Chapter - VIII

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to understand the role of teaser advertising in product promotion. All the objectives were explained and discussed in the previous chapter. The hypotheses were tested and all of them were accepted.

Findings of the study suggest two types of roles: implicit and explicit. While on one hand, teaser advertising performs its more talked about function of being the perfect launch pad for a new product, many other functions emerged from the study to enable us to view it in a more comprehensive light. The study showed that teaser advertisements are popular and connect with the consumers at the emotional level. The most profound role of teaser advertising identified from this study is the role of hidden diffuser of innovations. Attention is the dominant purpose of such campaigns. The trio of arousal of curiosity, generating hype and creation of buzz works to catch and hold attention of audience for a period of time. Besides these three, teaser advertising performs the role of a communicator aiming to interact, engage and influence.

Teasers Go Beyond Attention

Existing models of Teaser advertising concentrated on curiosity and knowledge gap, whereas the findings of the study present that though, these two remain the dominant antecedents of this creative form, other facets like entertainment, engagement and interaction are also important with respect to the vast marketing communication environment in India. Evidently, lot of campaigns are being done to initiate a dialogue or a compelling conversation through teaser cues (verbal and
visual) to rake the consumer brain and entice them into becoming reciprocal communicators instead of passive ones. This finding lends a new dimension to the art and craft of mass media advertising. Ever since, mass media advertising has been marred by a structural handicap, where by and large the sender says and the receiver listens, the teaser format transverses the argument by making the audience a part of the campaigns unfolding in a sequential manner.

**Using a Celebrity**

This study finds that using a celebrity with familiarity/likability to evoke curiosity works effectively in a teaser campaign. Especially in classic teaser campaigns, celebrities drive the consumers to explore the campaign step by step in order to fill the knowledge gap. The findings of the study corroborate the outcomes of teaser advertising in specific product categories or role of teaser advertising in a foreign consumer market. In multiethnic cultures like the USA or India, celebrities are highly effective in advertising. However, since teasers work on the premise of non-identified sponsor, using a celebrity endorsing many brands may lead to confusion and creation of wrong brand identity among target audiences. While a celebrity does aid the function of attention in teaser advertising, it may compound the ambiguity leading to a mistaken identity. Creating new fictional characters or mascots to tease instead are likely to add the dimension of exclusivity to the campaign process.

**In Advertising, Execution is Always Important**

Since the present study was based on a specific creative form of advertising, it brought back the focus on construction of ad messages: executions and tactics. The audience response to the role of teaser campaigns in a products’ life cycle is
insightful. The power of copy and the artwork is once again a crucial factor in the success of advertising campaigns. Intrigue, drama, humour, interaction combine in teaser ads via elements to result in a powerful climax. High recall of campaigns and familiarity with various commonly used terms lend credence to the conclusion.

**Promotion for All Products**

The study quashed the myths on the limited viability of this creative form in different product categories. Since previous literature largely analyzed it in a specific product category, emergence of the adaptive nature of teaser campaigns for all products assumes greater significance, both creatively and in understanding the product consumer relationship. Teaser campaigns are used not only in tangible goods but also in promoting services and idea highlight the spectrum of its reach and multiple roles. It was evident that its role extends beyond creating hype before a launch. The creative flexibility of storytelling in teaser ads makes it a perfect fit to perform the role of messenger, mediator and multiplier in the integrated marketing and communication environment. From the first ‘hit’ at the human mind to being a brand propeller in search of a perceptual space, its role is diverse.

**Medium and the Message**

This study also points out that creative innovation has to be integrated with astute media planning for campaigns to be successful. In the present times, both medium and the message must adhere to the dictum of one voice. In fact, the former must come up with fresh media options to respond to the creative call and the latter needs to assess the characteristics of each media at the time of ideation. Fear about the death of mass media advertising is misplaced. While there is acknowledgement for
the rise in new media for advertising, innovative forms are still most employed on broad based media like television and newspapers. Evidently, high penetration and reach coupled with creative flexibility make the two media most favoured ones both by the sender and the receiver of the ad message. Therefore, the need of the hour is a potent media mix to present the creative mix in every campaign.

Media wise, teaser advertising need not be limited to just print or television. Teaser campaigns lend more substance to further discussions in cross media research. With its significant role in attention economy and visible compatibility with print and television, the creative execution is set to open the scope of intermediated communication in India. The present study concludes that teaser advertising because of its inherent characteristics of ‘expose’ in a thrilling and sequential manner is a strong creative execution for cross media effects. In fact, the presence of many teaser campaigns in both print and television in a cross media ‘one voice’ approach shows the malleability of the creative execution. More importantly, experiments can be done and studied w.r.t use of teasers in the new media of internet and mobile advertising. In future, it will be interesting to see the uses and functions of teaser advertising in both simultaneous use of different media vehicles and subsequent options and at the same time and sequential use of the above one after the other. The study does however reiterate that in India, the conventional advertising media are still considered the best to innovate. With their opportunity to see far more than the internet and mobile, creatives prefer to stick to them with their executions and tactics. Joint effects of print, television and web can optimally maximize the potential of teaser advertising in India. It was noted in the study teasers are not only compatible with different ad media but
also can be adapted to innovative media shapes and placements like figured outline, pointers, gatefold, bottom spread, cover flap etc. Lot of teaser ads keep changing their look along with content (verbal and visual cues) to grab the audience eye and ear. This ability to respond to various media innovations makes teaser a strategy for the future, where economic use of space on both newspapers and television will hold the key to communication in the promotional mix.

