

afaqs! Reporter

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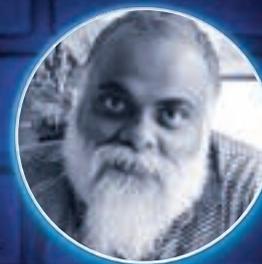
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This fortnight...



As OTT content becomes a staple for more and more Indians, the hitherto pressing question regarding our readiness to pay for online entertainment is answering itself... only to be replaced by another equally pressing one: will we pay for online news, something that's been free all this while? Going by the number of news publishers that are introducing paywalls, that partially or wholly veil their content, the optimism is evident.

But the matter is more textured than just that. Through conversations with several publishers and industry analysts, we tried to understand the implications of the paywall for everyone involved. How do expectations change once money enters the equation between the reader and the provider of news? How does it impact the way consumers interact with the content – say, do they spend more time on each piece? What are the different pricing models and variations publishers can look at?

Another important factor we discuss in the story is the discoverability of paid versus free news content on Google and Facebook; I recall Wittyfeed's Vinay Singhal unabashedly making a case for why publishers ought to be "scared" of the changing algorithms of both platforms, at Digipub World couple of years back. How does paid news content fare in this scary world? We went in with a theory or two of our own and came away with some counter-intuitive information.

An interesting aside, that's tangentially related to the subject at hand: The process of writing this note reminded me of something Coca-Cola's Venkatesh Kini said at a conference few years ago: 'Twitter is the most widely read newspaper today...' I foresee the efficacy of social platforms as sources of news falling in the days ahead.

As the world of subscription led news gets populated and publishers experiment with walls, I agree with experts who predict a brighter future for publishers of specialised, and business, news as opposed to general news.

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ERRATA

The photograph in the interview with Gaurav Banerjee is of filmmaker Aijaz Khan, and not as attributed. (Issue dated December 1-15, 2019).

The error is regretted.
Editor

AMAZON

“We Wanted to Tell Stories of Transformation”

Satish Upadhyay is behind the #IamAmazon campaign, in which delivery boxes bear pictures of sellers, **that when scanned on one’s mobile lead to a detailed video about the story behind their business.** By Ashwini Gangal

Putting sellers’ faces on Amazon’s cardboard delivery boxes instantly humanises them and makes the entire e-comm process appear less ‘transactional’, in a sense. Satish Upadhyay, head – marketing, Amazon India Marketplace, says, “Yes, the insight did come from a similar space – we wanted to humanise the brand. We’ve been observing the way people dig into and open their packages as soon as they receive them. It’s only subliminally that they think about where it came from... so we wanted to highlight the faces behind the boxes, because we owe a lot to our seller partners...”

Upadhyay writes in his blog on Amazon: ‘... we had just over a month to make Storyboxes a reality. Multiple interviews and phone calls later, we had hundreds of stories that could make it to the Storyboxes, all so immensely inspiring that each of these could be a book in itself. But sometimes six is better than hundred...’

How then did the team decide which stories deserved to be told? About the shortlisting process, Upadhyay, who has spent over four-and-a-half years at the company, says, “The major criteria was that the story should be inspiring – it should be a story of transformation, about preserving some kind of art form, about tier III sellers... we also wanted to have some diversity in the stories...”

As referenced in his blog, presently, six stories have been told through this initiative; the storied sellers include Vijaya Rajan (built a food brand called Sirimiri by selling healthy snacks), Ashwin Sokke (runs a consumer beauty brand called Wow Skin Science), Rani Ravindran (first Amazon seller from Periyakulam, Tamil Nadu, who sells wooden toys and cotton pillows), Abdul Gafoor (keeping his family’s 300-year-old heritage of Rogan art alive), Biswajit Swain (reviving the

legacy of Odisha’s handicraft through his brand Haastika) and Ibansara Shullai (sells the produce of farmers from Meghalaya under the Zizira brand umbrella).

While the current lot of stories is based on Amazon’s sellers, in the days ahead, the team plans to highlight other people who work in the shadows or are anonymous by design, like deliverymen and employees from AWS (Amazon Web Services), for instance. This brings to mind Swiggy’s ad that implores us to call the deliverymen by their names (as opposed to “Swiggy”); the Uber app gives commuters the option to get to know their drivers better by reading about their background.

The hardest part of this project, we learn, was the actual process of printing the sellers’ faces on the boxes. Instead of printing them as plain photographs, the team – and Upadhyay credits his agency partner Orchard for this – turned it into an “art form” by printing pixels that conjured up the seller’s faces.

“We printed their faces in the form of QR-scannable codes. We’re showing you the real face behind the surreal face, which is what all of us in the digital world interact with. We wanted to say ‘this is the face behind this effort’... we didn’t want to say ‘this is the QR code behind it’... We spent innumerable nights trying to get the faces right and as close to reality as possible,” says the Bengaluru-based marketer.

Other challenges include working with different vendors in different parts of the country and operational obstacles therein, given the large number of boxes, of varying sizes, involved.

The pixelated face is also one way of protecting the seller, one may reason. Sure, the idea is to tell people the person’s story, which involves sharing their identity, of course, but if the box lands up in a waste paper bin, it’s better if it bears a sketch-like image of someone and not a clear photograph. This, Upadhyay clarifies, was incidental. “That was not something we had in mind. Our intention was to just bring their story out,” he says, adding, “Actually, we were pleasantly surprised to see that many customers have preserved these boxes, kept them in their drawing rooms, posted about them on social media...”

Upadhyay and team are actively tracking engagement around this initiative, be it monitoring the number of times a face is scanned – and the story behind it, watched – or looking for social media chatter around the campaign. “In fact, we’re also asking people for more such stories that we can feature. All this engagement will also be the source of the next few rounds of stories...”

One can’t help but wonder about the potential of the delivery box to double up as a media platform. Brands spend on media to buy a slice of customer attention. While unboxing, with her eyes trained on the package, a customer is captive audience for absolutely any message. Does Upadhyay plan to use the box as a medium for commercial messages, sales hooks, discount coupons and the like? He laughs, “If we had to do it, we would have done it. I don’t have an answer to that, but we’re not thinking of it as a monetisation opportunity. That’s why we’ve chosen to put our seller stories on the box...” ■

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“Actually, we were pleasantly surprised to see that many customers have preserved these boxes, kept them in their drawing rooms, posted about them on social media...”
SATISH UPADHYAY

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DABUR

Here's to Long, Strong, Shiny Hair

afaqs! Reporter spoke to Rajat Nanda, marketing head – hair care, Dabur India. By Ananya Pathak

Parents view the entertainment screen – earlier TV sets and now smartphones, laptops and tabs – as an escape to peace (for a short while, of course) from their little ones. Kids glued to these screens are an audience for marketers who leverage their pester power. Dabur India's recent film for Dabur Amla Kids Nourishing Hair Oil banks on this power that children hold in household consumer choices.

'Princess Alia' is a 90-second animated film targeting mothers of young kids (five to 13 years). "Dabur Amla Kids Hair Care range is specially made for young girls keeping their lifestyle and specific hair care needs in mind. There is an unmet need today for a range of specialised hair care products for kids," says Rajat Nanda, marketing head – hair care, Dabur India.

While the animation, catchy music and jingle may make it seem like an ad targeting kids, Nanda clarifies that the idea is to educate the mothers about the benefits of this product in terms of ingredients, safety and the extra nourishment it offers. He says the brand's main focus is to reach out to maximum number of mothers and generate



Nourishing Shampoo comes in a 200ml pack for ₹145. The products are also available in a Castle Combo pack of ₹265.

