



# 3Ms of Advertising 2010

The Business Week, dated December 13, 2004, titled an article, ominous as it may sound, "Making Marketing Measure Up – The pressure is on to take the guesswork out of ad spending". Can advertising effects be measured better?

Media revolution, audience fragmentation and consumer disconnect have made several marketers question the role of the traditional 30 sec television commercial. So what is an advertising idea?

Job opportunities from new age industries like retail, banking, finance, consulting etc. have created a greater churn in the traditional service industries like advertising and marketing research. Can advertising attract and retain talent?

These three challenges are I believe the 3Ms that advertising industry will have to face up to over the coming years:

- the increasing demand for 'measurability in advertising'
- the need for 'media neutral ideas'
- the issue of 'managing talent'

Advertising agencies need to wake up to these three challenges over the coming years to ensure that they stay relevant to the C level executive.

## Measurability

Let us take the Measurability Mantra. It was a few years ago that Prof John Philip Jones used single source data to examine the direct relationship between advertising and market response. Using data on fast moving consumer goods, he could prove that advertising that works, often works in the short term. He termed this the STAS [Short Term Advertising Strength]. As India moves towards organized retail, we will be able to track the movement of brands across check out counters, on a real time basis.

Internationally, companies like Procter & Gamble are embarking on real time experiments to examine the effect of advertising, as reported in the abovementioned Business Week article. The article speaks of an ambitious programme code named 'Project Apollo' that will track media habits of 30,000 homes. The panelists will wear a pager-like device that picks up all electronically coded TV and radio they consume, that data plus online usage and grocery purchases scanned in half the households and frequent surveys of attitudes and lifestyles are aimed at helping advertisers like Procter & Gamble to take some 'if's out of their advertising commitments.

New York Times advertising columnist Stuart Elliott comments on how senior marketers are increasingly intent on finding what they are doing right or wrong. In a survey, 61.5 percent of the respondents said it was important to them to define, measure and take concrete steps in the area of advertising accountability. But only 19 percent said they were satisfied with their ability to take those steps.

With the growth of measurable media like Internet, the pressure on traditional media to prove that it works will increase. Today, tools like short messaging and Internet can help marketers and agencies to measure the instant effect of advertising. While the messaging may not have a direct correlation to sales, the quantum of messaging can be a good indicator.

Advertising needs to embrace the new data rich environment we are going to be thrown into.

## Media Neutral Ideas

One out of every two new car buyer in the US used the Internet to do research on which car to choose. Soon Indian

car buyers will be using their mobile phones to visit Internet sites to check out model configuration and pricing.

The traditional advertising agency model seems to start and end with the 30-second television commercial. Sometimes efforts are made to take the idea to the press medium as well.

If consumers are going to be difficult to catch, then advertising messages will have to find them where they could be found. On the Internet. At the mall. Or in a cyber café.

So brand building ideas need to travel beyond the television screen. Can the idea be taken to Internet? Can it become an SMS message? Can it become a game at the city mall?

Car marketers seem to understand the need for this media neutrality. For example no Tata Motors car is launched without the website resonating the brand message. All ad messages have a response device, an sms, a website embedded in it.

Internet alone may not do the trick, as yet, in India. But if you are neglecting it, then you are walking on the wrong side of the road.

Ad agencies need to embrace the multi-media environment, through champions who can evangelize the new media opportunities in the agency.

## Managing Talent

Advertising agencies in India have had a glorious tradition of taking talent from leading management, art, copy schools and training them. I am a product of this system. This system seem to have almost disappeared barring for a few agencies. Many marketing research agencies too have long running internship programmes.

But what about the new emerging industries, like media, content, Internet, retail, financial services?

These industries need to fill their organogram in double quick time. And so they raid the traditional industries. And today advertising is the old warhorse, with many foot soldiers, and veterans in its ranks.

Ad agencies are seeing an increasing rate of attrition in their ranks. And many of them are fighting back by arbitrarily increasing pay scales, giving titles where none are warranted, and making promises difficult to fulfill. As the Naukri.com commercial points out, people work for people; not just for money and title.

There has to be a better organized way of attracting and retaining talent. The industry bodies like AAAI need to do their work, by building pride in the profession. And individual agencies have to get their HR policies in place.

Recruitment is just the start. Talent needs to be nurtured and cared for to emerge as tomorrow's leaders. What are the skill needs? How will the agency impart it to them?

What are the training norms?

## Summing up the 3Ms

The coming three years will be greatly exciting for the advertising industry. The above 8 per cent GDP growth is going to fuel demand for products and services. New industries and product categories will rapidly emerge. So will competition. All this will call for better advertising, better communication and better results.

Agencies will not be able to meet the new yardstick if they do not internalize the 3M Mantra: Measurability; Media Neutrality; and Managing Talent.



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