

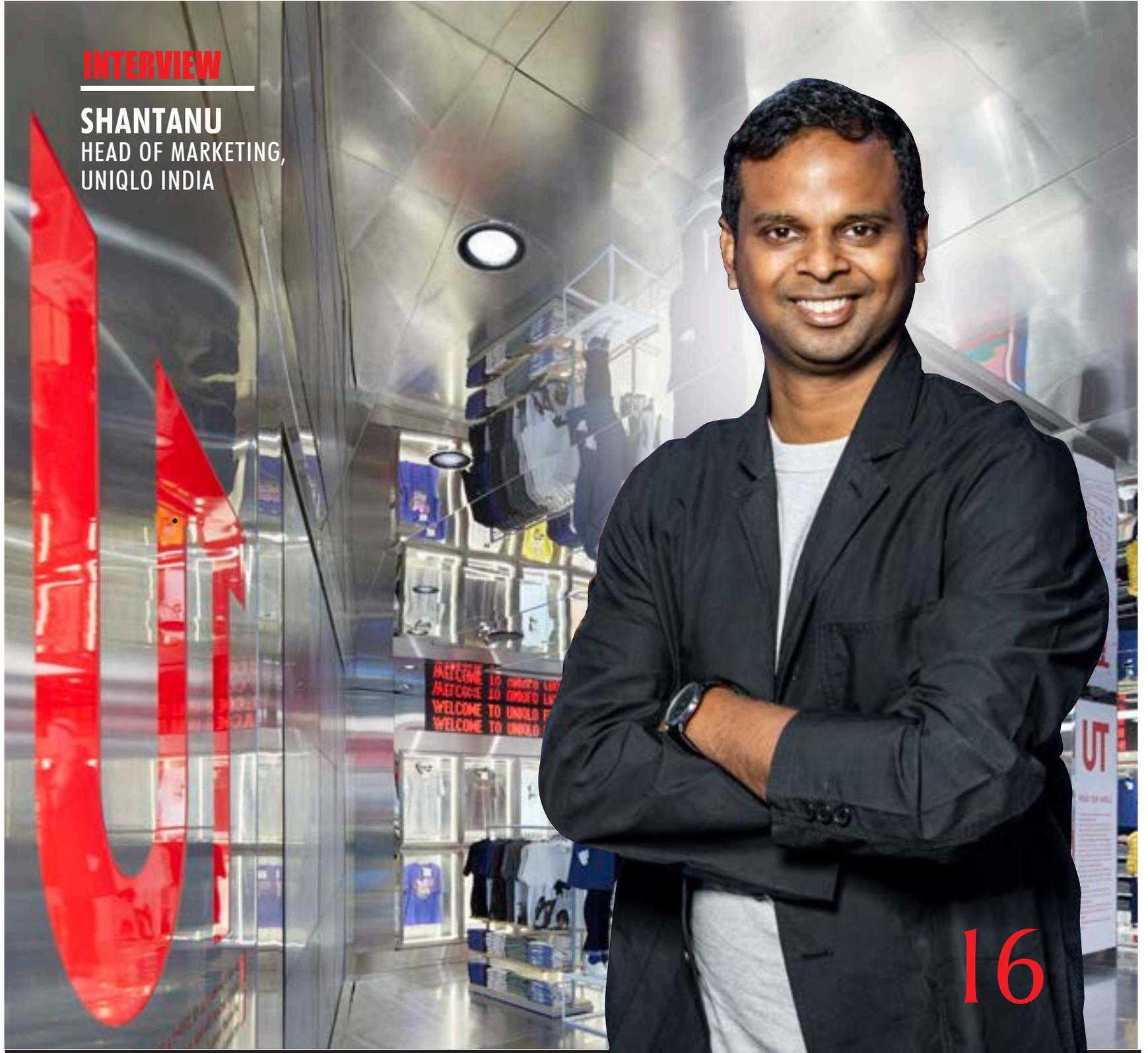
# afags! Reporter

November 1-15, 2019

Volume 8, Issue 9 ₹100

## INTERVIEW

**SHANTANU**  
HEAD OF MARKETING,  
UNIQLO INDIA



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# “OUR MARKETING TASK STARTS NOW”

An interview with Uniqlo India's head of marketing - Shantanu.

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## This fortnight...



**A**t the risk of sounding like an ignoramus, I'll admit... I first heard of Uniqlo only about 14 months ago. I read a Forbes headline that said - 'Roger Federer On Why He Ditched Nike For A \$300 Million Uniqlo Deal'. What's that, I wondered. And serendipitously enough, a few weeks down the line, a cousin who lives abroad gifted me a plain blue, minimalist-esque jacket – the kind we Mumbaikars, with no winters to speak of, only wear on flights! – from Uniqlo. My sense of wonder grew. This looks like a special sort of mysterious brand, I remember thinking.

Months later, when Uniqlo announced its big India launch, what piqued my interest was the fact that the team gave potential tie-ups with the Amazons and Myntras a miss for an offline strategy; Uniqlo's door to India is located at a mall in Delhi's Vasant Kunj. That's when I was sure... this is a brand worth getting to know. Lucky for me, doing so is my job. So this fortnight, we get to know both the brand and its local custodian Shantanu, who has a back story as interesting as his brand.

A former member of the merchant navy, who spent his time on oil tankers and in greasy engine rooms, Shantanu entered the rough seas of FMCG marketing with a job at Procter & Gamble around 2008, which took him across the company's India, Singapore and China offices. After spending over a decade at P&G, he is now tasked with bringing a Japanese fashion and retail brand into Indian wardrobes.

What is he most apprehensive about? Will Uniqlo's simple designs and monochrome patterns appeal to the colour-hungry Indian shopper? Who are his biggest rivals? What will Uniqlo's advertising look and sound like? And does he have a strategy to sell his wares online? Our reporter tried getting some answers when she met Shantanu at Uniqlo's Gurugram office recently.

**Ashwini Gangal**  
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## afaqs! Reporter

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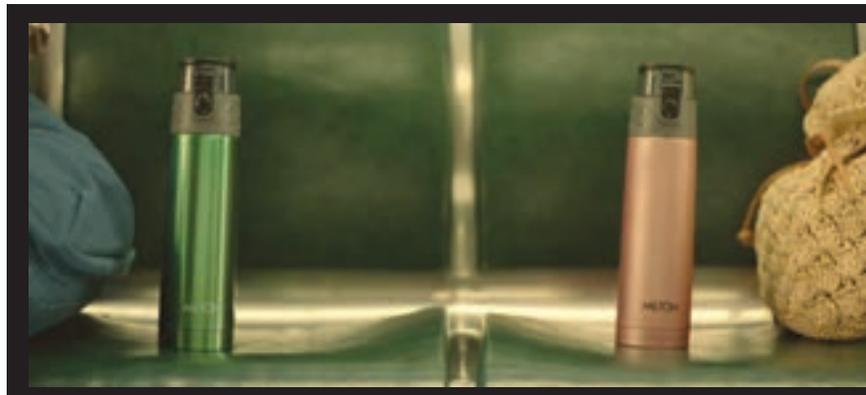


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MY FM

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# Budweiser Makes a Sporty Move in India; Partners as Broadcast Co-presenting with Premier League

*afaqs! Reporter interviewed Ben Verhaert, President – South Asia, AB InBev, about the brand's association with global football, marketing objectives, customised activations, yield factor, and more.*

Lately, the Indian football space has been experiencing a lot of traction from brands. From auto manufacturers to FMCG to finance to sports, brands just can't get enough of the second most popular sport in the country. With homegrown leagues like ISL and I-League playing their game right, the reach of this sport is one of the crucial factors for this heed. Bringing this to perspective, who wouldn't want to leverage a game that keeps over 100 million fans hooked – well beyond 90 minutes?

But while these leagues have been in there for quite some time, one sporting extravaganza which is religiously followed by football fans across the world is - Premier League. And like every year, this year too the league has not just kept the hype up, but has also been grabbing quite a few eyeballs of the Indian marketing fraternity. The league, which acts as an umbrella - sheltering world-class talent and prominent franchisees backed by global viewership - has already had a successful stint in filling up the broadcasting inventory. To understand more, we got in touch with Ben Verhaert, President – South Asia, AB InBev (Budweiser's parent company), Broadcast Co-presenting Sponsor of PL. In his interaction with Debashish Chakraborty of afaqs! Reporter, he talks about Budweiser's association with global football, marketing objectives, customised activations, yield factor, and more.



**India homes a mind-boggling base of over 100 million followers of football. How does a brand like Budweiser plan to cater and connect with them?**

The enthusiasm around football has grown multifold in India over the past decade. Drumming into this very passion point, Budweiser has been curating tailored experiences and engaging content to celebrate the zeal and gusto of the sport with fans locally and worldwide. Budweiser o.o's recent association with the highly followed EPL and La Liga in India is yet another step in that direction. Our efforts are steered to provide football enthusiasts an opportunity to come together, enjoy the sport

and give the event a more celebratory vibe.

