

THE 5 Rs OF BRANDING TO LEARN FROM USAIN BOLT

Over the past decade, there emerged a two-word synonym for speed - Usain Bolt.

The Jamaican's rousing exploits, not only obliterated the American dominance of sprinting; they also extended the very possibilities of the human form. Eight Olympic gold medals, eleven across the World Championships, and a multitude of audience electrifying moments, have assured Bolt of his place in history - as the greatest sprinter of them all.

But even as Bolt leaves a host of world records in his wake, there are some interesting ideas that his career catalyses, which find relevance in the world of branding. Elemental thought starters ignited by his blazing spikes. Potent parallels these; that could kick start branding teams to bring the same champion mentality to their own challenges at hand.

Presented below are the 5 'R's' of branding, as inspired by the feats of Bolt.

For someone so fast, it was perhaps inevitable that he would have zipped past the otherwise more conventional 'Ps', and moved on to the next thing...

- **RPM** - The need for speed

Usain Bolt is a speed merchant par excellence. He holds the world record across the 100 meters, the 200 meters, and the 4x100 meters relay. But he did not rest on these laurels once he had achieved them. Over the past few years, he has rewritten his own records a few times. It was this relentless urge to stay out in front, which defined him as an unparalleled athlete.

Bolt does inform the branding world about the importance of speed. In times when every single player, from television news channels to technology companies; are trying to nudge ahead of their competitor - speed is sometimes the very essence of a branding strategy. The need to establish oneself as the pioneer of new exciting innovations has its unique long term strategic benefits. The necessity to react quickly to competitive threats or controversies has its own tactical rewards. The speed of customer response, often lays down the very groundwork for a lasting and fruitful relationship. The business world does ruthlessly divide its participants, into the quick and the dead. Hence it is often prudent to follow Bolt's example, in terms of exploding off the starting blocks.

- **REVIEW** - The imperative of recasting things differently

Bolt would perhaps say in typically 'modest' fashion that his succeeding at athletics ensured the career of many a batsman around the world. This was because he began life aspiring to become a pace bowler. It is only when his school coach, noticing his phenomenal speed, urged him to try out the track and field events that this sporting phenomenon really hit the ground running.

A speedy start is one thing. But keeping an expert eye on what ground is being covered, is quite another. Many brands in the pursuit of innovation need to develop a keen sense of how newer initiatives are developing. Just because what is being uncovered, was not initially aimed for, does not mean that it might not have inherent value. From the time Columbus stumbled upon the 'new world', having initially set out to find India, great discoveries have always been marked with the

flexibility in mindset to reposition what has been revealed. And just like cricket's minor loss was athletics' major gain, similar stories might be waiting to be unfolded in the competitive marketplace.

- **RESURRECT** - The overcoming of setbacks

In 2011, Bolt had experienced the abysmal depths of failure. Hot favourite to retain his 100 meters title at the World Athletic Championships, he was disqualified in the final, because of consecutive false starts. And when Yohan Blake beat him in the Jamaican trials - just a few weeks before the London Olympics, 'experts' began predicting his downfall. But come London, Bolt answered all his doubters in the best manner possible. By emphatically brushing aside those failures and coming back even stronger.

This ability to rise above failures is as important in the world of branding. Teams behind brands encounter setbacks (of some sort), fairly regularly in the marketing world. And it is often their attitude to these 'failures', which determines the health of a brand going forward. Those which display the ability to learn from these experiences, and develop more directional ideas and initiatives; are usually the ones who ensure that their brand returns to the same challenge triumphantly. Finally, it's the quintessential human resolve to prove their sceptics wrong, which stands both Olympic champions and great brands in good stead.

- **RITUAL** - The seeding of actions

Usain Bolt's victory celebration routine, has brought a hitherto unseen showmanship and charisma to the world of athletics. His trademark 'bow and arrow' ritual is a sporting meme on the level of the 'Mexican Wave'. It is utterly simple in execution, and always brings back memories of its creator whenever it is rendered. For a person whose body of work often is the mere blink of an eye, it also goes a fair way in helping increase his interaction with the audience. It makes his triumphs far more participatory.

Brands have long understood that actions speak louder than words. It is only when they begin to become a part of daily rituals; that they truly embark on cementing their places in the lives of consumers. And when they manage to catalyze rituals on their own, they push involvement and bonding even further. This is especially true when these rituals, allow consumers to interpret and experience the brand for themselves. From automotive brands, which foster excursions that celebrate 'the joy of the drive', to social networking brands, which are creating newer benchmarks of audience participation and involvement; this aspect, like Bolt's victory routine, is likely to linger for a long time.