EXPERTS SPEAK

afaqs! Reporter asked industry experts about the best platforms to

Dabur India's recent film for Dabur Amla Kids Nourishing Hair Oil banks on the power that children hold in household consumer choices. 'Princess Alia' is a 90-second animated film targeting mothers of young kids (five to 13 years).

advertise to kids, and the care brands should take when advertising to them. Suresh Eriyat, director, Studio Eeksaorus, thinks it depends on the age group of the targeted children. The children's age group is quite complex to target as they grow out of things very quickly, unlike adults. "When we work with the channels (internationally), they segregate the children's programmes into slots of 2-5 years, 6-8 years, 9-12 years and the last category of 13 years

and above (when they start loving live action programmes and become boring as adults). Sometimes, they subdivide it even further. In India, kids mostly access films through digital/TV/cinema mediums when assisted by a parent – mostly mothers, till they are five years old. So, the age group that can choose to watch their preferred programmes on their own, on phone/iPad/TV would be limited to 6-12 years."



"Dabur Amla Kids Hair Care range is specially made for young girls keeping their lifestyle and specific hair care needs in mind."
RAJAT NANDA

He finds it refreshing to see animation being used as a medium for advertising a kid's hair oil and says the storytelling is simple and endearing, the animation is super high quality for an Indian production. He thinks it could work brilliantly for a product for adults as well. "We often encounter doubt from the corporate clients whether animation would work, as it takes time to create. But this is a good example of a film becoming a time immemorial product. Animation has that

unique property which rarely gets tapped. Tom and Jerry would be 90 soon. Mickey is 91 years old!!! Do we love any live action movie character that is 91 years old like that?!"

What should a brand be careful about when targeting children? He says Disney is a good producer to follow for this. "They always prefer to produce only 'nice' films which children can watch, and parents can let them watch without worrying about any unwanted content exposure to their kids. Their content goes through stringent filters about the influences that they're projecting through their products. They avoid all sorts of negative influences to reach the children, be it distorted socioeconomic views, violence/confrontational subtexts, sexual contexts, abusive language usage, to name a few."

Says brand consultant Sita Lakshmi Narayan Swamy, "In my view, kids are too young to be able to take rational decisions on product/brand choice. Hardly any kid I know would instinctively choose cabbage over chocolate or chaas over a cola. They are young and emotional, so, it's very easy to win them over with communication, thereby influencing their choices. So, the onus falls upon the corporates and industry to be responsible in what, how and where we communicate to children. It behoves us to ask ourselves the question 'Am I doing this to increase just sales or will this add to the well-being of the children?'" ■

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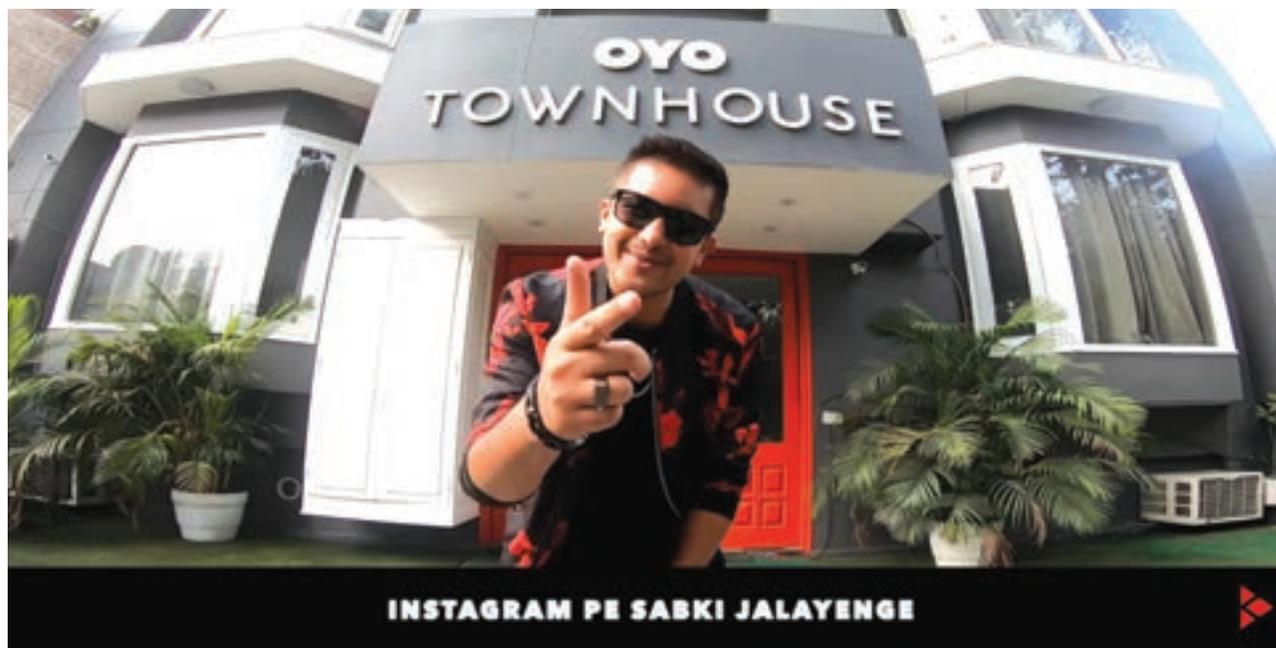
The latest ad is a music video featuring Knox Artiste and is ridden with millennial lingo. By Abid Hussain Barlaskar

Why does one book a hotel room? For accommodation, of course. Is that the only reason? Also, perhaps, for a quick friendly get together and a 'party', may be. This is the hint in one of OYO's latest bunch of ad films which also doubles up as a music video. The video is part of the brand's latest campaign which comprises three other ad films as well. Sung by musician Knox Artiste, the anthem-like rhythm probably aims to make the repetitive 'Oyo Yo Yo' stick to the consumers' minds. The video also highlights topics like 'friends', 'ease', 'pocket-friendliness', etc. While the video isn't at all the 'travel and living' type, the three other films (TVCs) from the campaign highlight private space, good accommodation and the ease of accessing the aforementioned services.

This campaign could very well be the brand's 'Get! Set! Go!' in terms of its advertising journey. The brand has gone all out with its media plan, making TV, radio and digital platforms like TikTok, YouTube and ShareChat a part of it. Aggressive branding of OYO operated hotels doubles up as its outdoor ads.

Gaurav Ajmera, COO, OYO Hotels & Homes – India, tells afaqs! Reporter that the music video is in continuation of the TVCs that have millennials, business travellers and families as their target audience. He says that the song helps extend the 'Raho mast with OYO' and the 'OYO Yo Yo' identities from the TV to digital domains. "The objective was not to drive transactions, but to create virality around the brand in a way that it would appeal to the larger chunk of our target segments, the millennials – aged between 20-34 years."

"Once we zeroed in on what we wanted, we decided that apart from the catchy tune, the communication should also include OYO's propositions (like affordability, etc.). Our team spent time with the artist and highlighted the promises of the



brand. We came down to a list of 10 to 12 things that needed to be mentioned. We decided to go ahead with the OYO Townhouse property as the venue since it is targeted at millennials," adds Ajmera.

He opens up about the brand's media strategy, saying, "Over the last several months, we were building our recall via mediums like TikTok, which we have been using for the last 10 months now. We wanted to go even deeper in markets where even communicating in English was an issue. That's when we decided to use ShareChat (social media startup in Indian languages). Once we felt that we had achieved a basic goal, we decided to do a TV ad. The TVCs which are being propagated in six languages and over 33 per cent of the

This campaign could very well be the brand's 'Get! Set! Go!' in terms of its advertising journey. The brand has gone all out with its media plan, making TV, radio and digital platforms a part of it.

spots are in regional languages like Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi and Bengali."

Speaking about the future of OYO's advertising in India, Ajmera says, "I think we will continue to spend decently on brand campaigns. And for the next year, we will be seen much more regularly because we will be going deeper in the existing 500 cities. There won't just be spurts of campaigns here and there. Although we do not have a clear plan in place, we will continue to invest in brand campaigns."

INDUSTRY SPEAK

Carlton D'Silva, CEO and CCO, Hungama Digital Services, says, "I believe they are trying to appeal to their younger audience judging from their choice of artist and genre. Usually, when a brand opts for this form of marketing (make a music video... everyone will sing our song), the most pertinent thing to do is to get the song right. Pepsi did that with their 'Har Ghoont Mein Swag' song with Badshah. Sadly, this one does not work. If I would have done this, I would have included TikTok in the mix and added a dance step to draw engagement from the community and get more bang for my buck."

