. It gives maximum brand recognition with minimum investment. Though digital started off as a platform for the millennial, it has slowly grown into a medium of communication for every demographic. Soon it will challenge TV.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Given the action in the digital space, with OTT platforms, web series, content-heavy marketing efforts and long-format advertising, we have been pushing our creative and digital media agencies for sales impact, ROI, media efficiency and metric-based marketing. This has been a regular point of debate and argument – and I'm sure it's leading to some grumbling too. ■





The lines between TV,
digital and radio are
gradually converging.

RITU MITTAL

Country Marketing Manager - Healthcare |
Procter & Gamble

**ONE MAN
ONE SHOW**
THAT GOT INDIA TALKING

**आप की
अदालत**

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

Over the past 12 months, as a new mom, I have spent my time outside of work watching my little one grow. I am enjoying the joys of motherhood. It is a refreshing and beautiful experience. In addition, I also practise yoga, and occasionally try my hand at gardening whenever time permits.

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

I have admired Indra Nooyi since my college days. Her thoughts on lifelong learning, emotional intelligence, and constant reinvention have guided me in my professional journey. She, to me, is a truly charismatic leader with an inspirational vision and the ability to unleash the power of her people. I relate to her views on the importance of communication skills in leaders, without which, competence, courage, confidence, and a moral compass can go waste.

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

Consumer habits, behaviours and needs are rapidly evolving in today's connected world. The consumer today demands a faster pace of innovation. They want brands that anticipate, not just meet, their needs. They are extremely vocal and expressive about their likes and dislikes. Content consumption habits are undergoing a paradigm shift, demanding a whole new level of creativity. Powerful storytelling will be a key differentiator in times to come. Spending quality time in consumer immersions on a regular basis to stay in touch will be more important than ever. I look at this changing landscape as an opportunity to connect with consumers better and engage in conversations versus a one-way dialogue. It is, indeed, an exciting time.

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

Consumers today are more connected, informed and demanding. They are constantly engaging with brands and influencers and are consuming content more than ever before. When it comes to personal health, consumers are becoming more aware and health-conscious. This has resulted in greater demand for health and wellness products. Consumers are also increasingly choosing brands that are a force for good. Therefore, when we launched our #TouchOfCare campaign for Vicks, we wanted to connect with consumers at an

emotional level by redefining care through stories that have challenged stereotypes.

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

Vicks has a product portfolio that serves consumers across demographics. Millennials are the largest demographic group of young India. They are the chief wage earners in most families. They are digitally-savvy and more informed than the earlier generations. These consumers are trendsetters and will shape the future of media consumption. They are, indeed, the future growth engine for the economy and for brands.

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?

At Vicks, we believe that if the brand is true to its purpose, it will rise above the noise and emerge as a force for good.

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

Content is being consumed everywhere – across different screens of varied sizes. The lines between TV, digital and radio are gradually converging. I believe TV will continue to be relevant. It still reaches out to the mass audience in the most efficient way. Digital is growing rapidly with the advent of social media and OTT platforms. More than half-a-billion people are online and that is, by no means, a small number. Today, there is opportunity to constantly engage with the consumers seamlessly across platforms.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Given the pace of change, agility is what is most required today. Our consumers are evolving and changing at a faster pace than ever before. Agility is a must in today's world – this is a big change versus the past. Agility demands continuous engagement and an ongoing dialogue. We are all collectively learning and evolving in these changing times. ■

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What we choose today is redundant tomorrow!

PEEYUSH BACHLAUS

AVP – Marketing | Kansai Nerolac Paints

**INDIA'S BEST
ASTROLOGY SHOW**



भविष्यवाणी
आचार्य इंदु प्रकाश के साथ

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7:30AM DAILY

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

Driving across Germany on the famed Autobahn and visiting automobile museums.

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

Mr Anand Mahindra. He is a communicator par excellence and a brand onto himself, and I as a brand and marketing professional feel that I can learn a lot from him.

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

Cheetah would be our brand personality. They are agile, nimble and ready to pounce at any opportunity and change directions with the highest success rate. Their traits mirror the needs of our industry well; wherein you have to be nimble and aggressive to meet the ever changing and evolving consumer preferences and macroeconomic factors that drive business growth.

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

The biggest challenge lately for us would be the work we have been doing for entry into the furniture adhesives category. The team has been at work extensively to ensure smooth entry and our biggest learning is the role that such a low profile segment plays in our lives and in shaping economic growth.

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

I would say fashion and lifestyle trends impact our category significantly. Whether it is colours, patterns, textures, designs, applications, we see all these evolving and changing at a furious pace. What is today's choice is redundant tomorrow! This becomes even more complex in the age of social media and influencers where many subcultures come to life regularly and find a platform of expression.

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 would stick to the millennials as our demographic segment.

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?

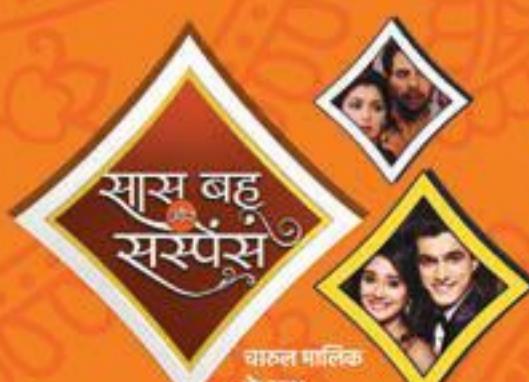
The brand and consumer engagement has increased manifold as social media evolves and matures. As a marketer, I feel we have to take the good with the bad. The responsibility, as marketers, lies on us to ensure that we are communicating positively and with greater transparency. We have to become better listeners and understand that we need to be on our toes at all times. Having said that, we need to also learn to distinguish between genuine feedback/criticism from what constitutes mindless trolling. We need to deal with the former (feedback) swiftly and compassionately so that the platform stays favourable and positive. The latter defies logic and rationale (thinking) and sometimes non-engagement is the best course of action.

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

In today's times, looking at just one medium to advertise and engage would be myopic. Consumers are a heterogeneous entity and there is no one-size-fits-all.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

When you ask for depth versus width. ■



**THE
TV TALES
OF INDIA**

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2:30 PM DAILY



DIGIPUB

World

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WHAT ARE WE DISCUSSING?

PANELS

- ◆ **News Channels vs Print Publishers**

As brands from two different media face each other online, who has an advantage over the other?

- ◆ **Has the role of mobile apps changed?**

Mobile phones have got smarter; surfing speeds have got swifter. How has this impacted the role of the mobile app vis-a-vis the website?

- ◆ **Do websites use data well to sell?**

A lot of data is available about visitors on a site or app. Can online publishers profit from it?

- ◆ **How much personalisation do consumers want?**

'Personalisation' is an article of faith online. But there is need to be clear about how personalisation serves a publisher's business objectives.

- ◆ **Direct sales vs Programmatic**

Website owners worry that if they turn to programmatic, it will devalue their sales effort and inventory. How to choose between the two?

- ◆ **The promise and perils of affiliate marketing**

To supplement their advertising revenue, publishers often consider turning into affiliate marketers and drive traffic to ecommerce sites. Is it as viable as it looks? And how to make it work.

- ◆ **How to turbo-charge the Indian language game**

What can publishers and platforms do to get more Indians online, more often?

PRESENTATIONS

- ◆ **Kedar Gavane, ComScore:** Online trend spotting

- ◆ How publishers can use LinkedIn

CASE STUDIES

- ◆ **Gautam Sinha** on the great transformation at Times Internet

- ◆ **B Srinivasan** on the digital aspirations of Vikatan

- ◆ **Rameet Arora** on personalisation at the new Livemint

- ◆ **Vikram Chandra** on the use of AI at Editorji

IN CONVERSATION

- ◆ **Anant Goenka** on staying true online to the roots of The Indian Express

- ◆ **Parry Ravindranathan** on the global ambitions of Bloomberg Media

Note: Tentative agenda subject to change

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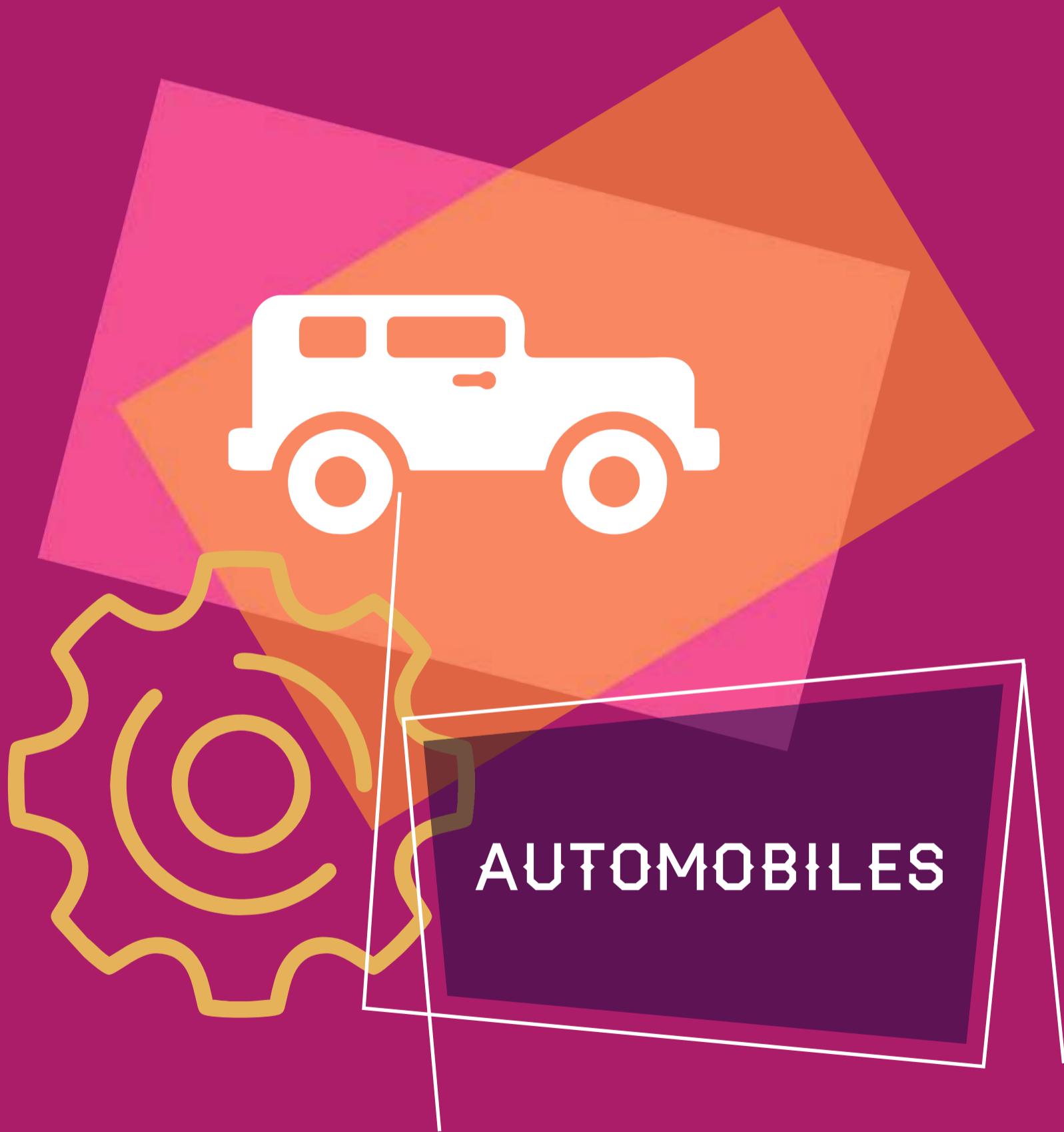


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Rural consumers are mimicking urban consumers in their lifestyles and choices.

SHASHANK SRIVASTAVA

Executive Director, Marketing and Sales | Maruti Suzuki India



WHERE INDIA DEBATES SENSIBLY

क्रोडीया
सौरव शर्मा के साथ

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6 PM WEEKDAYS

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

It was a visit to the forests on the border of Rwanda and Uganda in Africa. I spent half a day there with a group of gorillas – 20 of them with one leader! Gorillas are a bit unpredictable. So, there was some danger involved... it was a rare and thrilling experience.

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

Jony Ive, the designer at Apple. The admirable thing about him is his clear insight about consumer requirements and his boldness in betting on these insights even if they are not the prevalent design aspects.

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

Surely, a tiger – dominant, agile, aggressive, thrilling!

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

The biggest challenge has been dealing with the way digital technology adoption by consumers is impacting our marketing efforts. The Indian consumer is now connected digitally; this is altering the way they consume media and perceive different brands and products. Keeping pace with this behaviour and its impact on all our marketing efforts is a big challenge. The key learning is – marketers must keep an eye on changes in consumer behaviour and not assume that traditional methods will continue working.

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

One force is the abundance of information. Today, almost 75 per cent of all new age consumers have already decided which car they want to buy, even before visiting a showroom. They have the power of information at their fingertips, and this impacts their purchase decisions. The opportunity, hence, is to re-examine the consumer journey at the beginning of the purchase cycle, that is, when it is more 'digital exploratory'. That will make it easier to align the brand's narrative to the customer's own lifestyle and affinities.

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

Having grown up with better education, exposure and affluence,

millennials break away from traditional attitudes and wield a huge influence on high-ticket purchases. Millennials will continue to stay an important segment. India is a young country with nearly half the population in the age group of 25–35 years. This demography will continue to drive volumes and growth for us in the future. Besides urban areas, growth will also come from rural areas or 'Greater India'. With rising aspirations and affluence, rural consumers are mimicking urban consumers in their lifestyles and choices.

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?

Constantly listening to conversations on social and other digital platforms is the key to understanding the pulse of your audience. We have to be conscious about the messages we put across on social mediums, where share-ability is high. If these conversations are missed, the chances of getting trolled are very high.

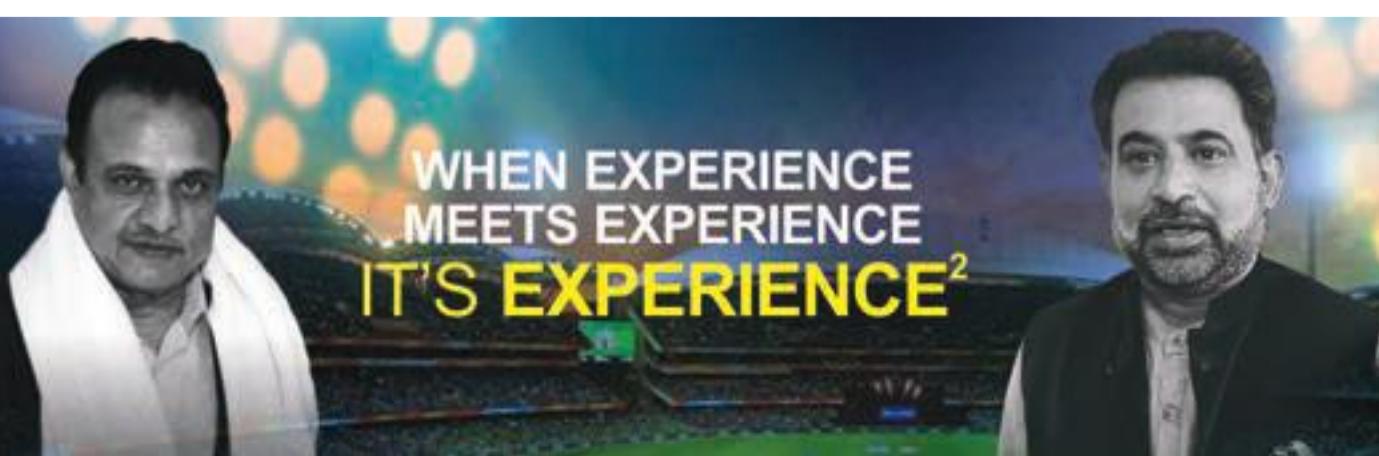
Knowing what the audience is expecting and talking about helps with quick mitigation strategies and crisis response. Among consumers, awareness about brands taking notice of grievances on social has increased. This has led to an increase in trolling, as consumers have realised that brands will respond.

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

It would be the medium that gives maximum ROI. Digital being data-driven helps identify the right target audience, gauge their response and optimise one's marketing efforts. It offers better measurability over other mediums. Digital reaches almost all potential car buying audiences and hence acts like a mass medium for auto manufacturers. Also, unlike other media, digital isn't a single format medium; we can choose from multiple formats like search, video, display, social, etc.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

There's a certain rigour that goes in crafting a sharp, insight-driven idea. Often, that gets compromised with the pressure to deliver instant solutions. This is a common grudge agencies have. On a lighter note, the amount of time spent in meetings outweighs the time spent thinking about ideas or on actual execution. ■



INDIA TV EVENTS

CREATING INDUSTRY'S
BIGGEST BENCHMARKS



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Customers are gradually shifting from an ownership to a user-based model.

BISHWAJEET SAMAL

Head of Marketing | Volkswagen Passenger Cars, India



What is the most interesting thing you have done outside of work in the last 12 months?

I've always been intrigued to learn to play the piano. It was a childhood dream to perform Beethoven's 'Für Elise'. While I've not perfected the skills yet, I can delightfully play the composition to a certain extent. Along with this, I enjoy spending quality time with my son by engaging in interactive games that help build his cognitive abilities.

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

Mr Jeff Bezos, CEO and president of Amazon, is someone I look up to, personally. He is a visionary in many ways, an innovator. He has the drive to push the boundaries and achieves the desired outcome that is beneficial for the larger good. His continuous faith in Amazon, even when it wasn't the number one e-commerce giant, showcases his commitment and willingness to keep trying harder.

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

The growing number of influencers across platforms has made it difficult for brands to find the right 'mix'. Brands want influencers who have the desired reach and engagement levels with the right target audience, who understand the brand ethos and can curate relevant content for consumption. Due to this, we have started using performance metric tools that identify the most suitable influencers for our campaigns. Basis the narrowed list, we do our personal assessment and initiate a conversation.

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

Global trends like the adoption of shared mobility – a sustainable, accessible and cost-effective option – impact consumer behaviour in the automotive sector. Fluctuating fuel costs in India, one-time insurance costs and the NBFC's liquidity crisis have affected consumer demand over the last eight months across the industry. Customers are gradually shifting from an ownership to a user-based model, which is further affecting automotive sales in India.

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 have a clearly defined demographic target. Our audience com-

prises the aspirational middle class along with young achievers who are educated, well-informed, well-read, well-travelled and well within the age group of 25-45 years.

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?

Trolls are everywhere. Most of the times they have a negative impact on the brand but if handled well, it sure can turn into your stride. It all depends on a brand's identity, witty marketing efforts, and, if required, the brand's response to the troll.

In recent times, competitor brands initiate trolls and while some manage to successfully keep the conversation going, most have not been that successful. As marketers, we should be cognizant of the impact these trolls have on our existing and potential customers.

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

Thankfully, the internet is a vast domain and with increasing internet penetration across India, without any hesitation, I can opt for that medium. There are several communication platforms available and consumers are constantly logged on to the web or social media. We marketers are able to advertise our brand and products in multilingual content that reaches a wider customer base without losing much to the other mediums.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

They want more exciting briefs. They're usually not too enthusiastic about the regular ones. Our agency partners are an extension of our team. While they have always supported us on our campaigns, 'deadlines' is something they gripe about. ■

**ONE MAN
ONE SHOW
THAT GOT INDIA TALKING**



**आप की
अदालत**

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India is a dynamic, value conscious market.

PALLAVI SINGH

Was Head of Marketing, MG Motor, at the time of the interview. She has since moved to BMW India.