- **RETIRE** - Making the right kind of exit

As awe inspiring as Bolt's career exploits might have been, the recently concluded World Championships proved to be one event too many for the champion. He was beaten to the bronze in the 100 meters final. Then, quite tragically, he pulled up with an injury in the 4x100 meters relay, and was unable to even complete the last race of his career. Perhaps Rio 2016 had already provided the perfect swansong moment, and whatever his motivations for participating at London 2017, it eventually only served to sully an otherwise unblemished report card. Sport does not offer perfectly scripted endings, unlike long running soap operas.

However, in this tale of defeat and dejection there are important lessons for brand custodians. In a rapidly changing marketplace, yesterday's success is no longer sufficient to ensure today's triumph. Even great brands and products must eventually bite the dust. There are very few that endure the test of that fickle taskmaster - time. Knowing when to make a profitable exit from the market is a key mindset to acquire. Planning what comes next from the company and how those shoes can be filled, then becomes the challenge for corporate strategy. Because while one stalwart might have hung up its proverbial boots, for the long term success of the company, the lane it used to ply has to be filled in by a new, well prepared prospect. Not just any bolt from the blue.

As the dust settles on Usain Bolt's epochal career, new perspectives begin to emerge. Those, which point towards not letting the residual effects of such sterling sporting endeavours subside; but to let their adrenaline rush truly energize thinking in the board room.

Bringing the influence of Bolt to bear on branding problems just might ensure they get resolved in less than ten seconds.

Source : <http://www.afaqs.com/news/story/51136> Bolt-and-the-5Rs-of-Branding

DOES RELIGION HAVE A PLACE IN ADVERTISING?

A few years ago, an international sandwich chain based in the UK called 'Pret a Manger', withdrew a brand of tomato flavoured crisps dubbed 'Virgin Mary' after receiving protests from Catholics. Harley-Davidson tested the limits of religion with a billboard in Quebec showing two halves of a ladies face - one half in a hijab and the other with a helmet and her blonde hair flowing. The hoarding read - A Chacun sa Religion - roughly translated it means -To each her own religion. They were going for a secular approach, but it 'backfired' which, as we know, is not a good thing for a motorcycle or its brand.

Advertising regulators in Europe and India receive a large number of complaints annually, but not too many are related to religion.

So where are we headed when it comes to religion in the digital age?

For one, religious institutions are using digital media to market their offerings, much like any other marketer. In India, for example, it is now possible to do a Sathyanarayan Puja on the internet making it easier than trying to book the neighbourhood pandit. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite come through with the same feeling as pujas are largely metaphorical. While one coconut can represent your ancestors, another may represent your progeny. All those little niceties and intricacies of a holy ritual can get lost in the anxiety to acquire a do-it-yourself Puja on the internet. The papacy, under the current pontiff, is clearly a global digital brand that relies on modern technology to attract followers.

In general however, it would be wise for marketers to avoid material that will either cause widespread or intense offense to a small group; which is why I find clients shying away from using any religious reference in their marketing, however big the temptation. Of course, this does not include festival advertising in India which is largely "discount sale" advertising without a point of view.

There is little doubt that the web is changing the way religion is being experienced on a global scale. On a trip to Badrinath, I noticed devotees instagramming their entire experience of the well-known spiritual journey.

But does religion really have a place in advertising? If one were to look at it purely from the point of effectiveness, I would say no. The pre-requisite for a good ad is to establish relevance with a target. The inclusion of religion only makes it relevant to those with strong religious beliefs. To many others, you take the risk that it may just be disqualifying to them. Some may also feel that making religion a commercial consideration might well offend their religious sensibilities. So in effect, you may be walking a razor's edge if you're looking at gaining commercial profit by using a religious theme.

The Meat and Livestock Australia Group just released a commercial which cheekily positions lamb as the meat that anyone can eat, irrespective of which religion you belong to. It's easy to see why they might have done that. Rise in cholesterol cases is killing the red meat industry and thus, it has killed the lamb too. And that, no doubt, is a worry for the livestock producers. On one hand the commercial tries to be secular by representing all the religions in the world, from Scientology, to Hinduism, and Catholicism. On the other hand, it takes the risk of offending every religious group in the world.

It is seen that the Catholics being offended with the reverse miracle of turning wine into water and the staunch Hindu being offended by Lord Ganesha being a party to eating lamb; just when millions in India are petitioning him with prayer while observing penance.

But religion and humour have never been the best of friends. Unfortunately, the role of humour and, to a certain degree, even advertising, is to subvert the accepted order of things. Whereas the role of religion and theology is to stoutly defend them.