Shrenik Gandhi, CEO and co-founder, White Rivers Media, says, "The song is catchy, will resonate with the young audience and travel across groups too. The lyrics must be paid special attention to, as it has a lot of short statements generally used by



"The objective was to create virality around the brand in a way that it would appeal to the millennials – aged between 20-34 years."
GAURAV AJMERA

the millennials and Gen Z. It's a fresh approach by the brand to hit out to the 'party enthusiastic youth'. Kudos to the efforts of the brand."

Prashant Nair, associate creative director, FoxyMoron, says, "The lyrics are good and capture the feel. The set-up is decent, but lacks 'swag' in terms of visual transitions. The initial bit is too long. The pace of the visual is slower than the tempo/energy of the music. ■

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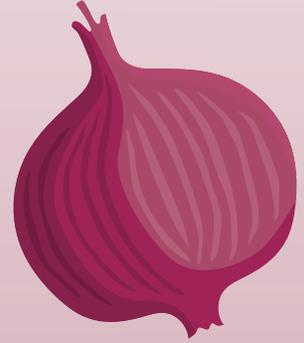


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Does Indian Advertising Need More Policing?

The government has decided to ramp up the scrutiny on misleading food ads and will set up a committee for the same. Here's how three experts feel about it. **By Ananya Pathak**

SURAJA KISHORE
chief executive officer
BBDO, India

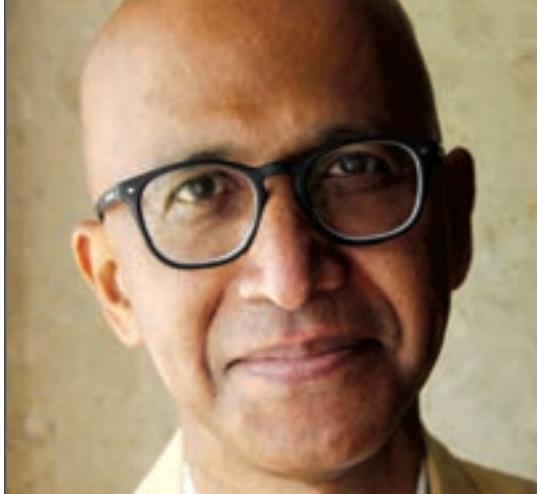


ISN'T IT IRONICAL THAT WE CAN TRACK OUR PIZZA, BUT WE CAN'T TRACK THE SAFETY AND NUTRITION OF THAT PIZZA? THE RISE OF PRIVATE LABELS

on e-commerce sites, the deluge of food and flavours on the shelf and the confusion around what's food and what's superfood demand that there is stringent scrutiny and compliance. Case in point is claiming 'organic'; standards and testing methods are so weak that anything and everything is being passed off as organic. We need to go back to the drawing board to redefine standards and benchmarks with no loopholes. Simultaneously, we need to create awareness about what's acceptable and unacceptable.

I don't see it as over policing since ASCI (The Advertising Standards Council of India) and FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) have different jobs to do. FSSAI ensures honesty, responsibility, decency and fairness, whereas FSSAI has to ensure standards and hygiene of food that's being sold to us.

KIRAN KHALAP
co-founder and managing director
chlorophyll brand consultancy



IF THIS IS BY FSSAI AND IT EXTENDS BEYOND ADVERTISING TO PACKAGING AS THE ARTICLE CLAIMS, THEN IT IS A WELCOME MOVE.

Because this goes beyond the current focus of ASCI, which usually scrutinises claims made in mainstream advertising.

Second, if the idea is to study unsubstantiated claims by SMEs in semi-urban and rural areas, that, too, is welcome since consumers in these areas may not be as questioning of advertising as those in cities.

AJIT NARAYAN
chief marketing officer
Socxo



ASCI ALREADY EXISTS AND IS ACTIVELY TAKING PART IN COMPLAINTS THAT ARE LODGED WITH THEM ABOUT FALSE CLAIMS. AS PER REPORTS,

they have upheld the complaints. More so, ASCI also has an MoU with FSSAI specifically for monitoring ads related to food safety claims and compliance. To that end, ASCI has been quite successful in pulling down misrepresented ads if one were to go by the reports that are published.

At this point, I am not clear as to the legal authority of ASCI to officially clamp down on ads. If it is self regulated, then there's a grey area around which advertisers could get away and not do any corrections at all. However, is setting up a government cell for regulation of ads the direction to take? How will that solve the problem? What if politics started influencing advertising and media? Would there be fair and square resolutions? Would we be forced to accept because the government had a say in it?

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 **COLOMBIA**
THE HOMEGROUND ADVANTAGE

In 2006, 'The Economist' ran a cover story, "Who Killed The Newspaper"... While in the west, the postmortem of the print industry had begun back then, in India, it was still growing quickly. Print advertising in the US has dropped from \$60-plus billion in 2000 to \$15 billion in 2018. During the same period, in India, print grew from a ₹6,000 crore to a ₹31,000 crore industry. Fact is, ink has survived the emergence of airwaves – radio, television and, lately, digital. Being the oldest medium, each time a new one emerged, the future of print got discussed as much as the excitement in the new ones.

Two thirds of the revenue comes from advertising; the rest from circulation. Growth is now slowing down. In 2019, advertising grew by five per cent and circulation by 3.5 per cent. The slowdown in advertising growth in print and the poor advertising rates online are forcing dailies to consider online subscriptions.

Recently, Indian Express decided to put its e-paper behind a paywall. Network18's financial news and information publication Moneycontrol released a subscription service Moneycontrol Pro in April 2018. The Times of India launched ET Prime, which one could only access after subscribing. Business Standard, The Hindu, The Ken, Newsland and many other web publishers and newspapers are eyeing a direct transactional relationship with the consumer.

Nuances of Pay...

The 'Metred' method (a mix of free and pay where publishers, like The Economist, make a certain number of stories per user available for free) and the 'Paywall' (nothing is available for free) are the two most commonly used subscription models in the industry. There are some publishers who offer a 'transactional' mode option, wherein the reader pays only for the stories she wants to read. In the case of partial pay models, the premise at play is that of the lot who read it for free, a certain number will convert to pay. This model also helps publishers retain their unique visitors and avoid a significant drop in page views.

Usually, when a paywall is in place, the search and social results plummet and traffic in terms of page views reportedly drops by 80-90 per cent.

The propensity to pay in India is low. "The subscription business has been a very tough one, especially in media where we have seen very limited success so far," says Manoj Nagpal, business head, B2C revenue, Moneycontrol.

Moneycontrol Pro, which is priced at ₹99 per month and ₹999 per year, claims to have 1.15 lakh active paid subscribers, which Nagpal considers to be one of the best in the industry. "The way we calculate our active subscriber base is – the ones who are actively using the subscribed service at this stage. It does not include subscribers who discontinued after a period of time," he says.

