

## Marketing Summit 2007: Reaching 'aam aadmi' in India

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"Now the global brands also have a focussed market, " said R Balakrishnan, writer and director of Cheeni Kum. Known more commonly as Balki, he is also the National Creative Director of Lowe Lintas. Balki was speaking at the session "Is there anything called the Indian Consumer?" during *The Marketing Summit 2007* organised by CII at Delhi.

"Every person in India has multiple identities. This underlies the Indian consumer. India being a strong family oriented society, for the youth boarding and lodging becomes free even when they earn, so they have a huge disposable income to spend as per their will. Typically, Traditionalism and Modernism co exist here. There is a value consciousness in the Indian homes, which lately MNCs have also realised. There is now a movement towards value added products as people now do not necessarily go for the cheapest ones." But before ending on this note, Arvind Wable, Chairman and CEO, FCB ULKA did not fail to quote author Shashi Tharoor "Any truth about India can be equally contradicted by an equally valid truth." He also used the examples of *Bingo* chips and *Scorpio*, *Toyota and Sumo* (four wheelers) to show how marketers were using different varieties and brands of similar products for different group of Indians to validate his theory of 'multiple identities and several markets within India'.

Charulata Ravikumar, Managing partner and National Head, Integrated Services, JWT India said that Indians now are accepting and managing their dual roles comfortably. "Spirituality goes along with changing values and modern and traditional go hand in hand. The difference between urban and rural is also getting blurred. Peoples' aspirations are growing continuously. There is a dual consumer in each one of us, who is constantly evolving, and people are accepting this now. So, brands need to recognise the double role and look for key inflexion points relevant to the category to position themselves."

Vijay Mallya, Chairman and CEO, UB Group started his Keynote Address giving his definition of 'Brand' as 'a personality', 'as a person you can communicate to' and 'not as a commodity'. He said 'luxury' according to him is 'aspiration', 'something that one looks forward to'. Adding, he said, while he was in the process of establishing Kingfisher as a brand, he had realised that India was a very young country and Young India wanted something that was 'rocking'. So he linked his brands with lifestyle and sports, which is always aspiration of the youth. He also gave a suggestion to the brand managers - " Don't let your brand loose focus and never allow your brand to go stale. Invest every 2-3 years to make it look fresh." The brand personality of his brands is a perfect marriage between 'Aspiration' and 'Luxury'. He added, " One should not depend 100% on market research. Gut feeling is also very important."

"Rural markets will change with the advent of infrastructure and connectivity," said Suhel Seth, Chairman, The Marketing Summit 2007 and Managing Partner, Counselage at the Marketing Summit 2007. "Innovation, interest and insight will bring the key difference in understanding the rural market and the 'aam aadmi'," he added.

"The marketer has to understand the development process of the rural market as the aspiration is fast tracked for the rural consumer compared to the urban consumer. The challenges for the rural markets are to establish trust, creating innovative product packaging and providing the right communication for the brand. The marketer has to create brand proposition by building iconic images and focusing on marketing challenges rather than penetration challenges."

"Focus on rural markets can only grow if the margins in urban markets fall and existing markets become stagnant, said Seth. He also emphasized on the infiltration of media to the rural areas to make rural population more brand specific."

S Sivakumar, Chief Executive - Agri business Division, ITC Limited addressing the session on 'Integrating the rural consumer - Challenges ahead for the Indian Marketers', said that distribution and reaching the rural markets at low cost is a major challenge. He said that the business has to be looked from the income generating perspective of the farmers since most of Indians still depend on agriculture as their sole occupation.

Technology, real time knowledge, local representation and transparent farm input transaction through collaborative effort creates architecture for profitability to the farmers as well as marketers, said Sivakumar. There is an opportunity of value creation in Indian rural segment which can be met with building appropriate channel, he added.

Gowthaman Ragothama, Managing Director, Mindshare, speaking on the session: 'Changing media habits and innovative ways to reach the Indian consumer', said, "Buoyancy, fragmentation and convergence are creating impact on the changing media habits of Indian consumers, said. Media is yet to reach to the Indian mass, as penetration is very low as compared to other emerging economies." "Reach and diversity are the biggest challenge for Indian media. India can be divided into global, aspiring, destitute and struggling socio-economic strata to create varying reach options for the media," he added.

Punitha Arumugam, Group CEO, Madison Media emphasized that the Indian consumer has not changed over a period of last few years but has become elusive. She said that word of mouth, technology, common sense and dialogue with consumers are the simple elements of creating media attention. Focus to narrowcast consumers and insights to communication are also important factors in creating distinctive brand identity in otherwise cluttered medium, she added.

"The television channels and print publications have grown considerably in last seven years but consumers spend less time on each of them," said Madhukar Kamath, Managing Director and CEO, Mudra Group. Commenting on the 80% growth of advertisers, he said that the increase from 4120 in 2003 to 7368 advertisers in 2006 shows the immense opportunity for media. "The basic tenet of creativity still exists in media and the advertiser should focus on interesting, entertaining and creative media usage to capitalise on the current opportunities. Retail and in-shop advertising is also going to play a major role in near future."



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