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

We both enjoy the spirit of motorcycling and the most interesting thing has been helping (my partner) Abhishek customise and personalise our Iron 883, Harley-Davidson.

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

I can name fictional characters I take inspiration from, as there are quite a few real-life heroes and mentioning one may not be fair. Elizabeth McCord in 'Madam Secretary' oozes so much grace and intelligence. Plus, she really rocks power dressing for women. Peggy Olson from 'Mad Men' is an example of using one's intelligence and competence to break through the glass ceiling in a male-dominated industry.

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

Phoenix – as it represents transformation and rebirth in its fire. As a powerful spiritual totem, the phoenix is the ultimate symbol of strength and renewal.

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

The biggest challenge – and also, opportunity – has been to create everything from scratch and take the unconventional route of complete storytelling through digital and content. It's these conversations that will ultimately lead to commerce in the future. We're focusing on innovative ways of collaborating with content publishers. Our brand strategy is to speak to customers directly, rather than taking the safer and conventional option in the category.

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

Government schemes regarding fuel prices and the environment currently play a great role. The auto category is massive inside, but has many overlapping connections – factors like the environment and safety impact this sector most. India is a dynamic, value conscious market; the budget, elections and all major or minor sectoral policies influence decisions.

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

For MG India, as MG Hector is a premium car, we see our product growth coming in from the 30-50 year olds. The brand impact, however, starts from a 15-year-old and goes up to a 65-year-old. Times have changed and today, a lot of us, young and old alike, are contributing to purchase decisions via direct or indirect influence. We may want to isolate our TGs today, but the influence cannot be seen like that. We need to focus on not just our customers, but also on our consumers. We need to be in the timelines and mind space of a large set of consumers, build relationships with them, and find common ground beyond the product that the brand may be selling.

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?

My views on trolling have always been the same – it is unnecessary and potentially harmful to the reputation of the brand. No one should feed the trolls. In recent years, we have also seen brands on brand trolling; there are some really cool and nasty examples out there, but it only works when done in good spirit. The intent should be to engage. It shouldn't be malicious. I think brands should be prepared for trolling today, with a strong crisis management team in place. Brands should be ready to handle criticism. The implications are huge so brands must think through all aspects before reacting to or engaging with trolls.

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

The primary medium would be digital. Today, marketers need to look at data – and data should drive rational decisions. However, digital alone is not what I would suggest or work with. Support mediums in and around the digital ecosystem are also important – print, TV or radio. I believe in a combination of rational/data-driven and emotional/culture-driven marketing.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Today, there's a shift towards fast-paced work. Be it creatives, digital media buying or content input and output, if you don't do it fast, you lose it. While agencies have great resources and set ups, there is still a 'traditional' pace at work, especially on the creative front. There's a mismatch in pace on the input and output fronts. That's why many companies today have started investing in their own in-house teams for content and creatives. ■

**INDIA'S BEST
ASTROLOGY SHOW**



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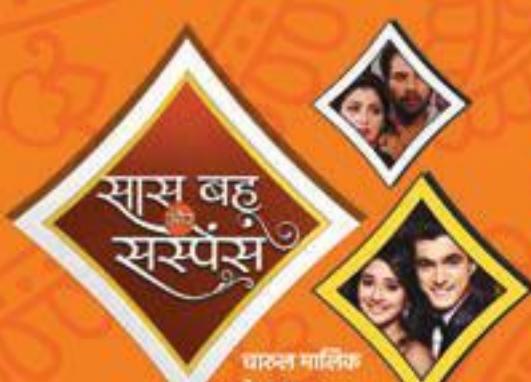
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In today's world, brands should remain humble and authentic.

VIVEK NAYER

Chief Marketing Officer, Group Corporate Brand |
Mahindra & Mahindra



**THE
TV TALES
OF INDIA**

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2:30 PM DAILY

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

My wife and I took a wonderful holiday break to travel across scenic yet unexplored locations across Croatia and Slovenia. In around two weeks, we covered multiple amazing locations – Dubrovnik, Split, Plitvice Lakes, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Lake Bled, and Piran & Postojna Caves. It was certainly one of our most memorable holidays.

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

I admire Elon Musk for his vision and boldness - from electric mobility disruption to space travel to hyperloop tunnels. Of course, there are some concerns that have surfaced of late so time will tell how much of this actually gets delivered.

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

It would probably be a lion or a horse. Lion because we are market leaders in many of the businesses that we operate in. And horse because we like to compete hard and strive to win every race in line with our credo of 'Rise'.

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

Budgets are always a challenge. But then you force yourself to find solutions that do more with less – solutions that are strong on consumer insight and differentiated from others in order to cut through clutter.

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

For our key businesses - automobiles, tractors and holidays - consumer sentiment is a key factor because these are high-ticket, high-involvement purchases. And when the economy is under stress, consumer sentiment becomes negative.

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

Well, millennials are important to us as they are not only our future consumers but also our key influencers in all the decisions that are made today!

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 the fundamental point is that in today's world, brands should remain humble and authentic. And if you do goof up, then please own up and apologise.

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

That would be digital because you can smartly and sharply target your consumers with the right relevance or context, at scale.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

I think agencies will always grumble about clients who do not treat them with respect, as partners. ■



WHERE INDIA DEBATES SENSIBLY

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6 PM WEEKDAYS

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Consumer sentiment and confidence impact the motorcycle category directly.

NARAYAN SUNDARAMAN

Vice President, Marketing | Bajaj Auto

WHEN EXPERIENCE
MEETS EXPERIENCE
IT'S **EXPERIENCE²**

INDIA TV
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क्रिकेट
की बात

7 PM DAILY

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

Tried my hand at the Keto diet. And it worked... for a while!

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

Steve Jobs. He's created a brand that transcends categories with ease - music, phones, content, broadcast/streaming, chronometers... and all at premium positions.

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

We have a portfolio of brands, so it's difficult to narrow it down to a single animal.

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

There have been several challenges faced by the auto sector in the year gone by – high fuel prices, higher insurance costs and tightening interest rates. These have led to depressed consumer sentiments.

We came out of this by first, making sure our brands remain sharply differentiated in terms of features and benefits, and second, by communicating in a memorable way. For example, our digital campaign - Avenger #noplasticpatriotism, our TVC - Platina bomb squad, our corporate campaign - World's Favorite Indian, our activation - Platina Agam Rath @ Kumbh, and our festival print campaign. Third, we have leveraged our ecosystem to deliver a strong value proposition to our customers via collaborations between Bajaj Auto Finance and our dealer partners.

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

Consumer sentiment and confidence impact the motorcycle category directly. A motorcycle is a big-ticket purchase for many customers. They think deeply about costs, both acquisition costs as well as future operating expenses. Hence, any uncertainty, or perceived risk to future income streams, impacts their purchase behaviour.

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

Working adult males will continue to drive demand for motorcycles.

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?

Presumably, you are referring to brands getting trolled due to a celebrity association... it is an unfortunate fallout of the anonymity provided by social media.

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

It would be print – yes I'm old fashioned! The newspaper habit is sticky, is considered credible and is a relevant one for my TG.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

The 'commoditisation' of their business model. ■



**9 PM RAJAT SHARMA LIVE
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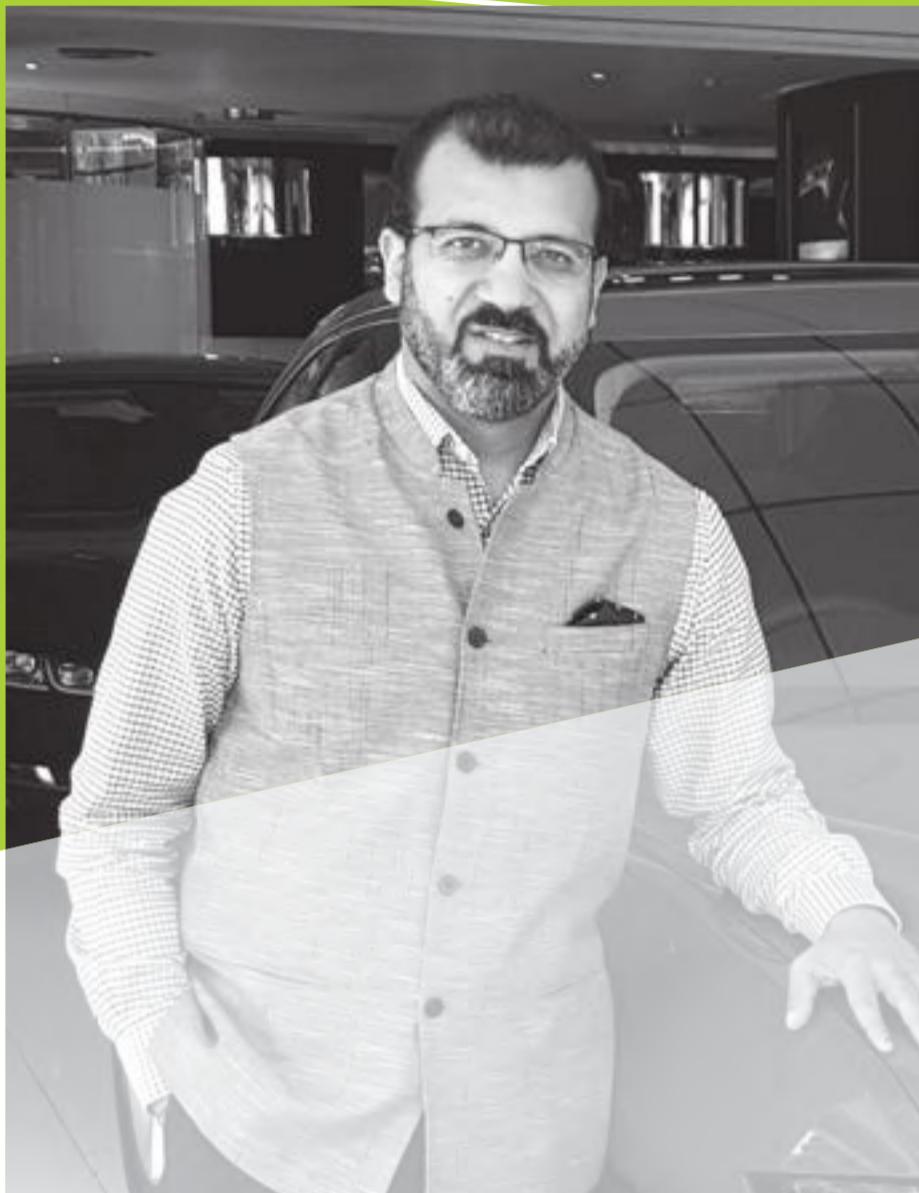
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**9 PM
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The average age of the luxury car customer is about 40 years.

ANKUR KANSAL

Brand Director | Jaguar Land Rover India

**ONE MAN
ONE SHOW**
THAT GOT INDIA TALKING

**आप की
अदालत**

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

My wife and I are huge sports fans and are passionate about India doing well in all sports, not just cricket. So, last May, we started 'The Sports Drum' to raise awareness for sports and promote sportspersons in India. This is just on social media at the moment and is completely non-commercial.

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

Karan Kumar, chief brand and marketing officer at Fabindia, for the way he is transforming customer engagement and experience at Fabindia, based on insights from various sources of data.

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

The leaping jaguar cat is already our brand logo and the design of Jaguar cars exemplifies the cat's qualities in terms of elegance, intuitiveness, dynamism and performance.

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

The luxury automobile market in India comprises just 40,000 units, so the universe of people to target via any marketing activity is fairly small. When it comes to driving customer engagement via content marketing, achieving reach and frequency for such a defined customer set is quite challenging. Yet, through innovative audience segmenting and remarketing techniques, the team was able to achieve great results for certain campaigns.

Over the last 18 months, we have been quite active in communicating relevant brand stories via content marketing and have learnt the importance of keeping the content authentic, unique and relevant to the defined customer set, and personalising the content. It's also important to have flexible plans that can be tweaked dynamically to achieve the desired results.

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

One of the strongest forces that impact the luxury automobile industry is government policy in terms of duties and taxes. While the market has grown from 18,000 units in 2010 to 40,000 units, today, this growth could have been much higher, had the luxury auto industry received the right policy impetus. The growth has been constrained by high taxes such as GST at 50 per cent for SUVs and

48 per cent for sedans. This has also not been helpful in realising the potential of creating jobs in this sector.

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

The average age of the luxury car customer is about 40 years. So, for us, both Gen X and Gen Y audiences are important.

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?

Some brands have been trolled for taking up social causes and including them in their campaigns. I believe brands must be purpose-driven and values-led; regardless of trolling, brands must continue to drive relevant social messages. It allows brands to communicate social benefits, beyond just functional and emotional aspects.

Land Rover, for example, has taken up the cause of raising awareness about wildlife conservation in India and has been creating digital campaigns around this over the last 15 months.

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

Jaguar and Land Rover vehicles are known for their iconic design and British luxury. Video is, perhaps, the best format to communicate this. As such, any medium that allows usage of video is always part of our marketing media mix. If I were to select one medium for the next 6 months, my pick would be television.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

One of the biggest challenges faced by agencies in India is the lack of quality talent, especially in digital and overall strategy and planning. ■

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7:30 AM DAILY

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

Work has been keeping me busy for quite some time now, but recently, all my old batchmates from college planned a get-together – the outing really helped me unwind. We went to Himachal Pradesh and spent some quality time together. Some of us were meeting after a decade and it is really nice to have such warm friends around you in life.

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

For nearly 80 years, Brand Jeep has drawn adventure seekers, idealists, vagabonds and visionaries to its front door. The brand has become synonymous with being able to help you go anywhere – spiritually, emotionally or physically. It's difficult to match these attributes to just one animal.

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

The biggest challenge is keeping pace with changing market dynamics. The first five months of 2019 were difficult for brands across categories. We look forward to the second half of the year, in the hope that buying sentiments will pick up. We're looking forward to a good monsoon and a super festival season.

Jeep is an experiential brand. My biggest learning is – keep all communication and activities customer-centric and focus on giving people extraordinary experiences.

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

The automobile category is a high involvement one, with social media and online research playing a big role in decision making. Technology is becoming a big part of automobiles. Today, cars not only help you move from one place to another, but also talk to you and understand your behaviour. These new trends do impact consumer behaviour. Time will tell how Indian consumers accept new technologies and how these technologies adapt to human demands.

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

Jeep is a global premium SUV brand. The brand is desirable and attracts buyers from all walks of life. Millennials are definitely future jeepers. Even today, they are big influencers within families and among friends.

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?

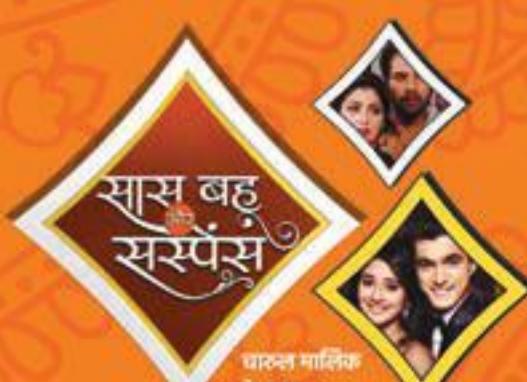
Brands have so much to learn from the past. I guess audiences today are well read and educated on various topics. Everyone has a different lens to view a piece of communication, and social media gives people freedom to instantly express what they feel. In such a scenario, brands need to be more responsible and must stay true to their core values.

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

Digital, without any doubt. Digital offers such varied platforms with precise targeting to spread the campaign message. This flexibility is not possible on any other medium.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

I see a lot of talent when I interact with my agency teams. They are passionate about trying out new things and making an impact. Timelines and pressure, at times, might be a gripe, but I think that has now become part of our daily lives. Agencies work hard and party harder. ■



**THE
TV TALES
OF INDIA**

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2:30 PM DAILY

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Our customers are mostly self-made, ambitious professionals and entrepreneurs.

Nitin JHA
Head of Marketing and Product | Škoda Auto India



WHERE INDIA DEBATES SENSIBLY

कुरुक्षेत्र
सौरभ शर्मा के साथ

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6 PM WEEKDAYS

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

I have been a panellist at various marketing, advertising and media award platforms, an experience I have thoroughly enjoyed. I guess these avenues have given me an overall perspective of what is happening in the country. It has helped me identify the latest trends and best practices across many verticals.

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

My personal favourite is Siddhartha Lal of Eicher Motors. I admire the attention he pays to the products and the surrounding ecosystem. I am sure he has a great team to support him but any team is as good or bad as its leader.

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

The biggest challenge we face every now and then is equating value perception with price, in the eyes of our customers. The learning we derive from it is – it pushes us to persistently deliver value with our product and services, especially in terms of the overall customer experience.

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

There are several external forces like infrastructure, connectivity, safety, accessibility, and novelty that influence consumer behaviour. In fact, novelty is a big force in the automotive sector as a lot of growth impetus is driven by new product offerings. This behaviour is unique to the auto segment; it is not as pronounced in many other industries.

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

Given the constraints that besiege a typical metro customer, we anticipate growth from mini-metros and Tier 2 cities over the next 12 months. Our customers are by and large self-made, ambitious professionals and entrepreneurs, with a sense of maturity acquired through experience.

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?

Trolling has been there for quite some time now, and this digital age phenomenon will continue to exist in the foreseeable future. Today, brands are better equipped to anticipate trolling activities and tackle them in a creative and time-bound fashion.

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

A tricky one, indeed. If I were to choose one medium over others, for the next six months, I would opt for television. This advertising platform is instrumental in our geographical expansion.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Our creative partners grumble about not being able to retain talented individuals and about losing them to multiple avenues that often appear more lucrative than agencies. ■



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The challenge all marketers face today is that of too much content.

DEBOSMITA MAJUMDER

Head of Marketing | PUMA India

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

I took up running more seriously. Attempting a timed 6K run for the first time, and then completing my 21K run within a few months of that, was an exhilarating experience.

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

The brain behind the Amul hoarding idea. The fact that they have been able to keep the Amul Girl relevant for the last 50 years is incredible.

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

Well, it is one!

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

I think the challenge that all marketers face today is that of too much content. Breaking through the clutter and reaching the right target audience is important. For us, sustenance is key and through that we have been able to drive far more impact for the brand across channels.

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

The hype around sneaker drops has led to products like the PUMA Thunder selling out in no time across the country. In addition to this, growth of 'athleisure' as a category and awareness around it has created a whole new fashion trend. An increased focus on health and fitness, need for comfort and versatility, and casual office dress codes are some of the key factors driving the 'athleisure' trend.

Also, digitisation and the evolution of social media has propelled the adoption of global trends around innovative designs and latest products. As a result, consumers are styling with sportswear for different occasions like travel, office, college, hangouts and evening wear, more than ever.

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

Gen Y, with the highest disposable income, definitely contributes most to business. But hand on heart, millennials continue to be the critical consumer segment for us.

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?

Well, yes, trolling has become really nasty in the last couple of years and personally, I am not a big fan of it. I feel opinion and wit can be displayed with far more flair than trolling.