**The Fear of Ambush**

Though most of the audience and the professionals favoured the use of teaser campaigns at various stages in a product life cycle, professionals did feel that recent cases of ambush marketing are a cause of concern. Teasers because of their inherent lack of identity can fall prey to hijack by the competing brand in the same product category. In the sample studied, two such cases stood out. The Airtel DTH teaser campaign in newspapers and television was running smoothly till reliance Big TV hijacked it by publishing their advertisements before Airtel’s final revealer came out. A similar case was noted in the Dove teaser campaign in print, when pantene ambushed the teaser ads by superimposing their identity on the campaign through their ad before the final revealer in the dove campaign. Both the cases present the dangers of using teaser advertising in a highly competitive and hawkish market. Rather than questioning the merit of teaser advertising, methods of making it can be carefully examined. The present study found that the Indian advertising professionals seem to be aware of these dangers and hence are creating campaigns which are ‘teasing’ yet product centric in some ways. Ambush of teaser campaigns can be prevented if at the time of message encapsulation, a uniquely differential attribute/trait
is woven cleverly in the teaser leaving it exclusively for the advertised brand. Generic teaser ads in which the concept is based on the product class or category and not presenting any cue on the specific brand who is the owner of the campaign, the likelihood of ambush by the rivals increases.

**Advertisers Spend More on New**

Observations on the funds allocated to teaser campaigns find explanation in the share of market/share of voice method of creating advertising budgets. The survey revealed that the advertising professionals believe that on an average 10-15 crores are spent on teaser campaigns in India. Since a large number of teaser campaigns are created and released in the case of new product introduction or brand extensions, advertisers are willing to spend considerably more in the beginning of the campaign justifying the expense incurred on the teaser advertising in India. Whereas on one side this creative execution is growing and developing into a penetrative and more pervasive instrument of communication, the downside of spending large ad spend for one type of a campaign may lead to skewed media planning and scheduling. A product needs various executions, tactics and strategies at different stages in its life cycle. Overspending on one campaign may lead to an inconsistent image of the brand because of imbalance in overall ad exposure. It is important to note that teasers alone cannot build a brand.

**Raise a Problem Only if You Can Solve It**

The study went beyond the arousal of curiosity through teaser ads and attempted to analyse the satisfaction of teaser-induced curiosity. Revealer ads deal with resolution of curiosity in classic and answering the questions raised/asked in partial campaigns. Both in newspaper and television, revealer ads were conventional
in format with benefit, news or benefit identification headlines, long body copies, taglines and visuals along with brand identity elements like brand name and logotype at prominent positions. Most commonly used size for a revealer ad is the full page of the newspaper broadsheet. Teaser advertising is being looked at, optimistically as a creative execution strategy for a long time in India because of its ability for trans-media storytelling.

**Do Not Lose Sight of the Product**

The findings are consistent with the view that advertising must not delink itself from the product. Marrying the tangible product benefits or salient features with the characteristics of a teaser campaign has emerged as a highlight of the study. The results show that quite a few campaigns though unidentified, look to hook the audience by mystifying the unique product features into teaser elements to reach the audience memory while others use the existing mascots or icons to allow the audience to look for a possible relationship between the two.

**Consumer Engagement is Vital to Promote Products**

Apart from the well known functions of entertainment and buzz creation, engagement has emerged a dominant function of teaser campaigns in the study. In a consumer empowered world, any advertising can work, only if it engages with the consumers at various levels in the communication process. The era of passive communication is over. Now the consumer wants to be a part of it even a part of the creative process. Teaser campaigns do just that. They take them along in a journey of promotional communication where the consumer carefully probes and preens to arrive at the appropriate product. With signposts at every stop, the consumer is properly guided in the journey by teaser messages.
Tailoring Teaser Campaigns for Indian Markets

Various key findings do show commonality with the results of previous studies on creative executions in Asia, Europe and America. It points to the fact that promotional communication as a whole has a lot in common with the way creative format is executed and received in the west as well in our country. Advertising creators across the globe are not scared to experiment or innovate, forever looking to expand the role of advertising and potential consumer base on multiple media platforms. The narrative, drama or the protagonists may vary but the need to tell stories (full of mystery, intrigue or suspense) is everywhere regardless of the social political or cultural differences. Indian advertisers may be following the west in making teaser ads yet the campaigns are totally rooted and native. The stories are indigenous, and the appeals used are also Indian. Glocalisation in its newest form is evident in this case.

