
Kids : The Darlings of Marketers

*Gitanjali Bhatnagar**

Abstract

Children today offer the biggest market and what is more, they are also going to be the next hottest market- that of youngsters with a high disposable income. Marketers and advertisers seem to have placed their figures on the pulse. Kids are active seekers and influencers for a whole range of products affecting their lives. The world of advertising has changed. Advertisers are making their pitches to more of young audience; “catch them young” seems to be the motto of the day. Kids are no longer passive consumer of brands that they once used to be. While this is definitely true for products like chocolates, biscuits, ice creams for which kids are the direct consumers. This it is also true for other range of high end consumables like package food, mobile, camera, clothes, place of vacation, computers and believe it cars. The paper brings forward how various products are successfully changing the mind set of target customer by developing commercials or communication strategies around children.

Introduction:

The world of children has changed a great deal over the last decade. Though the advertising provokes children to stay clean by soap companies like Dettol, Lifebuoy etc. Brushing twice a day, it was a marketing strategy for more usage of product but such advertisement always helps the children to keep their teeth clean, healthy and germ-free. Even the use of some cartoons or sometimes small ideas like “Pepsodent Germicheck – Dhishum Dhishum” encourages the child to use the product to realize the benefits shown in the advertisements. Companies such as Amul and Nestle are advertising milk products to the young generation as something cool & refreshing, e.g. Amul Kool. Although the motto behind the launch and its subsequent advertising is to capture the child segment of the market, the fact remains that still intake of any milk product is always good for the children. It is much more vitamin – rich and nourishing than other products like soft drinks which

are actually harmful for the child. Many companies focusing on children have realised that here is a need for redefining the generally accepted definition of childhood.

The obvious question comes in the mind is why this curious and interesting phenomenon of using kids in India persists? One would be surprised by the logics of ad world. Indian consumers are driven by emotions and family values. In majority of cases we Indians seek to live our lives through kids. The companies know that children have great amount of influence on their parents. Various media studies reveal that children are playing a major role in steering the family

***Dr. Gitanjali Bhatnagar**

Principal

I.T. Institute of Management & Technology

Chandigarh- Patiala Highway

Banur (Dist Rajpura), Punjab

e-mail: gitali07@yahoo.co.in

purchase decisions. That is why advertisements are aimed more at kids than parents. Undoubtedly, marketers and advertisers feel that strategies revolving around kids fetch better results. Grish Bapal, VP, marketing, LG Electronics, says "today kids play a critical role as the influencer in most household decisions when it comes to collective family purchase". He explains that the kids are getting influenced by media at a very early age and their spectrum of influence is moving far beyond their regular domain. The importance of a child decision has started gaining a higher weightage in all family purchase decisions especially with nuclear families growing in numbers. These children are the part of a new generation that is taking the Indian market by storm. Purnendu Bose, COO, Hungama TV, says "children influence the buying decision of about 30 percent of Indian FMCG market or consumer spending worth Rs. 30,000 crore".

An attempt is being made to analyze various popular kid oriented marketing and advertising strategies adopted by popular brands.

Cases:

McDonald's

The mindset of Indian family to eat out and to enjoy life has been understood pretty well by McDonald's. Not only are the commercials focused at the kid in the house but also the products and the ambience in the restaurant are made kid friendly. The fun filled ad campaign shows how strangers become friends and life becomes chatpata while enjoying the New McAloo Tikki Burger. The Ad has elements of both youthfulness and fun. It starts with a young boy winking at a girl who is at the counter placing the order and then the fun continues... Quote from Nitesh Tiwari, creative director Leo Burnett, "We are always looking for small ways in which we can add a little fun, a bit of zing to our every day mundane lives. This simple insight is core to our idea for McDonald's new McAloo Tikki Burger Its new chatpata taste adds spice to your life just the way the protagonist in the film adds to his by coming up with a unique way to break ice with a pretty girl".

