

Headline: A perfect pitch
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A Perfect Pitch

As India lifted the ICC Cricket World Cup, there emerged another superstar on our television screens—the inimitable Super Zoozoo from the house of Vodafone. For cricket crazy fans bombarded by a multitude of ads that exploited the cricketing extravaganza to connect with consumers, this was one campaign that certainly caught their imagination. Coming a close second was the Nike Bleed Blue campaign followed by Pepsi's Change the Game ad campaign. Another campaign that broke the clutter was the Adidas campaign, say a panel of experts that BrandWagon contacted soon after India won the tournament. The last three campaigns showcased the cricketers in their agony and their ecstasy to ensure an instant rapport with their target audience, the youth.

The battle for the viewers' attention fought by big and small brands was as intense as the clash of the 14 teams on the cricketing pitch. Brands across categories poured millions of marketing dollars into sponsoring the event and the chance to sport their logos on the jerseys of individual players. And as India entered the finals, advertisers went into an overdrive. Dheeraj Sinha, regional planning director, Bates 141, divides the advertisers at WC 2011 into two broad categories: the first set of advertisers like Vodafone, Pepsi, Nike, etc. who came on board as part of their media strategy and the second set which includes brands that came in the last few matches for traction. "Cricket is the biggest media opportunity in India and this time we saw some interesting examples of smaller brands leveraging the hype around cricket. For instance, a small advertiser like Revital upped its spends with the consistent performance of its brand ambassador Yuvraj Singh," he adds.

The fact of the matter is: While all the brands paid through their noses to to be a part of this cricketing extravaganza, there were just a handful who ran their communication through quality checks. As a result, while viewers enjoyed watching team India 'Change the Game' for Pepsi or the inimitable Zoozoo transform into the fastest Superman ever for Vodafone 3G, they had to see run-of-the-mill commercials launched by Sony, Speed, Mirinda, etc. Jagdeep Kapoor, chairperson and managing director, Samsika

Marketing Consultants believes that most of the sponsors not only got great coverage during the event but the next few months will see these brands reap more dividends. “The feel good factor of India winning the tournament will spillover. Just the way good batting and bowling are needed to win a match, both, the media plan and the creative have to be equally good for any brand to make its communication memorable.” he adds.

ESPN Star Sports had paid \$1.1 billion (R 4,900 crore) to get the exclusive global telecast rights for all International Cricket Council matches between 2007 and 2015. As per TAM data, as many as 161.9 million watched the first 40 matches of the Cup, as compared to the 143.7 million viewers who had tuned in to watch IPL-3 in 2010. The data was recorded in cable and satellite homes for viewers aged above four in urban and semi-urban centres. According to media planners, before the tournament began, ESPN Star Sports (ESS) was charging R 4-5 lakh per 10 seconds from sponsors. This was raised to R 7-8 lakh and then to R 10-12 lakh per 10 seconds as India reached the quarter-finals. Then, it was raised to R 18-22 lakh for a 10-second slot for the India-Pak semi-final. Eventually, during the final showdown between India and Sri Lanka, the rate per spot touched R 25 lakh mark.

Media buying was mainly in anticipation of viewership as in the case of any other event. Says Amin Lakhani, head, exchange, Mindshare Media, “The interest in the World Cup rose significantly after India’s entry into the quarter finals. It was more or less a gamble which seem to have paid for brands associated with Cup.”

Sudha Natrajan, president and COO Lintas Media Group (LMG), shares that the ICC (International Cricket Council) had been very strict on advertising norms unlike the Indian Premier League (IPL) and there are restrictions on the amount of inventory ESPN can sell along with the kind of innovations possible. Sony, Maruti, Religare, Voltas and Union Bank were the LMG clients who went on board the WC. “LMG and Sony in partnership with ESPN came up with the idea of promoting Sony Bravia HD television by partnering with ESPN’s HD feed and entered into a tie-up with Airtel HD DTH. At the same time, for clients with limited budgets like Religare and Voltas, we advised spot buying in India matches, quarters, semis and finals only, which gave them greater mileage and value for money,” she adds.

Will it be correct to say while WC was for bigger brands, IPL will be for one and all? Natrajan explains how WC 2011 saw a wide spectrum of advertisers from biggies such as Vodafone, Pepsi, etc., to Lava, Lloyds and Bluestar who are smaller brands. “In fact, IPL is more expensive than the WC in terms of rate/10 seconds besides being very cluttered. IPL may not offer as much value for money/ROI as ICC World Cup 2011 has done, because of the performance of the Indian team, the pricing of sponsorships, spots for the sponsors and other early bird advertisers. With a high likelihood of an overall increase in interest levels for cricket in our country post our WC triumph the

viewership of IPL 2011 could go up marginally over last year,” she says on a positive note.