Cut the Clutter with Out of Box Creativity

A clearer picture also emerged from the study vis-a-vis role of creativity itself in the contemporary promotional mix. Both the professionals and the people believe that the communication process in advertising has to go beyond dissemination of information and focus on creation of more affective responses to advertising itself, and not just to the product. Teaser campaigns like other novel executions are attempting to shift the focus from the product to the advertisement thereby initiating a relationship between the campaign and the consumer leading to a brand loyalty beyond product class and type.
In a highly cluttered ad market teaser campaigns strive to survive as a long term creative strategy. The storyline of teaser campaigns is deliberately conceived to customize to any media option as and when required. The teaser story can be easily told in print, television, out of home, internet and mobile media platforms with the careful choice of teaser element(s). The research study shows that many products select a media mix to diffuse a teaser campaign. Media mix optimizes the opportunity to see for the ads and rationalizes the cost of production. Such a one story on many media teasers are true to the cannons of IMC.

**New Relationship between Agencies and Audiences**

The study is indicative towards a more progressive relationship between the agencies and the audiences. It allays the fear of disconnect between the two to rest to a certain extent since responses from both the samples were highly favourable towards the interrelationship between creativity and consumers. Both the sender and the receiver were convergent in their opinions on creative structure, conceptual formation and media of teaser campaigns. The agencies are able to create and disseminate persuasive messages as intended by the source. The gap between intended response and actual response is not so big. Target audiences are active and need to be treated with respect, can be seen in the case of teaser ads. The study has significant pointers for advertisers and agency professionals. The results showed that the creative execution format has received positive response from both the industry and the audiences. The consumer today prefers to be included in the ad message strategies both at cerebral and at the sensory level. Mystery coupled with entertainment and conversation cajoles the consumer towards the brand. The power of communication
lies in initiating a process in which the audience feel included. Teaser campaigns provoke the audience to become a part of the brand building at numerous points. But on the other hand, the advertisers must be cautious with regard to its excessive use, especially within the same product category. For the advertisers, it was encouraging to find that the ad creators and the advertising consumers shared perspectives on numerous key features of teaser advertising. Both emphasized on its multiple branding and communication functions. While the audience was general, the professionals were specific in stating their preferences and opinions on the key questions. Both of them believed that teaser campaigns help in creating brand interest and does influence the consumers to try/use the product in some ways.

**Advertising May Not Lead to Sales**

The study had assumed that teaser campaigns do not conform to notion of sales as a direct function of advertising. In fact, it re-emphasizes that advertising is to persuade and not sell in the short run making it different from other tools of promotion such as direct marketing, personal selling and sales promotion. The results show that effective advertising may not lead to sales but creative formats like teaser do stimulate product trial and test marketing in a significant manner. Such campaigns are also being used to introduce a new contest, sweepstakes or a competition either in the conventional print media or the World Wide Web. Online games, contests are being created in the form of a teaser campaign for attention, interest, desire and action. Teaser campaigns are alluding to other appendages of the integrated brand promotion. Viral marketing campaigns are using teaser advertising effectively to connect with the new age net savvy young audience cum consumer.
Innovation through Buzz Marketing

Buzz marketing is basing itself in teaser advertising to spread the word. Mysterious, incomplete, deeply rooted in suspense made ideal creative concepts to diffuse information about a new product introduction or even a long forgotten one. Products looking to change shape, design and composition to suit the consumer needs find a perfect match in teaser campaigns set on objectives of provoking voice to noise to the brand.

Rebranding can be a Viable Option

The study shows that teasers are also being used to revive a declining brand. If the decision to reposition is a strategic taken, teasers become a popular choice as a creative tactic across product classifications. Repositioning aims to change the perceptual image of a brand in the minds of the buying prospect, needing the curiosity and engagement quotient of teaser campaigns for the people to dissociate with the earlier positioning and adopt the new one.

Contrastingly, survey also brought forth weaknesses and immeasurability of the exact nature of relationship the audience have with these unbranded campaigns.

The research study leaves us with crucial points to ponder on 5W’s and I H of teaser advertising. Further studies can compare the use of such executions in two or more countries. In addition to that comparative study on effectiveness of appeals used in innovative advertising can be undertaken.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In any research, prevalence of ideal conditions is desired. But various constraints prevent it from being possible.
1. In the survey, both the questionnaire were lengthy and asked both closed and open ended responses. Lot of respondents did not answer the open ended questions more explicitly as desired by the researcher despite face to face administration of the questionnaire.

2. It was challenging to gather the responses to the survey directed at the advertising professionals because of their lack of time and willingness to respond to academic exercises. Patience and persistence however paid in the end.

3. Since there existed no previous guidelines or references for construction of variable list and content categories, questions carried riders to explain the correct meaning to the respondent making it a time consuming task for them.

4. The number of media vehicles selected for content analysis were limited due to the scope of research and feasibility of the study.

5. Due to limitations of time, the study was confined to two main advertising media: newspapers and television. The scope of research etc. did not cover outdoor and the new media.

The above stated constraints however, were not deterrents in carrying out a primary data based dual research method study, but in fact provided the impetus to conduct the research more diligently.