**Budweiser has had a prolonged association with the football space worldwide. What was the idea behind getting on board as the Broadcast co-presenting partner for Premier League in India?**

Our overarching ambition is to bring people together while energising and inspiring them to bring alive the euphoric energy of the game. We are all about creating bona fide experiences that connect with individuals on a personal level while harmonising crowds. We have been a long-time partner of the FIFA World Cup, which

**BUDWEISER HAS BEEN CURATING TAILORED EXPERIENCES AND ENGAGING CONTENT TO CELEBRATE THE ZEAL AND GUSTO OF THE SPORT WITH FANS.**

has allowed us to champion our dream of energising and inspiring the 3.2 billion football fans watching the world cup across the globe. Given our commitment to football, we saw an opportunity with Premier League to further connect with fans and engage with them not just once in four years,

but year-round, with large-scale activations, on-ground screenings and engagement activities across key markets.

**What factors do you think brands and marketers consider before putting their bet on an association like this? How did Budweiser come to this conclusion?**

As a brand, we are core believers in engaging with and exploring opportunities that fuel unity and bring people together. We have brought this to life in all our activations and collaborations with music festivals and our very own IP - BUDX. Football, similarly, is all about bringing people together, uniting people through their mutual love for the sport or their favourite teams, the chants or the friendly banter - the atmosphere truly brews a sense of togetherness. It is also a high energy spectacle and the very euphoric vibe surrounding the sport is what excites us and drives us to associate with sporting events, be it our long-term partnership with the FIFA World Cup, the Premier League or the La Liga.

**While sporting properties like ISL and I-League are homegrown, Premier League is a global extravaganza. What connect do you plan to establish?**

Football is one of the biggest passion points for our consumers in India and excitement around the sport has grown significantly over the years. The Premier League is one of the most popular sporting tournaments in the country and by partnering with them on a global scale, Budweiser o.o aims to elevate the experience for our consumers here in India by bringing the sport closer to them – through exclusive match viewing parties and engagement activities with official fan clubs. We want to offer well-curated experiences as well as exclusive content surrounding the kings of the

game to our consumers, allowing us to be an integral part of their football experience and celebrate the spirit of the game together.

**Big screen activation, Select FC, caters to a huge fan base. What kind of activities or customisations can we expect from Budweiser here?**

We are running an integrated campaign in India with mainline and digital advertising, strategic digital activations with a central theme of how it is in all of us to taste greatness and be a King. We are also driving brand experiences through our hero asset, the Budweiser Light-up Cup. We also have exclusive fan parks where we showcase the iconic league trophy and viewing parties combined with engagement activities at all the screenings to keep the fans engaged and celebrate the excitement surrounding the game. Additionally, we are also looking at content partnerships to celebrate the growing relevance and cultural impact of the game within the country. Our association with Premier League and La Liga goes beyond mere sponsorship. We are committed to growing the passion for the beautiful game around the world and this will be brought to life through a series of well-curated experiences that celebrate the sport and the players.

**Where do you think the target group of Budweiser and PL converge?**

By regular interactions with consumers and active social listening, we know that football is a key passion point of our consumers. The excitement around the sport has grown significantly over the years and this presented us a massive opportunity to engage with our consumers through sports associations that are meaningful to them and also share the passion we have for football

with them. Considering our long-term association with the sport as the official partners of the FIFA World Cup and several football tournaments across the globe, it was only natural for us to take it to the next level with our partnerships with Premier League and La Liga which enjoy a growing fan following all over the world, especially in India.

**With an opportunity to have a significant reach and visibility, how do you plan to gain**



**maximum value out of this association? What kind of returns are you expecting?**

Through our association with Premier League, we have been passionately determined to craft exceptional experientials for the Indian football fans. It is our belief that if sporting fans can be gratified through all the relevant touchpoints and provide for a stimulating and highly engaging experience – then we have not only retained a fan but earned their loyalty with a promise that they will keep coming back for more!

**Budweiser is known to initiate distinct and notable campaigns around football. What can we expect more around this partnership?**

Our recent campaign with Budweiser o.o, our non-alcohol beer, and Sergio Ramos, captain of the Spanish national football team and Real Madrid, received widespread appreciation from

fans here for celebrating Ramos' stand-out career as the most capped player ever for Spain and, in turn, inspiring our consumers to step up and taste greatness. The latest 'Be A King' campaign celebrates Ramos' journey to becoming one of the football's greats by using the meaning and symbolism of his tattoos to showcase his achievements. In addition, there will also be ongoing digital extensions available across social platforms, including @ Bud Football to keep fans engaged with the kings of the game both on and off the pitch.

We will also offer football fans a taste of the sport with large-scale activations and on-ground screenings across key markets. Throughout the season, we will host exclusive fan parks in different cities, taking the match viewing experience up a notch through engaging, interactive activities and contests set in an electric atmosphere. The iconic Premier League trophy will be also showcased here. On our digital platforms and through our partners, we will also curate exclusive content to celebrate the Kings of the game, both on and off the field. We are also giving consumers a chance to win a chance to watch a Premier League game in England when they buy a Budweiser. Through this entire gamut of curated experiences, online and on-ground, our aim is to be an integral part of their football experience and celebrate the spirit of the game together.

**Since the popularity of football has been manifold year-on-year, what future plans does Budweiser have to support and leverage the game?**

Through our multi-year partnerships with the FIFA World Cup, Premier League, and La Liga, we will continue to champion immersive experiences around the sport through partnerships, digital content, and innovations.

ROL.A.COLA

# How Did One Tweet Resurrect a Dead Brand?

Here's how Parle executed a rare feat with its cola candy brand. **By Abid Hussain Barlaskar**

**B**iscuits and confectionery manufacturer Parle recently announced the relaunch of its once popular confectionery brand Rol.a.Cola more than a decade after it was discontinued in the market. What's interesting is the way the comeback happened — through a single tweet.

Rol.a.Cola, a cola-flavoured hard-boiled candy, was discontinued by Parle in 2006. Thirteen years hence, in February 2019, Siddharth Sai Gopinath (Twitter profile @ssaig), a young businessman based in Kerala, tweeted requesting Parle to bring it back. In response, Parle sought 10,000 retweets. The #BringRolaColaBack campaign went viral with almost 11,000 retweets and as per Parle's claims, secured over seven lakh impressions on Twitter, all organic. It was soon followed by the #RolaColaIsComingBack campaign and eventually #RolaColaIsBack.

According to Krishnarao S Buddha, senior category head, marketing at Parle Products, decades ago (around the late 1970s/early '80s), the Rol.a.Cola candy was launched as an alternative to the then pricey cola beverages. "That's when we felt that a cola candy could suffice certain needs of a certain consumer segment." He reveals that consumers have shared past stories about them dissolving Rol.a.Cola candies in water, chilling it, to drink it as a cola drink.

While it was an "instant hit", over the years, Rol.a.Cola started slowing down in comparison with other Parle brands. As a result, its production came to a halt in 2006.

When asked about the confidence of acting on a single tweet, Buddha recalls an advice from one of his former bosses at Uncle Chips where he used to work about 25 years back, "My then boss had told me that a single feedback letter from a consumer, either good or bad,



**"If a customer has bothered to react and reach back to a manufacturer/marketer, it means something."**  
**KRISHNARAO S BUDDHA**

could easily represent reactions of 10,000 consumers. If a customer, without any personal reason, has bothered to react and reach back to a manufacturer/marketer, it means something. We got such individual reactions on emails or postcards and responded in a standard format. But with social media, things changed. It could become a movement with other people joining in."

Siddharth Sai Gopinath, the first person who tweeted about it,



also tagged Parle asking how many retweets it would take to bring Rol.a.Cola back. He says that after a little bit of difficulty of finding the correct Parle brand Twitter handle, he decided to go ahead with the Parle Family handle since it posted about most Parle products. I had an emotional attachment towards the candy and thought that let me just tweet and see what happens. My grandmother used to buy it for me secretly when my parents did not let me have the cola beverages. That was 15 years back."

The brand has re-entered a now ₹10,000 crore confectionery market in which sugar hard-boiled candies, i.e. Rol.a.Cola's category, made up around ₹4,000 crore. Rol.a.Cola also rejoins the bevy of Parle's popular confectionery brands such as Mango Bite, Kismi, Poppins, Kachha Mango Bite, Mazelo, among others. It will also compete with

market, it was still active in global markets such as Africa and Middle East with a presence of over two decades. The manufacturing facility was set up near Parle's existing facility in Indore. Commercial production started by mid-September and distribution started soon after. The South region was the first to get Rol.a.Cola since the first tweet originated in Kerala followed by North, East and then the West.

The new packs are available in variants of ₹5 and ₹20. The larger pack is aimed at modern retail. "Modern retail outlets don't want to stock items below ₹10 in order to justify the in-store display real estate taken up by a particular product," Buddha explains.

The challenge now is to pass on the nostalgia factor and the brand to the younger generation. "Frankly, how much will the 30+ year old nostalgic consumers consume?"



**The brand has re-entered a now ₹10,000 crore confectionery market in which sugar hard-boiled candies made up around ₹4,000 crore.**

I cannot bank on nostalgia alone. The key TG of 13-24 year olds too must connect with the product. The success depends on the relevance," Buddha says.

