

afags! Reporter

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INTERVIEW

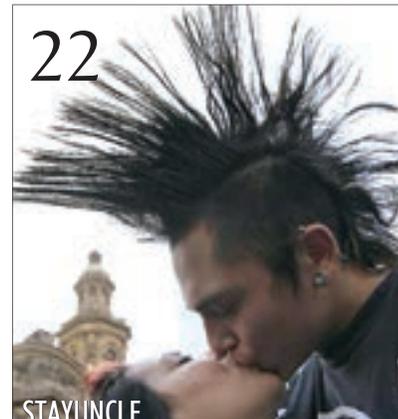
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MANAGING DIRECTOR,
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WANTED A
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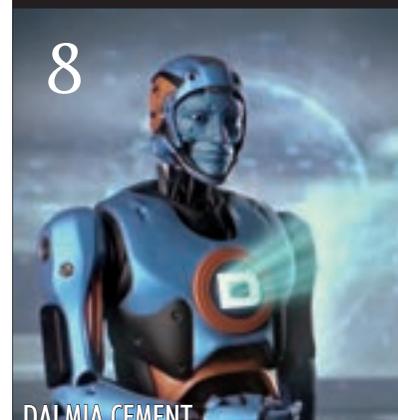


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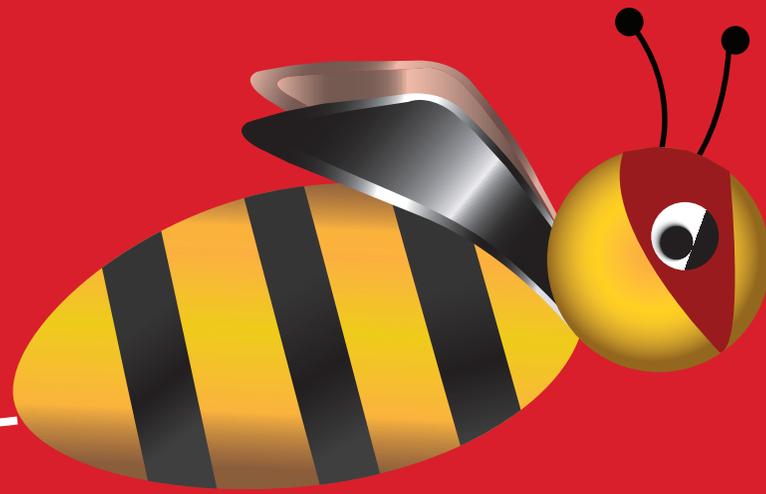
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This fortnight...



The one thought that leaps to mind after reading Vikram Mehra's interview is this: "is old the new, new?"

In a market where noise levels of pitching to Millennials are deafening, the story of Saregama India's portable music player Carvaan comes as a whiff of fresh air. In always-connected, digital world, one would not have imagined that retro songs arranged randomly in a box would reverberate so resonantly with consumers and revive a brand's fortunes so spectacularly.

Mehra - and Saregama - had a simple insight: music can be taken to the people and not necessarily the other way around. Taking a contrarian point of view and sticking to their guns paid off handsomely. Saregama chalked out its course quietly with an eye on the older consumer while others fought for slices of the under-30-consumer market.

That begs the question: are there other categories in which marketers could tap the older consumer? Music has more examples. In December 2016, sales of vinyl records in the UK overtook money spent on digital music purchases for the first time in history. This after almost dying out around 2006.

The gaming industry witnessed the return of old consoles. Atari, Game Boy and Sega Megadrive have made a reappearance much to the joy of old gamers. This year's CES 2018 saw Nintendo's original Game Boy come back 28 years after it was first released, when computing firm Hyperkin revealed an upgraded version in Las Vegas.

The mobile industry too had its share of retro when Nokia reintroduced its 'classic' 3310 hand-set. Such launches brought back fond memories and not just in people who buy them. But nostalgia is not the only reason behind the success. Marketers like Mehra don't leave things to chance. On the ball always, the man on this fortnight's cover makes it a point to visit 25 consumers - at their homes - every month.

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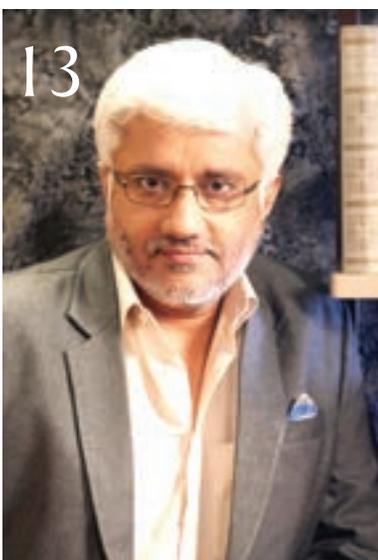
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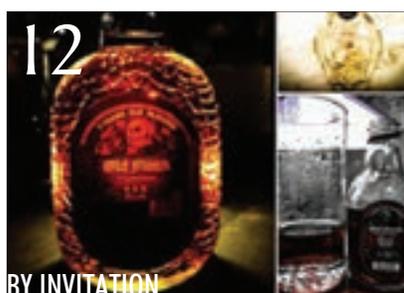


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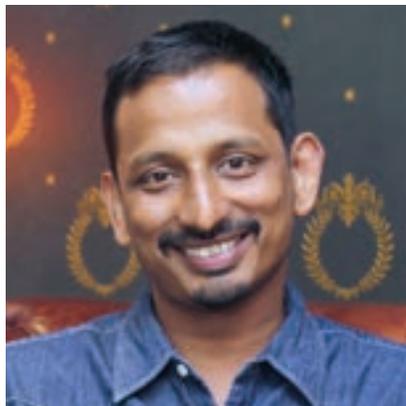
The campaign '#StrongerTogether' has been conceptualised by Ogilvy India. By Suraj Ramnath

Vodafone India is back with its adorable mascot 'Cheeka' the Pug in a recently launched TVC '#StrongerTogether'. This time, there are multiple Pugs featured in the ad film. The ad has been conceptualised by Ogilvy India and directed by Nirvana Films' Prakash Varma.

Talking about the challenges he faced while shooting the film, Varma says, "The most challenging part was handling 30 dogs. When you are handling one dog it is much easier, but when it comes to 30, at the end of the day, they are animals and won't walk in straight lines and will be all over the place; but they were trained very well."

afaqs! Reporter asked him how different the shooting challenge was compared to the first film he shot with a Pug. He says, "When I shot the very first film, it looked difficult even though it was just a single dog. Now, after shooting this film and when I look back at that film, it was definitely easier the first time. I had to cut and re-take shots many times because of specific things. There is a structure in the film. It starts with one dog, then two, then four; the number keeps going up and the multiplication of the dogs was very important for the communication of the story because the film says that 'we are adding a tower every hour'."

The dogs were recruited by a coordinator and the trainer who trained them for two weeks. It took the production house three days to



"The decision to use the Pug is never pre-planned. It always depends on what is right for the brief and the key message that is to be delivered."

KIRAN ANTONY

but we gave them a clear storyboard in terms of what exactly happens in the film. Each one of them came through a coordinator and a trainer and that's how we managed to get the dogs. They were all very excited when they came. Initially, I thought there would be a problem, but it was taken care of."

Last year Vodafone introduced the Dhananjayans (Asha-Bala) as their new mascots. They already had the Pug and Zoozoos in their kitty.

Rajiv Rao, former national creative director of Ogilvy India, had introduced the Pug when the brand was still known as Hutch.

shoot the film.

Varma tells afaqs! Reporter that it was much easier to convince the Pug owner in the first film compared to the current scenario. "Fortunately, in this particular film, each and every dog owner was very supportive and they were all excited because we gave them a lot of time to relax and take care of their dogs, so they were all fine. It wasn't difficult at all," he adds.

So, were the Pug owners comfortable? Varma says, "In the early stages, the owners had no clue,

afaqs! Reporter asked Kiran Antony, executive creative director, Ogilvy India, how and when do they decide to use the Pug and how much of that decision comes from the client?

He says, "The decision to use the Pug is never pre-planned. It always depends on what is right for the brief and the key message that is to be delivered. And it's a collective decision by both client and agency. There is no timeline set for any campaign. Ideas are developed and chosen basis the task at hand."

Readers will know that Rajiv Rao,



"It is a fantastic film and very refreshing after such a long time. It's a treat for the eyes and a joy to watch every single time and at the same time, the messaging is done so beautifully."

RAJIV RAO

former national creative director of Ogilvy India, had introduced the Pug when the brand was still known as Hutch. So, afaqs! Reporter asked him about his reaction to the film. He says, "It is a fantastic film and very refreshing after such a long time. It's a treat for the eyes and a joy to watch every single time and at the same time, the messaging is done so beautifully - making the network stronger - which is shown by multiple Pugs. I think, overall, it is a fantastic campaign. Every shot is beautiful and I love the part when all

these Pugs look together at the boy when he stops."

EXPERT VIEWS

Saji Abraham, executive director, Lowe Lintas, finds the ad very clever and watchable. He says, "They have used the old mascot of the Pug quite well and in fact, have built on it cleverly. It draws upon the memory structures Vodafone has built in the past and uses them to good effect. Is it as endearing as the first set of Pug ads? Perhaps not, as the uniqueness of the concept is not as strong. Regardless, it has been used well."

He adds, "I think using multiple characters can work well for Vodafone as long as each one has its own unique associations and are used for specific purposes. Like the Pugs have been used for network and the elderly couple has been used for roaming services. In fact, using multiple characters is better than stretching one across all the services that they offer. This way, 'mascot fatigue' is avoided."

