

Use of Indian Food Mascot Design as an Advertising Tool in Maintaining and Growing the Brand Name

Preeti Yadav, Dandeswar Bisoyi, Debkumar Chakrabarti

Abstract—Mascots provide memories to viewers, and numerous promotional campaigns with different appearances, continue to trigger viewers and capture their interest. This study investigates the effect of Indian food mascot designs and influence on enhancing communication; thereby, building long-term brand recognition by the consumers. This paper presents a descriptive approach to Indian food mascot design as an advertising tool, and its research adopts a quantitative methodology. The study confirms that mascots have an ability to communicate a message in an effective manner; all though they are simple in terms of design and fashion trend, they have the capability to build positive reactions.

Keywords—Food mascot, brand recognitions, advertising, humour.

I. INTRODUCTION

USING mascots in the food industry is considered by specialists to be an effective marketing strategy. As in other industries, the fast food sector uses mascots to build relationships with consumers on a more personal level. Because of its effectiveness and ability to create the emotional attachment with customers and mascot power in Indian advertising is significant. It cannot be stated that mascots are better perceived in India than in all the other countries in the world because there is no available evidence on this issue. However, it can be claimed that the usage of mascots in India is more effective than the usage of mascots in the US. The reason of this regularity lies in the area of Indian culture and Indians' mentality which are unique. In order to engage Indian customers into a communication process with effective advertising, a mascot should possess some Indian features. For instance, the most well-known mascot in the Indian food industry is Amul Girl, was specifically created for the Indian market which is obvious from its design.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MASCOT AS A WAY OF ADVERTISING

The use of mascots leads to the presence of spokes creatures that make up the branding element that provides a platform for people to remember easily and faster, both the products and the company, as shown in Fig. 1. The features of mascots are mostly based on people, objects or animals and enable the target audience to easily identify, relate, understand and

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remember the company's products as well as the company itself.

Mascots are timeless and boundless due to the fact they do not die, age or have unsocial behaviour, and therefore, damaging of brands is at its minimal, making them a good tool for brand development and maintenance.

The use of mascots needs to be in such a manner that they are in sync with other advertising and branding elements such as logos, slogans and jingles. In most cases, they tend to take the form of names, or the benefit accrued from the use of the product. For example, Fig. 2 shows the Mr. Clean mascot, which communicates that the product is related to cleaning and hygiene, and secondly, it shows relationship of mascot and product.



Fig. 1 Different mascots of companies

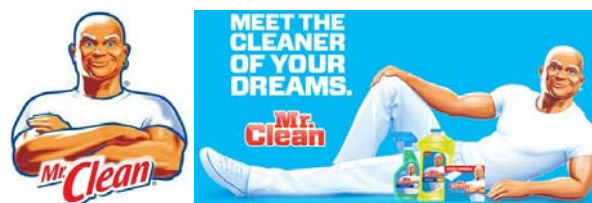


Fig. 2 Mr. Clean (official brand mascot) communicates the products are about cleaning and hygiene

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON AMUL GIRL ADVERTISING

Amul girl is an advertising mascot used by the Indian dairy brand, Amul, to advertise their products. The mascot is an animation depicting a young Indian girl dressed in a polka dot frock with a matching bow in her hair, as shown in Fig. 3.

The characteristic of the advertising mascot is in its simplicity- the simple and forever young clever girl with a penchant for wordplay is easy for the audience to relate to, and thus, helped the Amul brand gain a top tier brand position in the Indian market. The creation of Amul girl was triggered as a response to the Polson's butter girl, a rival brand of Amul, and the idea was conceived in 1967. The Amul mascot has been used not just for promoting the company brand, but also

to comment on social issues and trending affairs, sometimes which include social and political messages, as seen in Fig. 4.



Fig. 3 Amul girl (mascot)



Fig. 4 Amul girl (mascot) comments on social and political issues in a humorous manner

The Amul Girl mascot has managed to communicate about the product in a humorous manner which allows the audience to associate with it. The use of humour based on the reality of life has given the company a platform to differentiate itself from other advertisements. Also, since its inception, the use of the mascot has attributed to the creation of brand positioning among consumers.

