

touch point and trying to talk to every single consumer is something that doesn't work. For example, a financial brand trying to be present on a cricket property, advertising on a saas-bahu serial, being on digital... trying to speak to everyone is something that's not working.

“Communication should be insightful”



Sumit Sahay
Head, Marketing, Croma

Brand communication should be unique, insightful and something that the consumer will value.

Many brands today are communicating with the consumer in a fun and engaging manner after gathering a well-researched insight on the need of the consumer. On the flip side there are

Brands are communicating with the consumer in an engaging manner

brands that lack thinking in their communication. There is a whole gamut of communication where the consumer is looking for what relevance does the brand hold for them.

“Challenger brands are more innovative”



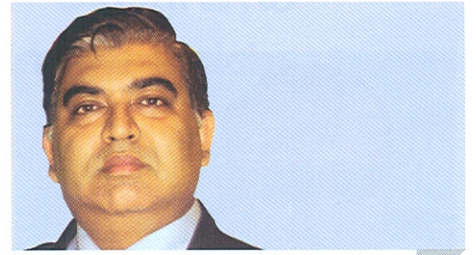
Pratik Seal
Head, Marketing, Micromax

Interestingly, none of those categories wherein a good brand communication can be made, has been done. For instance, in case of apparel and shampoo, the communications made are on the safer side

rather than being something bold or daring. What is more interesting is that challenger brands are coming up with innovative communications.

Therefore, in general, most brands fail to make a communication cut which is of utmost importance in this volatile and ever changing marketing landscape.

“You cannot just depend on TV”



Peshwa Acharya
Senior VP, Marketing, Reliance Communications

No, 360-degree is not a over stretch. Over time, all CMOs would have to think 360. You cannot just depend on TV or press etc. It has to be OOH, retail, live marketing, activations, digital etc. However, what is important is to remember the context: situation, geography, category, relevance, TG etc. Thus, the marketer needs to evaluate all this and take a call on what is 360 in each case.

Our Take

As consumer experience with the product becomes increasingly important vis-a-vis consumers' buying decisions, the circumference of 360-degree campaign is ever-expanding. With increasing fragmentation of media where different genres cater to different segments of consumers, marketers today need to be very precise on where and how they can connect and engage with their TG.

Besides, the traditional media plat-

forms, smart marketers today also need to look beyond 360-degree communication, to perfect, maintain and foster their connect with consumers. Marketers need to monitor the emerging channels where the consumer can have an experience with their brand.

In a market where options are galore, consumers don't wait for a message to come to them. Irrespective of degrees of communication, it is important for marketers today to be present at every touch-point from where their target consumer passes through.

Social media has, undoubtedly, opened ways for a multi-way communication, where consumers can criticise a brand and share their product experience with the whole world. The 'people's platform' has proved that consumers can play a vital role in marketing, right from product development to selling points.

Finally, marketers today need to ensure that their communication engages and entertains consumers and brings relevance into their lives in a differentiated manner.

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Can brands revive brand loyalty?

Till a decade back, brands could boast of die hard brand loyalists. With a plethora of choices, the days are gone. Can brands revive loyalty? The bigger question, however, could be - How?

“Word of mouth can revive loyalty”



Shashank Srivastava
Chief GM (Marketing), Maruti Suzuki

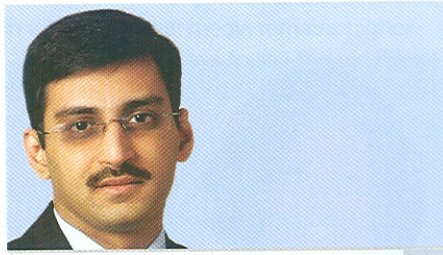
Brand loyalty in today's world has decreased dramatically and the reason is twofold. First, there are too many brands and the consumer has plenty of choices.

Secondly, people have a lot more money today and they are very aggressive in not just spending but in experimenting too. Once you start experimenting with brands and products, the concept of brand loyalty doesn't make any sense.

The only way for marketers to revive brand loyalty is through word of mouth. One good thing today is people are very well connected through social media, internet and mobile phones. So it's much easier for people to communicate. You have to keep consumer satisfaction very high. There is larger word of mouth going around and therefore it is essential to have satisfied customers who are more likely to talk about your brand and as a result build brand loyalty.