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

Instagram – that's where our consumers are and it's only growing.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Deadlines! ■

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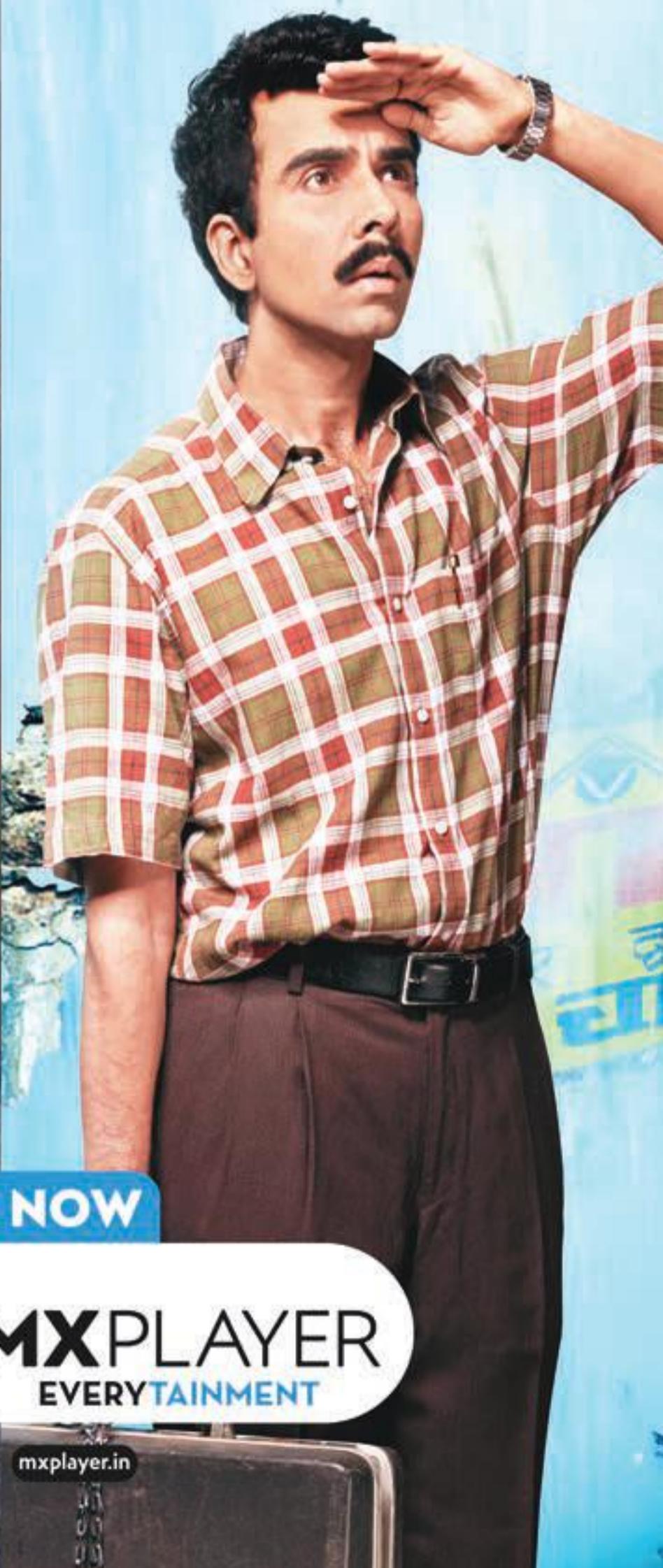
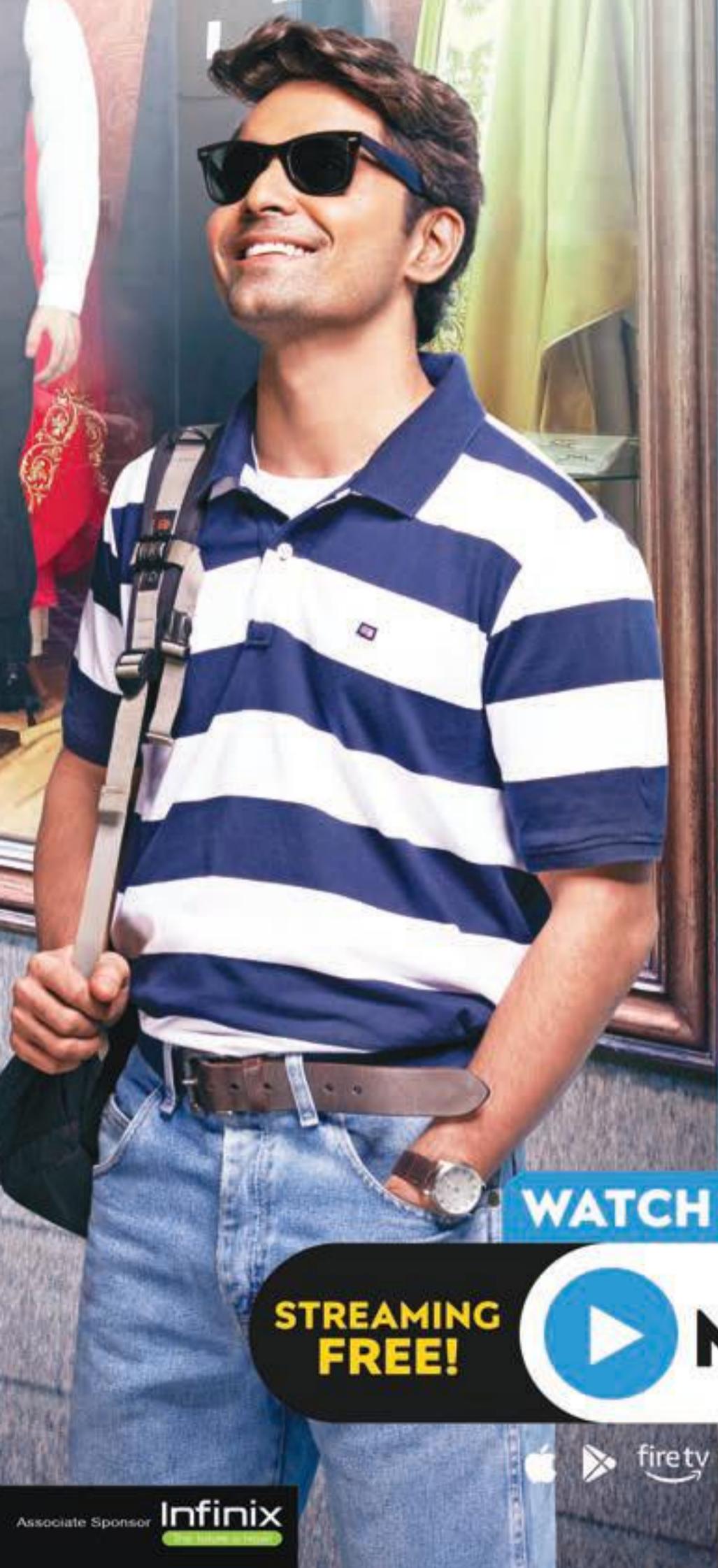
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It doesn't always have to be a grand purpose. It's more important to be honest and transparent.

KARAN KUMAR

Chief Brand & Marketing Officer | Fabindia



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A man in a yellow and black striped shirt is lying on a couch, looking up. Another man in a white tank top is also lying on the couch, looking up.

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

I stayed in a humble village called Saty in Kazakhstan. I thoroughly enjoyed the basic yet satisfying and healthy life. I stayed with generous hosts and enjoyed simple yet wholesome meals. Brown hills, green meadows, horses and sheep – such beauty and simplicity make you question the many assumptions you make in life.

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

The man who taught me most of what I know today is Hemant Malik, who currently heads ITC's food business. I've also closely followed Harish Bhat and his approach to purpose-led marketing. Their intensity, integrity and passion are inspiring.

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

An orangutan. The bond between an orangutan and her child is a caring and nourishing one. I would like to believe the bond we share with our consumers would be just as strong.

The other option is a horse because it represents intelligence, speed, strength, grace and devotion in equal measure.

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

How does a brand stay relevant to consumers who are so widely spread across the demographic continuum? Across this wide base, consumers' expectations are often varied and pull at opposite ends of the string. To sometimes choose between them, and at other times marry them to deliver a more overarching proposition, is exciting for us.

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

Technology is one – it has made brands more accessible and has put them under much larger (and welcome) scrutiny. Consumers promptly call out brands that are based on flimsy edifices or don't walk their talk. Today, brand authenticity really matters.

Customer experience is another one – be it in physical retail stores or across online touchpoints, consumers can only be meaningfully engaged if the experience enriches them. It has gone beyond simple product purchase.

Marketers across segments have fetishised the millennial. But

hand on heart, which demographic will drive growth for your brand over the next 12 months?

Millennials are among the most discerning consumer groups brands have ever encountered. They are intelligent, aware and exacting... and have fairly high disposable incomes. That said, for a brand like ours, that appeals to consumers across demographic clusters, the task is to play a rewarding role across segments, including but not limited to millennials.

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?

No. The mainstreaming of technology has ensured that brands are not just more accessible but also under high scrutiny. I think that is a good thing. I strongly feel that brands which are less than honest with their consumers, and that go any distance only to 'sell', should rightly be called out. The only caveat here is that I am referring to genuine and honest trolling, not the kind that is orchestrated with any mala fide intent.

Brands ought to be upfront about their purpose and role in their consumers' lives. It doesn't always have to be a grand purpose. It's more important to be honest and transparent.

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

A media mix is like a balanced diet. An overdose of any ingredient will lead to diminishing value of returns. Brands need to define their reach, engagement and revenue objectives wisely, and choose horses for each of those courses. No single course should dictate the choice of a singular medium.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Our agencies don't grumble. But if I were to guess, then the need for speed and clarity in decision-making would, perhaps, top the charts. ■





Only close to a fifth of Indian men prefer tailoring.

SHANTISWARUP PANDA

Chief Marketing Officer | Raymond

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

I have started running to keep myself fit. I also took a road trip to experience the serene beauty of Norway.

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

There are many, but if asked to name one I'll name Mr Ratan Tata for his intellect, vision, humility and compassion. This combination is becoming rare among the new breed of leaders we have today.

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

Lion – majestic, charismatic, dignified... someone who knows where to go and how to get there.

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

The biggest challenge is to work on a market development model to popularise tailoring as a preferred format for 'wardrobe refresh' for men in affluent and elite segments. Only close to a fifth of Indian men prefer tailoring, while the majority has moved to readymade garments.

While Raymond has a play in both formats, it is interesting to work on a market development model for tailoring to invite new consumers into the process of customisation and personalisation.

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

Mega trends that impact consumer behaviour in the fashion category include travel, content/entertainment, digitisation, social media, e-commerce, the urge to 'experience' rather than 'own', pride in Indian roots, and socially conscious consumption.

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 very clear that the fashion category can't be segmented basis age. It has to be segmented basis consumers' propensity to spend and their fashion sensibilities. So, for us, more than from an age bracket, growth will come from affluent and elite consumers who are conscious about turning out right for every occasion.

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?

Social media brings speed, frequency, scale, and a route for two-way communication with consumers, but if not managed carefully, brands and businesses become soft targets for trolls. Over the years, the audience in general has become hypersensitive. And since the rate at which content is refreshed online is so high today, brands tend to cross the thin line sometimes, and, as a result, get trolled.

The best way to handle trolls is to accept a mistake (if there was one) and move on. As long as the marketing team and the agency are clear about the brand personality, tonality, and the social and cultural context, social media can be managed well.

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

If forced to choose one medium, I would go for digital, for its ability to sharply target the right audience with relevant messages, and build a conversation. The combination of search, social and performance-based marketing is helping us funnel leads and invite new consumers.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

I think the biggest pain point for agency partners is poor quality briefs. Half the work on any campaign is done if there is very sharp brief based on a consumer insight. ■



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Newer trends include emergence of a 'convenience economy' and an on-demand mindset.

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VP-Marketing | Swiggy

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

I enjoy playing poker. As anyone with a basic knowledge of the game understands, there's a great deal of psychology involved in poker. Not only in the way you read an opponent, but also in how you prepare for a game. Poker requires you to spend time getting in the right frame of mind to play. One must also be extremely disciplined during play and display good judgment in choosing the right spots to be aggressive. A visit to the Mecca of poker would be one of the most interesting things I have done in the past year.

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

One must bring a strong mix of left-brained and right-brained thinking to marketing. Swiggy's consumer base has grown exponentially in size in the past year. So, tailoring our communication to different segments at the same time has become necessary. There are different consumer segments – price-sensitive, premium, value-conscious, those who expect exceptional service, etc. Hence, while it is important to have a strategic, long term point of view, it is also essential to be tactically flexible.

Consumers place a lot of trust in the brand, which is why controlling the experience end-to-end and repaying their love and trust in a very dynamic, multiparty ecosystem becomes an important part of the journey.

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

Burgeoning smartphone adoption and internet penetration have led to the growth of the digital ecosystem and in the trust people put in online shopping. Newer trends include the emergence of a 'convenience economy' and an on-demand mindset. Interestingly, these trends hold true not just for Tier 1 cities but also for Tier 2 and 3 cities.

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 brand that appeals to multiple consumer segments. Millennials are a key demographic for us, but homemakers and 'food decision makers' at home are also an important demographic for Swiggy.

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?

Knowing the pulse of the new-age economy we live in is important for a modern-day marketer. It's no longer about one-way, push-based communication. The views and demands of consumers are also important. The ability to engage with consumers on social media is a brilliant brand building opportunity which should be leveraged and not shied away from due to the fear of trolls. Take, for example, our recent 'Voice of Hunger' campaign in which foodies recreated the shape of their favourite food using the voice note feature on Instagram. We got over 1.5 lakh DMs on Instagram in just 10 days.

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

Both digital and TV have their strengths and we will absolutely leverage them. Digital is important for personalisation, targeting, and the opportunity to weave beautiful long-format brand narratives. TV provides us with a canvas on which we can paint an impactful story and create trust for a brand in the minds of consumers.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Given how fast-paced and nimble brands must be across mediums today, an ongoing challenge for agency partners is that of having too little time, and dealing with a fast turnaround requirement. Having said that, our partners have always been successful in coming up with clutter-breaking and much-loved work for us. ■

AN MX ORIGINAL SERIES

Only For
Singles

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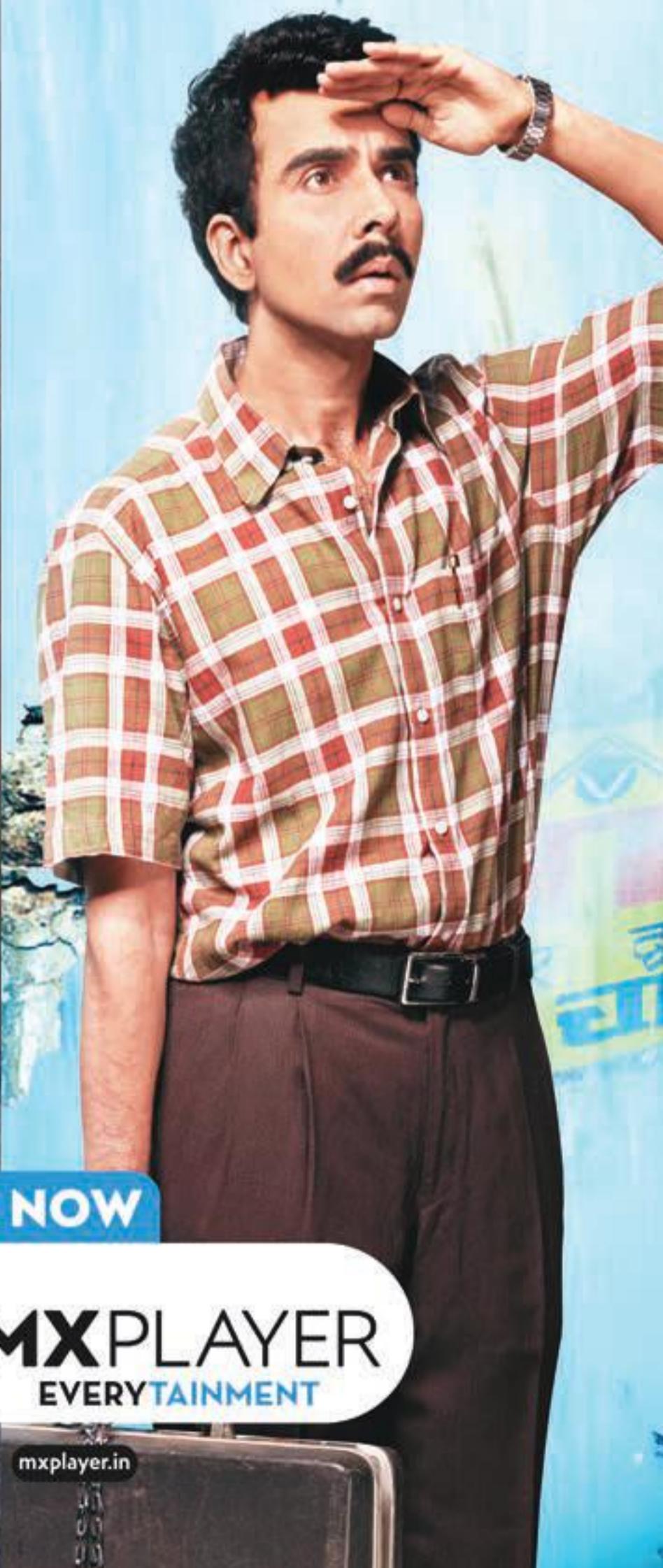
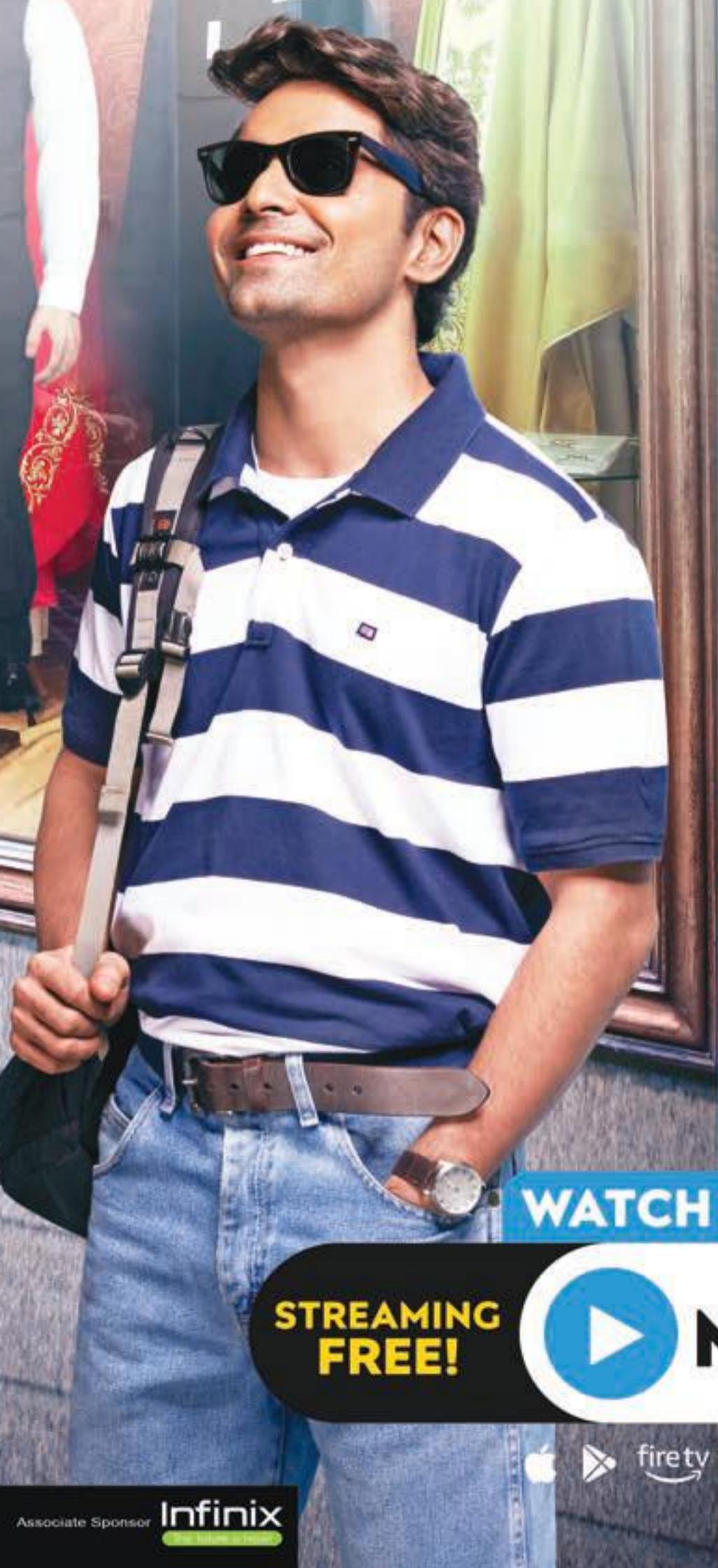
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Idea Jiska, India Uska!