Tushar Pal, of Leo Burnett, who has made the famous ad on "Happy meal with Madagascar toy." As the sequel of the movie "Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa"

releases world over, McDonald's has been very smartly providing the kids toys depicting their favorite characters from the movie with Happy Meal. Madagascar toy used to talk when shaken. Tushar says "Happy Meal experience is all about what's new in the Happy Meal Box and enjoying the new toy. Understanding how kids interact with these toys, we thought of this ad. McDonald's is the only kid's brand that continues to give kids a new reason every month to visit McDonald's. Where all other brands do tie-ups once or twice a year, we work month after month to sustain kid's interest."

Commenting on the New TVC, Arvind Singhal, Head Marketing McDonald's India (West & South) says, "McDonald's latest Happy Meal ad campaign is sure to make the customers say "I like to move it, move it". We have tied up with DreamWorks's Madagascar 2: Escape to Africa for our December's Happy Meal property. The single-minded proposition behind this Ad is to bring the fun & adventure alive. The film has beautifully captured the jungle theme and weaved in the elements of fun in it." The strategy of kids enjoying toy given with Happy Meal has changed the acceptability of brand for ever.

Amul

An ad which has factually changed the taste of India is none other than the one very close to our heart, a sweet looking creature, one and only Amul girl, whom we all have admired like our own kids. The Amul girl who lends herself so completely to Amul butter was created as a rival to the Polson butter girl. This one was sexy, village belle, clothed in a tantalising *choli* all but covering her upper regions. To quote Sylvester daCunha "Eustace Fernandez (the art director) and I decided that we needed a girl who would worm her way into a housewife's heart. And who better than a little girl?" . And so that the famous Amul Moppet was born. For more than 40 odd years the Utterly Butterly Amul girl has managed to keep her fan following intact. So much so that the ads have entered in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for being the longest running campaign ever. From ages Amul has released a new add each Friday and Amul girl was called the Friday to Friday star. Round eyed, chubby cheeked, winking at you from strategically placed hoardings at many traffic lights to steal your heart. Even today the Amul moppet everyone loves to love. I can't remember how often have I stopped, looked,

chuckled at the Amul hoarding that casts her sometime as the coy, shy Madhuri, a bold sensuous Urmila or simply as herself, dressed in her little polka dotted dress and a red and white bow, holding out her favourite packet of butter. From the Sixties to 2k, the Amul ads have come a long way.

Amul's ad is at most times, really wonderful and the interesting point is they have most of their campaign based on children. Amul as a brand has a range of products and for each product whether milk, ice cream, srikhand, cheese the ad theme is always catchy, interesting, meeting the objective- "Amul doodh pita hai India", "Dude where is doodh", "I want more" have shown children playing their pranks and enjoying life with Amul product. It is a fact, whether it is ice cream or cheese; Amul has not only changed the eating habits they have become all time favourite products of the family.

Dhara

In mid 90's advertisements of cooking oil Dhara changed the scenario of edible oil industry drastically. Instead of targeting women of the house ads featuring kids became popular. One of the most popular ads of Dhara has been "My Daddy strongest". The emotional core for the campaign is 'Pride in Dad'. Kids value the quality time spent with their Dad. The communication was built around how Dad can feel more energetic even after a complete days work and still have the energy to play with the kids. It was articulated in the phrase - '*My Daddy Strongest*'. What an imaginative way to express binding of a normal family. Marketers deserve appreciation for such creative strategies which are capable of creating history.

No one can forget another ad of Dhara in which the kid deciding to leave home after a minor tiff with his mother; he is shown waiting for a train at the railway station. The postman, Ramu Kaka sees him sitting there and tries to persuade him back home. When all his persuasions fail, he says *Aaj jalebi pakayi hai? , Jilebi?* the boy asks as the thought of yummy jalebis cooked by mom tempts him, he can not resist it any further and decides to let the idea of running away wait for another day. The childhood innocence of the kid and the caring concern of the elderly postman synthesize to give the ad a wonderful goody goody feel to it and the ad touches chords of human attachment and emotions. As the happy kid makes

his way back to home, the jingle plays in the background to complete the ad and the point is driven well and truly home. The marketers could change dull boring and labourious task of cooking into such wonderful learning is mind blowing.