India's recent victory and the renewed interest of brands from across the categories in cricket have made us put WC on our cover for the third time. As part of this story, we went to marketers across categories and asked them to name some of the memorable ad campaigns during the WC. For obvious reasons, nobody wants to see ads during a cricket match but these marketers were gracious enough to give due credit to some clutter breaking communication. One trend that emerged from our quick survey was that digital media is increasingly playing an important role in ensuring the consumer connect. Television is being used more and more to reinforce the message, rather than driving the campaign. Three of the big four campaigns’ – Nike Bleed Blue, Adidas Bring It On and Pepsi’s Change the Game—first stop was the internet, rather social media such as Facebook and Twitter, where they were garnered massive support from their target audience.

The big four First among Equals

Campaign: Super Zoozoo

Brand: Vodafone 3G

Company: Vodafone Essar

Agency: Ogilvy & Mather

Our Take: Vodafone Essar has created an intimate relationship between cricket and its egg-head mascot, the Zoozoos. The campaign, created by Rajiv Rao, national creative director, Ogilvy & Mather, first made its appearance with Indian Premier League (IPL) 2. The latest television campaign that marks the launch of Vodafone 3G services simply takes the entire concept several notches higher. Making its appearance during the ICC World Cup, the 3G super Zoozoo emerged as the hero of the ad battle that ran concurrently. The campaign talks about Vodafone’s 3G service which the ad claims is ‘faster, smarter and better’, just as our Super Zoozoo is. Many operators including Tata DoCoMo, Airtel, Reliance Communications have launched campaigns on 3G. However, this latest offering from the O&M stable wins hands down.

K. Sriram, VP (Sales, Marketing and Services),

MIRC Electronics (Onida)

Best World Cup ad: It was undoubtedly the Vodafone 3G ‘Super Zoozoo’ . To out-do the successful zoozoo idea must have been a daunting challenge, and the super-simple answer - a “Super Zoozoo” (some would call it the Rajnikant Zoozoo) to depict what 3G can achieve - was simply brilliant. Executional nuances and music added to the fun quotient.

I also saw: I found the other 3G commercials quite visible, but lacking in either engagement (Tata DoCoMo) or persuasion (Reliance Communications) or both. The Pepsi campaign - Change the Game - was visible and interesting in the early stages, but I thought it became too contrived in some of the executions.

Atul Chauhan, President, Amity Education Group

Best World Cup ad: I have been an admirer of Vodafone's Zoozoos since their birth during the second season of IPL in 2009. The campaign launched during the World Cup is certainly the best so far. Besides talking about the power of 3G, the ad has great music that reminds me of Austin Powers. In 2008, Vodafone had unveiled the 'Happy to Help' series during the first season of the IPL. If asked to pick my favourite between the two communication planks, I will definitely go with the Zoozoos. I wonder how the brand will take the story of Zoozoos forward.

I also saw: The second best ad I liked during the WC was the one from Religare Financial Services in which a simple idea was executed fantastically.

Kedar Rajadnye,

President & COO, Consumer Products Division, Piramal Healthcare

Best World Cup ad: I think Vodafone Super Zoozoo is the best world cup ad. It is a brilliant extension of the Zoozoo ads. In addition, it links a contemporary message.

I also saw: The Pepsi TV commercial is another nice piece of communication that was released during the World Cup.

It connects beautifully with the target group and the event.

It also connects the irreverence of the brand with some newer exploits.

Pravin Kulkarnii,

GM - Marketing, Parle Products

Best World Cup ad: The new campaign from Vodafone to introduce their 3G services keeps catching my attention, even after the World Cup. The brand's creative agency O&M has been able to extend on the brand association of Zoozoos with Vodafone by creating Super Zoozoo. The campaign has managed to do two things effectively - first, illustrating how the 3G network is superior to others and second, the various features that one can enjoy on the 3G network.

I also saw: Others ads I noticed include Pepsi's 'Change the Game' and Sprite's Freshology commercial.

Winning the Mind Game

Campaign: Bring It On

Brand: Adidas

Company: Adidas India

Agency: TBWA India

Our Take: An athlete-studded campaign, it seeks to inspire athletes and remind them of the significance of hard work, focus and self-belief in sports. The visually compelling 4-ad campaign features Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Kieron Pollard, Lasith Malinga and Dwayne Bravo. 'Bring it on' presents the doubts, insecurities and fears that cloud the minds of even the greatest athletes and how they overcome these by honing their abilities. Wearing the country's crest on the field of play is a dream only a select few fulfill but to continue playing on the biggest stage and redefining the game is demanding. 'Bring it on' captures the essence of this struggle and illustrates how great athletes confront doubt and celebrates the indomitable spirit of the world's greatest athletes. Like many other brands, Adidas too had a strong social media strategy for this campaign.