Luv Kalla, an ad filmmaker and director at Bubblewrap films, says, "Be it the Pugs, Zoozoos or Asha-Bala, every single one of them has caught peoples' imaginations and rightly so. It's like the Vodafone creatives at Ogilvy have a hidden 'charm-dial' that they turn up as and when they please."

He adds, "The commercial makes W.C. Fields' famous trope "Never work with children or animals" seem witless by capturing such lovely moments and making it all look so effortless. It must have been a real challenge to shoot this film, I mean 30 Pugs, but the team has clearly overcome all those challenges." ■

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DALMIA CEMENT

The Protector

In its latest commercial the brand **uses a robot as creative shorthand for high-tech.** By Suraj Ramnath

When was the last time you saw an Indian cement ad showcasing its strength through a humanoid robot? Dalmia Bharat Group has recently launched a new TVC for its product Dalmia DSP Cement. The ad has been conceptualised by JWT Kolkata, directed by Vinod P Vijay and produced by Lemon Yellow Sun Films.

The TVC shows 'D', a humanoid robot, as a constant companion for a kid, in sun or rain throughout his life until he grows up. From his days in the crib to his first baby steps, to adolescence and finally as a grown-up, D plays various roles. At times a teacher, a guardian angel, sometimes a friend and other times just a caregiver. Finally, when the moment arrives, he dons the expert hat and helps the protagonist and his wife choose the right material for their dream home. The film ends when the wife hands over their new-born to D and the voiceover says, "With you forever to build the future. Dalmia DSP Cement, the *dhalai* expert."

Talking about the reason behind using a robot in the ad, Anirban Paul Chowdhury, marketing head, Dalmia Cement, says, "We wanted to create a different line of communication in this cluttered cement category. There are lots of established players who are hogging the mind space of the buyer with their age-old advertising

The ad has been conceptualised by JWT Kolkata and produced by Lemon Yellow Sun Films.

and reason to purchase. So, 'how do we come in and tell people we are different and technically strong?' Most players convey the strength of their cement, so for us, it was about how we promote technical superiority. That is what we wanted to say and Dalmia DSP Cement is also packed with 25 benefits. When you say there are so many benefits, it is unheard of in this category; that is how the idea of D was born. Mr D is a *dhalai* expert. *Dhalai* is a concrete and the most important part while building a house."

He adds, "Essentially, we are trying to tell people that the 25 benefits that the cement has are part of one character who can do everything for



you. D is the image of technical superiority. His presence is to make the science behind the cement more believable to consumers."

The campaign is currently being run in the eastern markets such as Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Jharkhand. Dalmia DSP Cement's core TG is male, SEC A, A+, B and B+, targeting age groups from 25-55 years. The brand is doing on-ground activities and is going to promote the ad through 250 theatres in the above-mentioned markets.

Adding about the computer graphics used in the film and the challenge, Chowdhury says, "The CG was done with utmost care so that it doesn't look like a machine. It should look like something that is around you and cares for you, with some emotion. This imagery of the brand, Dalmia DSP, translated into Mr D. We wanted a high-tech agency which has done a lot of work on CG and we were satisfied with No Label (the Poland based graphics agency). We shot this in Poland and we have actually used a human being emoting on behalf of the robot and then we used CG to transform that human into a robot. Whatever running you see done by the robot in the film is



"Essentially, we are trying to tell people that the 25 benefits that the cement has are part of one character who can do everything for you."
ANIRBAN PAUL CHOWDHURY

done by the human being, an actor."

Talking about the challenge, Arjun Mukherjee, vice president and executive creative director, JWT, Kolkata, says, "To justify the superiority of Dalmia DSP Cement we decided to build on the futuristic platform. However, the challenge

was also to give an emotional hook to a technology product. We took extreme care to play up the softer attributes of the robot so that he exudes a certain warmth and makes the entire proposition a lot more believable."

afaqs! Reporter asked the experts 'if the use of a robot as creative shorthand for high-tech, works as strategy and does it break the category code?'

Bikram Bindra, vice-president and strategic planning head, Grey Group Delhi, says, "Semiotically, for me, the use of the robot as a creative device connotes futuristic, advanced and high-science. It is an interesting device that could break the clutter; the only question in my mind is how well it connects with the category hygiene of strength and endurance. Also, a device like this needs a larger surround, beyond just a TVC, to get established and become a sticky asset for the brand."

Anish Varghese, national creative director, Isobar, says, "I have a particular belief, in the era of AI and AR, being a non-involvement brand, it's a reasonable strategy to get the eyeballs of tech-savvy audiences. I'm not sure it can break the category code; emotions/fun worked well in this category, Khali's ad is the best example." ■

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DISCOVERY JEET

A New GEC is Here

With Baba Ramdev's biopic in its arsenal, **Discovery announces GEC battle.** By Anirban Roy Choudhury

Normally, whenever you enter a Discovery press conference, you are welcomed by giant LED screens with imagery of nature at its wildest or a tussle between prey and a predator shot in extreme conditions. This, however, was a one-of-a-kind Discovery Communications press conference, held in Mumbai. The stage had a few ecstatic twenty-somethings dancing to a Hindi song to welcome the gathering, then, stepping on to the stage was not a Bear Grylls or Ziya Tong but familiar television reality show host Paritosh Tripathi. He was handed the responsibility of hosting the event for the remaining part of the afternoon. And finally, it was time for the big reveal as the backdrop lit up to unveil the name of the infotainment giant's all-new General Entertainment Channel (GEC) - Discovery JEET.

The network does not have a GEC presence anywhere else in the world and with this announcement it somehow disrupts its long-running strategy. The channel will hit television screens on February 12, 2018, and will have a Hindi, Tamil and Telugu feed. The Tamil and Telugu market will feature dubbed versions of the original shows that the channel has in its programming lineup.

Karan Bajaj, senior vice-president and general manager - South Asia, Discovery Communications India, stepped up on stage saying, "JEET is a channel for the ones *jinhe kuch banana hai* (for the ambitious ones); the channel is built on the thesis of 'Hai Mumkin' (yes it's possible)."

In India, the GEC genre enjoys around 60 per cent (regional) of the total television viewership and about 50 per cent of the total TV ad spends. It is quite evident that in the Indian ecosystem, a broadcaster needs GEC and sports in its arsenal to establish itself as a formidable force. Discovery entered the sports broadcasting space with DSport last year and this year they announced their GEC entry. "As a business strategy, we want to expand Discovery in India; we want to go from the top 15 million, where we have the strongest affinity, to the next 120 million. The easiest way to do it would have been to acquire a channel in the mass space. But that would be adding noise to the already noisy space, so we decided



Karan Bajaj (extreme right) with the star cast of Discovery JEET shows at the launch event

to launch a channel which will have a differentiated offering for viewers," Bajaj explains.

Differentiated indeed! Promos were played in succession on the big screen and there was no sign of typical GEC material; no Saas-Bahu drama, no mythological characters, no reality shows... instead, the show-reel started with footage of a young boy struggling in Haryana who grew up to be Baba Ramdev and followed up with scenes which took us to the battle of Saragarhi (1897) and continued. Yes, the channel has the biopic of Patanjali Ayurveda product founder and one of the most talked about personalities in India, Baba Ramdev, in its lineup. "We will not do something that does not meaningfully uplift someone's life. It took us a year to prepare and plan what we have in front of us today. Every show sends across the message clearly, 'Mumkin Hai'. It needs to plant a seed of inspiration and that's what we aim to achieve," says Bajaj.

The Saragarhi story is produced by Contiloe Pictures and the founder, Abhimanyu Singh, tells afaqs! Reporter that they started working on it a year ago. This is a 65-episode show and has been shot in multiple locations across the country. Contiloe Pictures has a rich history of creating successful historical shows such as Bharat Ka Veer Putra: Maharana Pratap and Chakravartin Ashoka Samrat.

In India, production houses shoot daily and about 260 TV episodes a year; what took Contiloe a year to shoot 65 episodes? Is it because they

deployed a reduced workforce? "No. At times we had more people working on one unit than what we normally do for other shows. We shot for about nine months and then took around three months for post-production. What took that much time? Well, when you go into such deep detail, you need time," Singh answers.

In India, TV channels commission production houses to create shows and then pay on a per-episode basis; here, we have a production company making 65 episodes instead of the average 260 and deploying the same or larger workforce. "Yes, and that's why the budget is more than regular GEC show..." Singh clarifies. But how is Discovery paying so much more?

"We are not necessarily spending more," replies Bajaj. He quickly adds, "Let me make it clear, I do not make decisions looking at what the competition is doing. How is it we are not spending more and devoting a year to a show? Well, look at our shows; we do not have any expensive celebrities who will cost you plenty, our content is our celebrity. So, we are spending differently, but not necessarily more."

Discovery's entry into the GEC space may be unique, but there's more to it. OTT platform, Netflix, which is renowned for its rigorous vetting process, has signed a licensing deal with the broadcaster to have all its content on the streaming platform. "There was a lot of OTT interest in JEET's content and there were a lot of players interested too, but we chose Netflix because they are known

THE LIST OF SHOWS

Swami Ramdev: Ek Sangharsh - This is a scripted biopic series tracing Swami Ramdev's journey and is produced by Ajay Devgn FFilms and Watergate Production.

21 Sarfarosh: Saragarhi 1897 - The historical show is produced by Contiloe Pictures.

Mere Papa Hero Hiralal - Viniyard Films will helm the story of a Lucknow-based auto-rickshaw driver and his unconditional love for his adopted daughter.

Khan No 1 - Inspired by true events, the Rohan Sippy produced show will bring to life the tales of a smart cop and his tryst with conmen.