Paid or free, online publishers are highly

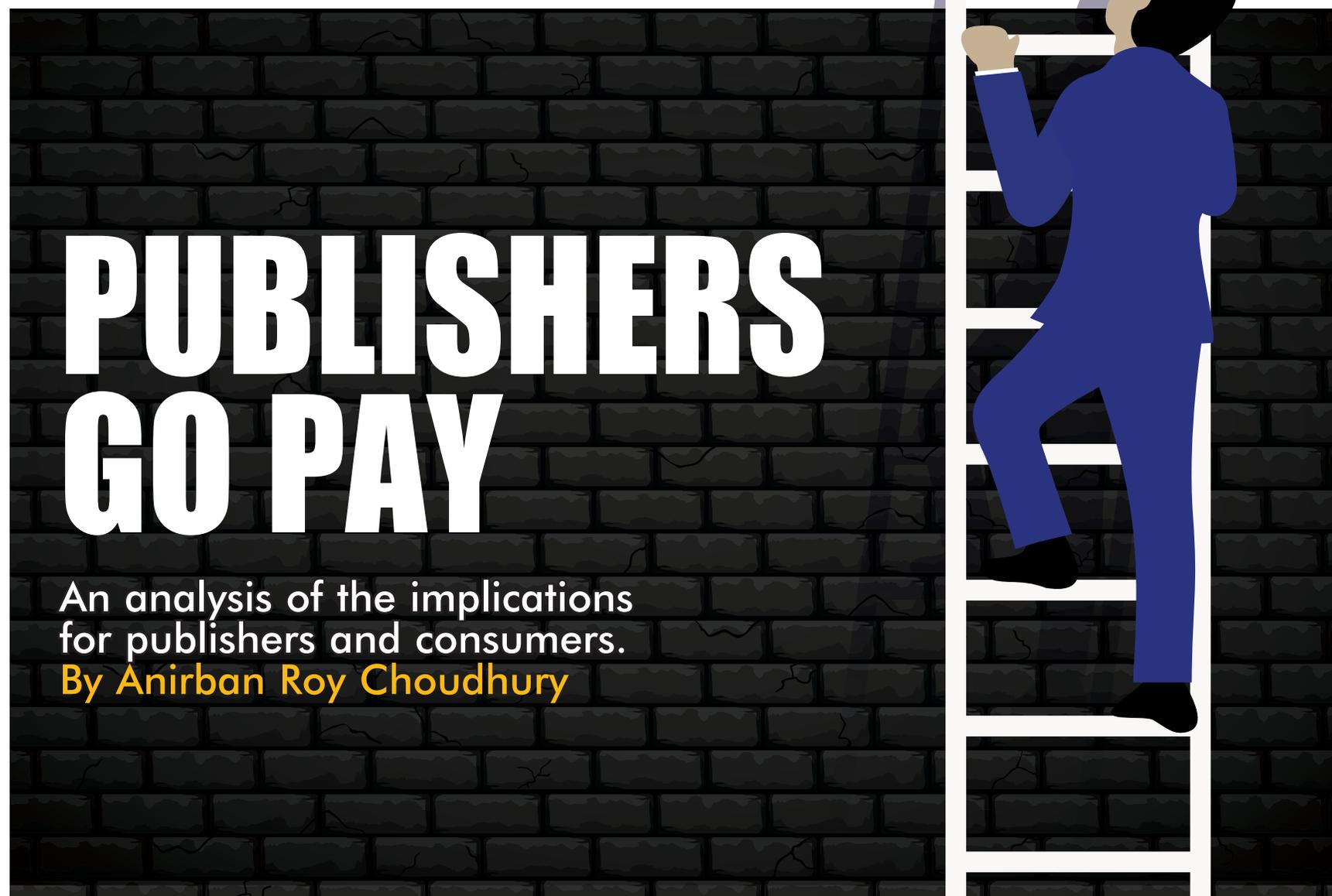
dependent on Google and Facebook for content discovery. Popular belief suggests Google and Facebook would promote publishers that carry their ads. So, what happens to publishers that decide to go pay? "As a matter of principle, we do not put any ads – native, programmatic or direct – on Moneycontrol Pro," informs Nagpal. And so far, surprisingly enough, he has not noticed any problems with respect to discovery through search or social.

He asserts, "In fact, our search performance on Google improved after we introduced a paywall. Quality content is one of our promises to our subscribers and the better the quality of the content, the higher your rank on Google."

Of Demand and the Demanding...

The moment a consumer pays for a service, her expectations from the product grow manifold, find publishers. "People are not saying 'we do not want to pay', but are asking us to add some elements and features that they think are good," says Sanjay Sindhwani, CEO, Indian Express Digital, adding, "They force you to invest more in the product, which, once you do, takes the product to a different level... and that gets a new set of readers in."

Jehil Thakkar, partner, Deloitte, believes Indian subscribers are only willing to pay for respectable brands or those that



are in some way useful to them for business/work. “We have seen in the west how The New York Times has managed to monetise well on the back of its strong brand value. Also, people subscribe to services like Bloomberg and Financial Times because through that subscription, they manage to drive profit – financially or intellectually,” he opines.

Considering current market dynamics, where a subscriber base of 1.15 lakh is considered to be “best in the industry”, publishers are cautious in their approach. “There are two ways to do it – you either build the entire product and then go to the customer or you launch the product and keep adding features as the subscriber base keeps increasing. We have decided to go with the latter, so we keep introducing value added services as we rake in more subs,” states Moneycontrol’s Nagpal.

Closer Look at the Prized Subscriber...

Indian Express’ e-paper is for “people on the move, who already are our regular readers” says Sindhvani. Priced at ₹799 for six months and ₹1,299 for a year, Indian Express’ e-paper is targeted at the loyalists. “Then the second segment comprises people living in cities and towns, where the print edition is not circulated. Also, there are a lot of people who are now more comfortable reading on digital platforms, because of convenience, storage, access to archives, ability to search and magnify... features only the digital platform can provide,” he adds.

Times Of India’s ET Prime, which is available at ₹999 for three months and ₹2,499 per year, is mostly followed by business executives working in fields like strategy, consulting, M&A and business development. “We are also seeing traction with users leading, or working in, startups,” says Puneet Gupt, COO, Times Internet.

He finds a big difference in the engagement patterns of free users and paying subscribers. “Prime users spend more time in every session with ET, spending upto 3X the time normal (free) users do. They also expect higher product and user experience standards and availability across platforms – iPad, android, tablets, etc. – and are also more vocal about what they need, sharing their expectations more regularly,” Gupt explains.

If subscribed to the ET Prime yearly membership, one gets access to Times Prime, a digital membership service for premium content, and exclusive member benefits. Times Internet’s most aggressive subscription push so far, Times Prime provides a bundle offering through which one can access partners services like Swiggy, Uber, Grofers, Big Basket, Oyo, among others. Apart from the bundle offering with ET Prime, Times Prime is available at ₹999 per year. Times Of India+, the ad free version of TOI, is part of Times Prime.

“Times Prime is a unique bundled subscription offering, where more than 80 per cent users are millennials, with over 95 per cent accessing it via mobile and more than 65 per of users coming from tier I cities,” says Gupt.

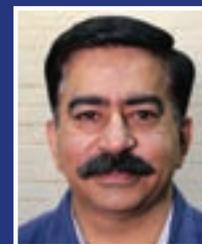
Music, fashion and food-related offers are among the “most activated” products/services, it turns out. About 80 per cent of Times Prime users are below 35 years of age, we learn.

People from over 75 cities in India have



People are not saying ‘we do not want to pay’, but are asking us to add some elements and features that they think are good. They force you to invest more in the product, which, once you do, takes the product to a different level... and that gets a new set of readers in.

Sanjay Sindhvani, CEO, Indian Express Digital



The hope earlier was that online would become an advertising revenue generator in its own right, which did not really happen as most of it came to be controlled by Google and Facebook...

Jehil Thakkar, partner, Deloitte



Times Prime is a unique bundled subscription offering, where more than 80 per cent users are millennials, with over 95 per cent accessing it via mobile and more than 65 per of users coming from tier I cities.

Puneet Gupt, COO, Times Internet



The way we calculate our active subscriber base is - the ones who are actively using the subscribed service at this stage. It does not include subscribers who discontinued after a period of time.

Manoj Nagpal, business head, B2C revenue, Moneycontrol



subscribed to Moneycontrol Pro, informs Nagpal. However, “Mumbai, Bangalore, and Delhi are the three main pockets. Close to 30 per cent of our total subscriber base belong to these three cities,” says Nagpal.

Exclusivity Crisis...

Paying for entertainment content in India is on the rise, thanks to the popularity of video-on-demand platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar, ALTBalaji and the like. The digital video subscription market in India, at this stage, is estimated to be around ₹1,200 crore and KPMG projects it to grow to ₹2,200 crore in FY20 and ₹6,200 crore by FY23. When OTT platforms market new shows on billboards and other media channels, the selling point is exclusivity – that is, the show they promote is available only on that particular platform. News publications, however, do not have that selling point. Deloitte’s Thakkar points that in an era of freely available news and news aggregator apps like Dailyhunt and Inshorts, there is hardly anything left for consumers to “catch up” on.