For the campaign, the Parle team crafted a story telling people that the brand has been travelling abroad since 2006 only to feel homesick and return home in 2019. Buddha believes that there would not be a better way of promoting the brand than on social media where it was resurrected. ■

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OGILVY

# Knocking on the Court's Door

Vivo and Dentsu Impact are facing plagiarism allegations. By Aishwarya Ramesh

Ogilvy India has taken smartphone maker Vivo and creative agency Dentsu Impact to court over allegations of plagiarism. According to the lawsuit, Ogilvy alleged that Vivo had approached its agency Brand David last year to pitch ideas to advertise their phones. Vivo eventually informed Ogilvy that it would not be going ahead with the ad that it pitched, to which, Ogilvy responded and informed Vivo that the intellectual property rights of the proposal still belonged to Brand David. Last year, Ogilvy claimed to have shared a detailed storyboard with Vivo before it rejected its “amusement park” idea.

Mumbai Mirror reports that Justice BP Colabawalla has directed Vivo to either deposit ₹1 crore, or furnish a guarantee from a reputed bank.

Before the Bombay High Court where the petition was filed, Vivo and Dentsu Impact refuted Ogilvy's claims. Mumbai Mirror reports that representing lawyer, senior advocate Venkatesh Dhond argued that a similarity in an idea could not amount to infringement, despite the court observing that there were

**Aamir Khan replaced Ranveer Singh as Vivo's brand ambassador in 2018 and the same year, Ogilvy and Vivo worked together to create a series of ads.**

quite a few similarities between Vivo's final ad and the proposal sent by Ogilvy's Brand David.

Aamir Khan replaced Ranveer Singh as Vivo's brand ambassador in 2018 and in that same year, Ogilvy and Vivo worked together to create a series of ads.

**EXPERTS SPEAK**

KV Sridhar, aka Pops, founder and chief creative officer at Hypercollective, points out that plagiarism is just a symptom, but the disease is bigger than this. “Sometimes, agencies fight; sometimes the client fights —



depending on who is bigger. If the agency is bigger, it wants to be politically correct and it remains quiet. If the agency is small, nobody really bothers about the allegations. This has been happening for a while. During a pitch, a brand calls for pitches from six to 10 agencies and the client has no idea what it wants. It uses these pitches to scout for new ideas, not for new agencies.”

Pops opines that the issue is not just about dishonest agencies, but also dishonest clients. He



mentions that every agency out there would've faced a couple of cases like this in the past, wherein a creative idea is stolen and used by the client.

We ask Pops if he has experienced something similar during his career and he replies, not before 1990. He recounts that at the time, the pitches used to happen on a strategic level and they were not that frequent. There were hardly any price negotiations either. He is of the opinion that industry bodies such as AAI

(Advertising Agencies Association of India) must do something and help agencies by penalising clients who misbehave. “All clients are not bad, but if few names come out, they will start behaving properly. Senior people should stand up and talk about it. Creative directors of agencies should also be vigilant of the source of ideas that are pitched to clients and they need to act as gatekeepers, in a sense.”

Pratap Bose, chairman and

co-founder of The Social Street and former COO at DDB Mudra Group, is unsure why the issue is escalating to this level. “That's the thing about the nature of our field — communication — that these coincidences are not uncommon. It's not done with intentions of cheating someone, but it's part of the creative process. Sometimes, individuals have coinciding thoughts. We believe that our work is truly original until we find out that this has been done before in some part of the world,” he

says. “There is a limit to the English language. There are only so many letters in the alphabet you can use to make words. Similarly, there's only so many instruments you can use to create a particular type of music.”

Bose endorses Pops' opinion when he says, “Nowadays brands call for a pitch between multiple agencies, shop for ideas and work with the agency that gives them a good deal.”

“Agencies don't mind this either, as long as there is some business coming in. Now the added confusion is what they should do on the digital front too. So, you call six digital agencies, six mainstream agencies and six content agencies. So, you've got 18 agencies fighting for the same brand! At the end of the day, neither the client nor the agency knows where this idea has come from. Clients pick an idea they like and assign it to the agency that will execute it inexpensively.” ■

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LAY'S

# Putting a Smile on its Packs

Lay's India has tied up with influencers for the 'Smile Deke Dekho' campaign.

By Aishwarya Ramesh



Lay's India may have been active on the advertising front, but its packaging and flavours have, by and large, stayed the same for years. Its new campaign 'Smile Deke Dekho' sees the brand collaborate with influencers across categories to introduce customised packaging for them.

"Lay's has always been about sharing fun moments. Our new 'Smile Deke Dekho' campaign emphasises that a smile is a universal language that represents many moods and flavours that go beyond conventional boundaries and help establish connections. As part of the campaign, we kicked off a mass influencer outreach program, where we mapped each influencer's smile and matched it to our flavour variants. We produced personalised packs of Lay's chips, featuring the smiles of influencers. The packs have taken social media by storm and we have seen an outpouring of anecdotes and stories of how a smile transformed various moments," says Sonam Vij, senior manager, Lay's India.

### EXPERTS SPEAK

Alpana Parida, MD at DY Works, believes that as far as changing the



packaging goes, it's a bold move for the company to make. "Consumers today are looking for newer experiences. In such a scenario, newness in packaging leads to greater

**Lay's new campaign sees the brand collaborate with influencers across categories to introduce customised packaging for them.**

are so many 'me-too' brands that have the same colours and the same flavours and so on. They needed to create something significantly different. This is putting them in another bracket entirely, making it completely distinguished."

She strongly believes that brands with a greater recall in the market, can break out of stagnation in a crowded market if they only muster up the courage to transform. "This

coolness. In this case, they matched it to the campaign, and the fact is that they've created differentiation in a category that is so cluttered; where everybody looks so similar. There

attitude will hold them in good stead because it keeps reinforcing their market leader stance."

Kunel Gaur, founder creative director at Animal, an independent creative agency working out of New Delhi, shares the same opinion — that the campaign and its execution is fairly simple, so it will connect with people. "People are sharing it, so it's already there in terms of virality, but it's hard to identify the influencer on the package, but I don't think that was their task anyway. They just wanted to leverage in terms of promotion of the campaign." He also points out that this is PepsiCo's way of bringing an international Lay's campaign to India.



Shekhar Badve, founder director at Lokus Design, highlighted that this is part of a larger global Smile campaign. "Smile universally has a greater connect and is an effective way to communicate a mood or emotion. There is a natural ease and affinity towards smiling faces or characters. This is a way to penetrate the target audience, who these days typically shy away from chips or fried foods. Close to 60 per cent of buying decisions are based on packaging design and if the packaging cues topical phenomenon or current trends, it has a very high probability of being picked up." ■

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CADBURY

# Here's a Chocolate for the Grown-ups

Mondelez India has introduced a new range of premium chocolates — Cadbury Dark Milk. By Deepashree Banerjee



Mondelez India has introduced a new range of premium chocolates — Cadbury Dark Milk. Actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan has been roped in as the face for the new sub brand in India.

The new variant Dark Milk has dropped 'Dairy' from its name and makes its proposition clear — meant for grown-up palates. Conceptualised by Ogilvy, the 55-second ad opens with Aishwarya sitting at a nearly empty airport lounge enjoying some "me-time" while nibbling on chocolate. A young, dapper-looking guy chooses to sit next to her and not-so-subtly asks if she would share a bite of chocolate with him. She tersely replies that he'd need to grow up before she does that. What struck us, apart from the unusual pairing, was also the brand's visible attempt to render a rather 'adult'(ish) twist in the TVC.

Says Anil Viswanathan, director (marketing), Chocolates, Mondelez India, "It actually underwent rigorous consumer research — product preference, packaging research, thermal stability, proposition evaluation/concept testing, etc. Dark Milk is a global brand, hence we had lot of learning from other countries as well, but we have developed the Dark Milk bundle to suit the Indian market after almost two years of detailed research."

"Dark Milk's taste is crafted for evolved consumers with mature palates/sensibilities. Cadbury Dairy Milk, our mother brand, has the



**"Cadbury Dark Milk's taste is crafted for evolved consumers with mature palates/sensibilities."**

ANIL VISWANATHAN

age old recipe containing cocoa, milk and sugar ingredients. While Dark Milk has 'more intense notes' as it has a higher percentage of cocoa and a different manufacturing process. It is a sweet spot between dark and milk chocolate — the rich, intense notes of a dark chocolate and also the creamy, smooth texture of indulgent milk chocolate."

Interestingly, millennials seem to be the target consumer for all Mondelez brands. The communication for brands, such as Cadbury Silk, Five Star and Fuse, is aimed at millennials. TV continues to remain the lead medium of communication. However, digital is catching up fast. Digital takes the lead when it comes to reaching millennials and Gen Z consumers, especially in top tier towns.

Viswanathan points out that as a category, chocolate has been growing in strong double digits and has been leading the growth in the FMCG/F&B industry. The launch of Cadbury Dark Milk will be supported by a 360-degree communication campaign.

As against ₹40 for a 43-gram bar of the regular Dairy Milk, the 72-gram pack of Dark Milk costs ₹99 (available in Original – Rich & Creamy variant) and the 156-gram pack is priced at ₹199 (available in Original – Rich & Creamy and Salted Caramel – Rich & Creamy variants). ■

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MID-DAY

## The All-new Sunday Mid-Day

It is '70 per cent features, 30 per cent news, 100 per cent Mumbai'. By News Bureau



Mumbai-based newspaper Mid-Day has launched a revamped avatar of its weekend read — Sunday Mid-Day. The launch is backed by the campaign, Hey Mumbai, we have a Sunday for you.