People are aggressive in not just spending but in experimenting too

“Keep reinventing and stay relevant”



Rajesh Mehta
Director, Marketing, Western Union

The onus is on you to keep reinventing yourself and stay relevant to changing consumers needs. Else, competition might steal the thunder. As a brand, you should be able to embrace those changes ahead of your competition. The only way to keep consumers loyal is to give them what they need today and anticipate what they might need tomorrow.

“Create buzz around the brand”



Peshwa Acharya
Senior VP, Marketing, Reliance Communications

As long as brands would be there, there would always be loyalty. It is the question of the length and effect. I don't agree that brands need to revive brand loyalty.

They may need to work differently or harder to drive loyalty. In the telecom sector, there is hyper intensive competition, hence to drive loyalty one needs new tricks: product, touch point, communication, usage etc. May be the concept of loyalty needs to be changed. In the retail sector, it is not just about the shopping trip, but the advocacy, driven by experience and host of factors.

I think, marketers must now use the tricks of trade of various categories. Single category expertise is gone. We must apply concepts across categories.

Our Take

We believe that we have left the days of brand loyalty, a decade behind us. With a plethora of choices, the consumer is ready to experiment.

If someone is going back to the brand, we'd like to call it brand stickiness rather than loyalty. And stickiness comes from customer delight and service. While, brands like Apple provide that, even die-hard Apple loyalists are ditching the brand because of its rigidity.

Reinvent yourself before competition outdates you. The consumer today, is ready to ditch you, for anybody who promises a better product and above all - better service.

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Is marketing easier than '80s?

With more data and statistics available now, marketers can make sharp segmentation and can plan communication better. The job has become easier. Or is the opposite true?

“Marketing is more competitive today”



Peshwa Acharya
Senior VP-Marketing,
Reliance Communications

Marketing is much more competitive today. I started in early '90s. Marketing in those days, essentially meant for FMCG. Marketers hardly took anything beyond that seriously. In the '90s other categories like banking, telecom, durables and telecom and other service categories surfaced in a big way. Also, as globalisation made headway in the '90s, more international brands entered the Indian market and competition became hyper intensive.

In the last 15 years, media has also become fragmented where marketers have to puzzle a lot to reach their target group through a combination of channels. Today, marketers have not only traditional channels of communication, but they try to connect with consumers through events, activities and social media platforms etc. So, the overall marketing environment is much more competitive today amidst emerging cat-

egories, and new marketing concepts. Nature of market is highly localised today, and marketers have customers who have different choices in the same product category. For example, in electronics, you have desktop, laptop, smartphones, tablets, iPad, etc.

However, on a physical level, '80s were more challenging and tough for marketers. They had no mobiles, no internet and it was difficult for them to reach the consumers and gather feedback.

Today, marketers as well as consumers are more informed. If a product is launched in US today, consumers expect it in the Indian market and they are no longer ready to wait. That makes marketers' task a little more difficult today. They have to keep themselves updated every hour and every second on

On a physical level, '80s were more challenging and tough for marketers

what is happening in their domain and also in other domains.

Earlier, marketers used to take time to formulate marketing strategies and then approach customers. But today, they can't afford to take much time in changing, shifting, or renewing their marketing strategy.

Earlier, even information was difficult to reach. Today, it is not only about getting information from different available sources, a marketer needs to look differently at the information and analyse it to best of his requirements.

“Technology has helped connect better”



Rajesh Mehta
Director, Marketing, Western Union

Earlier, a marketer didn't have lots of facilities that today's marketers have. The technology was not as evolved. You had to rely on limited media to reach out to the people.

Today, with better technology, a marketer has the option to create a much more impactful communication. This helps in connecting better with the consumers. So, in a sense, a marketer is benefited.

Media fragmentation has put pressure to manage the marketing budget

On the other side, with media proliferation and fragmentation, the cost of reaching to a consumer has risen exponentially. This puts high pressure on the marketer to manage the marketing budget and ensure optimum message delivery. Life has become tougher in that sense.