While Moneycontrol creates certain content which is only available on the Pro version, Indian

Express carries all the news that’s printed in its paper on its dotcom, for free. Why then would one pay for the e-paper, we wonder. “Quality user experience,” answers Indian Express’ Sindhvani.

Climbing the Paywall...

Going forward, more and more publications will experiment with subscription revenue as a business model, believe industry experts. Deloitte’s Thakkar says, “The hope earlier was that online would become an advertising revenue generator in its own right, which did not really happen as most of it came to be controlled by Google and Facebook...”

The pay model, he opines, is publishers’ attempt at monetising their content further; the belief here is – even if a small portion of the reader pool starts paying, the online venture can start becoming profitable, provided the P&L for online and offline is separate.

While many try to climb the paywall, only the big brands and the ones that can help subscribers make a profit in the real world will succeed. It’s a tough path, but increasingly it appears to be the only viable one. ■

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BALAJI WAFERS

More Chips, Less Air

Balaji Wafers' new campaign featuring actor Ayushmann Khurrana suggests the brand is providing **more chips per pack compared to its much larger rivals PepsiCo and ITC.** By Abid Hussain Barlaskar

The latest ads from Balaji Wafers, the Gujarat-based snack brand, builds up on a long-standing consumer pain-point, that of their favourite chips companies selling them air. The ads feature actor Ayushmann Khurrana, whom the brand roped in earlier this year as its first-ever endorser.

Packaged chips brands, not just in India, but globally, have been accused by consumers of selling more air and less contents. So much so that the internet is rife with conversations and memes around the theme. The crown of the 'usual suspect' has been placed on Lay's (look up 'chips selling air' on Google images). Balaji Wafers' campaign suggests that the brand is providing more chips in relation to its much larger rivals like PepsiCo and ITC. Jay Sachdev, manager, marketing, Balaji Wafers, in a previous interview, told afaqs! Reporter, "Our brand aims to provide good quality at a good price — value for money. We believe in selling a product worth ₹15 at ₹10." The new communication ties back to Sachdev's comment.

Without much digging around, the 'hawa' factor leads to another brand and its ads, which were launched in 2011. Fogg Deodorants was launched with a proposition that its cans contained no gas, unlike others in its category. The ads, too, highlighted the fact that Fogg provided a higher number of sprays than its rivals.

Shyamashree D'Mello, executive creative director and head of creative

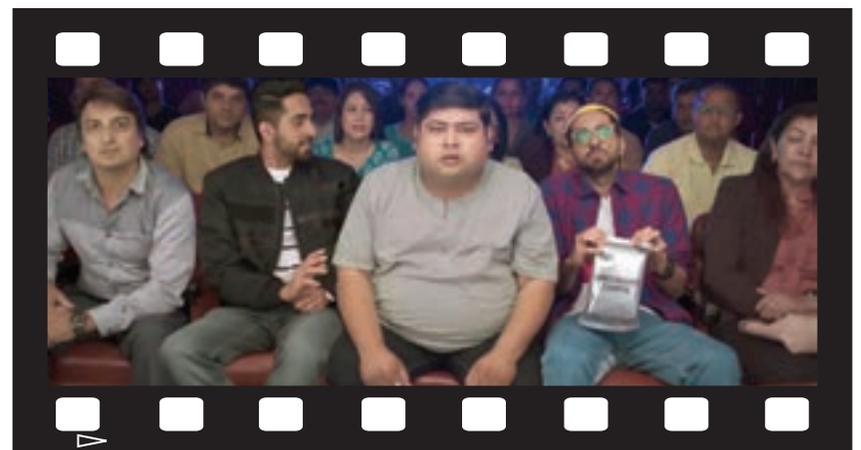
services – Publicis Beehive, which crafted the campaign, says, "Balaji Wafers offering the additional grammage was the story that the brand wanted to talk about. The 'kam hawa, wafer zyada' proposition was the agency's way of saying it. During the product testing of rival brands, we realised that the packs had very few wafers inside them despite having bigger packs... We wanted to test if the proposition will be well received by the market. We saw some traction and took it forward by making the brand look a lot more competitive and making the communication a lot more entertaining. To make it bigger, we needed an actor who could pull it off. When we presented the idea to a boardroom full of people, including the owners and employees of the

Packaged chips brands, not just in India, but globally, have been accused by consumers of selling more air and less contents.

company, we could tell that they themselves were excited about telling the story. We knew that once we get Ayushmann (Khurrana) and a good director who would add quirks to the story, it was going to be a fun place to be in."

INDUSTRY SPEAK

KV Sridhar, founder and CCO of Hyper Collective (a cross-disciplinary



innovations company), says, "There could be scientific reason behind filling chips packs with air, but the narrative of a brand claiming to offer less air and more chips seems very reasonable as people want more chips per rupee. But by the nature of Balaji's younger, smaller and regional nature in comparison to its bigger rivals, the communication makes sense. People will appreciate it. Brands have used such narratives

and grown huge in the past, for example, the deo brand Fogg is built on the 'no-gas' proposition."

Sridhar Ramanujam, a brand consultant and founder of Brand-comm, says, "In a category like chips, it is really important just to get the brand name across as it is a low-involvement product. It is important for consumers to just remember that there is a brand called Balaji. Such a

communication works in this case."

Ramanujam feels that Khurrana's presence in the ads lacks purpose and the situations could have been a bit more dramatic. He says the brand image of players like Lay's and Bingo is too strong to be moved by such a communication alone.

"Superb insight, consumer pain-point addressed, without risk, with fun execution," that's how Tarun Singh Chauhan, a brand consultant and founder, TSC Consulting, defines the campaign. "The execution is quite nice and matches the category."

Saurabh Mathur, head, strategy and planning, VMLY&R India, says, "There have been some pretty epic battles between brands and some were brilliant. I don't see this as a long term strategy for Balaji, unless this was meant to be a humorous distraction in the 'chip wars'. What it could gain from this approach is a temporary reinforcement of its proposition which is one of 'value'. Beyond that, it should use a celebrity like Ayushmann (Khurrana) to help build the long term equity of the brand with its core audience." ■

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NYKAA

“We Put Over 10 Videos Every Month”

A chat with Madhavi Irani, chief officer — content, Nykaa, to understand the brand’s online content strategy better. By Ananya Pathak

Nykkaa, the Mumbai-based multi-brand beauty retailer selling cosmetic and wellness products, recently had a four-day sale — ‘Pink Friday Sale’. Nykaa was offering 40 per cent off across all brands, both online and offline, between November 29 and December 2. In early December, the e-commerce website also released a film to announce the sale, featuring brand ambassador Janhvi Kapoor. The film was conceptualised by full service agency The Glitch.

The seven-year-old brand mainly targets urban Indian women in the ages of 18-35 years. Starting as an online retailer in April 2012, the brand opened its first retail store at Terminal 3, Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi, in November 2015. Currently, it has close to 60 stores.

afaqs! Reporter caught up with Madhavi Irani, chief officer — content, Nykaa, to understand the brand’s online content strategy better. She says that the effort has been directed towards replicating the offline purchase journey online through quick read articles, detailed product descriptions and solution-centric responses to questions on product pages, and then through videos that cover the gamut of DIYs, how-tos, reviews and expert and blogger led master classes.

“Our regional push on Nykaa TV has seen us target online, beauty conscious, regional audiences. In addition, we have a very active social media presence that reaches out to customers via FB and Instagram. Finally, we have created guided selling formats on the site vis-a-vis buying guides and stores that deep dive into categories on the site and create tightly curated listings. Our content also seeks to change buying habits in some ways. For instance, instead of buying a single quick fix product to solve a niggling skin or hair concern, we are taking customers to a regime-based solution through our Routine Finder. After entering some basic information, customers are shown a personalised regime best suited to resolve a chronic problem.”