Synonymous with the campaign's tagline — 70 per cent features, 30 per cent news, 100 per cent Mumbai — the all-new Sunday Mid-Day keeps the focus on the city and its residents. It offers leisure reading.

Mid-Day will continue to report on fields such as food and drink, and travel. New additions to the paper include a weekly tech and gadgets page; a fortnightly fashion column to keep readers up to speed with Milan and Mumbai; a seven-day round up of the world's weirdest news; a monthly look at famous soul mates; a weekly curation of what's trending online and offline, and a discovery of "the other life" of interesting Mumbaikars.

Talking about the relaunch, Apurva Purohit, president, Jagran Group, said, "For 40 years,

**"We are offering the perfect amalgamation of strong reportage and exceptional leisure features."**

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## \*AGENDA

Do marketers have a millennial fixation?  
Are lifestyle brands across categories so focused on millennials that they are missing out on other demographics?

Being Indian  
As the fascination with things Indian grows, what does it mean for lifestyle brands with roots overseas.

Keeping the aura of legacy alive  
Upmarket brands love to play up their rich heritage. Does it count for as much as before when exciting new categories are exploding all around?

The technology game: How the spread of technology has changed the business of lifestyle brands.

The enduring magic of Royal Enfield: Understanding the mojo of the brand.

BMW's marketing head on: How top-end automobile brands engage consumers.

\*Subject to change

## SPEAKERS



**Amit Gujral**  
Head - Corporate Marketing, LG



**Amit Tiwari**  
Vice President, Marketing, Havells



**Karan Kumar**  
Chief Brand & Marketing Officer, Fabindia



**Pallavi Singh**  
Marketing Director, BMW



**Saloni Nangia**  
President, Technopak



**Sandeep Shukla**  
General Manager & Head Marketing Communication, Jaquar



**Shantiswarup Panda**  
Chief Marketing Officer, Raymond



**Shubhranshu Singh**  
Global Head, Marketing, Royal Enfield



**Sreekant Khandekar**  
Co-founder and Director, afaqs!



**Sudipto Chowdhuri**  
Executive President - Sales, India TV



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**INTERVIEW**

**SHANTANU**  
HEAD OF MARKETING,  
UNIQLO INDIA



**“OUR  
MARKETING  
TASK STARTS  
NOW”**

**An interview with Uniqlo India’s head of marketing - Shantanu. By Ananya Pathak**

A few weeks ago, the seven-decade-old fashion retail brand Uniqlo, from the house of Fast Retailing, launched its first-ever store in India. The Japanese casual wear designer, manufacturer and retailer announced the launch in the country in May 2018 and inaugurated its first store at Ambience Mall, New Delhi on October 4, 2019.

The Tokyo-headquartered clothing brand currently owns over 2,000 operational stores worldwide. Founded in 1949 by Tadashi Yanai, the wealthiest Japanese now, the brand opened its first unisex casual wear store in Hiroshima in May 1984, under the name ‘Unique Clothing Warehouse’. However, while listing it in Hong Kong in 1988, a spelling error resulted in the brand’s current name.

In the annual industry ranking by the FR Group, Uniqlo’s parent - Fast Retailing - was listed at number two with sales of \$21.51 billion at the end of the last fiscal year (August 2019), sitting right under Inditex (Zara) that

closed the last fiscal year (January 2019) with recorded sale of \$28.89 billion.

Unlike the other dominant fashion retailers in the industry, Uniqlo does not run on the ‘trending fashion’ phenomenon. The brand’s philosophy aims at making it affordable for all and keeping it simple and comfortable. The ‘no logo policy’ is another differentiator for the brand.

At the time of the brand’s India launch, it also unveiled its first campaign for the country - ‘Together in LifeWear’. Conceptualised by BBH India, a Mumbai-headquartered creative agency, the 30-second film, along with the brand’s other products, highlights the newly launched ethnic section for the Indian market.

We spoke to Shantanu, head of marketing, Uniqlo India, to understand the brand and its philosophy better. Shantanu – he goes by just Shantanu, yes – with over 10 years of experience with Procter & Gamble, finds Uniqlo a best fit for him given the brand’s philosophy of ‘consumer first’. He says he did not have to unlearn P&G’s ‘consumer

is the boss’ philosophy before joining Uniqlo in January this year.

In fact, he says that keeping consumer in the forefront is one of his best learnings from his past experiences in the industry. He believes that while making any product-related decisions, one must always keep an empty chair in the meeting room, considering it to be the consumer’s seat and giving equal weightage to what he/she might have said if he/she was physically present in the room. Edited excerpts:

**You launched your first store in Vasant Kunj, New Delhi. What was the initial reaction like?**

The initial response has been quite exciting. Obviously, there was some nervousness about how people will react, but so far, the response has been fabulous. In fact, some of the items like ultralight down jacket and heattech, which we did not predict would become such a big craze, have caught all the consumer’s attention. So much so that on the launch day, around 3:00 p.m., we had to get an emergency shipment made to the store because of the mad rush.

### Are there plans to open other stores in pipeline?

The upcoming stores will be launched in very quick successions, say in a month or so. The plan is to launch the second store at DLF Avenue, Saket – the revamped mall in place of DLF Place, Saket – and following that, the next one at DLF Cyber Hub, Gurugram. Delhi is the starting point for us. We haven't just come to Delhi, it's a long-term commitment with India. We will definitely expand in the years to come. We foresee three kinds of expansions in the near future – within Delhi, then to other cities, and offline to online as well. All these are work in progress plans and will happen eventually.

### Tell us about the brand's 'no logo' policy...

That goes to the core brand philosophy and the brand's origin. Uniqlo is a Japanese brand. You won't find any show-off in the Japanese culture. That is where this no-logo philosophy comes into play from. They believe in simplicity and so does our brand. The apparels can be combined in different ways to portray different styles. One needs to feel good about the product and not show it off.

### When foraying into a new market, what are the steps involved? What did you find when you researched the Indian market?

Fundamentally, in terms of planning, we focused on three major areas: the proposition fit (product, colour, size), the business model fit (which mall, store location, human resource recruitment, partners), and the communication design.

The product and proposition feasibility and fit in India were one of our major areas of concern. Would the Indian consumers be receptive to the kind of product proposition, colours, sizes, etc? Then there was a check on the kind of communication design that we planned for the launch campaign – will it appeal to

**“We want to control the customer experience... that's what we based our decision to not collaborate with e-commerce platform for the launch phase on.”**

the consumers? Then we had to see where to start from.

Delhi, Mumbai and other cities, including Bengaluru, Chennai, are on our list. We started with Delhi majorly for two reasons – first, for the extremes of weather this city experiences, both in summers and winters. Although the weather conditions are a hard test for any product, Uniqlo's product stands fit

for both these weather conditions.

Second, Uniqlo is a made-for-all brand, which is very different from the way most brands operate. Most brands target a niche group – could be millennial, young ones or any specific age group. We go beyond that. Delhi has a versatile profile of people. For example, the profile of people in East Delhi is very different from that of South Delhi. Everyone has a different

taste. For a brand that is made-for-all, there couldn't be a better city to start with.

### What was the brand apprehensive about before the launch?

We got the confidence to launch the brand in India from the realisation that Indians who had an exposure to the brand had accepted it wholeheartedly. However, we were a little apprehensive about the scalability and if we would be able to re-apply the store experience that the customers get outside India here in the country. The store managers underwent a year-long training in Manila to learn it the Uniqlo's way.

Apart from this, we were a little sceptical about our simplicity philosophy. We weren't sure if it would be accepted in the Indian market. Although it's been only few weeks, it seems to be working well for now.



The Uniqlo store in Ambience Mall, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi



### Right, but how will you define the core target group for Uniqlo?

The lifestyle or fashion category depends majorly on one's personality and occasion. Most brands play in specific segments. Uniqlo plays across these segments. Hence, to slice a segment of customers which we will target is very hard.

The growth of the brand is a gradual process. People who will find value within Uniqlo will buy us first and this will trickle down eventually to the rest of the population. What matters the most is how much one is willing to pay for a product. We spoke

to Indians who prefer our brand. For many, before the launch of the store in Delhi, whenever travelling abroad, visiting a Uniqlo store was a part of their itinerary. That's Uniqlo's value. Some of our products are fit for any income group. On the other hand, there are products that will take time to settle and we will need to educate people about them. It will be a sequential progress.



**A Uniqlo ultralight down jacket costs between ₹2,999 and ₹5,999. Tell us about the brand's pricing strategy....**

The pricing has been designed as per the value that the product offers. 'Value', for us, is not defined by the money you pay for a product, but the benefits you get from it. The test is not how much you are willing to pay for a product when I show it to you, but what happens if I deprive you of it after you have had it for long enough. We focus more on the kind of difference our product makes in ones life. That's how the price has been decided depending on the kind of value the product offers to a customer.



**A look at Uniqlo's "Together in LifeWear" campaign**

**There are many brands that market the kind of products Uniqlo does. Who do you see as your core competitors?**

It is hard to outline one competitor. We look at them in two different ways. One is, we operate across segments and see competition from different brands in each of these sections. For example, if it is a baby segment, it is well established who is going to be our competitor, and so goes for men's formal section, inner wear section, winter thermal wears, casuals, denims, etc.