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We have built our brands on social media through communities that engage over common interests.

ANGAD BHATIA

COO | Indiatimes Lifestyle Network

A promotional banner for the MX Original Series "THINK Jalsa". The banner features two men: one in a striped shirt on the left and another in a white tank top on the right. The central text reads "AN MX ORIGINAL SERIES" and "THINK Jalsa" with the tagline "Idea Jisha, India Uska!". Buttons for "WATCH NOW" and "STREAMING FREE!" are present, along with the MX Player logo. Logos for Infinix, Disney, and MX Player are at the bottom.

AN MX ORIGINAL SERIES

Only For
Singles



WATCH NOW

STREAMING
FREE!



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

I spent time with my kids. I've travelled with them and tried to inculcate the habit of slowing down a bit even if it sometimes means getting bored. I feel kids these days have forgotten what it's like to slow down and observe things around them. When kids get bored, they get creative and that often unleashes their artistic spirits.

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 Anand Mahindra (CMD, Mahindra Group) for building an Indian brand with global ambition. What he has done with his business and his social enterprises is just phenomenal. Emily Weiss (founder and CEO of Glossier) is someone right up there as well, for successfully transitioning from being a fantastic storyteller to someone who is now a poster-child in the direct-to-consumer (DTC) space. She has articulated her ambition of creating a brand that people love so very well.

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

A bee – a meticulous, loyal, capable and busy builder, who doesn't shirk from its duty towards the community. Bees are aware that they are smartest when they are truly connected to the collective spirit of their tribe. Though each bee is extremely capable, they are among the most 'democratic' species. They have evolved to survive in and adapt to changing conditions.

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

The biggest challenge was in expanding the media business to commerce while maintaining a judicious balance between the editorial ethos and commerce-led content. After months of hard work, we created MensXP Mud, a community that normalises the conversation around male beauty needs.

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

We recently stepped into e-commerce and skincare, with MensXP Shop and MensXP Mud. Consumers are demanding more from their shopping experience. Convenience is the new buzzword; consumers expect a seamless, intuitive and curated digital experience. Customers like to invest in brands that stand for something. They want a richer, comprehensive and personalised shopping experience.

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

Hand on heart, it is millennials. For us, they're not just a demographic definition, but a psychographic one, driven by their motivations, anxieties and aspirations. Their consumption patterns keep brands on their toes. We have worked, over the years, to create millennial communities and we cater to them with trend-setting content.

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?

It's always a mixed bag. Perception management is a big part of brand communication and PR. An honest approach and having individual connections with consumers is the best way forward.

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

More than choosing, it's about defining the role of each medium basis the communication objectives. We have built our brands on social media through communities that engage over common interests. TV and print help provide validation to newer brands in a cluttered environment, while digital is a last mile conversion medium. For digital-first DTC brands, digital works as the primary medium as it helps with both conversion and conversation.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Agency partners, and clients too sometimes, get caught between finding the right balance between their marketing spends across the funnel. Most companies utilise their spends on top of the marketing funnel... only some navigate it to the bottom. Marketers who understand this fine line end up with the most evolved approach. ■



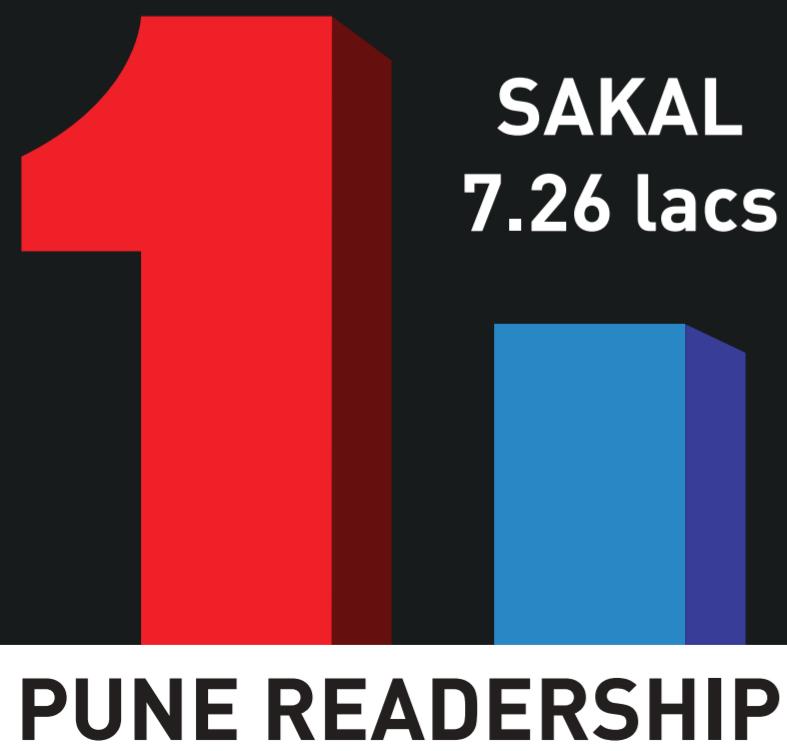
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Festivals and cricket tournaments influence TV buying patterns.

ANUJ SHARMA

Head of Marketing | Xiaomi India

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PLAY GOOD.**

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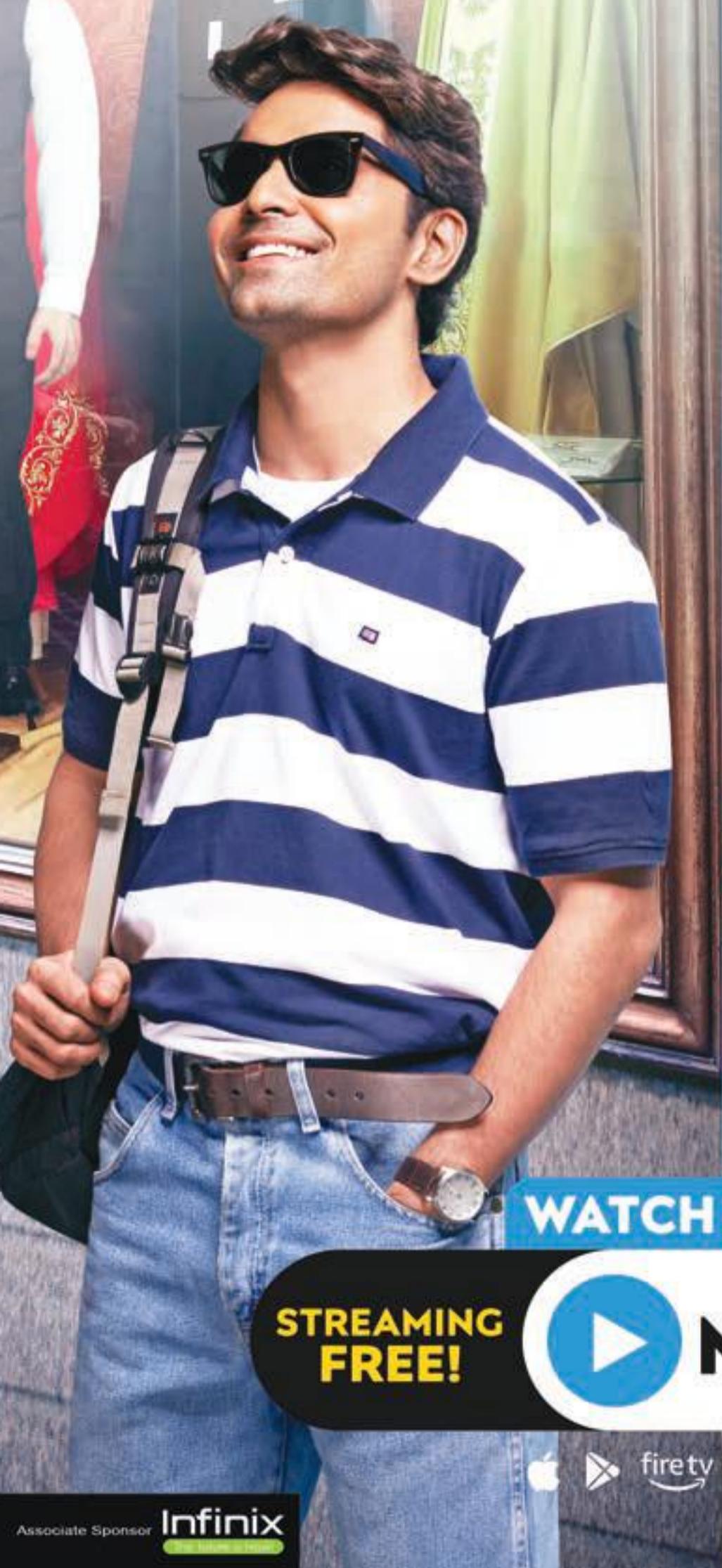


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Infinix

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

Lei Jun, the founder and CEO of Xiaomi, is a genuinely inspiring individual. His vision-innovation has been the guiding philosophy of the brand, and has transformed the lives of hundreds of millions of consumers, by offering them innovative technology at truly honest pricing.

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

It would be a wolf – we lead a large pack of our Mi Fans and consumers, and believe in their collective success. Additionally, we are focused on long term success, and are willing to walk long miles for it.

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

Usually, the period post Diwali turns out to be fairly challenging in terms of sales, especially for consumer electronics brands. This is because consumers are hesitant to spend again after utilising a variety of sales and offers during the festive season.

However, we successfully tackled it with our Black Friday sale initiative for the launch of our Redmi Note 6 Pro, during that period. We sold over 600,000 devices – they were sold out within minutes, right after all the Diwali sales ended.

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

External factors that impact decisions include festive seasons and occasions like cricket tournaments, which influence TV buying patterns.

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 have over 15 million monthly active users on our Mi community, and have a smartphone for every consumer segment out there. Therefore, we cater to a diverse set of segments, beyond just the millennial audience. Also, Xiaomi is more than a smartphone brand today, and is present across diverse categories with offerings like Mi Home Security cameras, Mi Air Purifiers, and Mi Bands for fitness enthusiasts, among others.

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?

We do witness a certain share of trolling, which, in my personal view, is a form of attention-seeking behaviour. Feeding the trolls does not help. It's best to just focus on one's own goals as a brand and continue delivering what's most beneficial to one's consumers.

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

Advertising is about reaching out to our audience and for us that means reaching out to our Mi fans. Therefore, we would certainly leverage our community and connect with our fans frequently to promote our latest products on the platform.

Having said that, we are not a brand that will ever stick to just one mode of advertising. It's necessary to tap into all the effective platforms. Television would also be a platform we would pick, given the fact that the majority of Indian consumers are still offline-based. TV offers greater consumer outreach from that perspective. ■

AN MX ORIGINAL SERIES

Only For Singles

The promotional image for 'Only For Singles' shows six panels of characters. From left to right: a woman sitting on the floor; a man in a chef's hat preparing food; a woman in a red dress; a man in a pink shirt; a woman reading a book; and a man flexing his muscles. The MX Player logo is in the bottom right corner.

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AN MX ORIGINAL SERIES

Only For **Singles**



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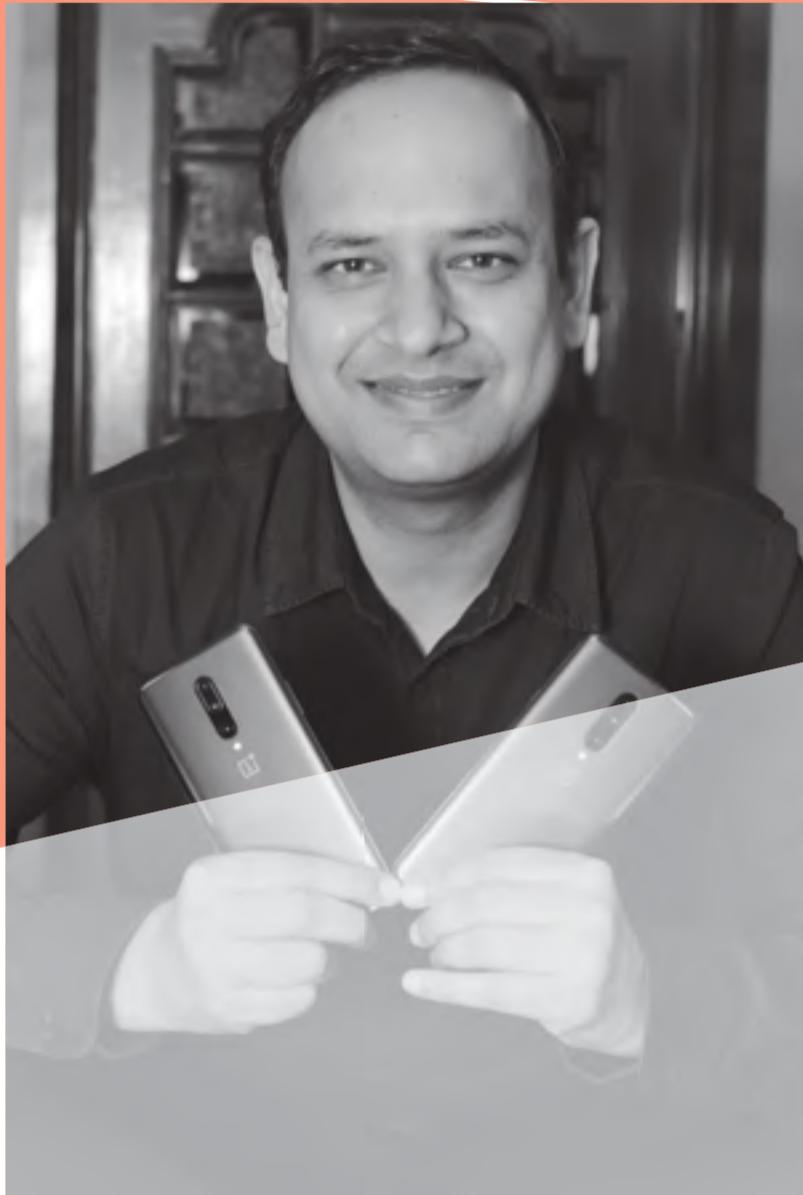
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Personal recommendation plays a key role in the purchase of smartphones.

VIKAS AGARWAL

General Manager - India | OnePlus India

A promotional banner for the MX Original Series "THINK". The banner features two men: one on the left in a striped shirt reclining on a couch, and another on the right in a white tank top also reclining on a couch. The central text reads "AN MX ORIGINAL SERIES" and "THINK" in large, stylized letters, with "Idea Jisha, India Uska!" underneath. Below this is a "WATCH NOW" button and a "STREAMING FREE!" button with the MX Player logo. The banner also includes the Infiniti logo and social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

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

I overcame my fear of watersports to discover the rich biodiversity and beauty of the underwater world through scuba diving.

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

After Steve Jobs, Elon Musk has emerged as the most inspiring global icon in the tech and marketing universe. He stands out for his bold vision of the future and simple yet effective use of digital media to drive organic word of mouth and engage directly with his patrons.

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

It is critical to build an organisation that learns from failures. The phoenix is a good representative for our brand since it is known to rise from its ashes. We also learn from our failures and rise up stronger, each time.

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

A year ago, OnePlus became the bestselling premium smartphone brand in India. This milestone made our young team overconfident about their abilities. There were suggestions to take a more open and aggressive approach going forward, in terms of the product mix, channel selection and marketing spends. At times like these one should stay focused on long-term customer value and avoid short-term growth measures.

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

Smartphones have emerged as intimate, important and personal devices. The category has evolved from price-sensitive to value-accretive, as it serves both utility as well as lifestyle needs of users across income groups. While India continues to be an underpenetrated smartphone market, the premium segment is growing very fast as users no longer wish to buy the 'cheapest brand'; they want to buy an 'aspirational brand'. Consumers today look for performance over the lifecycle of the product. They want a reliable after-sales experience too.

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're a young tech brand. Our core user base of early adopters comprises millennials in Tier 1 cities. We expect the same trend to continue as our brand awareness increases in smaller cities in the future. Personal recommendation plays a key role in the purchase of smartphones; we've observed deep brand penetration among the families and friend circles of our core community, which is bringing completely new user groups into the OnePlus family. The corporate sector (BFSI, consulting, etc.) and SME business owners are also some of our fastest growing segments.

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?

Social media empowers users to voice their opinions. Our goal is to educate them about our products and listen to their feedback and suggestions. This two-way, active communication and transparency has built a loyal community of OnePlus users, who have been our most vocal supporters as well as critics. This has helped us cut through the noise and stay focused on genuine user issues.

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

Our core marketing strategy comprises community engagement through offline activations and user endorsements through digital amplification. Social media, especially YouTube, is the most effective 'sustenance promotion channel'.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

We rarely work with agency partners. Most of our campaigns are planned and executed by in-house marketing and design teams. Working with external agencies is a slow process with iterative creative reviews and a mismatch in expectations, due to conflicting objectives. We have also faced challenges in identifying partners who can not only conceptualise but also execute integrated hero campaigns. ■

AN MX EXCLUSIVE
A MIRCHI PLAY Original

आपि
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Priya Bapat | Umesh Karmab
Director - Varun Narvekar

RADIO MIRCH

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**YOUR
ORGANISATION'S
SUCCESS STARTS
WITH HIRING
GREAT PEOPLE**

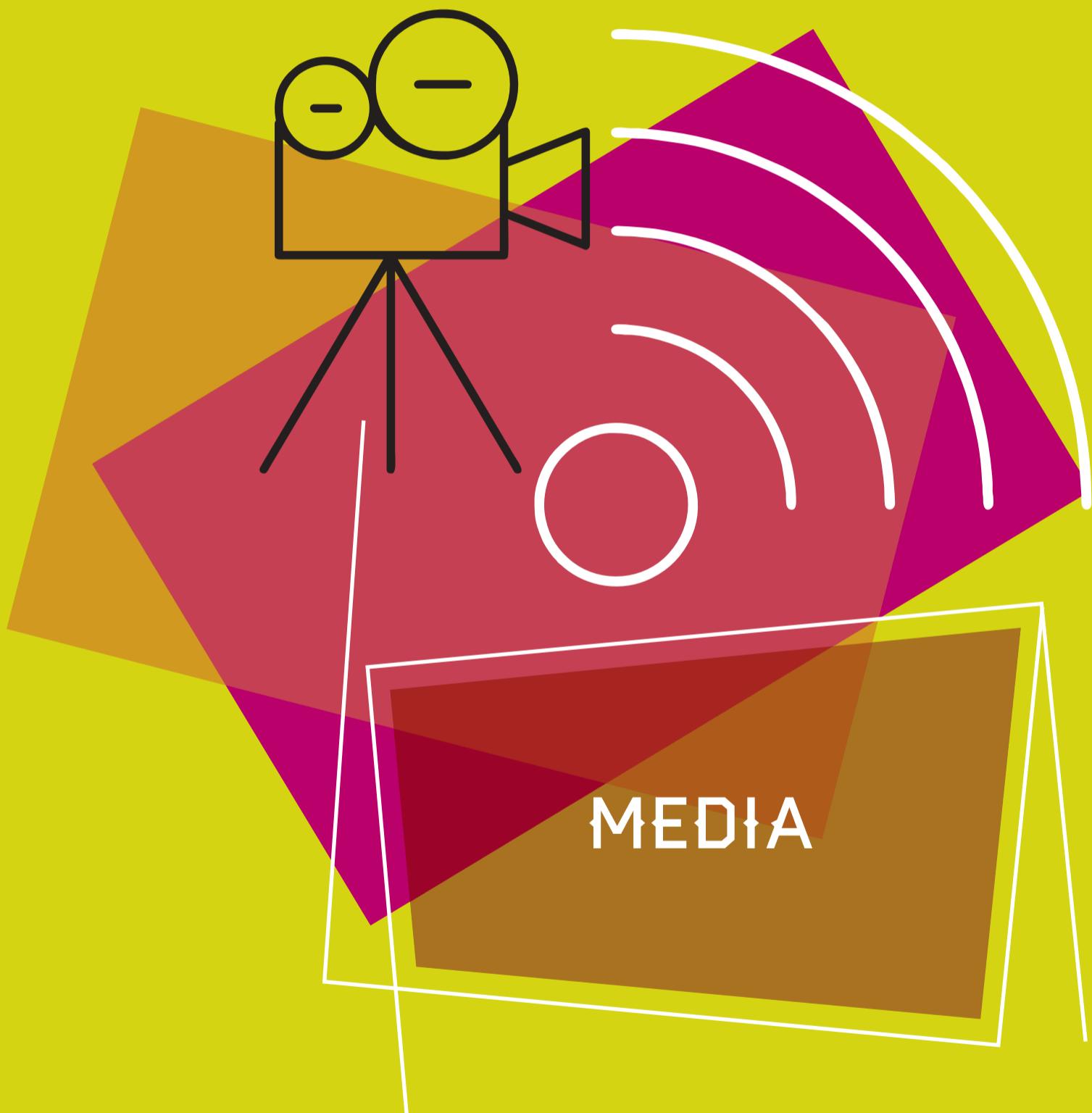


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When a brand sees itself as human, and not infallible, trolling becomes a non-issue.