Comedy High School - This non-fiction show featuring Ram Kapoor, is a light-hearted take on society, culture, education, and current affairs through a classroom-based set up.

Gabru: Hip-Hop Ke Shehzaade - This fiction show, set in the world of Indian hip-hop music, is produced by Still & Still Moving Pictures and features Amol Parashar.

Anjaan: Special Crimes Unit - This is a paranormal investigative crime thriller show produced by Lotus Talkies.

Man Vs Wild with Sunny Leone - The iconic series will be telecast in Hindi where the actor will not only host but also undertake many difficult stunts while adding a dash of humour.

Lucha: Dangal Ke Sultan - This is a wrestling-based entertainment show based on the Lucha Libre style of Mexican wrestling with masked fighters who entertain the audience with their stunts and actions.

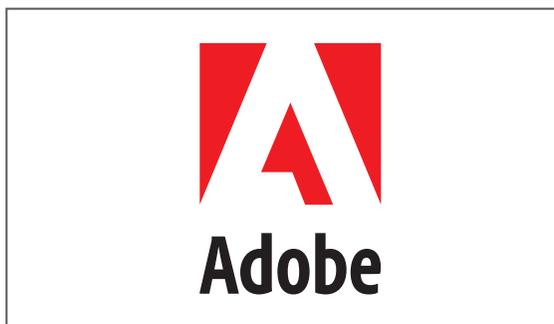
to be a platform with a differentiated offering and our content philosophies are also similar. Our purpose to be on Netflix is to target the diaspora audience and with Netflix, we reach out to 190 countries," adds Bajaj. The licensing deal is for a particular duration, which Bajaj opted to keep confidential at this stage.

Discovery is targeting tier II and tier III markets and has chalked out an aggressive marketing plan to lure its TG to the channel. The creative mandate is handed over to Taproot (creative agency from Dentsu's stable), "We will buy cricket spots along with other high-frequency inventories to promote the product. It is very important for us to let everyone know what we are doing, so we will have screenings at the grassroots level and a strong digital presence." ■

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GUEST ARTICLE

Old Monk - A Rite of Passage

On January 6, 2018, Old Monk lost its creator and patron saint, Brigadier Kapil Mohan (Retd). **By Prabhakar Mundkur**



There is a time in everyone's life when they move from being adolescents, towards adulthood. Old Monk somehow marked that moment in every one's life. When you look back at life there are always those defining firsts. Your first cycle ride. Your first set of trousers. Your first haircut. Your first love. And so on. When it came to your first drink, for most Indians it was an Old Monk with Coke. That is if you were born sometime before 1970, perhaps. In 1977, Coca-Cola was forced to leave the country. But Indians found another great mixer with Old Monk. Thums Up. I still know people who drink Old Monk today only with Thums Up. For fear that a Coke or Pepsi might adulterate the taste of their favourite rum.

Somehow Old Monk became so iconic, that as India quickly transformed itself into a whisky drinking country, Old Monk drinkers often looked down on their whisky drinking counterparts. Somehow drinking anything but Old Monk

seemed to be a little... well, it seemed like a 'sissy' thing to do. And who could deny that Old Monk tasted so much better than any whisky India could produce. When Scotch became freely available after liberalisation, the real Old Monk loyalist drank rum in preference to Scotch to show the others at a party that they were real men. Old Monk somehow exemplified the Art of Manliness. In fact, for some reason, Old Monk became a symbol of masculinity that strangely didn't preclude the women. After all a woman who drank Old Monk also portrayed a sense of strength, endurance and toughness.

As time went along, I noticed two types of Old Monk drinkers. The ones who would have it with water and ice. And the ones who would have it with a cola. I might be imagining this, but I started typifying these drinkers. The ones who had it with water, were making a different statement altogether, both about their rum drinking habit and about themselves. They were saying that Old Monk must be had with water,



because only then were you able to enjoy the real delicious taste of Old Monk. What they were saying about themselves was that they were real people. And I daresay they were also mildly suggesting, that the ones who had it with Coke were perhaps a little more feminine!

For some reason, Old Monk and rums in general have been associated with the sea. It was a common drink among sailors and if I may point out even among pirates! And rum almost has a mythical history. Blackbeard is supposed to have placated his crew with rum. Ernest Hemingway

is supposed to have made his way into Havana and popularised rum cocktails like Daiquiri, Mojito and the Cuba Libre. And while the Caribbean, Cuba and Mexico all have a great history for distilling rum, and produce excellent rums, even the well-travelled Indian will always swear by his Old Monk as being incomparable and standing tall amongst all the rums in this world.

On January 6, 2018, Old Monk lost its creator and patron saint, Brigadier Kapil Mohan (Retd). A teetotaler himself, the Brigadier has gladdened the cockles of many an Indian heart ever since Old Monk was first produced in the Mohan Meakin breweries at Solan on December 19, 1954. But the legacy he has created will live on forever. And the good old Brigadier will be blessed a million times for the many happy, unforgettable moments he has created for many generations of Indians over the last sixty-three years. ■

(The author is an ad man, musician, cyclist and coffee aficionado, who doesn't hesitate to speak his mind)

feedback@afaqs.com

PAYING TRIBUTE TO OLD MONK

Is this an Official Thums Up Ad?

A stunning tribute to Kapil Mohan. **And it has been created by an ad man from a rival agency.** **By News Bureau**

Within 24 hours of its creation, the visual of a glass tumbler full of dark liquid in the top half and, in apparent defiance of gravity, an empty bottom half, has raced across social media.

Below is the caption, 'The glass is half empty' accompanied by smaller text which says 'RIP Kapil Mohan, the man behind Old Monk'. Below, the Thums Up logo.

It's a simple, brilliant tribute to the symbiotic relationship between Old Monk and Thums Up.

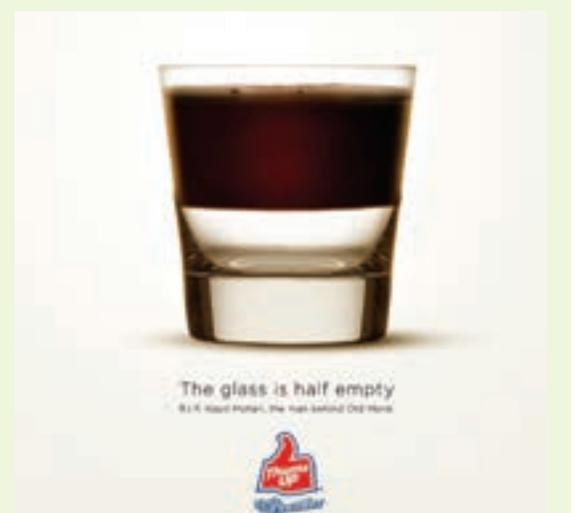
The ad is so tastefully done that most people

naturally assumed that this was an official tribute from Thums Up, which is handled by the ad agency Leo Burnett.

It isn't. The creator is actually Brijesh Jacob, chief creative technologist, DDB Mudra Group and joint managing director of its digital arm, 22feet Tribal Worldwide.

Recently Jacob tweeted this visual with the message 'What the folks at @ThumsUpOfficial should have done'. And he added a disclaimer, '(Spec work and not commissioned by client)'

Both Jacob as well as the spokesperson from



Leo Burnett, the agency on the Thums Up account were not available for a comment while filing this story. Meanwhile all we can say is that this is a classic case of how consumers treat the brand as their own in the age of social media. ■

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VIKRAM BHATT | The filmmaker is set to enter the OTT space

Testing New Waters

The constant buzz in the OTT space keeps pointing to the big potential of digital as the future of entertainment. This month it has a new entrant, someone who wants to start a 'theatre on the web'. With 30-odd films (in 26 years) to his name, filmmaker Vikram Bhatt, known largely for his horror thrillers, plans to launch his own OTT app on January 27, his birthday. The app is going to be called 'VB on the Web', just like his YouTube channel that was launched last year.

Bhatt has an interesting plan for the app. He will steer away from the monthly SVOD (subscription video-on-demand) system that's currently prevalent in the OTT market and make his audiences pay per show with 'ticket' prices as low as ₹10 to 20. The app will start with three shows — *Untouchables* (starring Bhatt himself), *Twisted 2* and *Maya 2*. This platform will also be open to external producers to put up their content on a revenue-sharing basis.

Overall, is this well-calculated strategy, or a bold risk?

For starters, Bhatt has already had the audience sample his content. Loneranger Productions, a company he started in 2016 for digital content has put up seven web series on his YouTube channel also called *VB on the Web*. Titles there have had consistent views, with some crossing the million-view mark; perhaps it is what pushed him to go for his own platform. We prod him on the move. Edited Excerpts from an interview with Shweta Mulki.

Investing in a standalone app is quite a step. What made you take it?

The point was to monetise digital content and there are only two ways you can do that — go AVOD (Advertising based Video-On-Demand) or have an app, I chose the latter. 'VB on the Web' on YouTube was more of an exercise to be known in the digital space over anything else. I didn't do it for revenue because YouTube doesn't really have any.

But there's a cost to this...

There is cost, but it's a precursor to the app, an investment. If I had come out with the app without doing any of these series then expectations would be - 'Vikram Bhatt makes films, what'll be in his app?' Now I can say *Twisted 2* and *Maya 2* are going to be on it. It helps in creating a web brand first, that was the purpose.

Will you discontinue content on YouTube?

No, I will always have content on YouTube. It's like a freemium model. For instance, we will start with *Untouchables*, a show that will premiere on the app and YouTube on the same day. It will appear week-on-week on YouTube, but on the app, it is for binge-watching; you can watch all 15 episodes in one go. On YouTube, the show will take 15 weeks.



