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PERSONAL

Who is your biggest professional mentor?

There have been several: Ketaki Gupte and Lynn D'Souza who taught me the science and art of media planning, Kunal Dasgupta, who called me his best 'goalie' and taught me the business of TV media; he helped me discover my killer instinct. Girish Agarwal, my current boss from whom I have learnt to relentlessly question every status quo and find answers. But my No.1 life mentor, guide, encourager, shoulder-in-need, strategist, supporter, and admirer is my husband Indriyajit Sethi.

If not a brand marketer, what would you be?

I am passionate about travel and simple cooking/cuisines. Travel marketer or travel writer and chef seem logical choices.

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

I admire Amazon for their tremendous innovative spirit. Apart from the fact that it is one of the largest beneficiaries of the e-commerce growth, I like the way it goes after a variety of competitors – Netflix's streaming service, Google and Apple's tablet, brick and mortar stores. Amazon's leadership in the e-book market, pioneering and dominating a new product category with Echo – the brand has displayed a remarkable ability to succeed in several categories, in contrast to some other greats who are good in one area. The recently unveiled Amazon Go, a convenience store with a 'no checkout technology', could potentially revolutionise the retail sector. I read somewhere that they are also launching a smartphone!

CATEGORY

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

The issue of consistent availability of measurement metrics plagues the Indian print industry. Newsprint prices are going through the roof, hitting bottomlines.

What's the biggest change in the way consumers approach your segment today, versus a year back? To what do you attribute this?

Incredibly, readers are paying more for their newspaper and reading more of their newspaper. Circulation, readership and subscription rates are rising at a healthy rate, year on year. Credibility and trustworthiness scores have gone up for print as compared to other mediums. With breaking news firmly the domain of Twitter and WhatsApp, newspapers have invested significantly in technology and presentation of news; today, images, headlines and sectionals are thought provoking and eye catching.

MARKETING

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

In my opinion, so many components of marketing are

new that it is a whole new knowledge ball game. Keeping the ball in play and in control is a tough job. Marketers today are driving tangible value and shaping organisations. In an environment where there are so many new toys to play with, I believe greater discipline is required to judge what will deliver desired results.

ADVERTISING

What is your lead medium of communication today?

Which medium do you use least?

Print, digital, social and out-of-home.

Are the best creative minds still in advertising?

Very much. India is witnessing a boom of young talent in advertising, film making, ideation and script writing. As marketers, we need to seek them out and harness the power of new thinking.

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?

I seek integration with our company's business goals as my top priority.