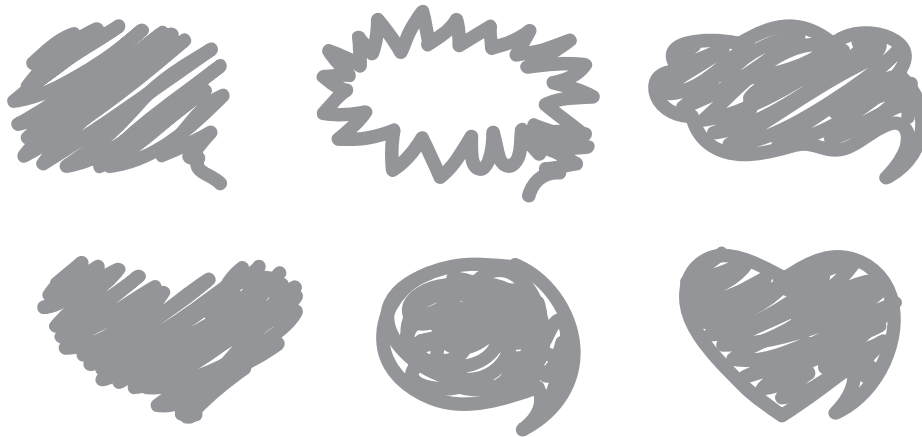


## “Emotional Ad-yachaar” – An essential Brand Differentiator



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### Winning Share of Wallet through the Heart



The ‘emotional’ uprising that has besieged the marketing world is indisputable. Brands are seeking to win a share of our wallets by touching our hearts. Though today’s branders are compelled to find creative ways of getting us to feel for their brand, they are also being driven to meet higher standards of reliability. In the case of Dove for example, it is not enough for a soap to just clean and moisturize. With its Campaign for Real Beauty, the soap brand

needed to rise up to meet higher standards of reliability by getting the everyday woman on the street to express and articulate what it meant to be beautiful. Similarly, it was not enough for a cup of tea to just refresh customers and ‘get them out of bed’ each morning (Harsubahsirfutho mat) but equally important to awaken (Jaago Re) the consumer’s forgotten and inactive value systems. When the American brand Nike entered the European market, they quickly realized that they would need to change their communication message. Through market research, they discovered that no other

sports brand in the market communicated the emotion of sports as their unique selling point. As an American brand they had always publicized sports specifically basketball. They began to appeal emotionally to their consumers about the power and culture of sport rather than on the products and their benefits. Thereon, Nike's image was re-focused and the Swoosh made branding history.

### **A Brand with an Emotional Stimulus Takes On Emotional Meaning**

Psychology, and more recently, Cognitive Neuroscience has clarified the critical role emotional appeals play in our every day existence. We have entire brain regions dedicated to expressing, perceiving, and processing emotions, and so it is not surprising to hear that emotions lie at the center of many of our actions and decision-making. Recent findings in cognitive neuroscience and Neuroeconomics (LeDoux, 1998; Damasio, 2000, 2003; Loewenstein 2000; Mellers and McGraw 2001) have made it clear that emotions play an even larger role in decision making than so far assumed. The idea of rational decision making and emotions and feelings as noise has ultimately been rejected. Decision-making without the influence of emotions is not possible (Damasio, 2000). Sound and rational decision-making depends on prior accurate emotion processing (Bachara and Damasio, 2005: 336) Thus the importance of including emotional aspects in consumer research is even greater than was earlier recognized.

Neuroscience findings support the notion that emotions can appear prior to cognition but also shows that the influence goes both ways (Damasio, 2000). Neuroscience has given foundation for new research on emotions in consumer research, also known as Neuroeconomics or consumer neuroscience. In advertising neuroscience methods have been applied by e.g. Ambler and Burne, 1999; Ambler, Ioannides and Rose (2000), Du Plessis, (2005); and Hall, (2002). In brand research the contributions have been made by McClure et al. (2004) in form of a classical taste-test between Coca Cola and Pepsi, by performing fMRI (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) on the participants. The study supports the traditional finding in taste tests, but the images also shows activation of the reward area in the brain when participant believe to be drinking their favorite brand explaining the choice behavior as well as documenting the earlier assumption that this is due to the brand effect. Yoon et al. (2006) (which was the first published in JCR1) test the notion of brand personality, and Hansen and Christensen, (2007) look at emotions related to brands and product categories. Erk et al. (2002) made an interesting study of consumer choice between products in form of different car types finding differences in activation of reward areas related to different