"I think the Indian OTT industry has mostly taken the audience for a ride because one is charging subscriptions, but not delivering."
VIKRAM BHATT

Are you confident that this lag will be enough to make people pay for shows on the app?

Well, it's not a subscription app. It's 'theatre on the web', so when you come on the app and you want to see a particular show, you pay only for that show. It's like a multiplex.

Why do you think this will work with Indian audiences?

I feel that Indian audiences can pay any amount of money if they know what they are getting. If I come to you and say, 'Do you want to become a member of PVR for ₹2000 a month? You can see any film you want,' you won't go for it because you'll want to know what's going to be put up. But if I say, 'Do you want to see *Tiger Zinda Hai*? It is 400 bucks a ticket,' you'll take it. I think the Indian OTT industry has mostly taken the audience for a ride because one is charging subscriptions, but not delivering.

But subscription fees charged by Indian OTT players are not considered that steep...

Even one rupee is high. When you promise entertainment month-on-month for a subscription fee, you have to deliver. 'Have they really given the subscription's worth?' 'Are you giving me what Netflix has?' Because you'll need to be in the same league with these players;

with their massive libraries and frequency. I'm not that hotel with all the facilities you may or may not use - I'm a BnB.

You mentioned that you are looking at very low pricing...

It's going to be ridiculous; somewhere between ₹10 and 20 for a single show. There will be deals like season passes. The shows will run for 13, 15 or 26 episodes each. We want to make it affordable. We even have cash payment. We are working on a system where my payment gateway has tied up with general stores all over the country. Via GPS, it will help you locate the stores and you can buy vouchers.

How will you price this for diaspora audiences?

Well, it won't be like 5 cents, but between \$1.5 to \$2.

Have you braced yourself for the 'uninstall app' habit of audiences here?

Forty days is how long they say an app stays on the phone. Candy Crush is an exception... maybe. Content makes apps stay. Facebook too has to constantly innovate; if you don't sell something new every few days, even FB can become a MySpace. The apps that aren't on your phone network anymore are those that aren't creating anything new.

The Netflix show, *Stranger Things*, is up your alley, genre-wise. Any possibility of creating something like that here?

That's a quantum discussion, firstly we don't have the budgets, but it will happen. Indian television has missed the bus on the youth segment; it's women-centric and mass centred. So, the young ones are either watching American content or pirating or watching Netflix, Amazon Prime and YouTube. There is a huge market for youth here and for diaspora type content too; these are interesting times.

International players do have content that's local...

I would say Netflix and Amazon have still to make inroads into Indian masses. A Delhi or Bombay and other A-plus centres watching them don't mean much. Yes, they have deep pockets and will go more local, but as far as I'm concerned, throughout the years, wherever there have been big studios there have also been independent makers like me, alongside them.

Vikram Bhatt is known for 'horror and erotic thrillers' how do you look at that tag...

People spend a lifetime making a brand for themselves, so why would I push that away?

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WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF
INDIAN IMAGES





INTERVIEW

VIKRAM MEHRA
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
SAREGAMA INDIA

“Consumers wanted a lean-back experience”

Going against the grain can pay off handsomely as Saregama India - and its managing director - have proved.

By Anirban Roy Choudhury

In an era of Netflix, Gaana and YouTube, where keywords like chord cutting, artificial intelligence rule the roost, and where marketers are frantically rushing about trying to find the next best thing for the Millennials, here is one company that is walking a different path. The fact that new technologies come and wipe out older ones has not affected it one bit as it went back in time and unleashed a portable digital music player ('digital' being the concession to technology) that is taking the older generation by storm.

In May, last year, Saregama India launched Carvaan, a music player for the older generation with 5,000 preloaded songs from the past. In just five months it became the talking point between generations. In Carvaan, the young found a perfect gift for the older generation. The inclusion of Bluetooth and USB port meant that the former too looked at it with interest. The most interesting point of interest in Carvaan is this: the songs play in shuffle mode with no option of the listener being able to search and select the song they want. Available in two variants (at ₹5,990 and ₹6,390), the product offers a lean-back-and-listen experience to the consumer compared to a more hands-on role that the consumer is used to in this digital age.

“
There is a bunch of people that say ‘music should run in the background’.
”

Going retro - the player has three buttons classified by artiste, mood, a collection of 50 years of Binaca Geet Mala, Ameen Sayani's highly popular show of the 60s and 70s - paid off. Saregama (formerly HMV) sold 95,000 units of the Carvaan between launch day and September 2017 - in value terms roughly ₹57 crore). It hopes to sell 100,000 units every quarter in this financial year - which means that its October-December sales could touch ₹60 crore. Extrapolating this estimate would mean that Saregama's sales from Carvaan alone would be close to its topline of ₹182 crore three years ago.

afaqs! Reporter spoke to Vikram Mehra, managing director, who feels that the market for a portable player like Carvaan is 25 million Indian homes (in value that works out to ₹15,000 crore, if each household bought a Carvaan). In this freewheeling conversation with Anirban Roy Choudhury, Mehra, a former STAR India and TATA Sky man, talks about going against the flow with an anti-internet hardware invention, why they decided to invest in a physical product and how the target audience (both old and young) responded. Edited Excerpts:

What made you conduct the research that led to the launch of Carvaan?

In the first quarter of 2015 - just after I joined - we conducted a massive qualitative research across 23 cities to find out the music consumption behaviour of the Indian consumer across states.

Why we did the research is because we were saddled with the perception that 'nobody wants to consume music, nobody wants to pay for music and music consumption is not happening.' Now, coming from the entertainment world of Tata Sky and before that Star (India), I found it difficult to believe that because what I saw from Tata Sky and Star is that music is the backbone of every family in India.

So, what were the findings?

The standard feedback that came from people who are 35-40 plus was that 'we love Asha, Kishore, Rafi, Lata type of music and that for us is the real music, but our problem is you Mr. HMV you have just kept it with you and you are not putting it out in the market'.

But your music is there in all the major streaming platforms...

Many people began telling me that they were scared of apps and the like. They were apprehensive about what would happen if they pressed a button. All apps are designed for the younger, tech-savvy generation. Older people were saying, 'what if I press something and I get charged,



what if something gets forwarded unintentionally, or if an ad pops up what do I do with it'.

After the interactions we understood that everybody who grew up in the '60s, '70s and '80s were still looking for a lean-back listening experience. When developing technology, we assume that everybody wants a lean-forward, more involved experience - yes, there is a bunch of people that loves this, especially the younger people.

The other bunch of people say that 'music is something that we should run in the background and please don't ask me to intervene after every two minutes, I just want to turn it on and keep on playing it out there'. This is what we caught on to...

So, how did a device that looks like a transistor radio turn out to be the solution of the problem?

Nobody came and told us that they wanted a particular physical structure. The insight was they want a lean-back experience. So, we started figuring out what was available.

“ Our first attempt to test the waters with older people was a product called 'music card'.

Compact discs were on their way out and even if I make them there are no CD players to play them.

Our first attempt to test the waters with older people was a product called 'music card'. It went with the basic philosophy that since USB ports are available everywhere, a USB port-based drive would be easier to play. The music card has done reasonably okay, but it did not solve the problem. People started using it in cars. Another problem was that it was the tech-savvy crowd working in the private sector in cities like Mumbai, Delhi or Calcutta that was using it more.

Why did it not work the way you wanted it to?

The music card will play only if you take the card, put it in the USB slot somewhere on the TV and then use the remote control to change the mode of the TV. Older people were not comfortable doing that.

We realised that the product served a need but only for those who are more aware of tech. It was not serving the person sitting in Bareilly, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur or Lucknow. That was genesis of the Carvaan.

Carvaan is often criticised for the lack of options it provides. For instance, it does not allow me to listen to a particular song at a particular time...

That the songs will play in a random order is a conscious call that we took. We did not want to give the choice of going in a linear fashion because we realised that, in the old radio days, you never knew which song would come on next. Hence you end up getting exposed to songs that you might have forgotten. Remember that line in Forest Gump? 'My mom always said life was like a box of chocolates. You never know

what you're gonna get.' That is the experience we wanted to offer with the player.

Carvaan is not for those who say 'Now I want to listen to Lag Jaa Gale and Mere Sapnon Ki Rani'. Saregama's content is available on every major streaming platform. There are apps for those who want to listen to a particular song at a particular time.

Your advertisements position Carvaan as a gifting device. Was that deliberate?

The joint family concept is breaking in our country and it has been breaking at a fast pace over last decade. The common phenomenon is that while the parents are staying somewhere, their children are working in Mumbai, Delhi, Pune or Bangalore away from home.

When you stay away from your parents, you may want to gift them something on an anniversary, a birthday or on Diwali. The size of the non-wedding gifting market in India (formal and informal) is about \$20 billion, which is massive.

When you are gifting your parents you never gift sweets - you gift a watch, a phone, a shawl or a shirt. There came the second consumer insight. 'I want to gift my parents something and I am bored of gifting the traditional impersonal gifts. I want to gift them something personal. What is it that I can gift?' The answer to that question is Carvaan.

But if your product is for the older generation why do you have Bluetooth and USB features in the device?

The 60-year-old should not wait till his son or daughter gifts something. Our understanding is that people who are a little older, especially those who have retired, stop spending on themselves. They worry about how they will manage the rest of their life.

They have a problem in indulging themselves with a gift meant just for them. If you tell them that the product is for them alone, they will be like 'accha hai yaar' but I can do without it. However, if I start giving them an emotional reason - which is relevant to their children or grandchildren - it will work. That's why we have Bluetooth and USB functionalities added in the device.

Tell us about your regional expansion, you have already announced the Tamil version. What's next?