On the brand’s offline versus online sale ratio, she says, “At present

a larger slice of revenue comes from online sales.” She says the offline stores serve to offer the very valuable touch and feel, experiential aspect to beauty that the online model cannot achieve. The brand, until lately, had been doing a lot of tutorial videos. With Kapoor coming on board as ambassador, the brand seems to have shifted to working more on TV commercials. Irani says that’s not entirely true. “We’ve leveraged the partnership with Janhvi to create exclusive branded content with her. However, our YouTube channel continues to create more than 10 videos every month with influencers, vloggers and experts.”

Talking about consumer behaviour and how it has changes in recent times, she reveals that consumers on the beauty journey are willing to try and experiment with new product lines and brands. “A large chunk of our content marketing effort has been to reach out to the various personas we have



The seven-year-old brand mainly targets urban Indian women in the ages of 18-35 years. Starting as an online retailer in April 2012, the brand currently has close to 60 stores.

identified and create avenues to cross-sell and up-sell. Obviously, with greater awareness and exposure to international brands and beauty standards, the Indian customer has become more discerning and selective. With the growing trend of consumer-led content becoming huge, Nykaa works with content creators to give them a place to be seen and heard. With user generated content becoming the norm, we have created Nykaa Network, an interactive beauty platform where brand loyalists become brand advocates, advise each other,

participate in contests and interact with experts through ‘lives’ hosted on the platform. In just a year’s time, this community has organically grown to 1.3 million subscribers.”

Talking about Nykaa Man — Nykaa’s online portal catering to the menfolk, how differently do men shop when compared to women? Irani divulges that men are far more utilitarian in their approach to shopping, whether it is for clothes or grooming products. And, therefore, communication and content has to be very concern-specific and direct. For women, beauty goes beyond the actual purchase of a product. It’s the whole experience, how it makes them feel rather than just how it makes them look. “Having said that, men’s grooming choices are also influenced by peers and influencers and, at Nykaa Man, we strive to strike that balance through a mix of guided, concern-based selling and influencer-led content.” ■

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MID-DAY

Mid-Day Revamps its Sunday Edition

In a new campaign, the Mumbai-headquartered newspaper tells Mumbaikars, 'Hey Mumbai, we have a Sunday for you'. By Ubaid Zargar

This compact morning daily has revamped the content of its Sunday edition. In a new campaign, the Mumbai-headquartered Mid-Day addresses the city saying, 'Hey Mumbai, we have a Sunday for you'.

Conceptualised and created by Scarecrow M&C Saatchi, the campaign runs on the tagline '70% Features. 30% News. 100% Mumbai'. The campaign includes a series of 10 full page print ads that feature various archetypes, including a foodie, a musician, a photographer, among others — all in an attempt to represent the different walks of Mumbai life.

Scarecrow M&C Saatchi has also penned down a song to give the campaign a longer life. The song has been composed by Rupert Fernandes — known for his 'you and I in this beautiful world' tune for Vodafone. Donning the country genre, the song has vocals by Neuman Pinto.

Commenting on the campaign, Tinaz Nooshian, editor-in-chief, Mid-Day Infomedia, said, "Sunday Mid-Day is traditionally known



only paper you read on Sundays, you still wouldn't miss a thing."

afaqs! Reporter reached out to Manish Bhatt, founder and director, Scarecrow M&C Saatchi, to understand what went behind the scenes in producing this campaign.

"Extracting 10 archetypes from 13 million Mumbaikars was a huge task in itself," Bhatt remarks. "With the help of Mid-Day's editorial team lead by their editor-in-chief, we

Conceptualised and created by Scarecrow M&C Saatchi, the campaign runs on the tagline '70% Features. 30% News. 100% Mumbai'.

for its curated ideas and quality of writing. The thrust is on leisure reading and handpicked feature articles spanning everything from pop- and sub-culture, to food and drink, health, heritage revival, fashion and technology, sport, the arts and entertainment. News is, of course, our mainstay, and we don't compromise there. So, if this was the

could accomplish this task, because they have a fair idea about which type of reader consumes which kind of content," he explains. Pointing out the necessity of the campaign's relevance, Bhatt says, "We neither wanted to miss out on the psyche of the reader nor the geography... the most important thing was that the ad had to be an interesting read."



slums, etc. The central idea of 'anticipation' emerged from ours and the client's fear of showing black and white clichés. But our differentiation in imagery lied in the idea itself, where we had to show Mumbaikars' anticipation of a relaxed and uncluttered

BHATT SPEAK

When a city like Mumbai is the theme of a campaign, a lot of clichés are invoked to get the image across. On being asked about such prevalent clichés in advertisement and how the campaign makes a case for originality, Bhatt says, "When it comes to capturing the essence of Mumbai city, the cliché would have been to show the black and white hustle-bustle of local trains, Crawford market, railway platforms,

Sunday of Mumbai, which by itself is breaking away from the usual representation of Mumbai."

Commenting on the inclusion of the song in the campaign and its genre, Bhatt says, "After a week full of hustle-bustle, Mumbai's Sunday could be best represented with a relaxed and laid-back mood. Hence, we thought that the guitar plucks and harmonica of country genre would capture it better." ■

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MP BIRLA CEMENT

When Advertising Gets Poetic

As MP Birla Cement releases new spots for 'Samrat' and 'Perfect Plus', let's take a look at the change in communication strategy of the category.

By Ananya Pathak

The cement category in India seems to have ditched its boring product feature-based communications and has moved on to storytelling. After Ambuja's 'Chhatein' and Binani's 'Parental Love', MP Birla Cement, too, has gone the metaphoric way in its ads for 'Samrat'. #TajurbeKiTaaqat – a recent campaign by the Kolkata-headquartered brand, captures the journey of a family's rise to success because of the 'secret' ingredient that makes their Kachori (lentil puffs) unique and special.

Riding on nostalgia, the 45-second film set in Uttar Pradesh tells the story of how 'Bishambar's' khaas (special) ingredients for both Kachori and the construction of his house (cement) remain unchanged for generations. The film has been conceptualised by Ogilvy Mumbai.

Fly ash-based Portland Pozzolana Cement (PPC) – MP Birla Cement Samrat is one of the 10 cement arms of the 109-year-old MP Birla Corporation – Perfect Plus, Samrat Advanced, Ultimate Ultra, Unique (PSC), Samrat (PPC), Ultimate (PPC), Chetak (PPC), PSC (PSC), Multicem (PPC) and Concrecem (OPC). The MP Birla Group is simultaneously running a campaign for MP Birla Cement Perfect Plus. Conceptualised by Ogilvy Kolkata, four TV commercials have been released as part of the campaign.

About the ideation of this campaign, Sujoy Roy, ECD and managing partner, Ogilvy, says the story focuses on the dreams and aspirations of the middle class home builder. "We brought in a slight twist to this by introducing the fact that daughters are equal contributors when it comes to building homes, a fact that has not been captured in the advertising that we have seen in this category." The brief by the Kolkata-based brand for the campaign was to reinforce the fact that MP Birla Perfect Plus is a special cement for



concreting. Roy says the challenge was to go beyond the usual examples – strength of 'dhalai' and strong cement for strong homes which have become table-stakes for the category. Other brands in the category, too, have grown from product feature-based communications.

EXPERT SPEAK

About this shift in the communication strategy, creative consultant L Suresh feels emotions, like cement, are a strong binding force. Both of them look raw when exposed



After Ambuja's 'Chhatein' and Binani's 'Parental Love', MP Birla Cement, too, has gone the metaphoric way in its ads for 'Samrat'.

to the world, making for interesting advertising. He says that cement is a category that pose a challenge not just in coming up with interesting creatives, but also in identifying the right TG. "Who are we talking to?" is the question every agency has

been moving from solid style of advertising to liquid. "Binani started it years ago with Amitabh Bachchan searching for memories of fond ones. The trend continues and each of these other brands are attempting the same. The real fact, however, is the truth that fundamentals of product quality still work wonders in the category. Emotions is a dalliance."

Rajesh Lalwani, CEO, Scenario Consulting, says, "If you see, the trend of storytelling in cements dates back a few years. You may recall the very popular ad by Ambuja Cement



been asking for decades now. That's because most home buyers choose apartments. And amongst those who build their own house, the choice is based on the leading brand in that region, the

cement stock available at their friendly neighbourhood retailer, and most importantly, the recommendation of the civil engineer/ builder."