Cadbury

'Cadbury' the name it self is mouth watering for consumer of all age group. The commercial Cadbury Delite has been developed upon the innovative excuse that kids usually come up with reasons to avoid drinking milk. A line that comes to mind of the model is "if I drink up the milk, what will the cow's baby drink? Or am I a pussy cat that should drink milk" A delightful series with charming kid- speak making a simple point that kids even who are at their creative best in thinking up excuses to avoid drinking milk, will now become friend with it. Marketers draw out smile, genuine connection that link the brand benefit to the context to the target user. What an intelligent way to blend marketing strategies to solve the problem of many mothers by expressing thought of kids in such a unique way.

Cadbury is one of the most cherished brands of Indian households. All their products are consumed by all of us irrespective of age, income, and education. In the early 90's, chocolates were seen as 'meant for kids', usually a reward or a bribe for children. In the Mid 90's the category was re-defined by the very popular 'Real Taste of Life' campaign, shifting the focus from 'just for kids' to the 'kid in all of us'. It appealed to the child in every adult. And Cadbury Dairy Milk became the perfect expression of 'spontaneity' and 'shared good feelings'. The 'Real Taste of Life' campaign had many memorable executions, which people still fondly remember. Cadbury 5 Star was always unique because of its format and any communication highlighting this uniqueness and went down well with the audiences. From 'deliciously rich, you'd hate to share it' in the 70's, to the 'lingering taste of togetherness' & 'Soft and Chewy 5 Star' in the late 80's, the communication always paid homage to the product format. Cadbury Gems has always given unique reasons to enjoy life with it. Cadbury products are today affectionately given as corporate gifts. God bless marketing strategies of the company and commercials of celebrations series. Cadbury is even used on festivals.

Dabur

Dabur's core strength is in distinctively Indian products. After Cadbury, this brand is probably the next one to stretch out from being relevant for children, to being relevant for everyone. Dabur Chyawanprash is sold in the market since its tin-pack inception in 1949 with variety of stories. These multivitamin supplements are not mere fads forward in its communication appeal of Zaroorat hai to Sabko zaroorat hai, using Amitabh Bachchan narrating stories generally with all members of the family. These foods are not fads to drive the message home through advertising. "A tried and tested natural health tonic for the family" to "Kare bhritri shakti ka vikas to Andar se strong and Bimariyan door, Josh bharpur" the current Zaroorat series, the brand's core message has been consistently featuring kids in the ads. To add dynamism, the Androoni Shakti proposition was carried perfectly in ad by featuring a gathering of all age group dancing vibrantly without getting tired. One of the ad campaign has moved forward from the mother spending a day in her son's place and creating the point that Dabur Chyawanprash is needed by active children daily, to a father and son taking the mother's place in a day full of house hold chores realise how strenuous it can be. The marketers know their task pretty well thus they simply make kids center of their strategies to attain what is desired.

Hajmola, one of the strongest brands in Dabur's portfolio, with a core proposition of "fun, taste and digestion" has centered all its ads around kids. Its tag line for years, *Chatpat swad, jhatpat aaram*, (tastes good, provides instant relief) conveys the product's benefits simply and succinctly. From quite some years Amitabh Bachchan playing different types of pranks with the child actors has changed product acceptability among different segments. The marketers have definitely done a remarkable job of expanding its positioning from ayurvedic digestive to a candy or mild digestive product with a younger and naughtier image. Yet another innovative offering from Dabur Foods, the largest packaged, preservative free fruit juice Real Junior, targeted at the kids below six years. The juice has two flavours enriched with calcium in 125ml pack with animated fruit characters intended to appeal to children. The product meets the needs of mothers who want their kids to have

additional nutritional requirement that supplement the vitamin intake. The company has multiple pack sizes that suit varied consumption needs and occasions. The Indian family has started taking packed juices in breakfast instead of milk or lassi. Its worth mentioning that we feel proud in offering packaged juice to our guests, God bless marketers for changing life style.