We launched with Hindi and then followed it with Tamil version, which is priced the same as the Hindi one and has the same number of songs.

“ Carvaan is not for those who say 'Now I want to listen to Lag Jaa Gale or Mere Sapnon Ki Rani...' ”



Carvaan is set to come up with Bengali and Marathi version after Hindi and Tamil

However, the Tamil version of the player has been modified slightly - in place of the Ameen Sayani button is one for Carnatic Music. There is also a button dedicated to devotional music (Hindu, Christian and Islam). We will launch a Bengali version in the next quarter and Marathi in the quarter after that.

How do you decide on the markets? Is it a decision based on the content you have? Do you have enough to do more regional versions?

Consider Bengali. We are sitting on the biggest catalogue of Rabindra Sangeet (songs written and composed by Rabindranath Tagore), we have a huge catalogue of Nazrul Geeti (songs written and composed by Nazrul Islam). We are putting all of that in the Bengali version.

In Marathi we have a lot of Lavani music (a genre that is very popular in Maharashtra). Then we have Asha tai, Lata didi and we will put all of that. We will launch in other markets too. What decides a new launch is the marriage between the demand and size of the market and the catalogue we have. Just now, we are exploring

Punjabi, Telugu and many other options.

What explains the launch of Carvaan Mini. Is that also based on a consumer insight?

The Mini version is not a consumer insight but a dealer insight. The dealers came to us and said that there was a large Bluetooth speaker sale happening in the 25-40-year age group.

They want something which can travel with them and they are also interested in listening to the most popular songs of that era. We launched two minis - legends and MS Subbulakshmi. The mini that is doing very well is the MS one and we have all the MS songs recorded so far in the Tamil Mini version.

Isn't the price a little steep at ₹2,290 for 251 pre-loaded songs? How do you justify that?

The Mini is a great Bluetooth speaker, which will compete on sound quality and features. The songs are there to add value and the future versions will have FM radio in it too. A good Bluetooth speaker in the market costs around ₹2,000-

“ Ever since 2005 I have made sure that I visit 25 customer homes every month. ”

2,500 - that is why we priced it at ₹2,290.

You have shared your projection of 100,000 units per quarter. How are you placed on that?

The target market that we have defined for ourselves is the SEC A, B, upper strata of C and R1. This is 23-25 million homes - people who

love their older music and we are sitting on that bank. Success depends on our ability to market the product to that customer. Apart from that, we have Indians outside the country. We have launched in the US we are getting into Canada and the UK in this quarter itself.

You rate consumer insights very highly. Is that what keeps you going?

We start thinking that we can run marketing sitting out here in our glass offices. I firmly believe if you want to understand what customer wants, you have to go out of your offices and go to the customers' homes and not just one or two. It needs to be a regular process because as we climb up the social ladder and get fancier positions as corporate executives, we start believing the world is what we know and that the world is people like us. That might not be a true representation of how things function and that is why since 2005 I make sure that every month I visit 25 customer homes. I plan to continue that process. ■

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IS

A New Brand Consultancy and Design Firm is Here

Indranil SenGupta launches brand consultancy and design firm IS after quitting Viacom18. By News Bureau

Indranil SenGupta has launched a new brand consultancy and design firm IS. Recently, SenGupta had quit Viacom18 as associate vice president, business head - Non Music IPs, brand and B2B marketing.

Launched in January, IS has already bagged the branding and communication assignment for the Mumbai Shopping Festival, completed the design of Showtime's Mumbai office and partnered with OMCPL's The Color Run.

Talking about the new design house, SenGupta, founder and CEO, IS, says, "At IS, design creates the contours of an idea and we want to infect people with this passion for good design. We want people to delight in design not just for the sake of aesthetics but because good design solves problems intuitively and offers intuitive solutions for success."

SenGupta has launched the firm with two other partners, Anindya Choudhary and Dhaval Palrecha.

Choudhary is a partner and creative director at IS and comes with intensive experience in production design for ads and films and spatial design for homes and offices. He has worked on projects with brands such as Omega, Netflix, Hewlett-Packard, ICICI, and Godrej. His living spaces portfolio includes the workplaces for AIB, Encompass, Insider and Glitch.



SenGupta: on a new journey



Palrecha is the third partner and creative director at IS. A cross platform designer, Palrecha like most young people these days started working even before he was done studying. He has worked on brands like SP Jain School of Global Management, Tata Sky and international brands like Lilou et Loic (Bath & Body), RoviTravel, Vh1 Supersonic and Emerge. ■

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ADFEST 2018

In a New Role

Taproot Dentsu's Santosh Padhi named jury president for Outdoor Lotus and Press Lotus categories. By News Bureau

Adfest has named Santosh Padhi (Paddy), co-founder and chief creative officer, Taproot Dentsu as jury president for Outdoor Lotus and Press Lotus categories for Adfest 2018. The event will take place during March 21-24, at Pattaya, Thailand.

Commenting on the announcement, Padhi, says in a press release, "It's always a privilege to be associated with Adfest, a festival I love more than most other shows. Nothing can get better than this - I'm a passionate print lover and to lead two of my favorite categories is a real pleasure. I'm



Padhi: reaching new stars

delighted and looking forward to taking this opportunity forward."

Jimmy Lam, president, Adfest, says in a press release, "In recent years, I have seen Paddy collect so many trophies and achieve so many successes as the founder of Taproot Dentsu. It is truly an honour to welcome one of our favorite friends back to ADFEST to lead two categories that he has well and truly mastered."

The full list of jurors was not available at the time of filing the story. ■

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>> continued from page 13

Testing New Waters

I don't know when the last time was that I made an erotic thriller. I have made many horror films, yes. But on the app, we have varied content.

Web content is not regulated today, but one day it might be. How could that impact content?

There's already a lot of self-censorship on the web. On digital, people come for a 'particular sensation'. They don't want a story mixed with sex. It could be an erotic story, but it has to be a story. Thanks to Jio, most of India has data. If they want to watch porn they can. I'm not going to watch a film or web series with half-clad women when I can see everything online for the same data, on the same phone. Earlier, in films, it was different because you couldn't see it anywhere else; you bought the 'half clad'. Today if somebody comes to my channel, it's not for porn (unless I'm specifically selling that), they come to watch drama, suspense or supernatural thrillers. A real content maker would not fear online censorship.

Will Vikram Bhatt ever make a light-hearted comedy for digital?

There's too much comedy on the web. There are whole channels doing rom-coms, husband-wife situations and there's no point being another one like that. We are all selling different wares. Also, on 'VB on the Web', there's hardly any horror there. There's *Twisted Maya*, *Hadh* and *Spotlight*, these are out-of-the-box. We're going to have drama, supernatural and Sci-fi on the app. *Untouchables* is an emotional courtroom drama. We'll also have *Breaking News* which is about corruption in media.

Is it all your own money? Tell us about the digital team.

Right now it's all my own investment. I'm not directing any, but I'm involved in the creative and scripts, a bit on the casting and I, of course, see the final product. We have E-Creed who have developed the app, they are my CTOs too. And I have a creative team of six directors, writers, music directors, and editors all dedicated to this.

You produce content for Viu too, won't there be any conflict?

I'm only one of the producers there. Also, I'm not a subscription model, so whether I showcase it in my app and charge or give it to them, it's all the same.

Any marketing plans? Will you promote the app in your movie trailers?

I don't think you can market an app. The content markets the app. Awareness doesn't translate to intrigue. It may not want me to download the app. It needs content specific promos (which will be sampled on digital). ■

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EFFIES 2018

Winning in Style

McCann Worldgroup India is Agency of the Year while the Grand Effie goes to Ogilvy India. By Suraj Ramnath

At the Effie Awards ceremony, which is organised by the Ad Club of Bombay, McCann Worldgroup India bagged the Agency of the Year award. The agency went on to win five Golds and finished with 238 points.

McCann Worldgroup India won its first Gold award for Harpic's 'Toilet - Ek Shame Katha' campaign for Reckitt Benckiser India (Consumer Products - Cosmetics & Toiletries, Personal Hygiene category). The agency won three Gold awards for One97 Communications' Paytm campaigns. The first Gold was 'Helping India conquer Note-Bandi' campaign (Services - Financial Services category). The second Gold was for 'India's Biggest Crash Course in Financial Literacy' campaign (Corporate Advertising / Reputation category) and the third Gold was for 'A Sticker That Brought Hope' campaign (Experiential Marketing / Brand Experience category). The agency went on to win its final Gold award for Narayana Health's 'Opening the door for breast self-examination in rural India' campaign (Healthcare category).

Ogilvy that followed at second position with 177 points ended up with Grand Effie award and 4 Golds. The agency won Grand Effie award for Star Plus' 'Nayi Soch' campaign. The first two Gold awards was won by the agency was for Yum Restaurants Marketing's 'Dominos Loves Pizza Hut!' campaign for Pizza Hut and for Perfetti Van Melle India's 'Chupa Chups - Take fun



McCann Worldgroup India team celebrating the Agency of the Year award



One97 Communication team celebrates after winning the Client of the Year award



Team members of Ogilvy & Mather India celebrate post winning the Grand Effie award

seriously' campaign (Consumer Products - Confectionary & Food category). The third Gold award was for Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan's '(Jaane Kya Dikh Jaye) You haven't seen it all' campaign (Services - Others category) and the last Gold award was for Amazon Seller Services' 'Inspiring India's New Dreamers' campaign for Amazon.in (Integrated

Advertising Campaign category).

JWT won a Gold award for United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) India's 'Every Half Counts' campaign (Small Town & Rural Marketing category).