Source : http://www.afaqs.com/news/story/51264_Does-religion-have-a-place-in-advertising

INDIAN ADVERTISING TRENDS OF 2017

What is in stock for advertising which was marked by some exemplary campaigns last year? It saw branded content catching the eyes of people and digital coming of age.

The creative world was not left untouched by the historic demonetisation and the unprecedented Pan Bahaar print ad that featured Pierce Brosnan and shocked consumers

on an October morning. The year also witnessed many creative turning independent or completely venturing into a new field.

Based on what happened in 2016, Best Media Info spoke to industry veterans to get an idea of some trends that might centre stage in advertising in 2017.

Demonetisation to wreck creative decisions

Advertising depends a lot on market sentiments. Ups and downs of the demonetisation exercise will affect decision making, whether it is advertising, branding or marketing. One can expect slight hesitation towards taking riskier routes in communication. People will fall back on more tried and tested routes as brands won't be willing to take riskier decisions in terms of accepting innovative ideas with ease. The first half of 2017 will be more affected while the second half will become a bit smooth.

Amer Jaleel, Chairman and CCO, Mullen Lintas, said, "My advice at this time would be that one should be ready for the impact of demonetisation and advertising should navigate its way out in such a riskier environment and make the communication really stand out. It would be a little difficult period but once you understand you should start navigating the strength. People's mindsets have shifted and we should take into consideration those mindsets and make appealing propositions for that mindset."

Creative agencies must work in tandem with media planners

All through 2016, there was a trend of media houses getting into the creative and content territory. Media planning agencies have started getting into content creation as they are close to media opportunities. For example, Mindshare's '6-pack band' for Red Label.

Creative agencies in 2017 will have to wake up and start realising that unless they get into media analysis and pick up a trick or two from media agencies, they will not be able to fully utilise the opportunities available for them. In 2017, creative agencies will start trying to understand the new media phenomenon and get into deeper analysis of how brands function, content functions and digital analytics happen, and what opportunities are thrown up because of data crunching.

Jaleel explained, "Probably, the old model of a media planner and a creative person working together will come. I think the creative people will welcome them more. Creative agencies will become more open in understanding about media and analytics. The trend that was sparked by media people getting into creative will change and see creative people getting into media."

Digital to rule

One thing is clear. Everybody was waiting for digital to arrive and now it is here and is an integral part of creative communication. In 2017, it will play an even more important role. India at first moved into mobile, then mobile first, and is now completely moving into only mobile. And that is going to play a huge role going forward. Every form of communication will start becoming digital. Even if you are on television, it will be

digital, for print it will be digital. We are entering true digital economy where no form of medium or message can be complete without digital aspect to it.

KV Sridhar, Founder, Hyper Collective, said, “Television might become marginalised and a lot more money will be spent on digital content. One could get to see far more digital storytelling. One will get to see the gap between storytelling and technology marginalising. Internet will allow a lot of interactivity.”

Digital to boost creativity

The creative fraternity will leverage the digital space to create long and short-format brand films. Unlike television, they will have more time to talk about a brand in the form of digital films and hence have more space to showcase their creativity.

Year of branded content

The trend of brands getting integrated in various forms of content has definitely increased, but one will get to see more of it in 2017. Brands have realised the importance of branded content with ad blocking and other features coming into existence. Nowadays, it has become the need of the hour to integrate a brand into the content wherever possible to connect with the youth. The only thing that needs to be kept in mind is finding newer and innovative ways to do so in future.

Anil K Nair, CEO and Managing Partner, Digital L&K Saatchi & Saatchi, observed, “I see brands moving an increasing part of their budgets in different kinds of branded content. Large agencies will invest in in-house studios that can create great content at speed.”

Mobile-friendly creative

Penetration of smartphones, Jio coming into action and data plans crashing to rock bottom. Both smartphones and internet will become far more affordable and creativity will be focussed on creating campaigns and solutions for brands that amalgamate well with the mobile medium.

Push for Out-of-home

India is a young country where a lot of infrastructure development is happening. A lot of roads, highways and metro projects are being built at a galloping speed. Young people by definition move out a lot and, therefore, out-of-home will gain more prominence and again may get digital in nature. As Ashish Bhasin, Chairman and CEO South Asia, Dentsu Aegis Network, commented, “Out-of-home will get its legitimate dues that it has not got in the past.”