We get a volume of our consumers from these segments. We just have to

set our focus point right. Let's take winter thermal section – the category exists with some meaningful players. But what we know for sure from our research is that despite having a need for the product, a lot of people don't use it because it makes them feel uncomfortable or bulky. This is where our product comes in. We offer them a comfortable and light product.

The second way to approach it is – we create new categories. Where usage doesn't exist, competition doesn't exist. For example, a bra-top. It may not be an existing category, but we you sure can create it.

**Does Uniqlo have an online strategy in place, say, a collaboration with an e-commerce platform, a route you didn't take for the launch?**

We are a service-oriented brand. We want to control the customer



there is no such plan.

**We notice the attempt to highlight the 'Indian-ness' of the range in your launch film...**

That segment was launched to act as glue across all segments. Because ours is a very simple and minimalist brand, we thought the 'Indian-ness' could be the common point like Bollywood or cricket. We

**“Because ours is a very simple and minimalist brand, we thought the ‘Indian-ness’ could be the common point like Bollywood or cricket.”**

experience. When a customer comes to our physical store or shops with us online, we aim to make the experience delightful. And that is what we based our decision to not collaborate with e-commerce platform for the launch phase on. We feel confident when we control that customer experience. That is why we prefer to limit to our own platform – at least for now.

**The celebrity endorsement scene in India is exploding. Do you think Uniqlo needs a face?**

For Uniqlo, the product is the hero. And the product performance is the core. Any association, if we do, will not be for the sake of getting a pretty face or its popularity. That association has to bring out the product feature. If we are able to do that without 'a face', great; if we need a face to enhance and highlight the product features, we are open to it. As of now,

found it relevant from an Indian standpoint because it resonated with diversity.

But our focus on the Indian-ness was just for the launch campaign. We wanted to highlight the mother brand in the first campaign. On an ongoing basis, we'll do product-specific campaigns. Our marketing task starts now. We have partly covered the brand awareness part in Delhi, now we can focus on popularising the mini brands based on what is relevant for the coming seasons.

**Which agencies is the brand working with locally?**

For the launch campaign:  
Creative agency - BBH India  
Media agency - Mindshare  
Social media agency - We are Animal  
Event and on-ground execution partner - TOAST  
PR agency - PR Pundit. ■

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PIDILITE

# Celebrating Sticky Situations

A new ad highlights common tile-related problems faced by customers.

By Aishwarya Ramesh

**P**idilite and Ogilvy are famously known for celebrating sticky situations in their ads. Roff is a tile adhesive brand from the house of Pidilite and has released its first consumer facing TVC. The ad highlights some of the common tile-related problems faced by customers, such as cracked tile, debonding, falling of tiles, when fixed with only cement.

Vivek Sharma, CMO at Pidilite Industries, says that the TVC's target audience is consumers who are building new houses or renovating existing ones. He says that the objective of the TVC was the task of category creation. "We wanted to move the practice of fixing tiles with cement to fixing tiles with Roff adhesive. The product will be used by contractors and masons because tile fixing in India is not done by the consumers. What we're doing is creating awareness about Roff among the consumers so that when house work begins, they can have a meaningful conversation with their contractor."

It is a fully integrated marketing campaign that will run on TV, digital and outdoor, with retail activations at major tile dealers in cities. "TV is the lead medium because we need to create mass awareness about the brand and the solutions it offers. TV still has a high level of reach and is cost effective. That's why it's the lead medium. Our least used medium is probably the print medium, so far," says Sharma.

When asked about Roff's competitors, he says, "The competition isn't other adhesives, the competition is cement. Masons stick tiles to the floor and walls with cement, but cement isn't the best medium to stick tiles to the walls of bathrooms, kitchens, etc., but the penetration (awareness) of an adhesive used to stick tiles is still very low. Pidilite wants to create the category in the market to convert people from cement to tile adhesives."

He points out that white cement



**It is a fully integrated marketing campaign that will run on television, digital and outdoor, with retail activations at major tile dealers in cities.**

when used as a tile joint, the filler has a tendency to erode, especially in bathrooms when corrosive cleaning agents or acid are used. He adds that the Roff RTM Epoxy Grout is not affected by weathering due to time or such cleaning agents. The Roff RTM Epoxy Grout is available in a wide range of colours against the

traditional white cement.

During the conversation, Sharma shared an insight, "A home is the biggest investment a consumer makes and they are emotionally attached to it. The biggest challenge here is, consumer awareness and education. We have to make consumers aware of the fact that if they spend a little more money, they get a long lasting tile solution. We have been marketing to contractors for many years. We create videos for them, we meet with them to educate them about Roff solutions and adhesives. We believe now that the time is right to create consumer awareness so they can have a beautiful home. We want to accelerate the adoption of our products, thus tipping the scale."

**EXPERTS SPEAK**

Aalap Desai, executive creative director at Dentsu Webchutney,

believes that Pidilite ads maintain a unique DNA like no other brand in India. "It's been so defined that you can look at an ad and say that it's a Pidilite even before the logo appears. Sometimes, some ads that are not even Pidilite, but try the same humour, are perceived as one. This consistency has a deep impact on the consumer's mind. And, this one totally lives up to the brand's legacy." Desai added that he found the script hilarious.

Kedar Teny, chief strategy officer at Tilt Brand Solutions, feels that this ad fits right in with Pidilite's style of storytelling. "The style of storytelling works for Pidilite, but you can't have a broad brush stroke that applies across categories; since multiple products in various categories are at different stages of evolution. From a house of Pidilite POV, it's a great ad, but from a category POV, I'm not really sure if it will meet its objectives."

He points out that Pidilite's biggest heavyweight brand is Fevicol and though Fevicol has never relied on humour, it has great visual appeal and has communicated the concept of stickiness, effectively. "Fevi Kwik is a brand that really wore humour on its sleeve. Without really putting effort into educating the consumer about what your product is, you can't really use that brush stroke across brands," Teny concludes. ■

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FLIPKART

# Merging Offline with Online

Flipkart ran QR codes on ZeeTV to drive commerce. By Anirban Roy Choudhury

*“You can drive your performance and so you spend on us.”*

YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram get a large share of advertising dollars from brands across categories by selling the idea of performance marketing. These platforms allow advertisers to pay only after the targeted action is performed — the action could be a click, lead, sale or whatever else the CMO wants. Television, too, has been toying with the idea of t-commerce. Back in 2014, during the Super Bowl, fashion retailer H&M ran an ad campaign featuring English football legend David Beckham. A few selected Samsung Smart TV owners got the option to buy whatever he was wearing by just pressing buttons on their remote.

Recently, Flipkart, too, attempted to use TV to drive commerce. “The task for us was to get new to e-commerce shoppers to Flipkart during the Big Billion Day sale,” says Anand Chakravarthy, MD - India, Essence, a GroupM agency. “We had the insights that viewers who watch soap operas aspire to look like the protagonists in the show. Often, they take photographs of lead characters and go to the tailors to get something similar stitched. We tried to marry this insight with Big Billion Days and get new shoppers on Flipkart.”

The Flipkart Big Billion Days sale was active from September 29 to October 4, 2019. On September 30, the QR code appeared on Zee TV during a couple of its primetime

**The Flipkart Big Billion Days sale was active from September 29 to October 4, 2019. On September 30, the QR code appeared on ZeeTV during primetime shows like ‘Tujhse Hai Raabta’ and ‘Kundali Bhagya’.**



shows like ‘Tujhse Hai Raabta’ (8:30 p.m.) and ‘Kundali Bhagya’ (9:30 p.m.). Once the QR codes were scanned, the user was led to a curated Flipkart landing page with a list of products, ranging from apparel to electronic appliances to personal hygiene.

The target audience of this initiative was 22 to 40-year-old females residing in Tier II and III towns. Do they know how to scan codes with their cameras? Are they savvy of that technology? The Aston band (the horizontal strip that appears



at the bottom of the TV screen during a program) asked viewers to scan the QR codes using their mobile phones. However, it did not explain how to do so. “That part is taken care of by the payment apps, such as Google Pay, PhonePe and others,” says Chakravarthy. He believes that his target audience is already scanning QR codes to make payments. “It is an easy technology and there are cameras on most smartphones, even the ones ranging as low as ₹8,000 come with an in-built QR code scanner. So, the user just needs to scan it and that is it.”

As per the data shared by Essence,



the one-day-campaign reached out to 31.9 million people. The agency or the brand did not share any data on conversions. “We got a good response. It was for a very short period of time and largely focused on the Big Billion Days. Our next step is to evaluate results in granular depth

and look at how we can scale this up for a longer term association,” shares Chakravarthy.

Ashish Sehgal, chief growth officer, Zee Entertainment Enterprises, believes the innovation of placing QR codes during programmes offers TV the opportunity to take viewers online and perform an action. “Usually, only the digital medium offers such options. But digital does not have the mass appeal that TV has.” Sehgal believes this can extend to other categories of advertising and spread across channels. “The only thing is, we need to make the television audience habituated to

this,” opines Sehgal.