Rasna

We all have cherished memories of the first Rasna girl from the inception of the initial advertisements. The baby Ankita grew up with the brand and remained its ambassador for a good many years. Rasna was the first brand to recognise the role of kids in brand selection. "I love you Rasana", the line was first lisped on television and it took a while for it to manifest itself in the print advertisement. Rasna's advertisement campaigns helped it in becoming a trusted and popular brand amongst Indian consumers. The advertisements essentially revolved around cute and very-likeable children who were floored by Rasna's attractive colors, taste and fruity flavors. Eventually, Rasna's TV commercial featuring a small girl with the tagline 'I love you Rasna,' was adopted as the brand's tagline for many more commercials over the next couple of years.

As a result of all the above, Rasna virtually ruled the market during the 1980s and the early-1990s. For over 17 years, it remained the undisputed market leader in the Indian SDC market. In the early 1990s, the sweetly endearing Rasna girl was joined by a Rasna boy. All the advertisements were appreciated and remembered by the audience as each one of them had cute looking kids catching your attention and affection instantly. "The campaign evolved as the brand grew. We did promotions, celebrity endorsements involving film stars and cricketers in the late 1990s and 2000s. Each campaign has contributed to the brand immensely."⁷ The brand has grown at substantial rate because we the Indian consumers are driven by emotions and family values. We all enjoyed the antics of the cute little girl as mascot of Rasna specially in the ad when she answers to the roll call of Miss Nimbupani and she answers with a finger on her cheek – Present please. It is undoubtedly this is one of the most favourite products of kids.

Funskool toys

This brand is one of the largest ranges of toys in India. To name few of them are GI Joe, Batman, Superman, Playdoh, Hungry Hippo, Barbie, Monopoly, Beyblade, Pokemon cards, Cartoon network merchandise and the list is endless. All ads of this brand focused on safe fun and mental development of children. The Funskool products are part of child's extended identity with sense of achieving extra ordinary feats. Each ad has shown children enjoying life with these toys and increasing their intelligent quotient. At least among urban educated consumers this brand has phenomenal utility. On each achievement of the kids parents reward the child with Funskool toys. Even the kids pursue their parents for buying all these toys to create an image among the peer group. The marketers have been able to successfully create the mindset that the wide range of Funskool toys help children of all ages to improve hand-eye-co-ordination, auditory discrimination, motor skills, creativity, logical thinking, problem solving skills, vocabulary and even general academic intelligence.

Funskool is the exclusive manufacturer for Cartoon Network merchandise. Funskool already distributes popular brands that are featured on Cartoon Network like Bob the Builder, Thomas and Friends, Batman, Superman, Tom and Jerry, and Scooby Doo. This strategy is extremely effective since inception, Disney movies and TV programme hold interest for the child and drive the toy sale, especially if the toys are straight out of the programme or out of a Walt Disney movie. What else children want in life? Marketers' strategies are perfect to have win-win out come.

Lifebuoy

Right from the early days, the brand called Lifebuoy has preferred effective communication to celebrities. The program "Swasthya Chetna" spreads awareness about germs and their adverse effects on health, and how proper 'health and hygiene' practices such as bathing and washing hands with soap could prevent diseases like diarrhea. The aim of the Lifebuoy ad is to challenge the misconception that 'visibly clean' is 'hygienically clean'. The advertisement showing kids enjoying bath with Lifebuoy soap sought to grow the brand in India by attracting those consumers who never used soap. In the process, the company sought

to bring about a behavioral change by convincing people to use soaps more frequently, thus creating more users for its brand. It was around 2002 that the product moved from being a hard soap to a mild soap that delivered a significantly superior bathing experience. The ad featured children cleaning up an entire colony without any fear or kids attendance in the school, is regularly highlighting the soap's germ-fighting benefits or the child playing in the ground counting eight, nine and father asks child to show his hands and gives him a Lifebuoy. From last seven eight years, the soap had a refreshing fragrance and its overall positioning changed painting its promise of health in softer, more versatile and responsible hues—for the entire family. The packaging was also changed. The rugged looking packs were soon replaced with a softer cover, resulting in all around acceptability of the product. Marketing strategies have been successful in changing behaviour of entire family. Today even a small kid is conscious of cleaning his hands with specific soap.