PRATHYUSHA AGARWAL

Chief Marketing Officer | Zee Entertainment Enterprises

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We are the most
watched Bengali
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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. ■

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

*Source: BARC, AIRWEI, RECS 24, Q220

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EVERYTHING



Consumers chase personalities,
irrespective of the medium. Radio
brands with strong RJs do well.

PRASHANT PANDAY

MD & CEO | Radio Mirchi

WEST BENGAL
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56%* female viewers
in Bengal have chosen
us as their favourite
entertainment channel.

*Source: BARC, West Bengal, FEB-ABC, Q3'20

WEST
BENGAL
HAS
CHOSEN



ZEE বাংলা

We are the most watched Bengali entertainment channel.

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

Lost weight! 17 kilos in all. I have always been an exercise freak, but I was a bigger foodie. I controlled that, and voila! I am now at my 'college days weight'!

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

Jack Welch, ex-CEO of GE. He was called "neutron Jack", perhaps, unfairly. He was a brilliant strategist, led his company for over 20 years, and delivered huge value to his shareholders. He was tough on non-performers, asking for the bottom 10 per cent to be fired, earning him his moniker. He's my hero!

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

I think it would be a leopard! We're fast-paced, energetic, colourful, dynamic and beautiful!

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

For Mirchi, there were two challenges. One was traditional radio, where growth has been challenged by a poor macroeconomic environment, the spread of digital and the inability to hike prices or increase volumes beyond a reasonable limit.

The second challenge was managing the transformation of Mirchi into a multimedia company, focused on providing "solutions" to clients and creating content way beyond radio or audio. Everything is changing – the way we deal with clients, create content, train and motivate our people... everything. Today, core radio programming forms less than 50 per cent of the team's KRAs – the rest is all exciting transformational stuff!

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

First, consumers chase personalities, irrespective of the medium. Radio brands with strong RJs do well. Listeners chase RJs irrespective of whether they are talking on radio or tweeting or posting a video on YouTube. The second is technology. New smartphones come without FM tuners, so despite wanting to consume FM, many listeners are unable to do so. That is why we are now offering all our FM channels online. Anyone can listen to Mirchi, irrespective of the type of phone they use. The third one is a need to be connected in the form of communities, for example, through interactive

media. The number of callers on FM stations is huge. People want to talk, be heard, and listen to others. It's a community that works online too.

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

Millennials are already too old! Which is why they are a great target group for advertisers. They have money and they buy products. In contrast, Gen Z is exciting from a programming perspective, but they are not a great source for business at this point. Business depends on current and future consumers. So, both millennials and Gen Z are important.

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?

Yes, they have. Earlier, we used to get very worried about trolling. A few thousand people tweeting with hashtags #Ban this and #Ban that would get us worried. Now we realise that these are passing non-issues. As long as one creates value for consumers, they will always come back to you. Trolls are totally irrelevant.

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

If I can't say radio, I would say OOH. Outdoor is a medium where you just can't miss the ads. If you are travelling by road, or by a metro, you have to see the ads. Ditto with radio. I have consciously chosen not to say "digital", though it is a great medium. However, my problem with digital is the huge 'skipping' that happens – like banners being blocked and videos being skipped after six seconds. Also, the creative format has limitations – how creative can you get with a Twitter ad or a Facebook post?

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

They grumble that every media's pricing is too high! All they want is cheap ads! They don't care if the media is playing 20 minutes of ads in an hour, or 40. This is a huge disservice to their clients, but it is the truth. ■

WEST BENGAL
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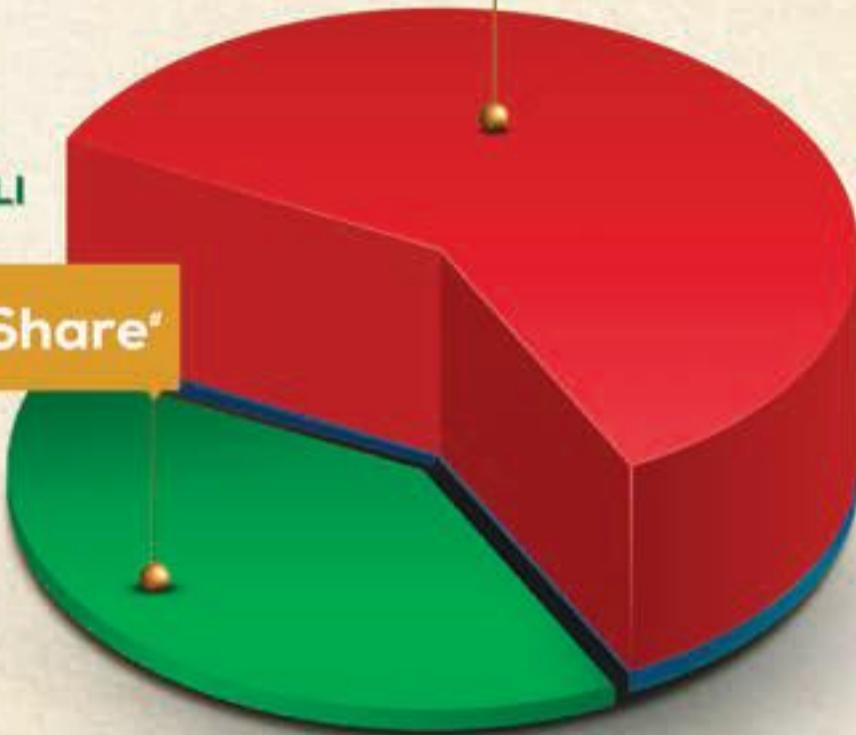
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in the market.

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52% Share*

OTHER
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ZEE বাংলা

We thank you for making us No.1 yet again.

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

Star Jalsha, Colors Bangla, Sony Aath, Aakash Aath, Sun Bangla, Ruposhi Bangla



About 30 per cent of our readers are women. There is no reason why this number cannot be 50.

SANJEEV BHARGAVA

Director | Brand TOI

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We have won
an incredible 56%*
of male viewership

*Source BARC, Week ending 4.2.2018, 50+ AB, 13-20

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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?

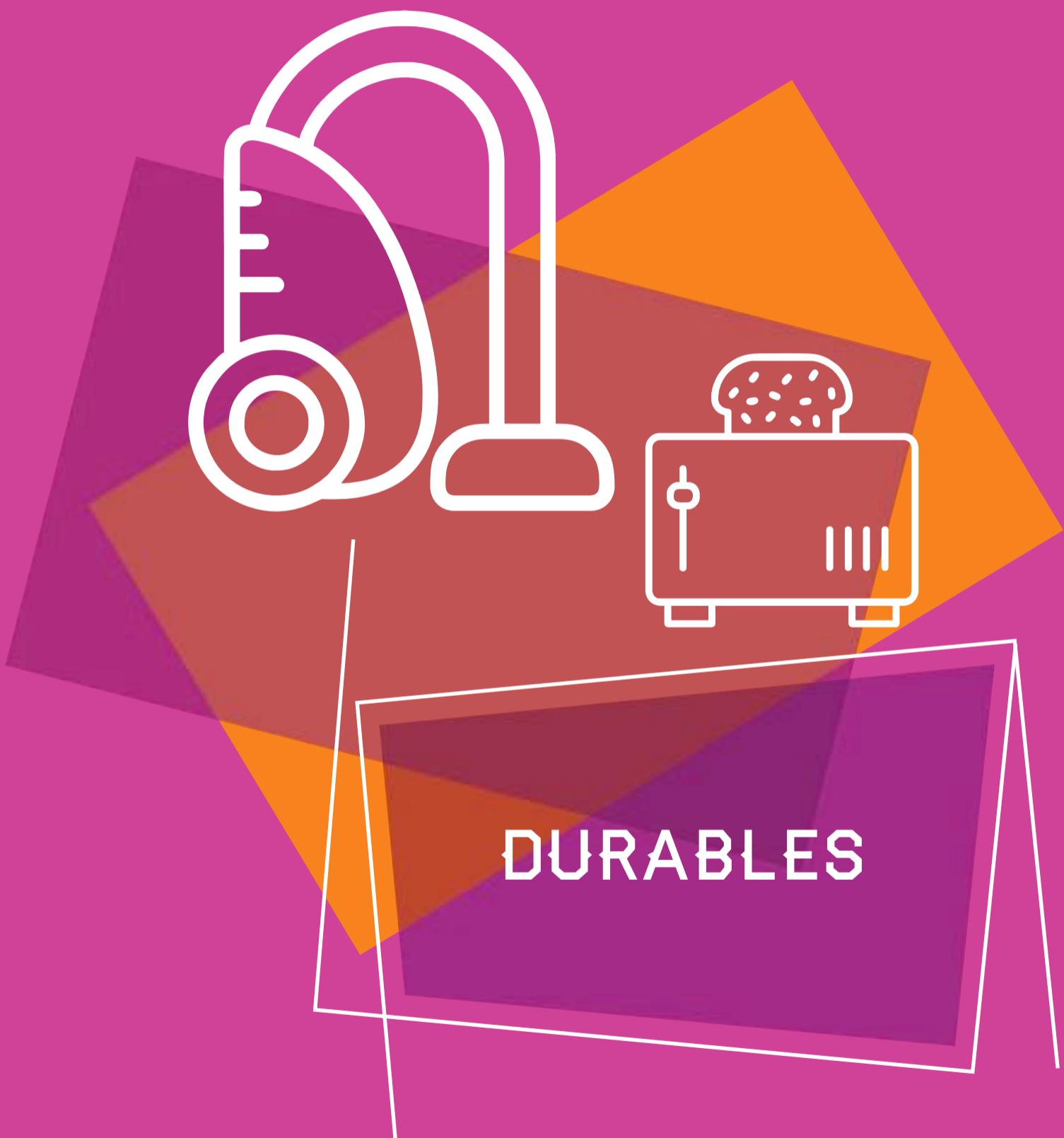
Data insufficiency and data reliability have been the biggest bug bear of agency partners as they are unable to make scientific decisions in the absence of this data. With the IRS becoming a quarterly feature, print has finally come back to being a measured medium.

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. ■

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



DURABLES



Ours will not be a male-only or male dominant category anymore.

AMIT TIWARI

Vice President – Marketing | Havells India

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

I completed a 21-km-long half marathon last winter. I wanted to do this for really long and am glad I finished it within the stipulated time.

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

Steve Jobs. He was such a great entrepreneur, marketer and risk-taker, who always wanted to work with smart people. He is known for anticipating the need for smart technology and also for creating it.

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

Challenges are a part of life, but finding good agencies and partners that understand the brand's needs, and work accordingly, is among the biggest challenges these days.

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

Technology transformation and consumers' adaptability towards technology are driving most marketers crazy today. Consumers have become endorsers and influencers in every category today.

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

Males used to be the prominent TG in most categories, but females have been bigger influencers in the buying decision process of late. So, ours will not be a male-only or male dominant category anymore.

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?

Initially, celebrities were the ones getting trolled on social media, but these days a lot of brands that try to think out of the box to generate more engagement online also get trolled. That's the reason 'social listening' is really important today. If you see something that goes against the brand's reputation, you need to act instantly. Nothing should be done at the cost of the reputation of the brand.

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

I would choose the digital medium. It helps drive larger conversations and influence around the brand. The consumer 'decision journey' is constantly changing and technology is becoming a big part of our digital life.

Consumers are spending more time on digital engagement and

interaction through mobiles has become an indispensable companion today.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Clarity of brief and expectation are the biggest missing links in today's agency ecosystem. Most agencies today try to sell their own agendas without realising the brand's needs. ■

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The demographic that drives growth for us is married consumers between 30 and 35, with a child.

SANJEEV GAUBA

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

I learnt baking.

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

NR Narayana Murthy. I admire his honesty, dedication, and his love for the brand he has created.

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

Tiger would be most appropriate. We have the agility to move fast, we're farsighted, and can visualise the future.

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

Though there is 100 per cent awareness about the RO Water Purifier category, it is still an evolving segment, with only four per cent penetration. In a country like India, 70 per cent of all diseases are waterborne. There is a belief and myth that boiling is the only way to purify water.

Our endeavour has been to educate the consumer. The challenge is to convert non-users and aware non-trialists (ANTS) and get them into the category. We also want to motivate current RO users to upgrade, as UV Purifiers do not remove all impurities. We have been able to do this successfully and expand the category, but the process of upgrading users is a very slow one.

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

The demographic that drives growth for us is – married consumers between 30 and 35 years, with at least one child. Once they have a child, their entire focus is directed towards the wellbeing of the child, and that's when they realise the need for a good water purifier.

Another important segment for us includes urbanites who're moving houses or cities – they are keen to change their household products and this helps in demand creation.

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?

Water purifiers fulfil a critical need. Trolling on social media is generally for categories and brands that are less respondent. However, brands can sometimes get trolled for no reason or for reasons beyond anyone's control. Both corrective steps and honest action help in defusing the situation and giving people the right perspective.

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

TV is the most cost effective medium for our category for two reasons – effectiveness and impact of the message. It has maximum reach and high OTS. The cost of reach per person is the lowest and it cuts across age, gender and class barriers. Since we are trying to expand the category and increase penetration, TV is the most appropriate medium for us.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Finding alternative effective solutions at a reasonable cost and turnaround time. ■



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E-commerce is blurring the urban-rural divide, and technology will be a big driving force.

ANSHUMAN CHAKRAVARTY

Head, Brand and Marketing | Orient Electric

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

That's a difficult one. Very recently, I drove more than 1,200 km in the hills in four days, something I had not done before.

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

Ruchir Sharma, for his ability to predict economic trends and his knowledge of markets.

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

An eagle – it's a symbol of power, intuition, action and speed. They gracefully exhibit creativity and balance, with a sharp vision.

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

The challenge lies in serving what resonates with the target audience. For example, when we launched our smart ceiling fan 'Aero-slim' this January, the big question was around reaching out to our consumers in a way that would make them convert. Everything from messaging to formats to mediums was critical. While traditional distribution remained our mainstay, we put special emphasis on awareness, engagement, product display, training and service. We also leveraged online channels, teaser videos, a TVC across mass and impact properties, and print ads.

We learnt that Indian consumers are switching from value-led purchases to money-for-value purchases and don't mind spending marginally more if the purchase makes their life easier and offers pride of possession.

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

Some of our products like fans and air coolers are seasonal in nature – sales can get impacted by changes in weather trend lines. For instance, due to extended winter, demand was sluggish in the fourth quarter of last year. However, the heat wave across the country has brought demand back on track.

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

While millennials will surely be a driving force, aspiration seeking customers have no age bar. Smartphone adoption and growth in internet usage in the days ahead will come from the 50-plus age group, primarily females. E-commerce is blurring the urban-rural divide, and technology will be a big driving force. Home refurbishment cycles are becoming shorter and these upgrades are an opportunity for us.

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?

Trolling has become like a norm on the internet. It spares no one, not even brands. Fake accounts and bots add to the predicament. The way a brand handles a troll determines its social image. Brands must have an effective social media monitoring tool in place to keep tabs on trolls. While you cannot stop someone from trolling your brand, you can always choose how to react.

Options include – ignore, troll back with grace and humour, or gird up your loins for further conversation. If someone trolls you for a slipup related to your product/service, then the best thing to do is to accept it, apologise and take the necessary action to avoid further trolling.

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

That depends on the target audience and the task at hand. But given the nature of our business, I'd pick point-of-sale engagement and visibility.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Business challenges have become more multifaceted and a lot more is expected of brands and marketers today. This is where some agency partners feel the heat of delivering what has been asked for. Problems include non-adoptability of new skill-sets, staffing snags, shrinking budgets, concerns about media transparency, data analysis, communication gaps and other process related challenges. ■



We live in the digital age
where brands are pampered,
glorified and slaughtered.

NANDAGOPAL NAIR

Vice President & Head - Brand & Communications |
V-Guard Industries



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

Taking a well-deserved holiday with my family and spending quality time with my favourite cousins.

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

Sir Richard Branson, for multiple reasons, such as his ability to think laterally, for creating a culture which encourages every employee to become an innovative thinker, and strongly believing in the power of delegation.

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

Well, we already have the kangaroo. It's an integral part of our identity. Almost four decades back, the kangaroo and the little joey in the pouch were conceived as a symbol of protection as back then, we were just a stabiliser company – the core function was protection for your appliances. Then, the kangaroo evolved, became more agile and contemporary.

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

Slowdown in consumption has been one of the biggest challenges. This made us think more sharply and smartly about our creative and media choices. We experimented with newer mediums like WhatsApp and social.

For example, after a considerable amount of consumer understanding, we had arrived at a new value proposition for our wires. But the adverse business environment did not allow us to use mass media. The challenge then was creating powerful communication in a low involvement category, and disseminating it among our channel partners, influencers and consumers. A unique creative code was cracked using wire art to communicate the long-lasting proposition of V-Guard wires. It came alive in a series of content pieces that were spread using only WhatsApp and Facebook.

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

V-Guard straddles multiple categories, ranging from household electricals like wires and switchgears to home appliances like water heaters and fans to kitchen appliances like mixer grinders and gas stoves. So, we cater to various consumer segments, from housewives to young working couples.

The Indian consumer of today is well exposed, connected with the external world, and is looking for smart, connected products. With mounting tariffs, consumers are becoming conscious of energy consumption in the context of household appliances; there's a growing demand for energy-efficient appliances.

Marketers across segments have fetishised the millennial. But

hand on heart, which demographic will drive growth for your brand over the next 12 months?

With an average, median age of 29 years by 2030 and with over 65 per cent of the population below 35 years, India is truly a young demography – whether we like it or not, it's something we can't ignore. Our larger consuming base is skewed towards a mature TG between 25 and 45 years, and we will continue to stay relevant to them with our products and services. But, with our new identity and smart product offerings, we will also focus on becoming aspirational for a younger demography – the future evangelists of our brand.