Need for agencies of the future

India has recently witnessed that a lot of bigger agencies have acquired or merged with smaller ones. Creative agencies have either tied up with digital agencies or have acquired production houses. These agencies have understood clients’ need of getting all the solutions under one roof. Dentsu Aegis Network (DAN) is one big network which

not only has creative solutions to offer, but also offers media planning and buying to its clients.

Bhasin said, “Clients will start insisting on getting holistic, integrated, 360-degree agency support and that is the secret sauce for us. It will become the necessity and sooner or later, all the agencies will follow that route. It is a real client need that most agencies are unable to satisfy so far in India.”

Breaking the clutter

Last year saw a few campaigns that touched the emotional chord, but none could be called clutter-breaking or exemplary. Santosh Padhi, Co-founder and Chief Creative Officer, Taproot Dentsu, has a powerful point to make. He said, “If 4-5 years back we could do Google and Gondappa, then why not this year? I would expect more Adidas sort of campaigns coming up next year. Ad agencies cannot be just doing print ads, outdoor and television commercials. Markets want some clutter-breaking format with new age thinking. Agencies need to prepare themselves for cutting-edge work other than commercials on television. More and more non-traditional things will be appreciated. I am hoping somebody to crack digital as a medium and do something really big because I don’t think something kickass has been done on that front in India.”

Source : <http://bestmediainfo.com/2017/01/rewind-2016-advertising-trends-to-look-forward-to-in-2017/>

PATANJALI AND OTHERS UNDER ASCI RADAR

India's advertising regulatory body the, Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has once again pulled up yoga guru Ramdev Baba promoted Patanjali Ayurved for running 'misleading' advertisement campaigns that disparage competitors' products.

The ASCI said Patanjali Ayurved “unfairly denigrates” products of its rivals in the ads. The Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) found Patanjali’s claim for its Kachi Ghani Mustard Oil that rival makers are selling mustard oil “adulterated with oil made by solvent extraction process with neurotoxin containing Hexane,” was not substantiated. “Also, the claim is grossly misleading by exaggeration,” the ad regulator said in its list for April, 2016, in which it upheld sixty-seven complaints against several companies. Besides, Patanjali also failed to substantiate its claims for Patanjali Fruit Juice, where it had dubbed rival drinks as “expensive juices containing less pulp.” According to the regulator, the ad was accompanied by reference to the prices of other branded juices and “by implication unfairly denigrates the entire class / category of fruit juices.” Similarly, it also failed to substantiate its claims in the ad for cattle feed Patanjali Dugdhamrut as “other companies mix three to four per cent urea and other non-edible things in their cattle feed.”

ASCI also held Patanjali Ayurved's ads for toothpaste Patanjali Dant Kanti as misleading as it did not substantiate claims of it being effective against pyorrhoea, swelling and bleeding of gums, yellowing of teeth, sensitivity and bad breath and provides a natural shield against germs. When contacted, a company spokesperson said the firm was looking into details and exploring legal options. In May, ASCI had rapped Patanjali Ayurved for "false and misleading" claims in its advertisements, including for its hair oil and washing powder brands, while issuing the list for March.

ASCI has also pulled up companies like Nissan Motors, Tata Motors, Amazon, Pernod Ricard India, Reckitt Benckiser, Colgate-Palmolive, Procter & Gamble Hygiene & Health Care, Hindustan Unilever, Idea Cellular, Reliance Industries. It upheld complaints against an ad of Nissan Sunny, where Nissan Motors has shown the driver speaking on the phone, vehicles coming from the wrong side, cars overtaking from the wrong side and the driver not wearing a seat belt.

According to ASCI, it "encourages dangerous / unsafe practices and manifests a disregard for safety". Similarly, Apollo Tyres was pulled up by ASCI for showing a man riding a scooter on the footpath to get ahead of the blocked traffic, which is in violation of traffic rules. Tata Motors also failed to substantiate its claim for its commercial vehicle Signa as "higher productivity through improved comfort and fleet utilisation", "Superior in-cab experience". It also pulled up Reliance Industries for an ad of Reliance Jio Infocomm in which the company has claimed that "Financial year 2016-17 will be the first full year of commercial operations of Reliance Jio."

According to ASCI, "it is factually wrong and likely to mislead the consumers as the advertiser has not started its commercial services". Two-wheeler maker Suzuki Motorcycle India was also pulled up for its ad of Suzuki Gixxer. The advertisement claims Suzuki Gixxer as the "Most Awarded Bike of the Year 2015-16", with a picture of 19 awards shown at the bottom of the advertisement, which was false and misleading, as Suzuki Gixxer had won only six awards in 2015-16, ASCI had said.

Source : http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/patanjali-ads-unsubstantiated-misleading-asci-116070400850_1.html