

Publication: Impact

Date: October 21, 2012

IMPACT

WEEKLY ADVERTISING, MEDIA & MARKETING NEWS Advertising Age VOLUME 9, ISSUE 18 - 21 OCTOBER 2012 ₹ 100

COME NOVEMBER

ARE ALL INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS READY FOR THE NOV 1 DIGITIZATION DEADLINE IN MUMBAI, DELHI, KOLKATA AND CHENNAI? WE ANALYSE THE ECOSYSTEM

CMO INTERVIEW
IN SYNC WITH THE YOUTH
ANUPAM VASUDEV,
AIRCEL

SPOTLIGHT
AN 'INVERTED PORTAL' CALLED INDIA.COM

BY INVITATION
THE CHANGING FACE OF EMAIL MARKETING

ANUPAM VASUDEV | AIRCEL

IN SYNC WITH THE YOUTH

“Rebellion is out. Confidence is in,” says Anupam Vasudev, Chief Marketing Officer, Aircel. He talks about the youth becoming more socially responsible, conversant with multimedia and sure about their brand choices, as well as Aircel’s association with the Bollywood flick ‘Student of the Year’

By PRIYANKA MEHRA

CMO FILE

Anupam Vasudev has more than 22 years of experience in sales, marketing, communications, branding and research. He is well versed in planning, directing and coordinating marketing in accordance with organizational goals. Before joining Aircel, Vasudev worked with Star India Pvt. Ltd as Executive Vice-president, Marketing & Communications. At Star India, he was responsible for Star’s core marketing strategy and process.



MARKETING TIP
Know your consumer.



Q| Aircel recently associated with the movie ‘Student of the Year’. How effective is the film medium in reaching out to consumers? Are there more such associations in the pipeline?

We are not into associating with films; our objective is to connect with the youth better. We will associate with anything that helps us do this. SOTY is a film fundamentally targeted at the youth and college kids. We worked on the film to help promote a new product launch - the Aircel Pocket Buddy - which is a part of their lifestyle. SOTY portrays young, fresh and upcoming challengers, and presented opportunities to capture our brand ethos. We are a challenger brand in the market, and reflect new things that are about to happen.

Q| What is your marketing strategy to reach out to your Target Group?

We have just introduced a new campaign called the ‘limitless’ campaign with Surya, the Tamil star. It really captures the essence of the Indian youth, which is confidence. Once they set their minds to doing something, they can definitely do it - this is the clear positioning of our campaign. If youngsters like to connect with friends, the Pocket Buddy helps them in doing so. Through this campaign, we have also launched the Buddy of the Year, which has a digital leg to it. The youth of today literally exist in the virtual world. We are supporting this through social media as well as television.

Q| What are the research insights that went behind this campaign?

The youth of India are extremely confident, passionate about their lives, the desire to achieve their dreams is very high. Also, the youth are not shy. They are extremely driven by ambition, open to broader career choices beyond old stereotypes such as doctor, engineer... and are discovering themselves. They are able to chase much higher goals. With these insights, we decided it was very important for our products and services to help them achieve their goals, capture their visions and missions in life by providing them limitless opportunities.

Q| Being a challenger brand brings with it certain roadblocks. How does the brand overcome these?

In a few circles such as Tamil Nadu, the North-

[MARKETING ZONE] CMO INTERVIEW



ABOUT THE BRAND

As one of India's leading telecommunications companies, Aircel is best known for its 'Save our Tigers' campaign. The brand started operations in India in 1999, debuting with the Tamil Nadu circle, and in less than 18 months, became a leader in the State by positioning itself as a 'pocket internet service provider'. The following year, Aircel established itself as a pan-India operator with

presence in 23 circles. The brand's latest 'limitless' proposition and pocket buddy campaign have resonated with the youth. Aircel is a joint venture between Maxis Communications Berhad of Malaysia and Sindya Securities & Investments Private Limited, of which the Reddy family of Apollo Hospitals Group are shareholders. Maxis Communications holds a majority stake of 74%.

FACTS

CREATIVE AGENCY

MCCANN ERICKSON

MEDIA AGENCY

STARCOM
MEDIAVEST GROUP

DIGITAL MARKETING AGENCY

DIGITAS

OOH AGENCY

MUDRA &
US ADCOM

BTL/ACTIVATION AGENCY

WIZCRAFT

PR AGENCY

WORK WITH
MULTIPLE PR FIRMS
ACROSS CIRCLES

east, Assam and J&K, we have a very strong hold, we've been there for a while and are actually the incumbent brand. In the rest of the cities and circles, we are a young brand and have to make ourselves heard and noticed. The way we see ourselves is really a 'pocket internet company' that has brought internet to mobile phones. Today, more people access the Internet through their mobiles, as compared to desktops and laptops. So, mobile phones have become the primary way of accessing the Internet. We want to sharpen our positioning on getting this revolution going in India and continue building on that. While we sell data and access to the Internet, we also provide strong voice services wherever we exist. We stand for value voice service, we have unlimited data plans in 3G and as well 2G. We are very focused on the data end of the market - we are a data player that also sells and provides voice services. Unlike other players who are fundamentally voice players, we believe data is the future of the telecom business and we are investing in that.

Q] Where do you think this category is headed?

In urban India, voice penetration is estimated to be nearly 70%- 80%, whereas rural India still holds opportunities. Urban India is coming to a saturation point where voice penetration is concerned. What we can see is people moving away to other value added services like entertainment, music and internet; so voice penetration is coming to a place where growth will happen through price increase rather than volume increase. Consumption will grow in the data and non-voice space.

Q] In hindsight, if you could change your

marketing plans, what would you have changed to get better results compared to what you executed earlier?

We did start very well when we launched the brand on the pocket internet positioning. In the last couple of years, we did lose our steam and focus in that area, we lost something we created. We are now building on what was earlier the core strength of Aircel.

Q] Can you share some recent consumer trends?

- Consumers are into multimedia, single medium is no more enough
- Indian youth are going through a dichotomy phase where there are elements of modernity and more social responsibility
- Rebellion is out, while confidence is in
- Optimism is very high among consumers, irrespective of the economy. That is both heady and dangerous

Q] Given your primary target audience, is customer loyalty a thing of the past?

Brand loyalty also depends on the life-cycle of the consumer. After you cross 25 years of age, you stabilize on the brands you want to entertain. The 18-24 age group is in an exploratory stage; there is less brand loyalty during this stage. Post this, consumers settle down. We need to remember that brands fundamentally provide a sense of security; you can't be taking new decisions on everything very often. A high degree of instability is added by changing brands often.

@ FEEDBACK

priyanka.mehra@exchange4media.com