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?

We live in the digital age where brands are pampered, glorified and slaughtered, all at the same time, by different consumer sets. Trolls have become part of the subset. And their prominence is growing. It is important for marketers to learn from them. A lot of it is created in real time, with a generous dose of humour, sarcasm and hatred. There are some deep learnings here, both on the content side and in the way it is consumed.

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

Keeping in mind our line of business, TV would be the prime choice of medium as it will enable reach in a cost-efficient way, across our new non-South markets.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

The larger debate of "unreasonable deadlines" continues. In an era of micro moments, brands are vying to catch the fleeting attention of their consumers. With that comes "increased work load" and "unreasonable deadlines". ■



Hectic and stressful lifestyles are making consumers approach bathrooms as 'wellness' spaces.

SANDEEP SHUKLA

Head, Marketing, India & Global operations |
Jaquar Group

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

Fitness is extremely important to me. The most interesting thing I have done that's not related to work is attaining goals in my fitness regimen, like running at a stretch for 10 kilometres at the speed of 12 kilometres per hour.

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

I've always looked up to Mr Bill Gates. The sheer brilliance he exudes in his work along with his ability to make the best use of time is nothing short of incredible. He is also a voracious reader, a skill that hugely contributes to his amazing personality. And, he's a philanthropist.

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

A cat. We're inquisitive, observant, and keep track of global trends and customers' demands.

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

As we take strides in the global market, balancing the brand's Indian values and ethos with global sensibilities becomes our biggest challenge in communication. One of our key learnings is – making our brand country, origin, race, nationality and gender neutral.

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

Hectic and stressful lifestyles are making consumers approach bathroom spaces as 'wellness' spaces. Concepts like whirlpools, spas and saunas are gaining momentum. Due to changing living styles and global exposure, consumers are looking at bathrooms differently; they expect them to not just have functional usage but to also fulfil aesthetic needs. Products like Tiara and Tailwater by Artize (a luxury brand from Jaquar Group) are examples of designer products that are more like artefacts with a functional advantage.

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

Today's home owners are young and the aspiration or need for a new space is felt during one's late twenties as compared to one's late forties, as was the case previously. Therefore, those in the age bracket of 15-25 years are a major influence on decision makers who are in the 30-45 years bracket.

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?

Social media is a double-edged sword. It has the advantage of speed

and reach. If marketers want to ride this wave and gain an advantage, then complaining is not the solution. I am confident that both brands and customers will become mature with time in terms of messaging, sharing information, giving feedback, etc. Learning from good feedback and ignoring unhealthy trolling is my mantra.

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

Digital and short videos. Cheap and fast data, access to smartphones, quick and easy consumption, and most importantly, virality of content with genuine creativity, are some of the reasons for my preference.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

There are two things that make our agency partners grumble: first, being asked to share ROI on mass media advertising, and second, being asked to cut down the budget. The rise of social media is changing the situation on the budget front, at least for now. ■



The luggage industry is driven by the way the audience travels and the kind of bags they carry.

ANIRUDH PANDHARKAR
CMO | VIP Industries

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

Spending time at my village gives me great insights about life beyond cities.

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

It is difficult to name one but if I had to, then it would be Seth Godin. I admire his honesty and authenticity.

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

Brand VIP has been a faithful companion on the travels that most Indians have taken in their lives. For this faithful companionship, I think VIP can be best associated with a dog.

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

The biggest challenge has been to get the positioning for our brand relaunch right. We had to be careful as we wanted to retain our existing buyers, but also attract new ones. With this revamp, we wanted to change the customer's perception of VIP, position it as a contemporary brand, and make it relevant for a younger cohort with a new philosophy 'Hello Holidays'. The relaunch also included the unveiling of a new brand logo and identity, a new consumer proposition and a new collection.

Apart from VIP bags, we also introduced a new campaign for Skybags ('Always a Star' with Varun Dhawan), a new spring summer collection for Caprese, and some new products for Carlton. Planning all of this has been challenging and exciting.

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

The luggage industry is driven by the way the audience travels and the kind of bags they prefer to carry with them. We have identified that there is a different kind of bag for every individual. Over the years, we have identified different kinds of personalities and individuals and have created bags for them – Skybags and Caprese for youngsters, Carlton for business travellers, VIP bags for families and Aristocrat for budget-conscious frequent travellers. Weddings and holiday seasons used to be and still remain the major drivers for us, due to the increase in demand during those times.

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

Millennials are an important part of our target audience. Specifically, Skybags and Caprese have a young fan following, so youngsters are the right fit for these products. We recently launched a campaign for VIP bags targeting young couples and new-age families so there is no doubt about how important millennials are to us; they form a

big part of the demographic we target.

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?

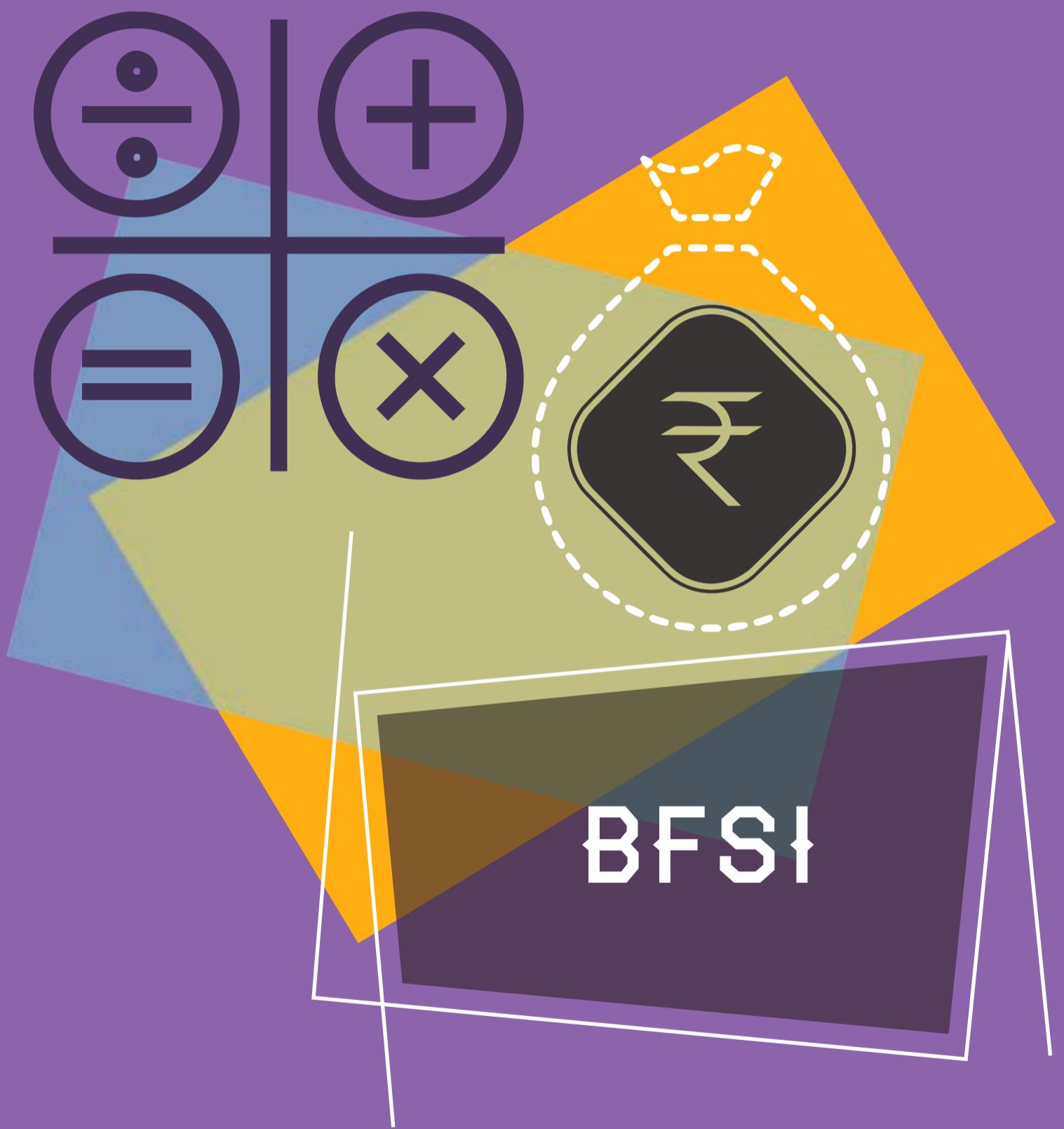
I believe the important part is to keep a positive attitude. There is an audience that encourages our initiatives and we appreciate that. Trolling has changed too much in the last few years and going forward, we don't see it reducing. But we have to learn to deal with it.

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

Television is an important part of our media planning but as our TG increases, digital and outdoor also play an important role in our marketing mix.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Every agency has its own issues; I don't think there is just one common complaint across agencies. ■





Traditional banks now have to compete with the user experience of the GAFA brands.

ASHA KHARGA

CMO | Axis Bank

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

I've been lucky to have met some truly spirited women who have been beneficiaries of Axis Bank's microfinance initiatives. These women come from really poor households and we help support their businesses. One story from those travels will stay with me forever.

When I asked them about the one big change that came with becoming financially independent, a shy woman, whose face I could barely see due to her ghungat, raised her hand. "If you had met me five years ago, I didn't have the confidence to utter a word. My life didn't matter. What I felt didn't matter. Today, I run my own business and I never imagined that one day I would have my own money in my own bank account. And when I walk into the bank, the manager greets me courteously and updates my passbook," she said.

A lot of us in cities barely even think about our mundane bank account. This story struck me because it shows us what a humble bank account with one's own money in it can mean to a simple villager living in Neemkheda, on the outskirts of Madhya Pradesh.

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

Satya Nadella – for his stunning turnaround of Microsoft, by clocking revenue upwards of \$100 billion last year. With his focus on young talent, artificial intelligence and cloud computing tools, Nadella has done more than return the company to relevance. At a personal level, I admire him for wearing his heart on his sleeve and for sharing his vulnerability with respect to his children; I feel his life experiences have had a profound impact on the way he leads and relates to people.

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

While digital banking has become the default for more than 70 per cent of our transactions, there are still many customers who value the personal touch. The biggest challenge for banks lies in developing an approach that intentionally weaves together human and digital touchpoints. To trust a financial institution with deeply personal activities such as saving for retirement or managing credit and mortgages, customers need to feel the bank has their best interests at heart.

Digital alone isn't the answer to the trust challenge. The critical thing for brands to understand is that even in the age of robotics, artificial intelligence, process automation, liquid workforce and lean operations, people will remain at the heart of their success.

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

Consumer behaviour has changed after the advent of GAFA (Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple) in our lives. Traditional banks now

have to compete with the user experience of these brands. Customer experience will now involve self-service, ensuring a total change in the way they engage with the brand.

Another example is game changing technology, like the use of AI in the KYC authentication process. AI can read scanned, uploaded documents and can detect minute inaccuracies that may escape the human eye. If there are none, then an account can be opened in five to 10 minutes, instead of three to four working days.

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

One of the most special aspects of the banking category is that it connects with very diverse customer groups across the country. We want to be a bank that remains focused on both retail and wholesale customer segments. We will continue to cater to all segments.

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?

World population is 7.3 billion. The internet has 3.17 billion users. With numbers like these, all brands will, undoubtedly, be subjected to some form of social media trolling. To my mind, internet trolls are more than likely not your major audience. Trolls commonly post distasteful, offensive statements in comment sections with the solitary purpose of provoking someone into an argument. They may be engaging with your brand online, but this engagement does very little for your bottom line.

However, potential customers are observing your behaviour on social media, even if they choose not to engage. A strategic, well-thought out approach to negative social media activity is far more likely to impress observers than an impromptu, caustic reaction.

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

TV. The medium reaches over 800 million individuals in India – the highest compared to any other medium, today. ■

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The term 'millennial' is largely misunderstood and misused.

KARTHI MARSHAN

Chief Marketing Officer | Kotak Mahindra Group

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

I have volunteered at my children's school Bombay International in a variety of capacities. BIS is a long-running, novel experiment in education, run as a not-for-profit parent cooperative. I have helped oversee the kitchen (parents come in daily to cook fresh, hot meals for all the students and staff everyday) as well as the admissions process for a few years.

The parents I have worked with have been some of the brightest I have ever known and I've learnt a lot from this unique model, where everyone gives so much and expects nothing in return. I have been able to deploy a lot of these lessons in my day job at Kotak, in the area of human resources, for example.

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

It has to be Rama Bijapurkar. I have been a devoted follower of Rama for almost as long as I have worked. I've even tried to persuade her to join the board of Sharekhan, way back in 1999. To spend an hour with Rama is like having the essence of a dozen great books on strategy read to you at the speed of light. It's a rare privilege to meet her, but when I do, I come away bursting with ideas triggered by the sparks that fly from her formidable intellect.

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

I am unable to equate any brand to an animal, but I do know that every brand is essentially a promise, so it's nothing more or less than a social contract. Also, our mental models about animal characteristics are quite flawed. For example, when we think of elephants, we think of family-oriented animals with a prodigious memory. But truth is, elephants can be quite scrappy within their herds, and even steal from each other.

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

Truth be told, no outside forces impact the behaviour of the bulk of our customers. But then again, the bulk of customers don't move the profit needle for any firm. Pareto's 80:20 rule kicks in – the wealthiest consumers, who account for the bulk of value in the financial services market, tend to react at speed to macroeconomic trends. Their consumption shrinks during busts and grows during booms. But if you look at the lady who's just got her first big bonus... she still wants to book her new car, buy her parents a resort holiday and so on. So, any discerning marketer would do well to ignore macro trends and focus, instead, on the universal truths about consumption cycles at the micro level.

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

The term millennial is largely misunderstood and misused. Too many marketers visualise self-centred teenagers when they refer to this cohort, but in truth the oldest millennials are almost 40 today. This is absolutely the demographic that has driven Kotak's growth over the last few years, and will continue to do so.

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?

Typically, brands get trolled for three reasons: First, some brands are soft targets because they are very thin-skinned and are likely to cough up 'hush money' to silence the most vexing trolls. This should be resisted at all times because once you feed the beast, there is no end. Second, sometimes brands do incredibly stupid things, for example, they appear to support a social cause without even understanding it. The lack of authenticity is clear for all to see. Brands that get trolled for this, deserve it. Third, brands sometimes mess up their customer service function and render customers irate beyond belief. These are actually great opportunities to build brand love.

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

Television, for three reasons: First, it delivers the cheapest cost per contact. Second, the consumer is in lean-back mode and is, thus, ready and willing to receive stimuli that sink into her subconscious. This helps make lasting impressions. Third, TV content can evoke emotional responses from viewers, ranging from love and passion to excitement and anger.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

I think agency partners grumble that clients are lazy. A great brief from a client needs to be one in which the client has done her homework about the consumer and the category, so that the agency's job is not to learn but to leap. If the client knows her customers' pain well, she will design her product/service to solve this in a unique way. Then the agency's job is only to tell this story in a compelling way. Too often today, clients have me-too offerings and yet seek virality for their campaigns – in other words, lipstick for pigs. Why won't agencies grumble?

But I'd be remiss if I didn't talk about why clients grumble too. Often, even when clients do the heavy lifting on research, strategy and rich briefs, agencies are lazy. Because the 'creative' tag is worn like a crown by agencies, they expect clients to approve outlandish ideas on blind faith alone. No self-respecting client is afraid of a bold, radical creative. But it needs to be in service of the brand, and not for shallow awards or just to pander to the whims of a prima donna writer. Why won't clients grumble? ■

**ONE MAN, ONE SHOW
THAT GOT INDIA TALKING**

**आप की
अदालत**





Consumers look for friction-free, seamless experiences in everything they do.

SUJATHA V KUMAR

Head - Marketing, India & South Asia | Visa

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

Apart from my work, my passion is music. I am the lead singer of a rock band called 'Mid Life Crisis', and have performed in numerous concerts.

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

Sundar Pichai – he has reached amazing levels of achievement, but is as down to earth as any person on the street. He is truly inspirational.

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

Consumers look for friction-free, seamless experiences in everything they do. This is also a core reason why the growth of different payment form factors have been seen.

Hence, Visa launched its Contactless Card with the proposition of being an easy, secure and seamless way to pay. Cardholders can simply tap their card on a terminal to pay without any signature or pin for transactions up to ₹2,000.

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

In our category we don't necessarily look at a specific age group; rather, we look at what we call 'Ageless Progressives', people who never stop being open to new solutions, regardless of their age. They are early adopters of new products and technologies, and lead the way among family and friends.

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?

With digital and social media, we are seeing a great deal of interaction between consumers and brands. However, with this growing access, we are also witnessing a lot of feedback – sometimes, impulsive feedback – from our users.

As responsible marketers, our task is to listen to our consumers and ensure the platform continues to be engaging and not offensive to our wider audience. In my opinion, brands have a huge responsibility to manage social conversation in a constructive manner.

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

It would be social media, because it lets us have a two-way communication with our users, helps us connect with the 'Ageless Progressives' and also lets us create content that is interactive and engaging!

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

With digital and social media on the rise, agency partners often lack time – they don't have the time that's needed to turn around quality output, given the speed that is required. ■



Brands should continue to learn from constructive trolls – it's a boon in disguise...

DINESH MENON

CMO | State Bank of India

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

Jumped off a plane (sky-dived) and a cliff (bungee jumped) to experience what flying high really means! Undoubtedly, the best adrenaline rush I have had.

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

Jeff Bezos; I admire his obsession with delivering customer delight and the way he has built all his businesses around that one core thought. I also admire Anand Mahindra and Azim Premji for their humility despite their stature in the industry.

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

Certainly an elephant... a dancing one.

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

Since one's financial needs are based on what one earns, one's job and professional growth are direct forces. Both these are, in turn, impacted by macro and microeconomic factors.

That apart, the explosion caused by digital technologies has put the consumer in the driver's seat. Consumers are now forcing brands to focus like never before on customer experience. Brands that continue to deliver superior CX stand to gain on brand preference and affinity. In the case of SBI, that's how our platform YONO (You Only Need One) was born. Most digital native brands across categories are a manifestation of this thinking.

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

While millennials will continue to remain a very important segment for a lot of brands, in a country like India, money is with the salaried/self-employed segment in the age bracket of 30 to 50 years. Growth over the next 12 months will, indeed, come from this segment.

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?

Trolling is inherent to the social media ecosystem. Brands have to accept this reality and manage their reputations accordingly. We all know that trolls are insipid and shallow. Since people generally tend to complain more than compliment, trolls appear to be blown out of proportion.

That said, brands should continue to learn from constructive trolls – it's a boon in disguise as it allows brands to take corrective action almost instantaneously, and thereby gain positive brand conversations. Compare this to the old days, when a brand had no clue

as to what was happening out there. The only source for marketers was some focus group, which didn't always reflect the sentiment of the larger populace.

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

Digital. Reasons - sharp targeting, personalisation, ability to test different creatives and make changes almost instantaneously. Most importantly, for its strong ability to lead prospects to the desired CTA (call to action) and to get them to experience the brand. The beauty of digital is a marketer's ability to measure each step of the entire journey and improvise it.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Remuneration by clients, that is, the effort to income ratio and lack of adequate lead time for jobs. ■



The choice of medium
depends on the marketing
objective at hand.

CHANDRAMOHAN MEHRA

Chief Marketing Officer | Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance and
Bajaj Allianz General Insurance

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

I ticked the box on a key personal milestone – I ran three major world marathons, in London, Chicago and Boston. I loved the process of training for it and being disciplined about managing my time and nutrition. Overall, it was a humbling experience. Of the six big world marathons, I've done two in the past, three over the last year and am keeping the sixth one for next year.