He expects, tier II and tier III towns to be more responsive to an initiative like this. However, he feels that if the initiative is done on an English movie channel for a brand, such as BMW or a real estate brand, even the metro audience would respond. “We are looking at this as a revenue option. This won’t be pure-play advertising, but if we manage to convert leads at a large scale we will look at other options. For example, we can tie up with e-commerce platforms and work on a cost per sale

model.”

An Aston band ad during prime time on Zee TV costs around ₹60,000 per 10 seconds. The Flipkart QR codes ran multiple times during both the shows. Sources say this was done at a “nominal cost” as a test case for the broadcaster as well as the brand, to have a deeper understanding. “The advertiser is happy with the association and there is no other data to share or draw a comparison,” says Sehgal.

“This activity was an innovative way to showcase the plethora of shopping options on our platform,” says Vikas Gupta, VP and head of marketing, Flipkart. “We showcased top products across categories such as mobile phone, fashion, electronics, home and kitchen, while audiences watched their favourite TV shows. This was a great example of merging online with offline, and communications with commerce.”

Both Chakravarthy and Sehgal believe this innovation can expand across categories, such as makeup, jewellery, automobile, real estate. ■

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MILTON

# A Tale of Two Water Bottles

Ogilvy's new TVC features an unlikely ice-breaker. By Aishwarya Ramesh

A water bottle seems like an unlikely hero in a love story — yet, it is the central character in the latest ad for Milton Thermosteel water bottles. The minute-long ad resembles content in its telling of a love story between a young man and woman on a metro train. A press release from the company claims that the TVC showcases the ability of today's youth to make connections through engaging unspoken moments and captures how a millennial conversation takes place today.

The ad has been conceptualised by Ogilvy and the campaign will run on national TV channels. In addition, the TVC will also be promoted on Milton's YouTube, Facebook and Instagram pages.

Ajay Vaghani, MD, Hamilton Housewares, says, "In a way, our choices of colours reflect an aspect of our lives; almost like an extension of our personality and the youth today visibly seems to resonate with this. They love integrating colours into

director, Ogilvy, mentions that bottles and flasks are no longer just a utilitarian product. "It's become an accessory for the youth, a means to express themselves. Bottles such as these have become synonymous with tattoos or jewellery. They are what sets one apart from the crowd. And when Milton introduced a range of colourful flasks, it was the perfect opportunity for us to talk to the youth not through words, but through colours."

Vinil Mathew, director, Breathless Films, admits, "In today's age of fast love, to tell a simple classic love story with unspoken moments and furtive glances, centred on the range of Milton Flasks was a challenge. The product had to be integrated seamlessly into the narrative without disrupting the charm and the emotions."

## EXPERTS SPEAK

Rajesh Sharma, planning head, Mumbai at McCann Worldgroup, believes the film could not have been

## The minute-long ad film resembles content in its telling of a love story between a young man and woman on a metro train.

their lives as a means of echoing the mood or a statement that they choose to make in that moment. It was exciting for Milton to build on this observation. We have a recognised legacy with Thermosteel bottles and with a wide range of colours in this category, we decided to cater to a vibrant young audience."

Speaking about the new TVC, Anurag Agnihotri, executive creative

written without the product attribute — colour. "But there is nothing in the film to know what role a flask can play in a youngster's life. Talking to this new generation of consumers can be tough — with cold drink refrigerators and hot beverage dispensers available after every 10 stores. But it is also a disruptive way to look at a new audience. It could work out into a good opportunity



for the category. But youngsters also need to know what it does for them, materially." The target group seems to be quite obvious: late university/first jobbers.

Sharma warns, "We ought to let go of our legacy understanding of who these younger audiences are. Today, they have disposable money and have social and familial sanction to exercise the liberty of personal choice. In fact, the entire youth lifestyle category hinges on this reality of this demographic."

He agrees that the line between ads and content are blurring, but contests that the two still have different roles to play. "I don't see them becoming the same in the future. Or at least until the entertainment brief and the marketing brief are not the same. Advertising copywriters have years of training in doing justice to the very object of the content — pitching the brand to the consumer. Content makes it easier to connect with the audience. Advertising convinces the audience to make the purchase. Both have a role to play, and will shape the future of marketing."

Over a call, Priya Gurnani, senior

creative director, Lowe Bangalore, says the ad was very similar to an older ad created for Gaana by M&C Saatchi, New Delhi. The ad carried a similar storyline — a young man and woman who fall in love and their love story begins after meeting on a metro train.

She points out that it was rather stereotypical for Milton Thermosteel's ad to begin with the girl carrying a pink water bottle. (Gurnani detests the shade.) "It's a nicely done ad, it builds up anticipation and viewers will stay curious and watch it till the end. In the digital medium, that's the advantage you have. You get the time to build it up and tell your story well. What they wanted to communicate is that the water bottles are available in different colours and yes, it does integrate seamlessly with the storyline." She, too, agrees that the lines between ads and content are blurring, but she believes the lines have to blur because that is how agencies and marketers will survive. "The mediums may be different, but at the end of the day, an ad's an ad." ■

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MY FM

# Local to the Hilt

A chat with MY FM's COO Rahul Namjoshi.  
By Abid Hussain Barlaskar

It was only recently that a senior executive from DB Corp mentioned that the media conglomerate is a non-metro house by design and all its verticals are aimed towards small town India. This also ties back to the most popular radio jockey Karthik at MY FM, DB Corp's radio arm. "Karthik is also the most followed RJ on Facebook, with over four million followers and he hails from Jaipur, a tier II city," says Rahul Namjoshi, COO, MY FM.

As per DB Corp's internal analysis, MY FM reaches over two crore listeners across 30 non-metro cities and seven states, and is targeted at 18 to 45 year olds. The radio station's identity is built on tailored regional content, keeping the family in mind, hyperlocal presence and the popularity of hosts.

"Till date it is perceived that FM is a source of music, mostly Bollywood songs, but it is not so. The morning starts with bhakti music followed by spiritual lessons. This is followed by expert analysis and commentaries on the popular news updates, both national and local, assuming that the news has already reached the people by then via social or other digital platforms. We also initiated a new property 'Fun Me hai Vishwas' with Dr Kumar Vishwas, given

**As per DB Corp's internal analysis, MY FM reaches over two crore listeners across 30 non-metro cities and seven states.**

his popularity in the Hindi belt," Namjoshi says.

Speaking about the advertising side, Namjoshi mentions that over the years, the industry has overcome the challenge of educating and pushing advertisers about the utility of radio. "Today, there are innovations around content integration, coupled with digital presence of RJs and the brand. Radio is the only live medium in the local market."

So, how important is it for a radio station to latch on to digital mediums? "In our markets, I would say radio is doing good as radio itself. Despite the availability of mobile data, the live interaction of radio is



still preferred in smaller cities."

Namjoshi goes on to elaborate that in key markets of MY FM, radio isn't a car audio medium. "There is not much drive time in tier II & III cities given the short distances. The average travel time is 10-15 minutes. It is a fixed listenership and switch on/off medium. Listeners don't change channels."

MY FM also has college jockeys, who are RJs from popular colleges. This, in addition to the hyperlocal nature, helps build brand salience. However, local reach demands localised content and also affects the relevance of umbrella content. "In small town India, preferences change every 40-50 kilometres. That's why we don't have RJs doing national shows," Namjoshi says.

Sharing an example of two Rajasthan cities — Kota and Jaipur, he elaborates, "Several years ago, during one of our 'music dipstick' programmes, we found out that the music preference of small town Kota was more updated than that of Jaipur. Listeners in Kota preferred western music. We then realised that since Kota is dominated by students who are mostly prepping for their entrance coaching, we started playing upbeat Bollywood music along with Western music."

He further mentions that in Gujarat, the dialects and culture of Ahmedabad is different from



Rajkot, which impacts the taste for content. "Humour properties, such as sparklers, which would do well in Ahmedabad, may not work in Rajkot. Even the top-of-the-hour jingle for the two cities is different. The Rajkot jingle is also sung by a local singer." Namjoshi says that MY FM sticks to local talent, familiar with the local dialect. "A guy from Ahmedabad hosting a show in Rajkot will never work."

On the major shift in challenges over the years, he shares, "Five years back, the challenge was to fill up the inventory at the right rate. Today, advertisers are getting into radio and our inventories are choc-a-block. Now, the challenge is to get the right kind of advertiser at the right rate. We have a limited inventory and we can't increase the advertising duration. Thus, the challenge is to increase the ad rates, which will, in turn, help to generate revenue, grow and provide the right benefits to the advertisers."

afaqs! Reporter asked Namjoshi if he has a FOMO moment, when the world is going gaga over topics, such as programmatic advertising, targeted video, etc. "The fear of missing out in the digital space luckily doesn't exist in our market yet. But it will pick up and we are building our digital presence and gearing up accordingly. We are doing decent digital business although the share is negligible at the moment. I also don't see much happening in the next year or two."

Though MY FM isn't pushing its digital presence aggressively, it plans to launch an app very soon.

