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## **Aircel is among the top spenders of ATL budget on mobile in the telecom space**

By Saumya Tewari

Anupam Vasudev, Chief Marketing Officer, Aircel Limited, is an established marketing veteran with 22 years of extensive work experience in sales, marketing, communications, branding and research. In his current profile, he leads verticals like sales management, product development, distribution channel management, marketing communications (including advertising and promotions), pricing, market research, and customer service. Prior to joining Aircel, Vasudev served as Executive Vice-president, Marketing & Communications of Star India Pvt. Ltd. At Star India, he spearheaded the core marketing strategy and process. He has also served as Regional Marketing Director of Asia region for over half-a-decade at SC Johnson Consumer Products' US office. He also had a successful stint with Hindustan Lever in various sales and marketing functions for over a decade. A St. Stephens and Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), Delhi University alumni, Vasudev enjoys watching movies, listening to music, reading and traveling with family.

### **How does the digital medium - both internet and mobile figure in Aircel India's plans to reach out to consumers?**

Aircel is a young brand with a focus on data and youth. Therefore, it becomes necessary for us to reach out to the digital platform on which our key target audience frequent and create deeper engagement. Moreover, these days a mobile is the first screen for youth and their first experience of internet is on this hand held device. At Aircel, we intend to capture this audience.

We have also made social media a common thread across all aspects of business - be it listening to customers, customer service, marketing or product innovation. We have close to 4.3 million fans on Facebook and around 21 thousand followers on twitter.

We have started to successfully delight the youth, drive conversations around Aircel, and effectively track consumers' needs and feedback and are confident that we will keep this momentum going. We believe that digital media will only complement our traditional media presence and enhance our reach to our target segment.

### **Aircel has been launching digital campaigns for its various data plans and offers and also company's CSR initiative, '[Save the Tiger](#)' campaign. Which according to you have been some of the most exciting and successful online campaigns that the company has initiated so far?**

At Aircel, we emphasise a lot on our digital media strategy and have launched various successful campaigns for our products and services in the recent past. For this year's IPL we launched a bloggers

contest – Aircel All Access. We created content on IPL 2013 and gave people a chance to be the official blogger for Chennai Super Kings, travel with them, get up, close and personal and finally write about the experiences in a real time basis. The response to Aircel All Access has been amazing and we have been able to garner a high PTA (People Talking About) score of 9.5 along with 16k+ twitter mentions.

In addition to our social media reach, we also tied-up with Yebhi.com, in a first of its kind association, to provide talktime to Aircel subscribers shopping on the portal. Besides, we have a dedicated youtube channel where you will find content like Aircel ad films and videos that have not been advertised using television such as our Dhoni films. And this year, we have started engaging with bloggers through our bloggers' meet #AircelBlogUp. We have had its successful editions in Delhi and Chennai; in fact #AircelBlogUp Delhi edition trended for three days in India. We hope to take this event to many more cities.

**What answers do you seek from your digital advertising agencies and digital media partners while promoting your brand on internet?**

The brief given to our agencies and digital media partners is simple. Through the use of internet, we wish to engage with the audience and create love for brand Aircel. In addition, the focus should be on upselling innovative products and services and motivate customers to adopt transaction on digital platforms. Finally, it is important to keep it alive and exciting in order to enable customer interact with the brand.

As a youth and data focused brand, we have worked together with our agencies over a period of time to achieve different objectives starting from raising awareness, to extending reach, to creating a buzz around the brand and finally generating meaningful conversations and engaging with our target audience. What is needed at this time is constant inflow of creative ideas and a strategy that is cohesive across all media channels.

**How has been the uptake of Aircel's online recharge platform? How many users recharge online?**

Youth today spends a lot of their time on both the internet as well mobile phones. Therefore, online recharge platforms have been performing well for Aircel and the numbers keep growing for us. Understanding this need on people wanting to recharge their phones online, we have recently launched the first of its kind 'Recharge Store on Facebook'. The recharge app will allow Aircel prepaid customers to recharge their number on the Facebook fanpage itself. In addition, the recharges can be done through our Aircel websites, certain bank websites, and a dedicated mobile app called Pocket Payment etc.

**Aircel has a strong presence on Facebook with 4.5 mn fans and 20k followers on Twitter. How crucial is it for a brand like Aircel to have social media presence?**

Youth and young adults are adopting internet at a very fast pace today and social networking is among the top two activities done on the web which makes it important for us to engage in that space. Our presence on twitter and facebook is quite strong and we are constantly thinking of ways to increase these numbers. We are confident that through our effective social media strategy, we can experience

greater brand affinity, one on one communication, greater return on marketing investment, more customer lifecycle moments of value and address grievances in an effective manner.

**How strong is Aircel's mobile footprint in terms of mobile advertising and apps you have launched?**

While we are into mobile advertising and have been steadily increasing our focus on this space, we are already offering a lot to our customers in terms of apps. We were one of the first telecom players in India to launch app store called 'Pocket Apps' and since then we have been expanding our portfolio. We offer a range of apps to our customers ranging from mobile recharge app- 'Pocket Payment', mobile TV app- 'Popkorn TV', from offering the regular apps for games, utilities, imagery etc. We will continue to increase the range.

**People are speaking about mobile being a great medium for brand communication, but still, very less amounts are spent on the particular medium. What is your take on this?**

Our share of marketing budget has been growing year on year on mobile ad space and at Aircel; we take this medium very seriously. Today, in the telecom space we are among the top spenders of ATL budget on mobile. Though in absolute terms TV as a medium takes the lead due to higher reach and addressability, however, digital plays a key role in enhancing experience of a brand.

**How do you see Aircel India's digital spends moving this year - in terms of growth and focus?**

Aircel is a young brand with a focus on data and youth. Therefore, it becomes necessary for us to reach out to the digital platform. Our digital spends and focus on this space has increased considerably and we will continue doing the same.

**How do you see your marketing objectives aligning with what the online medium offers from two years down the line?**

There is a huge potential that we see in this space, not just in social media but in digital and online media as a whole. Our digital media strategy is already aligned to our marketing objectives, going forward, we see ourselves keeping up with the latest trends and opportunities and adapting to engage with our customers effectively.