

Advertising: artistic way of marketing the products

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Agha Mohammad Khan

Not so long ago when we did not have a single round the clock television channel, when the words such as cable, satellite, and Internet were un-heard of, when there was no village located in Gulberg, where appearance of female models in advertisements and ice-creams advertisements were even banned, and at that time the advertising industry had yet to grow and nurture itself into an established one. In those days the common entrepreneur thought that he himself had the creative talents to make his own advertisements and promotional schemes while others interfered with the work of the advertising agency too often, and the latter practice does exist in one form or the other even today. Since then advertising, as we know it in Pakistan, has come a long way. New ideas, new concepts, new advertising agencies coming up, both the consumers and the advertisers getting well aware of the market, their competitors and their needs and wants. With over a fifty international and local television channels and two radio FM channels widely being watched and heard of in the entire nation, with the printing of several publications in both the English and Urdu languages, with a consumers who is spend thrift and has the got the purchasing power, advertising, as we know it has turned into a whole new ball game.

The winds of change began to blow in the late 1980's and early 1990's when Irfan Mustafa (CEO of PCI Pakistan Inc.) and advertising guru Tahir A. Khan (CEO of Interflow and a group of other companies) came up with a new strategy for the promotion of Pepsi (The Blues). The strategy was to capitalise on the emotional bond that the Pakistanis had for cricket while at the same time popular music groups would be promoted to target the young Pepsi drinkers who were mostly teenagers. The two names

which suffice in one's memory in this regard are Vital Signs who were the first pop band being officially sponsored by an International Brand in Pakistan, and the other is most obviously of Imran Khan. In those days Imran was seen teaching his skills to the younger lot, while the logo and the background music (lyrics) were both in the English Language, probably this was done so as to deliver the image Imran had at that time or simply just to catch the attention of the viewer. As time flew by, Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis entered the scene, gradually the advertisements became better and better and till recently the one's featuring Wasim where he hits a single wicket in by hitting the Pepsi crown first. If the presence of cricket celebrities wasn't enough, the background vocals were by Junaid Jamshed and the logo 'dil manga aur', would say the rest, while internationally we have the logo of 'The Joy of Cola', which has a completely different advertising campaign featuring Britney Spears. The difference in the two advertisements is the improvement in graphics, camera techniques, music and the overall concept and impact that the advertisement has on the consumer. And above all the acting skills of our cricket team members have improved to a large extent as well. Over the years The Blues have developed such a strong association with cricket, that whenever one hears the word cricket the soft drink comes to your mind simultaneously or vice versa. They have gradually increased their mind share, which resulted in strong brand equity and increased their market share to an extent that they became the market leaders in the soft drink industry in Pakistan hav-

ing more than 70% of the market share. All this was achieved through effecting advertising and choosing the right media mix over the years.

The Reds (Coca Cola) have retaliated in a big way, as they noticed that Pakistan was a potential big market where they were lagging behind their toughest competitor in many ways. The Reds used similar advertising campaigns as they sponsored the most popular sufi rock group, 'Junoon', convinced several members of the Pakistani Cricket teams in doing advertisements for them and so on and so forth. The amusing thing is that while some the cricket players featured in the advertisements are

ies showing teenagers enjoying the particular moment and the soft drinks as well. The idea was served as a major stepping stone in increasing their brand recall, while others such as Nestle, Pizza Hut, Paktel, Lipton etc did the same. The end result is that there is that the Liberty Round about in Lahore is being known as the Round About of Billboards these days, but the billboards, which are mostly noticed, are the MHB's while rarely anyone pays attention to the smaller size hoardings. This has introduced a new chapter in the field of advertising in Pakistan at least from a financial point of view, where the multinationals would go to any length financially to get the any possible edge over their competitors in brand recall, market share or both.

Apart from soft drinks there has been a considerable improvement in the advertising campaigns of all sorts of goods and services such as in the case of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG's), textile goods, industrial goods and various other kinds of goods and services. Moreover advertising has become a planned affair, as the major advertisement campaigns are being planned over a number of years through the help of a chain of advertisements. As in the case of Nestle's pure life, when it was first launched the stress was partially on the product category, which is mineral water and partially on the brand name, 'pure life'.

Over the years companies in Pakistan have also learnt the importance of establishing Brand names, because at the end of the day it's the brand equity that matters. Building a Brand name and an image associated with the name isn't easy and more than often is an arduous

task. As in the cases of detergents, especially the top three detergent manufacturing firms in Pakistan, who are trying to establish their different brand names by positioning them differently. A survey done by the scribe and a group of students at the Lahore School of Economics revealed that less than 20 per cent of the people knew which company produces the respective brand which they use, while in most cases they are brand loyal. Not many people know that both Wheel and Surf are produced by Lever, while only a few know that Colgate Palmolive, produces three brands namely as Brite, Bonus and Express Power. Nevertheless it is imperative for any company that there is no difference between the identity and the image of the product. Because if a difference exists than the consumers do not perceive the product, as the company wants them to, and thus a re-positioning strategy of the product will be made. As in the case of RJN (now VIM) which was launched as detergent bar but was used as for washing utensils etc, and after some time it was launched as a dish washing bar. While in some cases even if your positioning strategy is a bit doubtful, the product is still a big success. As in the case of Ariel, which is sold at a premium so it caters the upper class, the emotional appeal is used was for all segments while the Ariel marketing team wants to target Khula Surf (unbranded detergent) as well. So it seems that the product has been mass marketed but with such a high price only time will tell that whether the lower segment continues its repeat purchase or not. But at the moment the brand is doing pretty well and according to P&G it's the market leader while Lever has a different story to tell. Product repositioning is not only done when a product is wrongly positioned initially, it can also be repositioned according to the various stage of the product or industrial life cycle e.g. if the product is in a declining stage, as in the case of Squashes