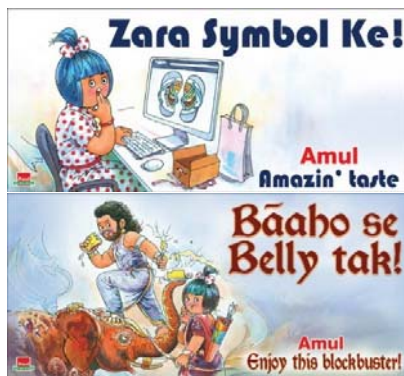


Fig. 5 Amul girl (mascot) communicates about the product in a humorous manner

The continued success of the company has resulted in consumers linking the brand name to the very essence of the product, something akin to how Coca Cola blossomed as THE soda to drink. The message is that now all butter has to be like Amul's, as it is the benchmark. This approach has created a competitive edge for Amul products over other brands in the

market.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

An advertising mascot is any object, animal or person used to represent a group with a common identity [1]. A common identity can be a school, military unit, brand name or a sports team. The idea behind it is to leave a lasting impression on the consumer/ customer, and thus, giving the company a long-term base on which to build [1]. The use of a mascot in advertising represents a form of guerrilla marketing tactics. In the case of Amul, the introduction of Amul girl was to counter competition from the Polson butter girl who represents the company's rival brand.

V. HUMOUR IN ADVERTISING USING A MASCOT CAPTURES THE IDENTITY AND STRENGTHS OF THE BRAND

To come up with a mascot that caters for this need, it is essential for a company to understand its vision and core values and to stand out as an individual among the competition [2]. With this understanding, the physical attributes need to mirror humour which tends to be easy to remember. For example, in Fig. 6, the casual done-up hair gives the impression of being bubbly and carefree. The polka dot dress, on the other hand, is trendy yet elegant, and is easily related to by consumers of all generations. Further, mascots used in advertising for any form of food need to attract attention through humour so as to ensure that the message is passed to the audience [3].

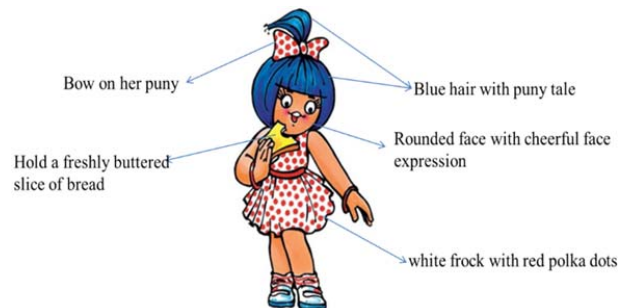


Fig. 6 Amul Girl design characteristics



Fig. 7 Connecting the mascot and the brand product

VI. MASCOT AND IMAGE

When using a mascot to advertise, it is preferable to communicate that the mascot is not just an animation, but also relates to the reality of the firm [5]. The product and its benefits should be portrayed clearly, and be tied to the mascot. This ensures that the mascot and its message is etched into the consumer's mind and makes it future-relatable with the mascot and the brand related to the mascot (see Fig. 7).

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adapts a quantitative methodology and the

preferred research design is descriptive in nature [6], [7]. Quantitative methodology measures occurrences in terms of quantity or objects. While descriptive research allows the researcher to describe events as they are at the moment [4]. This research will be a desk research cumulated on the number of 'love handle' reactions from a twitter handle and how the different advertisements were responded to. The data are from the web address [8]. Amul advertisements are very popular and are frequently given positive responses on social media.