Hindustan Unilever won two Gold awards for Surf Excel's campaigns. The first Gold was for 'Neki Ek Ibadat' campaign (Consumer Products - Others

category) and the second Gold award was for 'Giving The Fight Against Dirt A Karmic Perspective' campaign (Best Ongoing Campaign category).

Medulla Communications won a Gold award for Indian Association of Palliative Care (IAPC)'s 'Last Laugh' campaign (Healthcare category).

One97 Communications went on to win the Client of the Year award with 58 points. At No.2 was Hindustan Unilever with 48 points followed by Reckitt Benckiser India at No.3 with 40 points.

Commenting on the win Prasoon Joshi, chairman of McCann Asia Pacific, and CEO and chief creative

officer of McCann India, says, "It is a great feeling especially in a year where we have possibly won all the creative awards. Whether it is a Grand Prix at Cannes, 16 Lions at Cannes, Grand Clio or Black Pencil or a huge number of awards in Asia Pacific, it has been a great year for us and to win Agency of the Year at Effies, makes it a full circle." ■

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IAA

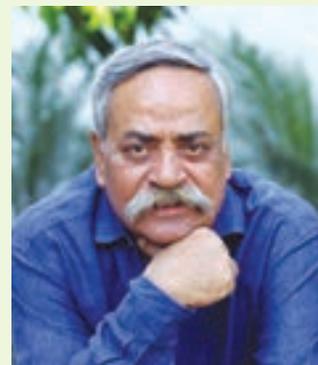
Looking into the Future

Piyush Pandey to present IAA Retrospect and Prospects. By News Bureau

The Indian chapter of the International Advertising Association (IAA) has recently announced that Piyush Pandey, executive chairman and creative director, Ogilvy & Mather, India and South Asia will present this year's Retrospect and Prospects. The event will be held in Mumbai on February 7.

Ramesh Narayan, president, IAA India Chapter,

says, "This is a programme where a leader takes a look at the highs and lows of the year that was, in terms of the communication industry and does a little crystal ball gazing into what the industry could encounter in the year ahead. I am delighted that Piyush will be doing this for the IAA. More significantly,



Pandey: the presenter

us. This will be the year." ■

the IAA will be felicitating Piyush and Prasoon Pandey for making us all so proud on a global stage. This is not just their achievement. It is an achievement of the entire advertising industry that Piyush and Prasoon have represented with such distinction."

Avinash Pandey, chief operating officer, ABP News, says, "Our Group has always supported the industry in worthy events and initiatives. I can't think of a better way to begin the new year for all of truly be one of the major events of

feedback@afaqs.com

GUEST ARTICLE

A Meeting Less Ordinary

A recycled version of an old afaqs! Reporter guest article. A New Year Special. By Vinay Kanchan



It was 7 am, Monday morning, a New Year's Day! A rather bleary-eyed client had been forced into his conference room by an extremely unscheduled meeting.

What really took the client by surprise were two facts; the first was the date and time of the meeting. And the second, that it was initiated by his advertising agency, otherwise famously associated with making the trip back home at that hour.

En route to the office, he had quizzed his subordinate on the phone.

"Are you sure this is not some infantile stunt, given that they must have been partying all night yesterday?"

"I assure you, sir, they wouldn't dare. They all know about your lack of a sense of humour"

The client grunted back in satisfaction.

He paused before opening the door, fully expecting to see an empty room, with apologetic messages about 'traffic trauma' soon to come streaming in. What he saw inside began to convince him that this perhaps, was gearing up to be the year of surprises.

His agency team were seated and in a state of agitated earnest. There was an air of menacing sincerity about them.

After the perfunctory greetings were over, the client quietly seated himself on the opposite side of the table. The president of the agency

rose majestically and walked across the room, his body and clothes still carrying the battle scars of one too many client meetings.

"Going somewhere?" enquired the bewildered client.

"Yes, a place we seldom visit. Your side of the table," replied the beaming president as he sat. The client pursed his lips slightly, but sensing there might be more surprises coming, volunteered his best smile.

Then the account director pushed a document across the table, it bore the title 'We solemnly swear', in an extremely self-effacing font.

"What is this?" asked the client.

"While this might seem like a document, it is more about a profound revelation we experienced last night," began the account director.

The three agency personnel, on cue, shared a deep soulful look, guaranteed to moisten the eye. He then resumed, "We decided yesterday, to unwind together. Driving around we found most places shut, extravagantly overpriced or ridiculously overcrowded. Then after taking one too many turns for the better, we stumbled on a joint we had never heard of, it was called 'A bolt of perspective'".

The creative director, unable to resist the ignominy of the spotlight being whisked away during a storytelling opportunity, changed man or not, quickly interjected, "Inside, the place, it looked like nothing we had ever seen before. There was a

bartender who seemed to have wings and maybe even a halo. We asked what he would recommend and he replied 'a stiff shot of moral fibre'. A few drinks and a lot of bright lights and flying saucers later, we found ourselves back at the office, typing this document."

"And all this is relevant to my account because?"

"We are completely changing the way we will work with you henceforth," began the president.

"We will be more accountable for every campaign. We will adhere to the sanctity of deadlines and only give you work that we can proudly stand behind. We will never be late for meetings, and always return calls," added the excited account director.

"We will not create campaigns for award purposes only. Nor will we shoot in foreign locales on the pretext of better lighting for pack shots. The only work we will ever present, is that which we think will result in increased sales for you," quipped the creative director enthusiastically.

"In fact, we will completely tie in our earnings to your sales performance as well," concluded the president emphatically.

For a bit, there was silence across the table and then the client spoke.

"All this is very well, but isn't this a lot of..."

"Sorry to pre-empt, but we know what you were going to say, which is why we have signed this document," said the president.

He then turned the pages over to display the endorsement of the entire agency team for all that had just been said.

"Well I..." began the client

"You don't have to say anything," assured the president, "we were just here to communicate our new-found perspective and to affirm that you now have a team, committed like never before. Since there is nothing of equal importance to say beyond this, we will now take your leave to start work, rather than indulging in idle chit-chat. Goodbye."

The threesome then trooped out, with the purposeful poise of an elite commando squad embarking on a critical mission to save the earth.

The client sat alone in the conference room and mused for a while.

After what seemed like an eternity, he then picked up the phone and dialled his subordinate.

"You won't believe the meeting I've just had with our agency. They said some of the strangest things I have ever heard about handling an account. I am really worried. I don't think they are interested in servicing our business anymore, they just seemed too sincere."

Then, after a pause, the client added, "I think it's time we called up other agencies for a pitch." ■

(The author is an independent creative thinking trainer and brand ideation consultant.)

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STAYUNCLE

Helping Couples

A cult brand with a unique proposition. By Sankalp Dikshit

Everybody knows about StayUncle, is how the two-year-old, New Delhi-based start-up markets itself on the company's website. But does everyone really know what this brand, a fast-growing cult, is all about? Essentially, StayUncle is a hotel booking website for both married and unmarried couples wherein rooms can be booked for convenient hours.

The venture that has recorded a turnover of \$2 million in the last 18 months, profits from the predicaments of nervous couples trying to get a room by ensuring the trip to be 'judgement free.' "That's our primary feature, providing privacy and safety assurance for whichever hotel one books for," says Blaze Arizanov, co-founder and chief marketing uncle (officer), StayUncle.

Arizanov, a commerce graduate from Macedonia, came to India from an AIESEC internship which ultimately led him to a tech job in the country. A chance meeting with Sanchit Sethi (co-founder of his first start-up, StayUncle and a mechanical engineer from BITS Pilani) at a social media workshop led to the eventual formation of StayUncle. As Arizanov puts it, "I was planning to wind up work here in India and head back to Macedonia when I met Sethi and StayUncle happened."

Speaking about StayUncle and their dealings, Arizanov says, "We are adamant about the kind of hotels we choose to partner with. We extend collaboration offers only to those hotels which are open-minded about the concept. From the receptionist to the general manager, we place scrutiny measures at all levels of management. When couples come to hotels, they have a fear of embarrassment, their legs are shaking! But when they book through StayUncle they receive fast check-ins and there are no embarrassing, cheesy questions asked."

The online portal which promises to provide 'couple-friendly hotels' in India, did not initially have couples as its core target audience. Arizanov and Sethi launched this company keeping in mind business travellers who would require hotel rooms for hourly stays. Realising that a majority of inquiries were from unmarried couples, the



founders shifted focus. The business models itself on the popular Japanese concept of 'Love Hotels'.

While the company finds itself on the right side of the law, it is faced with the kind of marketing challenges that come with operating in a delicate and guarded social fabric of the Indian culture. The company talks to two distinct sets of audiences - first the hoteliers (B2B) and second the end consumers (B2C). Arizanov explains, "The biggest pain-point is to make hoteliers agree to partner with us. Initially, the conversion rate was extremely low. Out of 10 hotels, only one or a maximum of two agreed to try us out. Now the number has climbed to five. But still, it can be way better."

Speaking about consumer interaction challenges, Arizanov

accepts that high rates on the website are one of the biggest consumer objections. "We, unfortunately, don't enjoy the benefits of economies of scale the way other bigger companies do, which is why we cannot lower the prices beyond a certain limit. We often get this as feedback - 'I really like you guys, but you are so much more expensive compared to XYZ players.' We try to explain to them that they are mistaking us for a travel

portal. We are not the ones to go to when you visit Vaishno Devi. We are different; we are about local guests, couples!"

StayUncle acknowledges OYO Rooms as its 'biggest competitor'. Arizanov snaps, "If you think OYO, (Rooms) for example, is cheaper than us, then go ahead and try to book a hotel. If you are a couple then see what happens; how you get judged at the reception, how you get knocked on the door while you are checked-in! Then tell us whether we are the same or different."

