

'Ads must bring out the core values of a brand'

Target future media such as blogs, video streaming sites

Our Bureau

Chennai, Jan. 21

Advertising agencies need to catch up with the reality of where consumers and corporates are headed. A session on 'Integrated Communication - Disintegrated Agencies,' organised by the Ad Club of Madras as part of its two-day seminar 'Future Shock', dwelt on the future of advertising agencies.

According to Mr Arvind Sharma, Chief Executive Officer, LeoBurnett India, the challenge faced by agencies today was to define a brand's nucleus. "There is no point in bringing out new creatives with a different tag line. Instead, agencies must keep reiterating the core of a brand in every ad," he said.

He cited the example of Complan that was growing at over 25 per cent each year yet brought out fresh communication every 15 days. "Each new ad still focuses only on the core values of the brand," he said.

Mr Shumone Chatterjee, Managing Director, Levi's In-

dia, said advertising ended up 'interrupting' consumers. "Stop interrupting what people like to watch and become what people are interested in," he told industry representatives present at the seminar.

He said agencies must identify and target media of the future such as blogs and video streaming sites such as YouTube. "If one has even 3 per cent of blog space (about 6 million consumers), one can further reach out to many more millions through social networking sites," he said.

Mr Chatterjee said ad format (medium) would define ad content in future, unlike now. "In the future agencies will have to offer even retail services to consumers. People who want to become famous will come to ad agencies for help," he said.

Mr Pranesh Misra, President and Chief Operating Officer, Lowe India, said mass media is its own enemy - the Indian consumer on average saw 419 TV commercials a week! "Any medium that we work with, we're infesting it

Future of ads

Ad format (medium) would define ad content in future. **Brands should** adopt the category captaincy approach where they should reinforce their leadership of the category and clarify the benefit expected of the product at large, rather than the brand alone.

and killing it with ads," he said, adding that this overkill would only be detrimental to both advertising agencies and clients. Full service agencies (offering the whole gamut of communication services) and boutique agencies (offering niche sector specific services) will co-exist but clients will want to work with one organisation that can handle every need rather than a clutch of firms that specialise in only a few services, he said. "Clients will look for one throat to strangle," he quipped. Mr Rammanujam Sridhar, CEO, Brand-Comm, chaired the session.

CAPTAINCY APPROACH

Earlier, in a session on 'Engaging Impact,' Mr R. Kannan, President of retail solutions company Ramms

India, said that in a day and age when retailers, not brand managers, are calling the shots, brands should adopt the category captaincy approach where they should reinforce their leadership of the category and clarify the benefit expected of the product at large, rather than the brand alone.

For example, if the product is one meant to assist consumers trying to give up smoking, the brand could present information on the goal and ways to deal with it in and around the shelves that carry these products, but need not engage in aggressive branding - "you have to become the shopper and then fix or anticipate the journey", he said. The point of sale must talk, he added.

Mr Roshan Abbas, Managing Director, Encompass

Events, said the spread of technology powered more unique experiences to offer consumers, and that more affluence creates the need for more unique experiences. The challenge is to not just use various media to attract the consumer but to create media to get their attention. "Almost anything in consumers' lives can be a potential medium for intersection," he said.

Ms Meenakshi Sachdev, Chief Operating Officer of public relations firm Good Relations, spoke of her work experience at the BBC. BBC's assets are its trustworthiness, credibility and balanced reporting, which it leverages to the fullest in its brand communication, she said. Public relations plays a large role at the BBC as emotional connect with its audiences is important to it, she said, adding that PR is involved in how the newsroom communicates to the world. Mr T.R. Ramachandran, Business Manager (Credit Cards), CitiBank, chaired the session.