"A few years ago, nation-building and all the metaphors of strength were popular themes for cement brands. (Some of them still make an appearance during cricket telecast.) We've also seen humour used by a couple of brands and, of course, the celebrity route. In this line of progression, the films by brands like MP Birla Cement and Ambuja Cement have taken the next step, with the emotional route," he adds.

Harish Bijoor, brand consultant and founder Harish Bijoor Consults Inc., feels cement creatives have

featuring the celebrity actor – wrestler Khali where the mighty one shares his plight – of walls at the village home and neighborhood that kept breaking, unable to take his weight – until he finds Ambuja, that is. That one went viral. Then there was the Dalmia Super Roof Cement ad. The brand had positioned this variant as the 'roof specialist'; and to etch this message, created an ad with an elephant sitting on a swing inside a palatial bungalow, even as the man of the house played a piano without a care."

He adds that if you see the category, the HNI urban customers mostly rely on advice by architects and rarely make the purchase basis any emotional pull. "The rural, mid-tier and the traditional urban buyers, on the other hand, can be influenced by emotion – a first home for the urban couple, a retirement home, a house upgrade for a village/tier 2 dweller are important chapters of life. The choice of cement becomes a symbolic investment into values dear to this customer – the values of strength and character. These themes have been a constant with brand stories in this category." ■

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What Does the Telecom Tariff Hike Mean for Digital Brands in India?

Four experts present their views on the impact of the move by Indian telcos. By Abid Hussain Barlaskar

PRASHAN AGARWAL

CEO
Gaana



THE RAPID PENETRATION OF BETTER INTERNET SERVICES AT LOWER TARIFFS AND READY AVAILABILITY OF

affordable smartphones has heralded a new era of internet usage over the last couple of years. This has triggered a cascading effect on the entire digital ecosystem in India, including a considerable surge in traffic, distribution and production for digital media companies like ours. While the recent increase in data tariffs may slow down user-acquisition in the short term, we believe these corrective measures would improve the overall financial health of the telecom sector and lay the foundation for a healthier and more sustainable digital roadmap for India's future.

MAHESH UPPAL

telecommunications consultant and owner, ComFirst



I DON'T EXPECT A MAJOR FALLOUT DUE TO THE HIGHER PRICES. THE REASON IS, THE DATA PRICES

in India have been exceptionally low. And even after the hike, these would still be low in relative terms. The low prices enabled people to sample data-based services – whether it was e-commerce like Amazon or others. It has given people a taste of the potential of data services. It would include issues like savings, convenience, etc. For example, a discounted flight on MakeMyTrip or a good deal on Amazon, or quickly checking the status of one's flight. But the economic value that it represents is far greater than the extra money paid for it.

There is always a greater incentive in case of free services like content platforms, etc. However, having sampled the services, there will be users who won't mind paying a little bit more. Take the example of WhatsApp, a major free communication service. It will cost a minimal amount of money for a service like that.

K VAITHEESWARAN

e-commerce consultant and founder of Again Drinks and Indiaplaza



THE REALITY IS, WHEN RATES GO UP, PEOPLE ACCESSING CONTENT AND SERVICES WILL NATURALLY GO DOWN.

But at the commerce level, say on platforms like Amazon, Swiggy, etc., the change may not make a difference because there is a transaction (involving convenience, discounts, etc.) where the consumer is benefiting from it.

It will make a difference where content is consumed virtually for free, say on platforms like YouTube and TikTok. In cases like these, where there is no other cost involved other than the data cost, if that cost goes up (40 per cent is a significant jump), consumption will go down. The principle holds true in cases of both urban and rural consumers.

SANJAY TRIPATHY

co-founder and CEO, Agilio Labs and advisor - IAMAI



TELECOM TARIFFS IN INDIA ARE THE LOWEST IN THE WORLD, WHICH HELPED RAPID

growth of the digital ecosystem in India. Hence, tariff hike is not good news. It will impact millions of existing users, while also having negative impact on new user addition. It's a chicken and egg situation as mobile operators are facing mounting losses and they see no other option other than increasing tariffs to survive. More importantly, operators are focusing on high ARPU customers and making prepaid expensive by 40-50 per cent.

Any hike should be accompanied with an increase in quality. With call quality going down month on month and a corresponding increase in tariff, it will definitely have an impact on the entire digital ecosystem.



IKEA

How discomforting can a night's sleep be sometimes, right? Well, IKEA, in this ad film titled 'Let's celebrate sleep', aims to ease that distress for you.



BRITANNIA GOOD DAY

Flaunting innocence and simplicity of kids, this ad film asks you to be stubborn in your pursuit of happiness.



CROMPTON WATER HEATERS

The ad film defines 'perfect' hot water for us with a comic touch.



MANFORCE

Titled 'Shut The Phone Up 3', the ad shows you how filming your intimate moments with your partner can cause future complications.

Creative agency: ADK Fortune Communications



INDIAN TERRAIN

In a bid to spark celebrations for International Men's Day, the ad film showcases multiple men sharing their stories.

Creative agency: Brave New World



RAYMOND

It takes someone special to do something special. The ad film promotes #RaymondCeremonial collection designed for special occasions.

Creative agency: Grey Group India



VOLTAS BEKO

Sundays are our most awaited holidays, but what about moms? Their relentless routine revolves around making our Sunday perfect.



BALAJI WAFERS

Breaking loose of typical air-filled wafer packs, Balaji proposes lesser air, and more wafers in these ad films.



UNACADEMY

In this ad film, Unacademy depicts the plight of Indian students, while encouraging students to study.

Creative agency: McCann India



INDIAMART

IndiaMART, through this ad film, positions itself as an assistant in making your work easy.

Creative agency: Interactive Avenues Production House



FENESTA

Pointing out the prevalence of excessive noise in the nation, this ad film asks the viewers to #ShutTheShor.



REDBUS

Passengers often face inconvenience while finding comfortable buses to travel. The ad film asks passengers to opt for redBus app for their future bookings.



SONY PICTURES

Depicting the love of fans for cricket, this ad film showcases a story of a real life cricket fan.

Creative agency: Scarecrow M&C Saatchi



JOY

The ad film presents Bollywood star Kriti Sanon ditching the conventional beauty care advertisements for a better, more realistic one.



PLATINUM

The ad film showcases a tale of two lovers and how they create something bigger when they are together.



RED CHIEF

Goons need to be put in jail. How about doing it in style?

Got some great campaign that has been published recently? Upload it on afaqs! for the world to see. Visit: www.afaqs.com/advertising/creative_showcase

JOB SWITCH.in



Post: Account Director
Company: PMG Integrated Communications
Profile: Act as an advisor to clients on marketing communications solutions. Manage overall progress and development of accounts and projects. Actively establish new business leads and develop business proposals. Establish, maintain and strengthen relationship with existing and new clientele.
Experience: 12-15 years
Location: New Delhi
Email: nayab.shaikh@pmgasia.com

Post: Graphic Designer
Company: STIR
Profile: We are looking to hire a graphic designer with loads of 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: 0-2 years
Location: Bangalore
Email: prakash@stironline.com

Post: Junior Visualiser
Company: Think out of the box Advertising & Communication Services
Profile: Must understand the usage of design softwares like Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, CorelDraw, etc. Candidate with an experience of 3D designing (CAD & 3D Max) will be given preference. Should be a pass out from a renowned art school. Must be capable enough to think creatively and put across ideas effortlessly.
Experience: 5-10 years
Location: Mumbai
Email: amruta@thinkoutofthebox.in/anchoit@thinkoutofthebox.in

Post: Group Head - Copy
Company: Quotient Communications
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: 4-8 years
Location: Mumbai
Email: team@quotientcomm.com

