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Fake news is worrying - it has an extraordinary ability to travel quickly and damage the brand irrevocably.



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PERSONAL

If not a brand marketer, what would you be?

Marketing professor.

Name a brand (other than your own) you admire.

And Why?

Amazon. I admire it for its organisational capabilities, its ambition and agility of execution.

CATEGORY

What are the big challenges you see coming your way in the next 12 months?

I see multiple opportunities towards experimenting with new technology tools, sustaining brand relevance in the context of changing consumer preferences, fuelling relevant conversations and enabling deeper connect.

What's the biggest change in the way consumers approach your segment today, versus a year back?

To what do you attribute this?

Today there exists a higher level of category awareness, increased goal-based planning and informed decision-making. All life insurance players and regulators have done a commendable job of building a higher level of transparency and customer-friendliness in their products and sales processes.

Which product segment out there impacts trends in your category most? Why?

ULIP (Unit Linked Insurance Plans) continues to have high product share and customer affinity because of its flexibility, market-linked returns, lower charges, life cover and tax benefits.

In what way/s does your marketing strategy change from tier I to tier II and III markets?

The choice of consumer segment determines the strategy. Based on our recent brand re-orientation efforts, mass affluent consumers and 'Life Maximisers' (i.e. younger audiences) are our focus. Our brand essence of being an 'enabler of life goals' remains intact regardless of the market. However, the choice of medium and message varies based on the product.

MARKETING

What's the toughest part of a being a brand marketer?

Now is one of the best times to be a brand marketer,

given the favourable macro-economic environment and availability of diverse resources that allow you to rapidly deploy, test, measure and refine your strategy. The tough part remains connecting meaningful dots from the enormity of data, agility of execution and integrating the desired brand experience across multiple touch-points.

As a marketer in the digital age, what is your biggest nightmare?

Fake news – It has an extraordinary ability to travel faster and damage the brand irrevocably.

ADVERTISING

What is your lead medium of communication today?

Which medium do you use least?

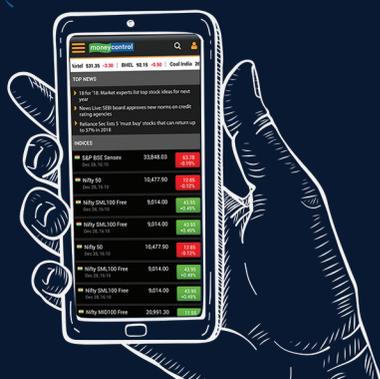
Selection of medium depends on the marketing objective. In general, we adopt an integrated marketing approach. TV is a key medium for its cost-effective, cost-per-thousand reach and ability to strike an emotional connect. TV is supplemented by print, outdoor and radio. Digital is becoming central to our communication efforts; we have been creating digital-exclusive content in the recent past.

Are the best creative minds still in advertising?

Certainly, there are creative minds in advertising. But reliance on creative minds in advertising alone cannot take brands far. Creative minds rooted in consumer insights, marketing and business deliver sustainable brands.

In what way has your relationship with your agency partners - creative and media planning/buying - changed of late? What's the one must-have quality for an agency today?

At every stage of the planning and implementation process, both partners are involved early on, to ensure an integrated approach. We expect both to have a clear view on the metrics of effectiveness, and rigorously monitor, refine and deliver on these metrics. Their solutions should be embedded in business realities, be backed by data, cut across mediums, have acceptance among internal/external stakeholders, and be relevant across distribution formats.



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