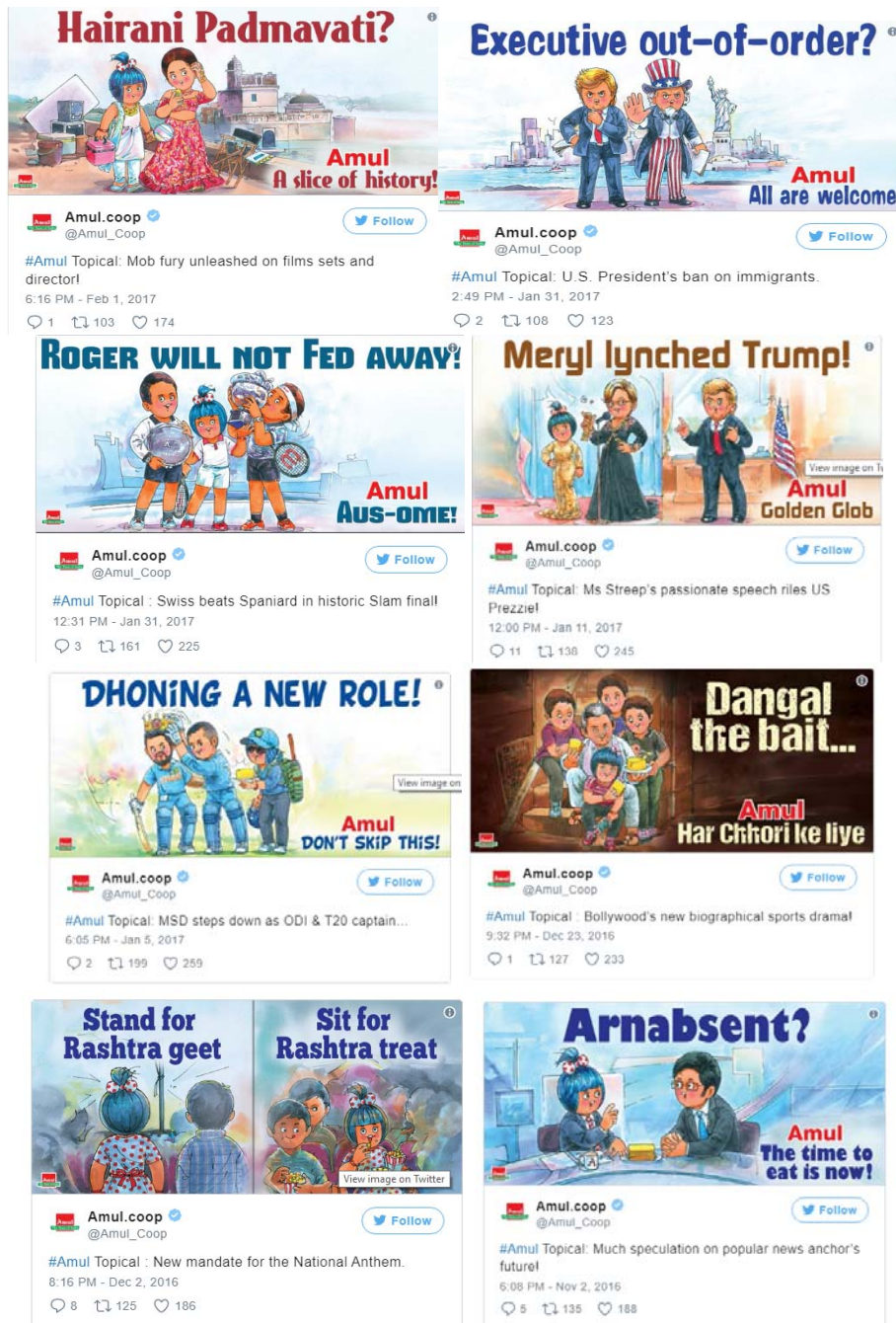


Fig. 8 Data are from the web (Twitter) and shows the different issues and messages communicated in Amul (mascot) advertising

As can be seen in Fig. 8, the main element of Amul advertising is the use of humour to highlight or address the issues affecting society and social life.

VIII. FINDINGS

Amul advertising has used a mascot to create brand positioning for the company. In addition, humour was used to communicate the company's products and the issues affecting society, social life or the political structure. An example includes the US immigration ban. Messages such as "Roger will not fed away" received a love reaction from 225 followers, "Meryl lynched Trump" received 245, and "Dhoning a new role!" received 259, while "Dangal the bait" attracted 233 love emotions from Twitter followers.

IX. CONCLUSION

From the reactions to the different messages communicated through Amul girl, it is notable that the mascot is simple in terms of design and fashion trends. The use of the mascot relates easily with the consumers resulting in brand recognition among their customers.



Fig. 9 Mascot dressing according to the topic

The designers also use creative ways of dressing the Amul girl mascot to match the topic of the day, as shown in Fig. 9. In addition, from the findings, it is notable that the mascot attracts a wide audience despite its innocent baby-faced appearance, and advertisements featuring Amul girl leave a memorable impression on the audience.

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