On the advertising front, the brand utilises unconventional modes that Arizanov labels as part of his "inbound marketing" strategy. Starting from 'Dikshi Auntie' courses on their YouTube page to open forums such as 'Naughty Sita', the brand has built a

StayUncle rejects the idea of having a mainline advertising agency on board.

nexus of advertising pursuits to follow and target potential customers in the mid-range income bracket.

"In our case, we do not speak about our services; instead, we speak about why people would need a hotel for couples in the first place. We go all the way to capture peoples' attention when they are still single. For example, people need help to get hooked up and here comes Dikshi into the picture with her online courses on



"When couples come to hotels, they have a fear of embarrassment, their legs are shaking! But when they book through StayUncle they receive fast check-ins and there are no embarrassing, cheesy questions asked."

BLAZE ARIZANOV

dating. When people apply her course tips and they actually work, they will then remember us. So the brand is already established in their minds, way before they become actual users of our services," informs Arizanov.

StayUncle rejects the idea of having a mainline advertising agency on board since the primary channel of advertising remains word of mouth. "If I have to spend so much money I would rather burn it or give it back to my customers as discounted prices," exclaims Arizanov.

At present, the company is present through its tie-ups with hotels in 40 cities in India, including New Delhi, Mumbai and Bhubaneswar, among others. The company is growing at a steady pace and plans to expand to tier two and tier three cities which are in the pipeline. As a long-term goal, the company would like to enter the offline space as well. "We plan to launch our first set of brands which are the Love Hotels, our very own hotels," Arizanov signs off. ■

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POKER SPORTS LEAGUE

Betting Big

Dabur's Amit Burman is co-founder of the Poker Sports League. By Anirban Roy Choudhury

First, stickers on rickshaws and hoardings in top metros and now, television broadcasts; Poker, along with its growing popularity, is becoming more and more mainstream in India.

Online today, there are poker tournaments that lure players on the dot-com with up to one crore in prize money. This is a level up Amit Burman, vice-chairman of Ayurvedic product specialists Dabur India, has invested in starting a poker league in India. The Poker Sports League (PSL) started last year and in season two, the organisers have upped the prize money to ₹3.6 crore. It's not just the prize money that's been upped, however, this year the league will have 12 teams, last year it started with nine. All teams were sold in an auction and the highest bidder took home the franchise. But what caught our attention is that the league owners have inked a deal with national sportscaster, DSport, to air the poker championship on TV. This is the first time an Indian poker league/ tournament will be televised on national television. Quite some time ago, AXN would telecast episodes with some of the best poker action from around the world.

But what got Amit Burman into it? "I play a little bit of poker and whenever we research about the game, we found that in a lot of countries, poker is considered a mind sport, but in India, the whole perception is that it's gambling because it's played with cards. I believe the perception is primarily because of the Diwali and Teen-Patti connection. I want to bring poker out of the gambling area into a sport and the first step in that direction was the league," Burman informs. Apart from Burman, Anuj Gupta and Pranav Bagai are the two other co-founders of the league.

Telecasting the game on TV is a move in that direction feels Burman, "The launch of the Poker Sports League (PSL) was our first step in changing people's perceptions. So, here there are 12 teams battling it out for a final prize, exactly how it happens in the IPL (Indian Premier League, domestic franchise cricket league), PKL (Pro Kabaddi League) or PBL (Premier Badminton League)," he asserts.

But how does a TV presence help



the cause? "The moment something is on TV you start seeing it differently. Remember, we roped in champion chess player Viswanathan Anand as a brand ambassador and he agreed to join us because he too believes that poker is a mind sport and is not gambling. In India, if you want to communicate something to the general public, TV is the best and most respectable medium," opines Burman.

The league owners have paid the broadcaster "a sum" and in return, the newly-launched sports channel will handle production and packaging. "It's a win-win deal for us. In May we will have our finals which will be played over two days and that is about 30 hours of poker. We plan to make around 10 one-hour episodes from the 30 hours and telecast it in the month of June," informs Burman.

The league's owners will also tie up with an over-the-top service provider which will stream the tournament live. But who will watch it on TV or on the streaming platforms? "People who are just starting to play poker; they won't sit for 30 hours to watch each and every hand that's dealt. For

them, it will be easy to learn and follow the game on TV. While the hardcore fans will watch it live on the OTT platform," expects Burman.

Media rights are a great source of revenue for league owners across the globe; Burman feels that in the long run, the Poker Sports League will also rake in dollars from media partnerships. "Not as much as IPL or PKL, but there is a niche audience base which will watch it and I think the time has come for us to look beyond physical sports," he says.

Burman himself is an advertiser and from that perspective, he feels the sport has a lot to offer brands. "It is a mind game played by the young and the old, male and female, sitting all together which is a unique proposition that no other sport can offer at this stage," says he.

But which are the brands that can possibly buy a poker spot? "Worldwide, a lot of car brands associate with poker; we have seen a lot of eyewear brands sponsoring poker and we have also seen watch brands sponsoring poker; so, we are talking to all such brands and individual franchises are also speaking to the brands because they want sponsors for their jerseys," says Burman.

Each franchise owner has an agreement for eight years and the owners will payout the winning bid over the eight-year period and that for now is the biggest source of revenue for the league owners. Apart from the league owners will get a share of sponsorship revenue raked in individual franchises. "We will have a central sponsor too sponsoring the league and in the long run I do see money coming in from TV," he adds.



"I want to bring poker out of the gambling area into a sport and the first step in that direction was the league."
AMIT BURMAN

Each team will have a mentor, two professional poker players, four amateurs and two wildcards. "The amateurs will be selected from a series of online and on-ground tournaments. The tournaments have already started and mentors are monitoring them. The wildcard is a very interesting concept; through this, the owner can get any two players to play for his team. It could be the owner himself, a celebrity or the best player on the continent," informs Burman.

TS Panesar, business head DSport, is also upbeat about the TV telecast. He says, "Poker has been broadcast on sports channels across the globe since 1978. In India, this will be a first. The PSL team is committed to creating an excellent broadcast-friendly show, to reach out to sports lovers across the subcontinent and make this an exceptional experience for them. We are elated to associate ourselves in this first-of-its-kind journey."

DSport is the Indian version of European sports broadcasting giant Eurosport. In February 2017 Discovery Communications which owns Eurosport launched the channel in India and branded it DSport. ■

anirban.choudhury@afaqs.com

New campaigns across television, print, out-of-home and digital media.

VIDEOS



STAYUNCLE
New Delhi based start-up, StayUncle's digital video talks about the company's business which helps couples to book rooms for convenient hours.
Creative Agency: In-house



DALMIA CEMENT
Dalmia Bharat Group has recently launched a new TVC for its product Dalmia DSP Cement showcasing its strength through a humanoid robot.
Creative Agency: JWT Kolkata



AXIS BANK
Axis Bank has released a new ad titled, '#KhushiKeAansu'. In the one-and-a-half minute long video the ad serves as an investor awareness initiative.
Creative Agency: The Womb



NIVEA
NIVEA has come up with a new campaign for its Roll-on deodorants range. The ads talk about how the product can help solve the problem of body odour in winters.
Creative Agency: DigitasLBi



MCDONALD'S
McDonald's in a digital film tells the story of a 35-year-old child, Sunil who harbors a passion for collecting the brand's 'Happy Meal' toys.
Creative Agency: Leo Burnett



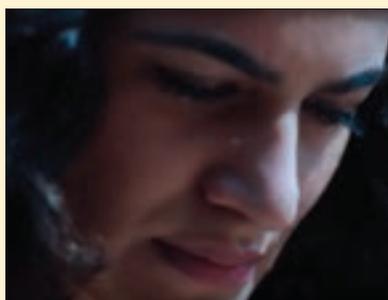
5 STAR
5 Star has released an ad film, titled 'Jo khaaye alag level pe kho jaaye', for its new variant '5 Star 3D', and features the brand's famous faces — 'Ramesh and Suresh'.
Creative Agency: Ogilvy & Mather



SWIGGY
Swiggy has launched its first integrated campaign. It pivots around how consumers turn to Swiggy on any occasion owing to the superior food ordering experience.
Creative Agency: Lowe Lintas



VODAFONE
Vodafone has come up with a new campaign that marks the return of the brand's mascot – Cheeka – India's favourite pug.
Creative Agency: Ogilvy & Mather



IDEA
Idea has come up with a new ad titled 'A video can change your life'. The ad film talks about the power of online video viewing in bringing about a change in the society.
Creative Agency: BBDO



GOOGLE MAPS
The ad urges viewers to 'Look Before You Leave' by utilising the service of Google Maps in order to avoid unnecessary delays by getting stuck in traffic jam.
Creative Agency: Lowe Lintas



ASSAM TOURISM
Assam Tourism launched a multimedia campaign to ensure that the state gets etched on the global tourism map. The ad features brand ambassador, Priyanka Chopra.
Creative Agency: Yaap and Crayons



PERRIER
Mineral water brand, Perrier has released a new minute-long-video which depicts how the brand has transformed Shanghai Metro into a jungle.
Creative Agency: Havas

PRINT

ASIAN PAINTS

Asian Paints' new print ad celebrates the achievement of Piyush and Prasoon Pandey as they are awarded Cannes Lions' Lifetime Achievement Award — the Lion of St. Mark. The ad reads 'Har Ghar Kehta hai, Well done.'



DOMINO'S

Domino's has come up with a new print ad to advertise its pizza delivery service. The ad mentions that the brand delivers food until 4 am.