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

Jeff Bezos, for his leadership style, which is very relevant in today's hyperdynamic business environment. He is showing us how to not just survive but grow in both traditional and new-age businesses. The Amazon model – based on experimentation, thinking big and strategic agility – is an extension of his personality.

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

The challenge has been preparing to leverage the opportunities brought in by tech and data. Tremendous possibilities are emanating from the adoption of BOT, ML and Voice, which can help us connect with customers effectively and enhance business efficiencies. We're constantly thinking of ways to connect the dots within this voluminous data that's getting generated and maximise the potential of analytics. The idea is to get 'marketing actionables' out of this data.

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

Key factors that influence consumers' approach to insurance include macroeconomic forces, stock market movements, industry regulations, technology and tax incentives. For example, market-linked insurance products attract huge consumer interest when the stock markets demonstrate an upward trend. March continues to witness a spike in new business premium collection on account of tax benefits offered by insurance products. However, we would like our customers to stay disciplined for a longer period of time regardless of external factors.

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

Essentially, the age group between 28 and 45 years has a dominant revenue share and will continue to drive growth for the next 12 months. However, given the demographic skew towards millennials, it is obvious that brands will have to figure out ways to deepen their understanding of them. Our recent research (Bajaj Allianz Life India's Life Goals Preparedness Survey) reveals that millennials are seeing life goals from a very different perspective – unconventional

goals related to entrepreneurship, travel, health and fitness are gaining prominence amongst this group.

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 believe in sticking to fundamentals, like empathy towards a large set of stakeholders and all the participants of the business ecosystem we operate in. As long as the brand consistently delivers on its purpose, it will continue to accumulate fans who will, in turn, become custodians and drivers of positive sentiments for it.

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

The choice of medium depends on the marketing objective at hand. Largely, we will stick to an integrated approach with an increasing focus on digital. ■



Moments and milestones during an individual's lifetime trigger the need for insurance.

ANJALI MALHOTRA

Chief Customer, Marketing and Digital Officer |
Aviva Life Insurance

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

Over the past year, I have been engaging with start-ups as an angel and mentor, and it has been a very fulfilling experience. Their innovative business models and passion to make a difference really stand out.

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

There isn't just one. The individuals I look up to as marketing gurus include: First, Simon Sinek for his clarity of thought around the "why" aspect for every brand. Then of course, there is Jeff Bezos, who is an idol for many. I admire him for the culture of customer-centricity that he has introduced and built Amazon on. Also, Elon Musk for his vision to foresee and create the future in so many different lines of business. They are the top three leaders, among others, whom I really admire.

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

A dog – loyal, trustworthy, and always has your back even in dire situations.

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

Cyber security is becoming a behemoth concern across industries and no organisation can sustain without a clearly defined information security strategy. The team's ability to build and adopt tools and processes, and to create the requisite culture and awareness towards a robust and secure business environment, has been a great learning.

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

There are various moments and milestones during an individual's lifetime that trigger the need for insurance, for example, marriage, birth of a child, buying a house, taking a loan, to name a few. On such occasions, people feel a sense of greater financial responsibility and, thus, try and build a backup plan to "insure" themselves and secure the future of their loved ones.

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

While 'the millennial' will certainly impact category consumption over the next three to five years, the largest growth in the next 12 months will come from a slightly older segment. We follow a process of psychographic segmentation and there are certain personas that are clearly driving the impetus towards insuring themselves.

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?

Trolling is now a real and serious affair – some are sincere efforts, but there's a lot of riff-raff too. We must learn to separate the wheat from the chaff.

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

Isn't that obvious? Digital, because it offers the opportunity to personalise communication, engage deeply, and respond instantly. That's what makes digital the best choice.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Agencies used to derive maximum delight from producing large format TV films; this seems to have taken a beating in today's world of multi-format video consumption. They miss that. ■



In the face of an ever-changing market, product and customer scenario, formulas do not work.

PANKAJ GUPTA

Chief Marketing Officer & Senior Executive Vice President Sales | HDFC Life

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

I have started learning trivia related to soccer, gaming and cars as my 10-year-old son constantly quizzes me on these through the day! Over the past few months, I have followed some of the CSR interventions by HDFC Life – this has helped me understand ‘transformation’ in new light. Beyond information, our lives or work must persuade, inspire and lead to action that make our world a better place.

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

I have a lot of admiration for Satya Nadella of Microsoft. The way he has transformed Microsoft so fast, in a competitive and dynamic environment, and in the wake of two illustrious predecessors, is remarkable.

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

A horse. They stand tall with grace, epitomise a healthy competitive spirit, and are success oriented.

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

One of our biggest challenges is keeping our brand and its communication relevant in the face of an ever-changing market, product and customer scenario. Formulas of any sort simply do not work. We actively educate and re-educate ourselves about our products, our customers and the changing marketplace. We routinely get speakers, from internal teams and external agencies/companies, to speak to us and share their perspectives.

We encourage our teams to visit our branches and listen to consumer calls. We have also upped our time and effort on customer research, as it helps us stay relevant. An example of this is the launch of India's first 'mogo' (musical logo) in the insurance space, which helped strengthen our 'Sar Utha Ke Jiyo' positioning.

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

Technology and rapid digitisation are impacting every category and business across the globe. It is no different with insurance.

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've been engaging with the young millennial for the last two years through our #youngandresponsible campaign. For us, the contribution of this TG is growing at a significant pace year after year, across key categories. The retirement segment and the segment planning for early retirement are also very promising, thanks to trends like changing life expectancy, age demographics, shorter career spans

and a budding aspiration to retire early.

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?

Feedback or complaints are an opportunity to improve and strengthen our focus on customer-centricity. Yes, outrage against brands has become more frequent these days and may at times seem trivial. But brands cannot afford to ignore any communication, big or small, sent their way on social media. It makes little sense to spend tonnes of money on research to understand your customers and then ignore what they are saying directly to you, only because it seems inconvenient at that given moment.

All communication coming a brand's way, rude or otherwise, is critical as it is, in essence, real-time feedback on what your customers think about the brand or its services. Yes, it may not always be entirely fair, but it can direct you to an underlying problem.

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

In today's times, advertising on a single medium would be of very little help, unless supported by a monstrous advertising budget. That said, if I must pick one, I would be tempted to choose between TV and digital.

I'd choose TV because, if you have a good story, well told, then TV remains the cheapest medium to take your message across to the country. However, if my communication has something newsworthy and share-worthy in it, I'd then choose digital as it is likely to give two or three times the impact on every rupee spent.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Time and money. This is one agency-client area that has remained constant over the years, regardless of all the technology changes and evolution. ■



Consumers connect to things they see as opposed to those they read.

AALOK BHAN

Director and Chief Marketing Officer |
Max Life Insurance

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

Science shows that placing one foot in front of the other leads to some seriously impressive mental and physical benefits. My daily health and fitness zone is a walk while listening to audiobooks on 'Audible', followed by a balanced diet. I find these books a great source of knowledge and information.

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

I admire Steve Jobs for his breakthrough thoughts and the relentless focus that was ingrained in his personality. He focused on the purpose - the higher purpose. I admire him because he challenged the status quo and answered his 'why'.

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

Elephants - they echo our brand and tell the story we want consumers and the community to know. They have always stood for their strength, intelligence and decisiveness. They are respected and trusted. They are one of the dominant forces in the jungle.

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

To determine the status of various demographics with respect to their understanding of life/term insurance, ownership and degree of feeling secure, we recently conducted pan-India research ('Max Life India Protection Quotient') in association with Kantar IMRB, across 15 cities, including metros and non-metros. We used two broad parameters - protection index and knowledge index.

The research highlighted that India continues to feel under-protected due to low awareness levels regarding term insurance and poor uptake (21 per cent). There is a big need for pure protection. While life insurance penetration, in general, is high, protection penetration is low.

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

The life insurance industry is at an inflection point as digitisation is changing customer preferences. They expect faster, relevant and frictionless experiences, every time and everywhere. They are on the lookout for personalised, data-driven services, tailored to their needs. The impact of disruptive technologies is evident in the shopping experiences that customers are now getting accustomed to.

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

For us, the demographics of our customers are already known, but differentiation in the space comes when we gain insights about the customers' life-stages, preferences and behaviour patterns with the

help of analytical tools. This allows us to offer relevant and compelling propositions throughout the customer life-cycle.

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?

Social media provides an excellent way to engage with different demographics, reach new potential customers, and grow brand awareness. With more businesses present on social media platforms, brands are bound to experience trolling. They need to know how to handle criticism and how to manage their brands. Responding to trolls in a fun way or being prepared to respond to things that get attention on social media, can be vital to brand management. Continuous engagement with customers is the key.

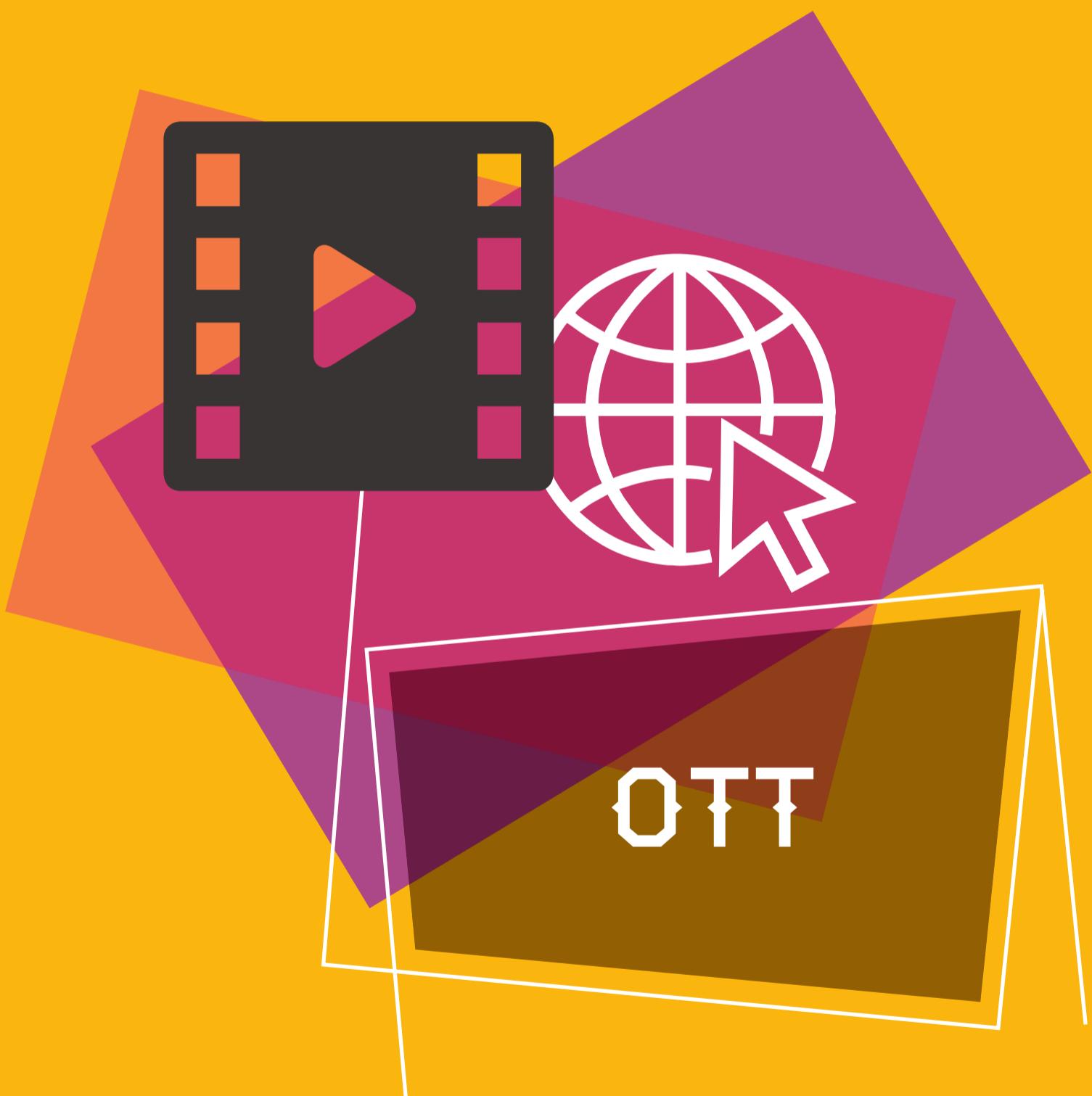
If you could advertise on only one medium for the next 6 months, what would that be - and why?

When it comes to advertising insurance services, there are a lot of options. However, I believe Instagram is a powerful strategy that brings the message to life in the form of photos and videos. Consumers connect to things they see as opposed to those they read.

Instagram gives an opportunity to entice people into wanting to learn more about the insurance plans we provide, in a way that's different from that of other social media sites. Due to the way Instagram functions, we can target the advertising based on specific traits, including age group, interests and gender.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Agencies today play a key role in the success of a brand's growth. Being aligned with the agency, having a true partnership and sharing the same vision for the future is important. There are several challenges when dealing with a big business, but finding the right partner helps overcome these common agency and partner pain points. ■





A long time ago, in a faraway land,
there existed a client and there
existed impossible deadlines.

ABHISHEK JOSHI

Head of Marketing and Business Partnerships |
MX Player

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! ■

Ahead

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Only 10 per cent of the Indian population is currently consuming music online.

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

It's important to disconnect and rejuvenate occasionally to be able to give your 100 per cent at work. Recently, I was able to take some time off my demanding schedule for a family vacation in Singapore. Spending quality time with my children helped me understand the incredible thought process of a teenager. Kids don't have a fear of failure, they ooze creativity because they are naturally curious and are completely plugged in when it comes to technology.

My little one picked up my smartphone, opened the Gaana app and kept asking, "What will happen if I do this?", "Why does this happen when I do that?" and by the end of it, she had some innocent suggestions that got me thinking!

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

I'm an admirer of Kumar Mangalam Birla and the vision with which he has built a multi-billion business empire over time. His hard-working nature, sharp business sense and passionate approach towards decision-making is something every business leader can learn from.

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

I'd like to believe Gaana is like a tiger - passionate, fearless, royal, swift and brimming with vigour.

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

Managing infrastructure at scale is our biggest challenge and priority right now. With the kind of growth we are experiencing, we are always on our toes to ensure 100 per cent uptime for our customers.

Only 10 per cent of the Indian population is currently consuming music online. This is one of the hottest sectors. We believe our growth will more than double in the coming year. We're focused on execution above everything else.

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

Music is important to Indians; we wake up with music, sleep with music and are influenced by music. Everything, from the weather, our mood and our commute to our location, plays a role in the way we consume music, online or offline. You may want to wake up to piano instrumentals, switch to EDM or soft rock while you hit the gym or are on your way to work, and relax to soulful music or '90s Bollywood classics after a tiring day.

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

Millennials have, indeed, emerged as the most engaged consumer

segment in the country. It's no secret that they spend money differently, as compared to previous generations, and prioritise experiences over things.

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?

The role of a brand has evolved. Users expect their favourite brands to align with them on similar values. This has led to brands becoming socially conscious and having a finger on the pulse of their customers.

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

We would, undoubtedly, go with Google Ads, owing to the huge number of users actively looking for goods and services online. The Google Display Network reaches billions of people each and every day, and gives advertisers like us the opportunity to raise brand awareness on a large scale using banner ads. ■



As one wise man said,
“Our biggest competition
is sleep”!

MANAV SETHI

Group CMO | Eros International

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

Driving from Gurgaon to Mumbai via Udaipur. The drive is long but interesting as the route takes you through multiple cities with varied food and culture.

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

Elon Musk. Who would have believed, way back then, that we need another type of car? The phasing out of the internal combustion engine in itself is no mean feat! Add to that SpaceX and The Boring Company. The sheer magnitude of his vision and relentless execution driven by one man, in his lifetime, is 'inspiration overload'.

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

A dog! Dogs are human beings' best friends... they love and entertain unconditionally.

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

When we launched India's first SVOD business with ALTBalaji, we changed the notion that India doesn't pay for content. We launched a subscription-only platform with six original shows, for which our annual marketing budget was less than the amount Netflix/Amazon spend on two big shows. In that budget we launched the brand, the platform and six shows... and we acquired paid subscriptions at an unprecedented scale, so much so that Reliance picked up stake in us!

The big learning was – the Indian consumer doesn't resist paying. It all depends on what you are selling! If it's exclusive, original, compelling and lends a functional experience, then people will be ready to pay and consume anything from Naagin to Narcos!

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

The VOD business is riding on the explosive growth in the smartphone segment and the parallel drop in bandwidth prices. These two trends have created the perfect recipe for the growth of entertainment. This is 'personal entertainment', and not the kind of 'household' entertainment that TV offers. From a content perspective, India has either seen the three-hour movie arc or soaps with 100-plus episodes. The storytelling value chain, from writing to production, is going through a cataclysmic shift such that snackable 10-episode stories of 20-30 minutes per episode are consumed at scale.

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

With just 200 million TV households, India has been an entertain-

ment-starved country. So, hand on heart, almost all 1.2 billion people across India with smartphones and feature phones have started to consume entertainment in some shape or form, and the majority of them are doing it for the first time ever on the small screen. As one wise man said, "Our biggest competition is sleep"!

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 marketers we have always considered social as an important medium for the "feedback loop". In the history of marketing, never has such a strong medium existed. It allows marketing teams to gather almost real-time feedback on products and value propositions. Trolling is an occupational hazard that comes with the medium, and brands should build capabilities to deal with it. Brands should be resilient enough to come out of it unscathed.

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

Digital! Never ever in the past, in a country like India, did the ability to reach 300-400 million people exist. Today, marketers have the ability to measure near real-time effectiveness of monies spent. At the same time, they have the ability to realign their budgets as per consumption, demography, geography and day.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

About keeping up with digital! ■



Consumers themselves have become content creators on social media.

RAHUL MISHRA

Head of Marketing | Shemaroo Entertainment

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

I took time off to visit an offbeat location named Santander in the north of Spain... off the touristy parts, away from the madness of the city.

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

I look up to Reed Hastings, CEO of Netflix. His clear vision, creative intelligence and transformational leadership are inspiring.

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

A wolf. We've bravely adopted new and innovative ways to change our business dynamics from time to time. After our brand refresh last year, we now have a new identity – a young company that caters to the growing demand for entertaining content on digital platforms. Our target is to grow 5X in five years.

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

The decision to refresh the brand identity after 55 years since the commencement of the company was exciting and challenging. The new logo is not just about changing the design and colour; it's about changing the perception and capturing the mind and attention of the audience. The launch of our OTT platform ShemarooMe in the midst of so much competition in the segment, made the message very clear. Part of the challenge was targeting the movie watching audience in Tier 2 and 3 cities of India, a region that houses a massive consumer base.

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

The digital industry has witnessed a boom, thanks to low data rates and affordable smartphones. As per Broadband India Forum (BIF) 65 per cent of video consumption is coming from smaller towns, and as per BCG's report, the OTT market is expected to hit \$5 billion by 2023.

The demand for entertaining content, especially in Tier 2 and 3 cities, is increasing. Offering familiar content to audiences in their preferred language has worked for us. We launched our OTT platform with Punjabi and Gujarati categories to connect with our regional audience. In April 2019, we added our Marathi category.

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

Millennials are, for sure, a lucrative market. They're the most coveted consumer demographic. The number of smartphone users in the country is expected to double to 859 million by 2022, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.9 per cent, accord-

ing to a joint ASSOCHAM-PwC study. We would like to cater to this demand for digital content.

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?