According to theories of verbal learning and research, the following hypothesis can be formulated: If a "neutral" brand name is repeatedly presented together with an emotional stimulus, the brand name begins to assume an emotional meaning. The brand name now acquires the ability to release emotional reactions in the consumer. Kroeber-Riel University of the Saarland (W. Germany) and Dr von Keitz of Institute for Communications Research, 1980 conducted the following experiment in which advertisements were played out for a group using the model "brand name + emotionally loaded picture" and proved that advertisements could alter feelings towards products. Slide advertisements - exposed for five seconds - were presented to subjects in a simulated film theater. Among others, "Hoba

soap" was selected as a neutral brand name. The pictures conveyed emotional events concerned with suggestive imagery, social happiness and exotic landscapes. They had no relationship to the product and did not transfer any information about the product.

The following variables were manipulated between subjects: the emotional intensity of the pictures (strong to weak) and the additional textual information (present to absent) within the subject with a number of repetitions (up to thirty). Also, the following dependent variables were measured: The emotional reactions to the brand name, the attitude towards the brand and the specific beliefs as well as the readiness to try the product. At the beginning of the experiment, it was found out by psychobiological measurements and by verbal ratings that the brand name "Hoba soap" had practically no emotional meaning. After the conditioning, the name alone - exposed twenty-four hours after the final conditioning period - aroused significant emotional reactions.

The presence of written text did not have any influence on the success of the conditioning. It was, therefore, possible to change the emotional meaning of a brand name and with it the attitude towards the brand by emotional persuasion without any information being given about the product. It was also noticed that thirty repetitions distributed over ten days was necessary to achieve a significant effect. It seems that twenty to thirty repetitions are necessary in order to do the conditioning for brand names. In this context, it is remarkable that the mere repetition of the brand name in the advertisement can result in an increase in liking for the brand name (the brand) without the presentation of further emotional stimuli. This "mere exposure effect" was demonstrated by Zajonc. Secondly, pictures are better suited than words to effect emotional reactions. This was related to the fact that emotional behavior is mainly related to activities of the right hemisphere, and this activity is more strongly stimulated by pictures than by words (Tucker 1981).

### **Brand Image Strategy Entails Psychological Differentiation**

Advertising attempts to develop an image or identity for a brand by associating the product with symbols. In infusing a brand with an image, advertisers draw meaning from the culturally constituted world and transfer that meaning into their brands. In effect, the properties of the culturally constituted world that are well known to consumers get transferred and come to reside in the advertised brand.

When a Brand image is developed using advertising it manages to create a distinctive persona for the brand. This is especially significant for brands of soft drinks, biscuits, confectionary, jeans and fashion accessories. These product categories actually have very little physical differentiation and are somewhat homogeneous.

Consequently brand image advertising is often said to be transformational, since it associates the experience of using the advertised brand with an exclusive set of psychological traits that would not typically be associated with the brand in the same degree had customers not been exposed to the advertisement. Such advertising is transforming (vs. informing) since it endows the customer with a particular experience which is different from the usage of a similar brand due to the emotions communicated through its advertising. Due to the repetitions of the advertisements the brand becomes

associated with its emotional message and with the people, senses or events in those ads. Transformational advertisements have two prominent characteristics:

1. They make the experience of using the brand richer, warmer, more exciting or more enjoyable compared to what would have been the case had the communication been just about an objective description of the brand.
2. They unite the experience of using the brand closely with the experience of the advertisement and consumers remember the brand and the advertising experience together.