VODAFONE

Vodafone's new print ad congratulates Piyush Pandey for winning the Lion of St. Mark. The ad, which features Vodafone's ad character 'ZooZoo', mentions that the brand is proud of Pandey's achievement.



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JOB SWITCH.in



Post: Art Director
Company: Think WhyNot Integrated Communications Pvt Ltd
Profile: A strong team member responsible for conceptualising and designing visual communications. Converting brand briefs into relevant and effective ideas / concepts.
Exp: 4 to 10 years
Location: Mumbai
Email: careers@thinkwhynot.com

Post: Senior Graphic Designer/ Senior Creative
Company: Momentum Communications I Pvt Ltd
Profile: The candidate must be well versed with Adobe Photoshop, CorelDraw and Illustrator. S/he should possess clean, sophisticated and innovative design aesthetic, with strong typography and interaction design skills.
Exp: 2 to 9 years
Location: Gurugram
Email: sushma.singh@momentum.co.in

Post: Art Director
Company: Collateral - The Storytellers
Profile: The candidate will have to create concept and strategies as per the brief understanding; ensure that the desired client time lines are being met. Ability to work/think independently, and lead a team, as well as ideation qualities are a must.
Exp: 5 to 7 years
Location: Mumbai
Email: nandini@collateral.co.in; prasad@collateral.co.in

Post: Client Servicing Executive - Creative
Company: Coconut Media Box LLP
Profile: Manage and coordinate all marketing, advertising and promotional activities of the clients, and the internal team. Brief the creative team about the client requirements, and get the job done as per the company's standard and client's brief.
Exp: 1 to 3 years

Location: Mumbai
Email: payal@coconutmediabox.in

Post: Senior Manager - Digital Media Buying & Planning, Media
Company: IdeateLabs
Profile: Assess and evaluate data that relates to circulation and distribution of certain media channels. Make use of web analytics tools to monitor digital campaigns. Goal based approach with a view to increase brand awareness, engagement and revenue.
Exp: 5 to 8 years
Location: Mumbai
Email: careers@ideate.email

Post: Sr. Account Manager (Female)
Company: Centum Advertising & Marketing Pvt Ltd
Profile: The must have a zeal to keep client's servicing needs on top, in-depth understanding of advertising agency functions and a fighting spirit to achieve targeted results.
Exp: 5 to 7 years
Location: New Delhi
Email: hr@centumad.com

Post: Sr. Copy Writer
Company: Haapus Creative
Profile: Looking for copywriters who want to make headlines. The candidate should have passion for writing and be able to come up with path breaking ideas. S/he should revel in story-telling across mediums viz TV, Radio, Print, Digital, Collaterals and other mediums.
Exp: 6 to 10 years
Location: Bengaluru
Email: ashish@haapus.in

Post: Senior Visualisers
Company: Blue Berry Communications Pvt Ltd
Profile: The candidate should have an diploma/degree from a reputed Art school with a knack for translating a creative brief into a work of art. S/he must be well versed with graphic designing

software.
Exp: 2 to 3 years
Location: Mumbai
Email: blueberrycomm@gmail.com

Post: Sr. Graphic Designer/Studio Manager
Company: Vermmillion Communication Pvt Ltd
Profile: The candidate should have a good experience of working with softwares such as Adobe illustrator, Indesign, Photoshop and CorelDRAW.
Exp: 2 to 4 years
Location: Mahipalpur, New Delhi
Email: hr@vermmillion.net.in

Post: Creative Head-cum-Strategist
Company: Digital Decaf
Profile: Looking out for a suitable candidates for the position of creative head-cum-strategist and Copy writer. The applicant must be a specialist in advertising or marketing. S/he must possess agency experience and have a creative flair.
Exp: 1 to 3 years
Location: West Delhi
Email: info@digitaldecaf.in

Post: Animator/2D Animator
Company: Landscape Outsource Marketing Pvt Ltd
Profile: We are looking for a creative animator to develop excellent visual frames with 2D or related techniques. The candidate's work will give life to storylines and characters in films, games or videos.
Exp: 2 to 4 years
Location: Gurgaon
Email: km@landscapeoutsourcing.com

Post: Art Director/Senior Visualiser
Company: Roots Advertising Services Pvt Ltd
Profile: We are looking for someone who is madly in love with weaving a visual story all the time. Brain smart, team leader, kick-ass, funny bones, extremely creative to the core.
Exp: 7 to 10 years

Location: Gurugram
Email: roots.recruitments@gmail.com

Post: Business Development Executive
Company: Span Communications
Profile: We are looking for a young and ambitious professional with good communication skills. S/he must be self-driven and be able to reach out to potential prospects, do rigorous follow-ups, acquire new clients (government and corporate), prepare proposals.
Exp: 2 to 3 years
Location: New Delhi
Email: resume2span@gmail.com

Post: Sr. Business Executive
Company: Classic Advertising Group
Profile: Develop business independently for Newspaper ads, Printing job, Corporate Film, Exhibitions, etc.
Exp: 2 to 3 years
Location: New Delhi
Email: ceo@advertisingindia.net, classichrd@advertisingindia.net



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>> MOVEMENTS/APPOINTMENTS <<

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

ADVERTISING

Leo Burnett Orchard

In a recent development, Leo Burnett Orchard, The Leo Group India's full service creative agency, has made some key senior management changes. The agency has brought on board Manav Rai Ahuja as vice president and branch head -



MANAV RAI AHUJA

Mumbai. The branch's former vice president and head, Sharmin Panthaky, has moved to the Bengaluru branch in the same capacity. Panthaky now heads the branch overseeing the Amazon India business, Leo Burnett Orchard's largest client. The duo will report to Mahuya Chaturvedi, chief operating officer, Leo Burnett Orchard.

At Leo Burnett Orchard Mumbai, Ahuja will work closely with executive creative director Amod Dani. Ahuja comes in from Leo Burnett India's Gurugram office, where he was the vice president. He joined the agency in 2009 to launch Telenor in India.

Cheil Worldwide

Nishi Suri, chief operating officer, South West Asia, at Cheil Worldwide, has moved on from the company. Highly placed sources close to the development have confirmed the news to afaqs!.

Atika Malik, currently Chief Strategy Officer is being promoted internally to replace Suri with

effect from January 15, 2018.

Suri joined Cheil Worldwide in December 2016. She was based in Gurugram overseeing the company's operations whilst driving new business growth and strategies. Previously, she worked with BrandCross Consulting LLC as international brand consultant and founder, and Miami Ad School as a guest faculty at the industry hero program. She has also worked with Ogilvy & Mather for almost 10 years.



NISHI SURI

dentsu X

Dentsu Aegis Network's dentsu X has appointed Arabinda Ghosh as chief strategy officer. He will report to Roopam Garg, chief client officer, dentsu X India and will be based in New Delhi. Ghosh brings with him 20 years of experience in research and planning.

Previously, he has worked with Indian research firms such as the Kantar brands — IMRB, TNS, Millward Brown and Nielsen. Ghosh was



ARABINDA GHOSH

also a team member at The Media Edge and subsequently Zenith Optimedia. Academically, Ghosh has a degree from Indian Statistical Institute in Masters of Statistics.

During his last tenure at Kantar, Ghosh was the key consultant to Coke and ABInBev for their branding and communication development strategy. He has also worked with British American Tobacco (BAT) globally, where he was instrumental in building relationship between BAT and Kantar. Ghosh has also guided clients on the effectiveness of cross media impact and how to harness and optimise the consumer journey to achieve the desired brand objectives.

Publicis Beehive

In a recent development, Publicis Communications has announced the appointment of Paritosh Srivastava as the chief operating officer of Publicis Beehive.

Srivastava steps into the role in place of Sanjit Shastri, who passed away in September 2017 due to cardiac arrest. The appointment is effective immediately. Paritosh will take over the reins of the agency apart from continuing to lead Publicis Ambience as its COO. He will report to Srijia Chatterjee, managing director, Publicis Worldwide India.



PARITOSH SRIVASTAVA

MARKETING

Kia Motors India

Kia Motors India (KMI) has appointed Kookhyun Shim as managing director and chief executive officer with immediate effect. Shim will be responsible for driving Kia Motors' expansion in the Indian market. Shim will play a leading role in ensuring KMI's projected timeline and schedule of operations is achieved. He will also oversee the construction of Kia Motor's first manufacturing facility in India, to help strengthen the company's position in the fifth largest global automotive market.

Shim, 58, brings over 30 years of experience in the automotive industry to his new role, having most recently served as head of Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia Plant Coordination Group. Prior to this, he was responsible for the



KOOKHYUN SHIM

head coordinator of Kia production in Slovakia.

Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance

Chandramohan Mehra, who recently resigned from Sony Pictures Networks India (where he was senior vice president and head marketing, Sony Sab and Sony Pal), will join Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance as chief marketing officer. "He will be responsible for all the marketing initiatives of Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance," informed a source close to the development.

Mehra joined Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) in 2014 and has been with the company for more than three years. Prior to joining SPNI, Mehra worked with SBI Life as country head - e-commerce, cross sell and international operations.



CHANDRAMOHAN MEHRA

DIGITAL

Snapdeal

Kanika Kalra, vice president, marketing, Snapdeal has quit the company. Kalra has joined McKinsey & Company, a consulting firm, as senior expert. Kalra worked with Snapdeal for more than a year. Prior to that, she worked with Hindustan Unilever as global brand director for more than three years.

In her previous role at HUL, she was global brand manager for four years. Before that Kalra worked with Pepsico Foods for nine months and GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare as manager for three years. Kalra holds a Post-Graduate degree in Marketing from IIM, Lucknow, and a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the Delhi University.



KANIKA KALRA

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