Consumers themselves have become content creators on social media. This has led to a surge in content, opinions and reviews. Our strategy has always been to include consumers in our story; that's how we are able to mitigate negative stories. When we get trolled or receive negative comments, we look at it as an opportunity to understand our consumers better and ensure we satisfy them going forward.

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

We believe in the power of digital and are investing heavily in digital tools and technologies. This helps us in micro-targeting and provides a clear indication of the reach and effectiveness of our campaigns.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Fortunately, our agencies are in sync with our fast-paced environment. Where we stand today would not have been possible without the support of our agencies – they're increasingly becoming partners, hence I don't see them grumbling in this day and age. ■



Ultimately, it's unique stories with great narratives that drive content and entertainment platforms.

DIVYA DIXIT

Senior VP and Head Marketing | ALTBalaji

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

My daughter and I are both dog lovers, and we recently got associated with an animal protection centre for a two-month project. I was really appalled and saddened to see the way we treat animals; many people abandon their pets on the roads. Do we even think that this earth belongs equally to humans and animals? We just take away their habitats, sustenance and then expose them to such merciless behaviour... the animal protection program is my true calling, once I hang up my boots at the workplace.

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

I admire Elon Musk for his persona as a tech entrepreneur and his perseverance to stand against the odds. I love the way he can think ahead of time and come up with lateral solutions to impending issues. Tesla, his brainchild, is an example of his understanding of the global fuel crunch; it's an innovation that recently outsold Mercedes in US. His SpaceX program has gained worldwide attention for providing cheap transportation for the colonisation of Mars.

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

I am a Leo by birth and that makes me a lion – courageous, protective of loved ones and proud. On the flip side, this pride can cost us opportunities at times.

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

It's been a steep learning curve. As a popular and evolving entertainment platform, the challenges have been quite a few. In the competitive OTT segment, where large international players are rallying with huge resource banks at their disposal, we are garnering a fair share of noise with much more constrained resources.

The trick is to take stock of the market scenario and competitive strategies, and to then adjust the push and pull of one's marketing accordingly, to ensure maximum ROI. The other challenge marketers face is an uncertainty about content consumption... while I strongly believe we have the best original Hindi content available on digital, the predictions on consumer consumption patterns keep evolving – that can be quite challenging.

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

Pricing, unique concepts, content library, personal intent, user experience, and cashback offers are standard forces that impact this category. I strongly believe that the innovations that are currently trending, like voice search, AR/VR technology and interactive episodes (where a viewer can choose the path of the narrative), will add a certain element of choice. Ultimately, it's unique stories with great narratives that drive content/entertainment platforms.

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

Millennial, actually, is a misleading term. Millennials are those born between 1981 to the mid-1990s, on the cusp of the inception of the technology era. Gen Z is the era after 1997, when the population got exposed to mobile phones, laptops and the internet. So actually, it's the age group of 18-35 years (a combination of millennials and Gen Z) that comprises the largest growth drivers for us. It's a combination of natives and opt-overs.

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?

Social media has been a spectacular force for brands, by allowing them to reach out to consumers directly. However, there is no denying that social media platforms are sometimes misutilised... and these conversations, if not managed well, can lead to inconsequential debates and attacks.

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

Given the pace at which the digital space is growing, with no signs of slowdown, it will be my first choice. It's where most of our target audience is and it's where I can measure the immediate returns on investment – be it performance or branding opportunities. Of late, many digital platforms are willing to co-partner and strategise on consumer reach and acquisition as well.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

When I started my career, creative and media partners had a free hand to experiment and recommend things to the client. Today, in the era of information overload, clients have access to multiple information channels, from social media listening to direct performance-oriented results. This leads to various conclusions at the client's end at the brief stage itself, and curtails the experiments that a creative or a media partner can do. This may lead to a bit of stagnation at the agency end.

Also, today, briefs need to be turned around much faster, so the client-agency relationship has to be strong, smart and aligned accordingly. ■



A challenging task for us
was developing content
for our regional market.

VISHAL MAHESHWARI

Country Head – India | Viu

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

I visited a host of World War 2 sites across Central Europe, Germany and Austria this summer. For a huge history buff like me, the experience was life-changing. All these places have had a date with history and being there makes one feel something either tragic or exuberant.

The place that stood out for me was the National Memorial for the Heroes of the Heydrich Terror, created beneath the Cathedral of Saints Cyril and Methodius. The movie 'Operation Daybreak' is based on the tragic context of this memorial.

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

I'd have to say Steve Jobs, for his sheer faith in each of his endeavours. He has truly left behind a legacy, as he was the pioneer of some of the most significant devices that have shaped our lives over the last two decades.

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

Cheetah – focused, fast, and course correcting.

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

An extremely challenging task for us was developing content for our regional market. We rose to the challenge and have come out stronger, through trial and error. At such a crucial juncture, it was important to learn from our experiences and mistakes, instead of just hypothesising.

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

In the OTT sector, accessibility and affordability are key to growth and development. Jio's entry into the market was a complete game changer as they impacted the availability and price of data; they democratised data for one and all. Had it not been for them, the viewership numbers of Indian OTT streaming services would have been a completely different story.

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 solely focused on creating originals, increasing and improving our regional content and giving millennials an immersive viewing experience, in a language that is native to their region. We've already done this with our Telugu, Tamil and Hindi offerings so far.

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?

If you say and do something that's against common perception in general, good or bad, you will be trolled. That's a fact of life. It's just like stress... you simply can't ignore it. What you can do, however, is learn to deal with it. You can't please everyone all the time.

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

Digital is something we trust and know well. So, we would focus on the gamut of options across digital, be it vernacular, social, performance, search or display.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Opacity of data. They want to understand data better and advise clients appropriately.

The media space, especially video - be it TV or internet based - is undergoing mind-bending changes. With the best yet to come, there is a lot to be explored, understood and harnessed. ■



Marketers often focus on 'collecting' fans on social media versus really 'connecting' with them.

NEHA AHUJA

Head of Marketing | Spotify India

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

I try and learn a new physical skill every year; it helps release 'happy hormone' called endorphins, which reduce stress and trigger positive feelings. Last year, I hiked to one of the highest points in the mountains of Bhutan, meeting a few yaks on the way and learning about the oldest monasteries from our trainer and guide. This time, my summer break was in the Scandinavian countries and I tried my hand at fishing – it's a great way to learn a new skill and requires lots of patience.

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

World over, we raise our girls to be perfect and our boys to be brave. To truly innovate, we can't leave behind half of our population. Reshma Saujani, the founder of 'Girls Who Code', has taken up the charge to socialise young girls to take risks and learn to program - the two skills they need to move society forward. The program promotes technology training (specifically coding) for girls. Reshma says, "We need each of you to tell every young woman you know to be comfortable with imperfection." That's the thought I admire and love.

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

Dogs seem to have a sixth sense when it comes to compassion and understanding. We all go through a lot in our daily lives and need someone to help us manoeuvre through these situations. Dogs are the best companions. No matter what life throws at you, your golden retriever will be by your side. And that's Brand Spotify - 'When life changes tracks, there's a playlist for that' helping you live life better.

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

The OTT or the music streaming category operates in an ecosystem that's extremely intertwined. From the more obvious ones such as the cost of handsets and changing data consumption rates, to deep consumer life-based trends such as the rise of online gaming leagues and school holidays versus exam time, all factors impact consumption and adoption in our category.

Our user report clearly shows that during March and April the most searched tracks were related to 'focusing on studying', while that changed to 'long drive playlists' or 'online gaming playlists' in June.

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 believe in democratising music. Music is for everyone, regardless of your age, where you are and what you like doing. The width of our song library is spread across genres, languages and time peri-

ods. What drives growth is relevance and customisation of communication for every segment. We talk to international music streamers, regional music lovers as well as new podcast users.

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?

Trolls aren't looking for resolutions. They want to engage in a battle, one that nobody can win. And this has not changed over the years. They might have increased the frequency due to the rise in social media access over the last couple of years, but I don't think the way we manage them has changed. The basic principles are: respond with facts, correct your mistakes when needed, diffuse with humour and never delete.

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

Word of mouth marketing - the original social media platform. Over 95 per cent of consumers believe in recommendations from people known to them. The problem is that marketers often focus on 'collecting' fans on social media versus really 'connecting' with them. We need passionate advocates or fans for the brand. Being talked about requires a strategy that goes beyond 'likes'. The Ps of marketing have changed to Es – Engage (listen and respond to your fans on social media), Equip (give them a reason to talk about your product) and Empower (give them ways to talk and share).

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

A lot has changed - agency structures, data-driven thinking and even the briefing process. But the one 'grumble point' that is a constant - and that will probably stay - is the paucity of time for job delivery. We can define and redefine the processes, but clients know that their agency partners deliver best under pressure! ■

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People are very particular about their individual choices, as against ordering one thing for everybody.

PRASHANT GAUR

Chief Brand and Customer Officer | Pizza Hut
India Subcontinent



REVIVIFY

Introducing
ADVANCED
skincare

REVIVE
HEALTHY
SKIN
SUN PROTECTION
SKIN REJUVENATION
ADVANCED
SKIN CARE
PARABEN-FREE
YOUTHFUL
BRIGHTENING
ANTI-AGEING
SKIN HYDRATION
BEAUTIFUL
WHITE
EXPERT
CELL
RENEWAL
MOISTURISING
BOOST
LIGHT
SKIN
REPAIR
ANTI WRINKLE
DARK SPOT
REDUCTION
DIANCE





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

I have been playing tennis a lot lately and have grown increasingly competitive. I participated in some inter-condo competitions, and that is the most meaningful thing I have done other than work.

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

To answer this, I will go back to the early days of my career, which started with Maruti Suzuki. That was my first job and I had the opportunity to work under the brilliant leadership of Jagdish Khattar, former managing director of Maruti Suzuki. I admire his leadership style, vision, and the way he understood the customer... just too good.

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

A kangaroo, an animal that doesn't know how to move backwards; it only leaps forward. Also, like this animal, our brand has the ability to evolve, adapt and be agile.

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

QSR is a dynamic and complex category, in which brands must respond to consumers on a real-time basis. So, we learn something new pretty much every single day. And there are new challenges that surface all the time.

Today, consumers are looking for easy, non-home cooked food options. They want convenience and a better customer experience. That is one of the challenges we've witnessed in the last six to 12 months. We did a lot of things to address this, including investing heavily in technology. Earlier this year, we launched a real-time 'rider tracking' feature that gives consumers the comfort of knowing exactly where the rider is.

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

There is a growing ask for ease. The one common thing across consumer segments is the 'I want what I want, when I want it' outlook. People want personalised, convenient solutions. This is a major external factor affecting the industry.

While people love to socialise, they're very particular about their individual choices, as against ordering one thing for everybody. This is leading to a surge in demand for single portion sizes. Other factors that are influencing behaviour include technology, easy access to good quality internet, digital payments, e-commerce, and a rise in demand for a fusion of Indian and Western cuisines.

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 brand with universal appeal and a universal target au-

dience, across age groups. But we do focus a lot on millennials, because India is a young country and this segment is growing. Also, millennials are heavy consumers of pizza, so our growth is coming largely on the back of this young segment. I'd say 18-35 years is the sweet spot for our brand.

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 it is okay for brands to err as long as the intent behind the initiative is right. We're all human. It's also okay for brands to say sorry to their fans. Also, trolling doesn't last long; the cycle doesn't go beyond six to eight hours. Sometimes brands go viral for good reasons, at other times for bad reasons... netizens are mature enough to spot the difference.

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

We would choose digital. We're a hyperlocal business and for every store, we have 'trade areas' from where we get our business. Digital helps us target these zones sharply, geofence our communication, stay relevant for the audience around our retail stores, and do time-bound promotions.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

The agency ecosystem has evolved; they're a lot more open than they were a decade back. Today, when we have conversations around doing a campaign which is only online, and not for television, I see a lot of openness on their part, which is a healthy change. The grumbling is less now. ■



**My medium of choice would
be the 'screen'!**

MOKSH CHOPRA

Chief Marketing Officer | KFC India



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

I love music! Last year, I was fortunate to be part of a musical based on Freddie Mercury's work. I had to audition to be part of the chorus, and had a blast singing all the classics. We even managed to pull off the difficult Bohemian Rhapsody! Of course, I had to look the part as well – I was styled to look like David Bowie, which my team found hilarious.

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

I find Byron Sharp's work incredibly powerful. His empirical, data-backed approach to marketing has challenged many conventional beliefs. I admire the rigour and objectivity his scientific approach brings in, without curtailing the art and creativity in marketing.

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

Interestingly, not so long ago, we asked a few consumers the same question. Most of them said KFC could be a horse – not a chicken! For its strength, agility, grace, loyalty and lineage.

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

The big shift towards digital as a medium and the strengthening of food aggregators have been two rapid changes. Thankfully, we've already been evolving from a purely brick-and-mortar, TV-led approach to an omnichannel, multimedia approach. Being agile in response to change, at an organisation level, has been our biggest learning.

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

Macro-level forces like the economy and consumer sentiment affect most categories, including ours. These factors are, mostly, not controllable. Aspects like seasonality and cultural events, like festivals and cinema, also have a direct effect on our business. We plan our calendar and campaigns accordingly. Lately, digital technology is impacting most industries.

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

Our consumers are largely millennials who love to experiment with food and are always on the look-out for value and variety in their eating-out experiences. We cater to all demographics but our focus will remain on millennials.

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?

Consumers today use trolling not so much to condescend a brand or

person, but to make their opinion heard. They are very vocal about their likes and dislikes, and, perhaps, are getting creative in their manner of expression. Thankfully, we take our chicken very seriously, but not ourselves. Everything that we put out there has a KFC twist to it; be it memes, gifs, sharp and witty posts on trending topics or chicken jokes... we do it all.

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

Television helps brands reach mass audiences. However, the pattern and means of consuming information have changed. India is now the world's second-largest smartphone market, with half-a-billion mobile users. Millennials, who are our core TG, have almost doubled the amount of time they spend online, as compared to a few years back. So, my medium of choice would be the 'screen'!

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Given the fast pace of change, it's the timelines! ■



Today, over three-fourths of the shoppers start their exploration for a new gadget online.

RITESH GHOSAL

CMO | Croma, Infiniti Retail



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

There are 2 things I really love – travel and food. I always try to explore new places, especially ones with an interesting history, and while there, sample the local cuisine.

Travelling to friends and with friends is something I have done a fair bit of over the recent past. While life has taken us to different cities or even countries, we make it a point to catch up at least once a year to renew our youth.

Croma's aggressive expansion plans have been an added bonus as it allows me to travel to cities and towns across India, and also explore the local cuisine.

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

Over the last 25 years, I have had the opportunity to work side-by-side with many of the best marketing minds of this country and some of the most inspirational leaders of men. I admire some for their vision, others for the dogged pursuit of a goal. The one I admire most is Shripad Nadkarni (my boss at Coke India) because he is the only one with all the above qualities.

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

I would personify Croma as a big, friendly dog because like man's best friend, we like Croma to epitomise loyalty for life; unselfish, unconditional love; and be trustworthy beyond question.

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

Retail is a catchment business and Croma has been adding stores in new catchments rapidly in the last few months. The trick to expansion is turning a profit in the new stores and the trick to that lies in getting the store "discovered" by the catchment. After years of focusing on 100-odd catchments, we had to learn a new trick – driving traffic to new stores, in new catchments, from shoppers unfamiliar with the brand.

The key lessons learnt included: Different local contexts require different marketing approaches. Therefore, it's critical to try many things, track impact and keep making course corrections. There's a need to build a team of marketing mavericks who believe solely in the power of a good idea rather than seek budgets to bludgeon their message into customers' heads.

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

Digital explosion, I suppose, would be one of the key trends that's impacted consumer behaviour within our category. It's not only changed what people buy and how often they buy, but it has also altered how they buy.

Today, over three-fourths of the shoppers start their exploration for a new gadget online. Being able to complete this journey profit-

ably online or guiding them into our stores is critical for any retailer to succeed in our category.

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

I don't understand these jargons. All the talk of millennials, GenY, Gen Z, etc... India is a young country, entering the tipping point of what economists call a "demographic dividend". Obviously, youth will drive the growth for the next decade. Learning to engage in a profitable long-term relationship with the digitally empowered youth is the only way to build a retail business at scale in India.

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?

The power of digital media lies in the ability to create two-way conversations with audiences. This is what has driven the growth of digital media in the last decade. However, malpractices, indiscipline and irresponsibly avaricious behaviour by the digital media and the associated ecosystem of agencies, publishers, etc., have created a situation where responsible brands have to think their every move very carefully and yet still have to resort to fire-fighting ever so often.

Trolling is a very small part of the problem, I think the entire arena of social media marketing needs a serious overhaul – unfortunately, nobody seems keen to take on the responsibility.

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

The first and foremost marketing investment for Croma is our store-front. We pay a significant premium to acquire properties that can serve as "outsize hoardings" for us. We use various local and national media to communicate our marketing programs and bring people to the stores.

Starting last year, we have been moving most of our investments to TV advertising as the brand has modified its storytelling approach. Digital media plays a strong supporting role.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

Croma currently works with a large suite of agency partners across creative, media and digital duties. The persistent complaint, of course, is that we don't spend enough money with any of them. ■



If my brand were an animal, I would like it to be an octopus.

UMA TALREJA

Chief Marketing & Chief Customer Officer |
Shoppers Stop



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

A lot of my time outside of work is when I travel. The most interesting one recently was to Benares. It was an extremely rich experience of Indian culture, visual theatre and traditional food, and a delight to experience and photograph.

I also found Berlin fascinating. The emergence of a unique expression in art and music coming from a traumatic history, gives the city a very unique character.

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

It's hard to deny the wrap dress' iconic status — it's been one of the hardest working garments in any hard-working woman's wardrobe. Created by Diane von Furstenberg in 1974, the wrap dress has played a huge role in the lives of women. Notable, however, is the fact that she and her husband have pledged to give over \$1 billion in charitable contributions to help organisations in the public spaces, community building, education, arts, human rights and environmental sectors. Philanthropic leaders are extremely inspiring and in my eyes, she is a real legend.

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

If my brand were an animal, I would like it to be an octopus. The extra arms are super useful to manage the marketing disruption. I love its ability to hide in plain sight as well. We all need the 9 brains and 3 hearts to be able to handle the complex environment.

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

I think one of the biggest challenges is stitching all the data together which helps you look at the consumer in a more holistic and contextual manner. While there is a lot of data, the challenge in gleaming the insights and using that across channels in time and with relevant content is still a challenge, thanks to complexity of the data, its incompleteness and many a times its inaccurate capture or structures.

What we have been doing is using bite-sized data and specific use cases that help us create campaigns and solutions that can connect with consumers more powerfully.

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

I think Indian consumers have faced a lower rise in income than expected and has been below inflation levels. This is especially true of salaried professionals. Add to this the uncertain economic conditions have made consumers rethink discretionary spends.

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

The core consumer for Shoppers Stop is the young family whose purchase decisions are driven by the woman and her choices. This segment has been driving maximum growth for us. In addition, early career aspirations of 18-25 year olds is an emerging segment that finds favour in premium products as they come into discretionary income which they manage and control themselves.

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

Given only one marketing strategy, I would focus on our loyalty program customers and reach them through digital means. The 6.4 million base of 'First Citizens' contributed to 82 per cent of our revenues today and is a rich asset of relationships that we learn from, understand, and create for.

What do agency partners grumble about most, today?

The pressure of timelines on delivery is a huge challenge for agencies in a real-time environment where the consumers are shifting, the marketing plans are being more flexible and agile, and it forces agencies to rethink their internal mechanisms to deliver. ■

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*Source: IRS 2019



MIRCHI RULES IN INDIA!



WITH **3.2 CRORE**
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