Sandeep Aurora, Director, Marketing, Intel South Asia

Best World Cup ad: It is evident that today brands are competing extensively to capture a percentage of the audience's mindshare for recall and this World Cup we surely saw some great advertisements standing out and striking the right note with the audience. While Pepsi's 'Change the Game' and Nike's 'Bleed Blue' advertisements were surely unique, the one I enjoyed watching most was the Adidas ad.

The brand truly brought alive the feeling of true sportsmanship with its 'Bring it On' ad campaign. I personally found the ad as an ideal fitment with regards to the spirit of cricket. Triumphant over the doubts, insecurities and fears that cloud the minds of the even greatest athletes and players, the ad clearly differentiates great sportsmen from their counterparts with their self-belief and attitude to take on the world and India did just that.

A Bare Show of Patriotism

Campaign: Bleed Blue

Brand: Nike

Company: Nike India

Agency: JWT India

Our Take: The 'Bleed Blue' mantra captured the imagination of the nation. While supporting the Indian team was the common refrain of many brands in their respective campaigns, for Nike it was the raison d'etre of their campaign. The passion for the game and the thirst to wear the blue jersey of Team India was the pivot on which the campaign rested. The campaign kicked off about 6 months ago building up to the World Cup largely through nikecricket.in and Nike's Facebook page which has over a million fans. If the first of the three TV ads, the Bleed Blue Pledge, saw the Indian cricket team express their passion and commitment to the game in their own words, the second 'Yards' captured the essence of cricket played in the backlanes of India, as well as on the stadium, encapsulating how the street feeds off the game in the stadium, and vice versa. The third, 'United in Blue' which was released after India lifted the World Cup included footage of ordinary people celebrating the win interspersed with the shots of athletes playing in the stadiums and young Indian kids playing on the street.

Lutz Kothe, Head of Marketing and PR, Volkswagen Group Sales

Best World Cup ad: While advertising during a cricketing extravaganza like the World Cup, a brand must avoid being obvious and push the envelope by taking its communication forward. I enjoyed watching Nike's Bleed Blue ad during the WC. Rather than talking about any product, the communication focusses on commitment to sports. I also liked the Adidas campaign.

Sanjay Tripathy, EVP & Head Marketing, HDFC Life

Best World Cup ad: The best ad was Nike 'Bleed Blue'. It had a fantastic fit with the event as it showed the aggression of young India. Besides the TV ads, the campaign gave equal importance to the print and out-of-home media, which increased its visibility and made it a 360-degree campaign. The ad picked up a little late but the idea was so strong that it managed to capture the mood of 1.2 billion Indians and resonated with the audience to the extent that soon it became the lingua franca of all cricket commentary.

I also saw: While the number of good ads is limited, the number of average to bad ads is equally high. I can particularly think of two ads which are extremely average. First is the Reliance Communication 'Mix your world' ad, which is badly executed. The message does not come out clearly from the visuals. The second one is 'Idea Cellular Keep Cricket Clean' which is like an extension of the 'Get an idea' campaign. The tag line 'Get an idea' was very badly used in the TV ad.

The Unorthodox frontrunner

Campaign: Change The Game

Brand: Pepsi

Company: PepsiCo India

Agency: TapRoot India

Our Take: Irreverent, unorthodox, fun, challenging was Pepsi always, and through its ad campaigns, Pepsi has always tried to bring these and more into the game of cricket. This ICC Cricket World Cup, Pepsi celebrated the new unorthodox yet immensely popular face of modern cricket with its high decibel and path-breaking campaign - 'Change The Game'. Cricket has changed, cricket fans have changed and the way they watch cricket has changed, and this was the underlying message of the new campaign. With this innovative campaign, Pepsi has become the official sponsor of everything that is unorthodox about the sport; whether it is Virender Sehwag's Upper Cut, Mahendra Singh Dhoni's Helicopter shot, Harbhajan Singh's Doosra, Tillakaratne Dilshan's Dilscoop, Kevin Pietersen's Switch Hit or Virat Kohli and Suresh Raina's aggressive on-field spirit. The campaign includes a series of ads that showcase out-of-the-box moves that are not text-book and yet help achieve the ultimate goal.

Shashank Pore, Head - Brand Communication & VAS, Tata Teleservices Limited

Best World Cup ad: I found the Pepsi 'Change the Game' extremely engaging. The ad is relevant to the occasion and the event. It echoed the mindset of the target group. The story telling was refreshing and scored very high on uniqueness. It was a very nice way of building the role of the brand in the storyline.

I also saw: The Parryware 'loo break' commercial, which is a very weak way of introducing the role of the brand in terms of context setting. It does not leave with a positive feeling about the brand.

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