Many digital audio platforms, such as Ganna, Jio Saavn, Spotify, etc., are trying to build their user base, which many claim to be in the millions in India. Says Namjoshi, "A listener does not consciously maintain a list of favourite songs, and will usually have to pause and think hard after recalling the fourth favourite. OTT platforms track user habits and provide a familiar playlist. OTT listening is a kind of mechanised listening. FM music is unpredictable and the element of surprise and unpredictability is actually an USP. The OTT science is different to ours. Apart from that,

listeners can also interact with RJs. Many a times, celebrities and music artists are present at the radio station interacting with listeners. All of this makes radio music different and more exciting." ■

abid.barlaskar@afaqs.com



**PRABHAKAR MUNDKUR**

# How a Prospect Poached my Idea



**W**e were feverishly getting ready for a pitch. This client was a reputed one, and we wanted it very badly as a digital agency. After struggling through the lower rungs of marketing for over six weeks and two tortuous rounds of social media creative presentations, we were being prepared for the meeting with the senior management of a large company.

The big day arrives. My team and I arrive a good 30 minutes before the meeting at the prospect's reception. (I am still old fashioned when it comes to punctuality.) We are summoned to the top floor of a building in Mumbai's new business district.

We finally make our way to the top floor. This is the big day. Six weeks of hard work finally come to an end. We either win it or lose it. Suddenly we are told by the lower echelons of marketing management that there has been a major policy change that has been announced by the government and our senior prospects are occupied with the chairman of the company but will be with us shortly. I sit and ponder on whether this is a typical Indian failing. Does it have to do with companies? Or does it have to do with an Indian management habit? Not the first time that I have been kept waiting a career spanning 39 years. Or is this a really genuine case?

Having spent the last 10 years of my career in an Indian promoter-

run company, I know that when the boss beckons, you leave everything aside and run! Because even senior executives in Indian promoter-run companies are servants. They are just very well paid servants, that's the only difference. And you can't dare to tell them that you have a previously scheduled meeting when you are being summoned.

The wait then starts. The first 30 minutes is small talk with brand managers. The next 30 minutes gets a bit tedious. The next 30 minutes I find people are twitching around the table. There is a sense of nervousness. Should we leave or

**That is one story of Indian business. No ethics. No sense of propriety. No guilt. No courtesy.**

should we stay? I know my uncle, the late Bal Mundkur, former founder and chairman of FCB Ulka, would have left the meeting in the first few minutes in a huff. He would not have been proud of me on this day. Just as I feel that I might be letting down the whole industry, the prospect arrives.

**RELIEF, FRUSTRATION**

The meeting starts with a brief apology. No introductions. So we don't really know who we are speaking too. Or they are so important, that it is assumed that we know them. But they are not expected to know us. Anyway, it's

getting late, we are hungry since it's past lunch, so we carry on and we think we did a good job.

Four days later, we are told by the brand manager that they would take at least a month to decide on the pitch. We know what that typically means. We've been through this before. It's a 'no'.

Another three days later, we find that our social media idea (both text and graphic) are showing up on my creative director's Facebook timeline. Oh no! Our creative idea has been plagiarised and executed. What can we do?

I write to the marketing director saying that our idea has been plagiarised. He responds to me two days later saying that they had used the same mnemonic (graphic and copy) in their social media posts a few months ago. I say fine, but how come the brand manager allowed us to present to you an idea that had already been executed by you a few months ago? Our tech teams then go overdrive and find that no such posts as claimed by the prospect were ever made.

A few days later, we find that they are trying to poach our social media expert who was one of the presenters at the pitch. She's gone through two

rounds of interviews, the second one with the client's HR department. We try desperately to keep her back and I think we have succeeded.

I finally check with my corporate lawyer friend, how we should have handled it better. She asks, "You must have an NDA, to prevent prospects from poaching your ideas and people?" I feel a little silly. Seems like a pretty simple solution. I think ad agencies and digital agencies are sometimes too trusting. They are still quite innocent. It's us who are always signing up NDAs with the clients to meet the client's requirements on confidentiality. Never the other way around. Lesson learned.

That is one story of Indian business. No ethics. No sense of propriety. No guilt. No courtesy. Just pure business. Are you surprised that some of the biggest firms in the country are breaking up because of corporate governance issues? Are you wondering why Indian managers are saying that performance and success are more important than ethics? Is it a wonder why we are seeing scams such as Nirav Modi?

Maybe it's going to take a long time to change the basic moral fabric of India Inc. ■

*The author is an independent brand strategy advisor. The article has been reproduced with permission from his blog on LinkedIn dated February 28, 2018.*

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**POND'S**  
The festive season ad for BB+ fairness cream urges people to overcome insecurity and express themselves freely.  
**Creative agency:** Ogilvy



**MILTON**  
The ad showcases the ability of today's youth to make connections through engaging unspoken moments and captures how a millennial conversation takes place today.  
**Creative agency:** Ogilvy



**MELORRA**  
Its latest communication let's #UnTradition revolves around the insight that millennial women are bold, independent and experimental.  
**Creative agency:** Dentsu India



**FACEBOOK**  
The short video by Facebook Thumbstoppers showcases the bond between siblings. It gives out the message that 'Equality starts from home'.



**FULLERTON**  
The customer-centric campaign #RishtaSammaanKa is based on real-life experiences of its customers.



**NBA INDIA**  
The #NBAINMyBackyard campaign showcases popular players from Sacramento Kings and Indiana Pacers playing in some iconic Mumbai backyards.  
**Creative agency:** DDB Mudra



**BIKAJI**  
The film was shot in a flight. The air hostess serves actor Amitabh Bachchan pretzels. Bachchan isn't impressed and opts for his own packet of Bikaaji bhuja.  
**Creative agency:** 3 Brothers & Fils



**INDIAN TERRAIN**  
The campaign 'The Spirit of Man' is targeted towards the youth and millennials, and encourages young audience to pursue their dreams.  
**Creative agency:** Brave New World



**SBI LIFE**  
SBI Life's 'Real Life Real Stories' presents the awe-inspiring journey of Mittal Patel as she strives to achieve official identity for the nomadic tribes of Gujarat.  
**Creative agency:** WATConsult



**ICICI LOMBARD**  
On the occasion of World Heart Day, ICICI Lombard reminds consumers to have a hearty heart by following a healthy lifestyle and fulfil the promise made to loved ones.  
**Creative agency:** Ogilvy



**BREAKTHROUGH INDIA**  
The film #TrustKarkeDekho brings forth the fact that if girls are given the freedom to dream and aspire, they have the same ability as boys to build their future.  
**Creative agency:** Ogilvy



**FEVIKWIK**  
The idea for 'Phenko Nahi, Jodo' stemmed from marrying the logic of 'smartness' and 'value of repair' insights with the magic of stellar storytelling and relatable humour.  
**Creative agency:** Ogilvy



**POLICYBAZAAR**  
The film #LiveOnYourTerms encourages mothers to live on their own terms despite having all the responsibilities.  
**Creative agency:** Enormous Brands



**BAULI**  
Through an entertaining and humorous narrative, the film explores the protagonist's obsession to a point where she starts seeing Spyroll everywhere.  
**Creative agency:** L&K Saatchi & Saatchi



**GODREJ SECURITY SOLUTIONS**  
The campaign, starring actor Ayushmann Khurrana, aims to drive awareness about adopting security solutions.  
**Creative agency:** Wunderman Thompson



**OLX**  
The campaign, featuring millennials as protagonists, highlights OLX's versatility across popular consumer categories, especially furniture, electronics, etc.  
**Creative agency:** Enormous Brands

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# JOB SWITCH.in



**Post:** Senior Copywriter  
**Company:** Centum Advertising & Marketing Pvt Ltd  
**Profile:** Past experience of having worked for government clients and brands at a reputed advertising agency. Excellent command and writing skills in English and Hindi. A copywriter who can think visually.  
**Experience:** 5 to 6 years  
**Location:** New Delhi  
**Email:** hr@centumad.com

**Post:** Graphic Designer  
**Company:** STIR  
**Profile:** Possess creative flair and an eye for detail. While here, you will have the chance to work on projects for leading global brands. The roster of opportunities extends across domains, ranging from advertising and digital to films and events.  
**Experience:** 0 to 2 years  
**Location:** Bangalore  
**Email:** prakash@stironline.com

**Post:** Art Director, Graphic Designer and DTP Artist  
**Company:** Kautilya Multicreation Pvt Ltd.  
**Profile:** Minimum 5-6 years of experience in an ad agency or a relevant field. Qualification preferred. Looking for talented individuals who share our passion for design; who abhor mediocrity; who obsess over details, but think big; and who love this madness as much as we do.  
**Experience:** 5 to 10 years  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Email:** kautilyampl.info@gmail.com

**Post:** Group Head - Copy  
**Company:** Quotient Communications Pvt Ltd  
**Profile:** Simply put, thinking up great ideas and bringing them to life with the power of language. To give you a slightly more specific idea, there will be campaigns to conceptualise, headlines to be written, body copy to be crafted and presentations to be created. All with that unique touch that

makes the good, great.  
**Experience:** 4 to 8 years  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Email:** team@quotientcomm.com

**Post:** Key Account Manager  
**Company:** Vritti Solutions Ltd  
**Profile:** Responsible for sales and marketing, media planning and management, key account management/client servicing, business development, team management, MIS/reports/operations.  
**Experience:** 3 to 5 years  
**Location:** Chandigarh  
**Email:** seema.shedge@vritti.co.in