### **Making the Emotional Connect with Consumers to Increase Market Growth**

Brands have managed to turn around their fortunes by making the emotional connect with consumers. One such example is of Havells. A decade ago, Havells was a manufacturer of electrical switch gear. The market then was dominated by the unorganized sector and advertising campaigns were directed at the trade-contractors, electricians and electrical consultants. At this juncture, Havells decided to make a break from the past and re-invent its brand. It decided to move away from a trade-centric business and appeal to a broader audience through a Rs 15 crore ad campaign. As per Anil Gupta, joint managing director of Havells, no one in the electrical equipment category was advertising visibly, and few were targeting the end consumer. Havells then expanded its ad budget from Rs 15 crores to Rs 40 crore using the emotional route to make the connect. From 2004 to 2007 Havells grew from Rs 400 crore to Rs 1,600 crore, leveraging its aggressive advertising to lure more consumers away from the low-quality unorganized market to its costlier, but higher quality wares. Havells not only expanded its revenue to Rs 6,518 crore in the 2011 but also expanded new categories such as fans, lighting and home appliances to its product basket. R Balki, chairman and chief creative officer of Lowe Lintas, who created these campaigns for Havells says that building campaigns in traditionally low-involvement categories such as electrical equipment is often challenging. But since the creatives used humor to make the bond, the brand began to seem interesting to the consumer. It is for this very reason that the advertisers decided to build campaigns which connected with emotions rather than focus on the technical prowess of the product. The 'Shock laga' campaign pushed its circuit breaker range of products, another much discussed campaign dealt with the emotions of a hangman. More recently, a south India-focused commercial for its mixer range, features a house bedecked with idlis.

As per KV Sridhar national creative director of Leo Burnett, Havells as a brand was stuck between Bajaj, a strong domestic player and Philips, a well-recognised multinational. The communication strategy brought interest into the brand from life itself and not from the technical attributes of its products. As a result Havells could establish a clear slot for itself in the market today. As per Sridhar. "People love and recognise you (the brand) for your ads and not just superiority of product."

## Brands Develop Global Consumer Relationships through Emotional Communication Experiences



Noted researcher Bobby Banerjee, University of Massachusetts, in 1994 expressed "...in a time when people consume images, maybe we should... begin figuring out what people do with advertising, how they respond to it, how they use it, how they develop relationships with brands based on their experience with it." He advised that multinational advertising should start with consumers, and their responses to the advertising

stimulus. The focus on emotions in global ads was motivated by two reasons; firstly, global ads were primarily emotion orientated, since the dominance of emotional ads in the global setting was due to the difficulty of basing a competitive advantage on the functional attributes of a brand. Consequently, as products start turning more and more homogeneous, the emotional attributes of a brand become essential for differentiation. As a consequence, advertising tends to rely more on sentiments to attract consumers' attention and interest. Emotions are said to move across borders better than information. Empirical evidence also suggests the dominance of emotional ads in global campaigns. Consider the two global brands of Coca-Cola and McDonald's as examples. Coca-Cola's campaigns always depict people around the world sharing their happiest times -- love, laughter, and celebration -- in the company of Coke (Keough, 1994). An emotional appeal to happy families is also made by McDonald's ads promoting the universal theme of happy family time in McDonald's (Rothschild, 1987).

The second reason for looking at emotional aspects of global advertising is that studies of emotion, both in psychological and sociological contexts, have suggested that there are a handful of basic emotions, such as happiness, anger, fear, sadness and love, that are the instinctual biological reactions that human beings possess universally, and are recognized by people in cultures around the world (Ekman, 1984; Kemper, 1987; Shaver et al., 1992). Social emotions, such as humor, guilt, warmth, and nostalgia, are derived from these basic emotions, and are social reactions acquired at a later stage of human development through the socialization process, and are culturally specific (Harris and Saarni, 1989; Kemper, 1987; Malatesta and Wilson, 1988; Scheff, 1990). The possibility that basic-emotional responses are cross-culturally homogeneous shows that there is a great deal of potential for capitalizing on the similarity in response among consumers globally. Due to the tendency for basic emotions to be universal, cross-national consumers tend to have similar emotional responses toward global ads which are intended to generate basic emotions. For example, the Coca-Cola ad captured the happy feelings of global consumers, an emotion considered as universally basic.

## Conclusion

Therefore trying to cox your consumer by helping them create an emotional experience of your brand image establishes a more personal connection with consumers who remove for longer. While an emotional marketing campaign may be more effective, creating ads that engage consumer emotions isn't easy. By comparison, basing a campaign on a "fact" (if a brand has such an advantage) is comparatively simple. Indeed, brands have sometimes damaged themselves when an emotional campaign failed to align with reality. Emotion-based ads may be more difficult to create, but the statistics do indicate that it's certainly worth the effort.

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