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

Post: Social Media Manager
Company: Prawal Media
Profile: Collaborate and maintain close relationships with cross-functional teams to maximise the impact of social media efforts by ensuring alignment in communications across channels. Analyse and report social channel and activation performance to quantify the effectiveness of campaigns and drive scalable learnings.
Experience: 2-4 years
Location: Hyderabad
Email: info@bigbears.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, etc. Manage social media community & facilitate ideas to build it.
Experience: 1-5 years
Location: Mumbai

Email: manoj.motiani@thoughtbubbles.in

Post: Content Writer
Company: Paradigm Plus Marketing Communications
Profile: Experience in writing long copy posts, blogs, articles, white papers. English should be impeccable - both written and verbal. Should be able to do thorough research on subjects given to them. Technical background is preferable.
Experience: 3-4 years
Location: Bangalore
Email: jobs@paradigmplus.in

Post: Senior Visualiser
Company: Thoughttrains Designs
Profile: Creative flair, originality and a story visual sense & strong computer skills. Confidence to present & explain ideas to client & colleagues. An interest in graphics & typography visualiser/creative.
Experience: 4-8 years
Location: Mumbai
Email: hr@thoughttrains.com

Post: Manager - Client Servicing
Company: Span Communications
Profile: Professional with good communication skills, commercial acumen and proficiency in working on government ATL campaigns. Experience of independently handling government clients in reputed advertising agencies is a must. Will be responsible for servicing ATL clients and follow-up for new business.
Experience: 5-7 years
Location: Bengaluru, Kolkata, Bhopal
Email: resume2span@gmail.com

Post: Digital Marketing Business Development Executive
Company: India News Communications Ltd
Profile: Have a proven track record of selling digital services to leading brands and corporate organisations. Have a strong network of contacts, which you will use to develop

new business. Have a great understanding of digital services and how they can benefit clients. Be experienced in all stages of the process, from lead generation to conversion.
Experience: 2-4 years
Location: Noida
Email: info@inclgroup.com

Post: Business Development Manager
Company: CupShup
Profile: Developing and maintaining relationship with existing clients and brands. Identifying new business prospects and closing in new clients and corporate partners. Managing end-to-end business process right from pitching, planning and closing the deal to campaign execution and client servicing. Ready to work on cold leads from scratch. Comfortable about working in a fast-paced, high-growth start-up environment with excellent opportunities for personal growth.
Experience: 3-5 years
Location: Mumbai
Email: HR@cupshup.co.in



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>> MOVEMENTS/APPOINTMENTS <<

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

ADVERTISING

Only Much Louder

OML has appointed Gunjan Arya as CEO, Dhruv Sheth as COO and Saurabh Abbi as chief business officer (New Initiatives and International Business). The newly elevated leadership team — all managing partners at OML prior to these appointments — will take on their new roles with immediate effect. They will lead OML into its next phase of growth and expansion. Ajay Nair will continue as MD, focusing on new opportunities.

AdLift

Ranadeep Chakravarty, former senior GM at Network 18, has joined AdLift as chief creative officer. AdLift, a global digital marketing firm founded in 2009, delivers niche marketing solutions.

IdeateLabs

IdeateLabs, one of India's largest independent full-service digital-first creative agencies, has roped in Divya Ajitkumar as business head. She will be based out of the Mumbai office and will report to the director Vrutika Dawda. Ajitkumar has over a decade of experience in the digital space, having worked in highly organised and evolved markets, with exposure to cutting edge technology and access to top tier publishers and clients in New York and London.

MullenLowe Lintas

The Bangalore offices of Mullen Lintas and Lowe

Lintas have recently witnessed new leadership appointments. Kishore Subramanian, who successfully led Mullen Lintas' agency office for four-plus years, has passed the baton to Siddhartha Roy, who has been entrusted to take up the responsibilities in the leadership role as the Bangalore office branch head. With a career spanning over two decades, he has worked with multiple network agencies such as Ogilvy, Everest Y&R and Publicis Ambience.

Madison Media Group

Madison Media has promoted Vinay Hegde as chief buying officer. Hegde, who has been with Madison Media for three years, will report to Amol Dighe, CEO, Madison Media Ultra and Head of Investments. Madison Media's buying teams across offices will now report to Hegde. He takes over from Neelkamal Sharma.

The Social Street

The Social Street has appointed Parag Pandya to head the OOH & Experiential business for West and East. He will work in close cooperation with the founding partner and chairman Pratap Bose. Pandya comes on board as senior VP. The MICA alumnus has 15 years of experience in new business development and client servicing across telecom, e-commerce and media with companies like Vodafone, The Times of India, Percept Media & OAP.

DIGITAL

Nodwin Gaming

Nodwin Gaming has appointed Sidharth Kedia as CEO to spearhead and drive the online gaming business in India. Following its explosive growth over the last 12 months, this is Nodwin Gaming's first senior management appointment. Kedia will be based out of Mumbai, where he will open the esports company's first regional office.

Social Beat

Digital agency Social Beat has onboarded Arunima Singh as executive VP — Growth in Mumbai and will be focused on driving success with existing and new clients for the West region. Singh will work closely with the core team. She has 19-plus years of marketing experience, on both client and agency sides. Prior to her latest appointment, Singh was business director at Wunderman Thompson.

MARKETING

DLF

Karan Kumar, former chief brand and marketing officer at Fabindia, has joined real estate brand DLF as senior VP, marketing and CMO. Confirming the news to afaqs! Reporter, Kumar says, "I am excited about the industry and all there is to realise from strategic brand building and the role storytelling and customer engagement can play therein..."

Hewlett-Packard

HP's country marketing director Neelima Burra has decided to move on from the company. She joined HP around two years ago and worked towards positioning the brands as an offering for millennials and building an emotional connect between a tech brand and its consumers. With over 19 years of industry experience, Burra last worked with Cargill for three years

Amway

Anamika Sirohi, former VP and head of marketing at Hindware, has joined Amway as VP, Wellness. In her last role at Hindware, she was VP and head of marketing. An engineer, Sirohi started her career as a product manager with Dabur India in 2000. With close to two decades in the industry, she has had stints with Reckitt Benckiser, Dabur India and Nestle.

Hyundai Motor

Hyundai Motor India (HMIL) has appointed Tarun Garg as director — Sales, Marketing and Service. An alumnus of the Delhi College of Engineering and Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow, Garg brings 25 years of experience in marketing, sales, network development, used car business. Prior to the latest appoint at HMIL, Garg was executive director — Marketing, Parts and Logistics at Maruti Suzuki India.

Future Consumer

Future Consumer has named industry veteran Rajnikant Sabnavis as CEO with effect from January 1, 2020. Sabnavis' appointment underscores the company's focus on driving sustainable profitable growth by leveraging deep expertise of the management team. Sabnavis brings in over 30 years of experience in creating and leading dynamic FMCG brands across India.

OYO

OYO Hotels & Homes has announced the elevation and addition of Aditya Ghosh, presently CEO, India & South Asia for the hotels and homes business, to the company's board of directors. Ghosh's addition makes it a powerful, diverse, and truly global combination.

MEDIA

IN10 Media Network

IN10 Media has announced the strengthening of its leadership team and confirmed the hiring of four senior media executives. The appointments are across top leadership in brands and on the network position.

Kavita Sagar will serve as senior VP — Revenue. With over 19-plus years of experience in advertising sales across genres and different markets, she has a proven track record across media giants like Start TV Network and NDTV.

Mansi Darbar, will serve as VP — Corporate Strategy and Development.

Sourjya Mohanty will serve as COO for EPIC On. A 15-year veteran, Mohanty last served as the head of Business Development at Zee5.

Mona Merchant will serve as

head — Television for Juggernaut Productions. She has worked as a content creator for over 12 years with top production houses like BBC WST; Synergy Communications, BAG Films; Plus Channel, Ketan Mehta's Maya Entertainment; Applause Entertainment on various fiction and nonfiction shows.

Optimystix Entertainment

Optimystix, the leading production house in both fiction and nonfiction programming, has appointed Rajesh Bahl as director and Group CEO.

In his role, Bahl will not only be responsible for Optimystix's growth strategy, but also help the company accelerate its next phase of growth and transformation from a bespoke TV production company to creating and producing digital content and venturing into feature film business.

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