**Post:** Senior Business Development Manager  
**Company:** CupShup  
**Profile:** Do you like the thrill of the chase? To get yourself heard and let your ideas do the talking? We look forward to developing something beyond business, we believe in long-term relationships, do you too? Let's build together!  
**Experience:** 4 to 8 years  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Email:** HR@cupshup.co.in

**Post:** Digital Marketing Executive/ Social Media Manager  
**Company:** Thought Bubbles  
**Profile:** Manage the strategy and setup of all paid campaigns. Thorough knowledge of digital campaigns with planning experience on Google AdWords, SEO, social media presentations, websites, e-commerce. Manage social media community and facilitate ideas.  
**Experience:** 1 to 5 years  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Email:** manoj.motiani@thoughtbubbles.in

**Post:** Account Manager (Client Servicing)  
**Company:** MX Advertising Pvt Ltd  
**Profile:** Responsible for managing brand responsibilities and client expectations on all aspects of 360 degree marketing. Coordinating

with the agency's creative, media and technical teams in offline/digital/experiential. Ensure timely project delivery. Strong skills and proficiency in using Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint. Strong project management, good interpersonal and exceptional time management skills.  
**Experience:** 4 to 5 years  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Email:** hr@mxadvertising.com

**Post:** Client Servicing Executive  
**Company:** Thoughttrains Designs Pvt Ltd  
**Profile:** Excellence communications and interpersonal skills, good command and fluency in English, understanding the market trends, client's business and their brand. Analysing the client's briefs and delivering creative as per the timelines. Real estate knowledge and experience in an ad agency will be an added advantage.  
**Experience:** 4 to 6 years  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Email:** hr@thoughttrains.com

**Post:** Visualiser  
**Company:** Greysell Marketing Promotions Pvt Ltd  
**Profile:** Understand creative briefs and conceptualise design and campaign ideas. Work closely with the client and handling team to achieve brand goals on time. Manage tasks and projects responsibly to ensure on-time deliveries. Knowledge about typography design and layouts, colour theory and rules. Good knowledge in Photoshop, Illustrator.  
**Experience:** 2 to 3 years  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Email:** hr@greysell.in

**Post:** Junior Graphic Designer  
**Company:** India News Communications Ltd  
**Profile:** Self-starter who can work independently and with different teams. Excellent visual aesthetics. An integral part, from conceptualisation to client amends.  
**Experience:** 1 to 2 years

**Location:** Noida  
**Email:** info@inclgroup.com

**Post:** Business Development Head  
**Company:** The Think Tank Entertainment  
**Profile:** Continually developing your employer's brand and building increasing awareness in the marketplace. Generating and seeking out potential new opportunities.  
**Experience:** 4 to 6 years  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Email:** hr@tnte.agency

**Post:** Art Director  
**Company:** Yellow Bus Integrated Services  
**Profile:** Ability to conceptualise, idealise national campaigns: TV, print, outdoor, radio and others. Manage a team of visualisers and graphic designers. A strong sense of design and layouts. A strong sense of responsibility and brand ownership.  
**Experience:** 3 to 6 years  
**Location:** Mumbai  
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## &gt;&gt; MOVEMENTS/APPOINTMENTS &lt;&lt;

A round up of some major people movements in the last fortnight

## MARKETING

**CherryPeachPlum**

After a series of marketing stints and a stint as a brand consultant, Vani Gupta Dandia has launched CherryPeachPlum Growth Partners, a marketing-driven management consultancy tuned to deliver business growth solutions. Gupta is a former marketing director for Indian foods at PepsiCo India. Most recently, she has been credited with the Cars24 brand proposition relaunch and the following campaign. Apart from her role at PepsiCo, she has also had stints with Leo Burnett, Henkel, RB and Unilever. Her last job was with Benddit.

CherryPeachPlum's services cover the end-to-end gamut of execution through a network of 12 partners, led by Gupta. "They're young, small (teams of 15-30), hungry for good work and can deliver to the demands of the entrepreneurial world. These are agencies that I have worked with in the past and personally know the team members. I also work with freelancers, depending on the nature of work needed."

The network covers services such as creative, design, digital marketing, packaging, PR, content marketing, BTL activations, e-commerce specialisation, performance marketing and website development, among others.

On being asked how she differentiates her venture from the lot of other consultancies, Gupta responds, "While I call myself a consultant, I do so for lack of any other commonly understood descriptor. I, in fact, loathe the word, 'consultant'. I take pride in working directly with the client, in their office, not just to craft the solution, but also execute. Along with a part variable fee, I also work with start-ups as an 'external co-founder' — meaning I take business targets, while my remuneration is a cash and equity combination."

So, how has the landscape changed in terms of brands outsourcing strategy work since her time as a brand marketer? "When I worked as a brand

manager, the role of a chief marketing officer was far easier. Today, the world is very different and requires new skills and competencies."

Gupta says that consulting is a personalised business and there are several reasons for outsourcing work. "Each business has a unique set of challenges and one cannot apply a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Even when founders are merely looking for agencies, few understand what they really need or how they should get work done. Often, start-ups lack the marketing world view that comes from years of training at the likes of Unilever or PepsiCo, but they value that competence. Or it could be that even while they have a seasoned marketing resource in-house, they're simply looking for a fresh perspective. Or it could be that they're looking to move with greater speed."

**Grasim Industries**

Grasim Industries has appointed Srishti Sawhney as president and global brand head for Pulp & Fibre Business. In her new role, her mandate will be to strengthen and enhance the communication and branding of the ingredient brand Liva. Sawhney has previously handled and was a key player in the marketing and communication strategies of top companies and brands like Spark44, Jaguar Land Rover India, Audi India, JWT, Leo Burnett and McCann. She was instrumental in launching brands like Bacardi, Colgate Total, Sprite, Georgia and Diet Coke in India.

**Mastercard**

Mastercard recently elevated Vikas Varma to the post of COO. He has been associated with Mastercard since 2005 and has held various leadership roles, including overseeing business, market and merchant development, among others. Varma will lead initiatives such as new partnerships and development of digital payments solutions in the Indian market.

## MEDIA

**Discovery Communications**

Discovery Communications recently appointed Hemant Arora as head of new revenue streams. Arora moves from Times Network, where he was business head of Times Influence for around seven years. This is his second stint with the company after having spent a year as assistant manager in 2000. With an experience of more than 20 years, Arora has worked with Dainik Bhaskar, NDTV Media and The Times of India in the past.

**VICE Media Group**

VICE Media Group has appointed senior media executive Rohit Tugnait as commercial director for India territory. Tugnait will lead the commercial teams based in Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi, and will be responsible for growing all lines of business within VICE's India region, including VICE Digital, Studios, Content Partnerships and VIRTUE, the creative agency borne out of VICE. Tugnait will be based out of VICE's Mumbai office, where he joins the leadership team led by Samira Kanwar, head of content for VICE's APAC region.

**Cartoon Network**

Abhishek Dutta has been named as senior director and network head - kids, overseeing Cartoon Network

and POGO in South Asia. Based in Mumbai, his responsibilities include programming, channel operations, acquisitions and promotions, as well as the content direction for the two brands. His career includes stints with ALTBalaji, Discovery Networks India and, most recently, he was senior kids programming director at Viacom18, a company he joined in 2016.

**HT Media**

HT Media has appointed Samudra Bhattacharya as chief executive officer, Print. He will report to HT Media managing director and CEO Praveen Someshwar. Bhattacharya will be responsible for the print business with coordination across all functions. He will lead transformation across the print business and will work on product/geography innovation, while helping build new age capability.

Bhattacharya started his career with P&G in India. He later joined Asian Paints in the Middle East, where he served in sales and marketing as well as general management roles for almost seven years. He then joined PepsiCo India in 2006 and has worked across several assignments. In his last assignment, he was based in Manila, Philippines, where he was the general manager for the PepsiCo JV in that country.

## ADVERTISING

**Culture Machine**

Sameer Pitalwalla, co-founder and chief executive officer of digital media company Culture Machine, will be moving on from his current role by December-end. Pitalwalla will continue with Rainshine Entertainment, the holding company of Culture Machine, as an advisor and will oversee some of its existing long-format shows. The business post Pitalwalla's transition will be led by Anuraag Srivastava, chief operating officer of Rainshine Entertainment.

Pitalwalla had moved on from at Disney UTV in June 2013 to start his own venture. Prior to Disney UTV, he was head, digital, Times Audience Network (TAN), the digital video arm of the Times Group. He was responsible for creating the online video and on-demand video platforms for mobile and web as a part of the TAN initiative.

## DIGITAL

**TikTok**

TikTok has appointed Nikhil Gandhi as the head of TikTok India. Gandhi will lead the development of TikTok's products and operations in India to achieve its global mission - inspire creativity and bring joy. He will focus on inspiring creativity and bringing joy to TikTok's users, while also working to have a broader positive impact in the country. Gandhi will prioritise key initiatives, such as #EduTok, that benefit the community. In a career spanning over 20 years, Gandhi has held leadership positions at leading media and entertainment companies. Most recently, he was spearheading the business growth at Times Global Broadcasting as president and chief operating officer. Prior to Times Network, Nikhil was at The Walt Disney Company for nine years.

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