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endorsing the drink with their names, they are wearing the blues logo (as the blues have sponsored the entire cricket team) throughout the day while playing cricket matches. This does leave a consumer perplexed and the endorsement may lose its value to a certain extent, though whether the campaign turns out to be a success or a failure, that only time will tell. On the other hands The Reds targeted the youth directly by showing them in various colorful ways in various advertisements in both the print and television media. (Godzilla, may not be one of the top grocers at the Box Office, but the Reds certainly learnt one very important lesson that, 'Size Does Matter'. The result were the Mega Huge Billboards (MHB's) put up in strategic locations in the important cit-

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and Sharbat's in Pakistan.

That is the prime reason we see that Jam-e-Sheereen has come up with a new advertisement in which it is targeting the youth, while Rooh-Afza has done the same by showing an advertisement on the satellite channels where girls are playing beach volley ball, now doesn't that ring a bell, but I am sure structural changes are required if the same advertisement has to be shown on PTV.

The competition among the top advertising agencies is getting tougher and tougher by the passing of every moment.

The customers have become much more demanding, the consumers are becoming educated (as in the case of their buying habits) while the media mix is becoming more difficult to make with the large number of channel and publications that consumers have an option of viewing or reading. Picking the right satellite channel and the selecting the right time requires a lot more than a simple hunch that which programme do consumers watch most.

In recent times Kon Banega Crore Patti (KBC) is one of the most watched programmes by our consumers and therefore a large number of Pakistani advertisements are being aired during KBC's commercial breaks.

One does wonder that advertising such advertisements on satellite may be very costly, but a source told the scribe that Satellite Channels change frequency of the satellite during the commercial breaks so that the Pakistani advertisements are only shown in Pakistan and cost a little less than they would cost being aired on the satellite otherwise.

Nevertheless if Ding Dong bubble gums advertisements are being aired on the satellite, one shouldn't worry as the company is earning roughly around the Rs 70 million mark. That clearly shows what effective advertising and brand awareness can make even a simple product a highly profitable one.

Advertising agencies have had their fair share of the problems in

Pakistan as in the case of the Always advertisement, which spur a chain of negative reactions among the consumer.

This mainly happened for two reasons, firstly the advertisement touches a taboo topic and the typical consumer finds it difficult to digest such an advertisement rather than seeing a cigarette advertisement on a regular basis.

Secondly, the concept of the advertisement was a bit flawed keeping in the mind the Pakistani culture, as it became a source of embarrassment for college going females when their male counterparts teased them about it. Zara Sheikh is one of the most talked about babes of tinsel town these days and she is popularly known as the Jazz Girl.

But her Jazz Girl advertisements, specially the hoardings, received severe forms of criticism, I used the word severe as the hoarding was burned in Karachi and removed from a few places in Lahore. What I found intriguing was actually the slogan, 'Are you getting it', which would make one raise their eyebrows as they would see the picture of the actress with a bare shoulder while reading the slogan at the same time.

Likewise the advertisement of Habib Oil Mills showing a mother and daughter kissing each other was abhorred by the consumers on a large scale and was quickly changed with a more appropriate one.

What may sound as a failure can actually turn out to be big success for such advertising agencies, as the hue and cry increases the brand recall and top of mind awareness of such brands.

All in all advertising in Pakistan has changed tremendously; the entire set up has become highly professional and competitive. 'Branding' is the key to success as one of my professors once told me that, 'it is not the name of the game but it is the game of the name'. Various companies are busy establishing brand names on basis of differentiation according to the four P's of marketing, which are product, price, place and promotion.

As in the case of packaging we see toothpastes now available in collapsible tubes, squashes available in plastic bottles etc, while in cases of promotions we have a wide range of companies giving several consumer and trade promotions but these promotions are becoming bigger and better at the clock ticks.

Pepsi some time back introduced the consumer promotion called 'apna music khud banou', which it actually launched in America a year ago under the slogan called 'make your own music'.

While 100 Diamond rings were being given to the lucky winners of a draw of people who bought a particular soyabean oil. The products are being differentiated from each other on every possible way while shelf space is becoming another important area for which good amounts of money may be paid for in the times to come.

Some analysts believe that consumers are being turned into zombies and being forced to buy things, which they have, no need in the first place.

While others believe that advertising makes the consumer aware of the choices he has in the modern day world and give him/her the right to choose the best from the rest. Advertising, which may look a very simple subject to an average consumer is rather a very complicated and extensive subject in reality.

It is a science in a way as you have different models and theories to know how a consumer will respond and react to various advertisements, does the consumer favour an advertisement which has more pictures in it (a visualiser) or they like to read more details in text form or the product/service (a verbaliser).

Though advertising is an art that it is upto the advertiser to come up with an advertisement, which meets the need of both his customers and his target consumers and in the end, creates high brand recall. In a nut shell its upto the artist, who can make a beautiful idea look ugly and make an average theme look like a masterpiece.