Parle-G

Parle-G is one of the oldest recollectable brand names as well as the largest selling brand of biscuits in India. For decades, the product was instantly recognized by its iconic white and yellow wax paper wrapper with the depiction of a young girl on the front. The brand has managed to retain its relationship with children and leadership position because it has evolved its campaign with every consumption trend. With sponsoring the television show *Shaktimaan* on Doordarshan, it literally gave new heights to Parle-G. The brand has come up with some innovative commercials involving young vibrant, enthusiastic children with a new punch line, *G means Genius*, which was an instant hit. The 'G maane genius' theme's latest rendition features Aamir Khan & Darsheel of Taare Zameen Par fame. Together their mental alacrity gets them out of a tight spot. In another ad smart small boy while traveling in local bus makes a fat lady leave the seat so that he can offer the seat to the charming school girl. Parle has always continued with its G for Genius campaign in different stories like in drawing competition, a cunning girl spoils the painting sheet of the main contestant, though the girl reacts smartly and writes on the sheet rainy day and wins the competition. It is a heritage brand that happens to sell over 25 crore packets every month.

The stature of the brand reflects from its acceptability in every house. Parle-G has managed to retain its leadership position with just a simple white-and-yellow striped wrapper with a picture of a baby on it. The last campaign, *Hindustan ki Takat*, (the strength of India) is a huge position which no other brand can take on so effortlessly.

Horlicks

From last five to sixes years, the brand has changed its marketing strategies. Instead of just communicating with mothers, or doctors, the brand has tried to communicate with children. The tag line says that the children who consumed Horlicks are "taller, stronger, and sharper" than those who did not. The ad shows kids in the ground playing and enjoying their life Apang, Upang, Chhapang- slurp it, spread it, lick it. In one of the its commercial aggressive comparative advertising with its competitor Complan too has contributed in its brand building efforts. The ad has usual sneaky ways of showing similar packs while intoning about "other rival products" was given a go-by as a couple of boys and their mothers indulged in gleeful one-upmanship over who had made a smarter decision. The Complan boy said his health drink had 23 nutrients, and the Horlicks boy said, hah, mine has that too. The Complan boy asserted that his drink made him taller, while the Horlicks boy replied, hah, mine makes me taller, stronger, sharper. The Complan Mom says it cost her Rs 170 while the Horlicks kid says, huh, ours cost only Rs 131. The Complan kid looks jubilant at Complan being higher on something — thus revealing, perhaps, his lack of sharpness? The Complan Mom looks annoyed and just to rub it in, a billboard of Horlicks floats past. These commercials have definitely changed its brand image, —from a fuddy-duddy, boring health drink recommended by doctors to something that is nourishing, and enjoyable. The outcome of such marketing strategies is visible in changing opinion and acceptability of the product.

Good Knight

From the beginning Good Knight commercials have made a conscious effort to show a family where the mother protects children from being bitten by mosquitoes. The ad enjoys exaggerated stories about big giant size mosquitoes entering house and the

mother is irritated, worried. Finally, the mother puts on the mat and opens up windows, doors with smile on the face. Not only this, she starts playing with the kids without any tension. One of the other ads of the coil features a mother lovingly putting her infant to sleep without any worry of mosquitoes. The TV ad for silver mat too worked well for the brand. The idea was to convey that a little bit of silver mat could make your child win the championship in school as the mat too has the power that results in better health there by resulting into a winning spree. The brand has high order of emotional association of nurturance and total protection for kids. The crux of the marketing strategy is that mothers never compromise on their kids' health and safety. Each of the advertisements has placed the product on the highest pedestal of protection of family. The acceptance of the product is phenomenal. The brand is an essential part of each household to safe guard from mosquitoes.

Baby Johnson

All the products of Johnson n Johnson are advertised with mother-kid as center of the story line since ages. No research is needed to say that these ads are all time favorite ads of every individual. It seems the company knows that watching kids in ads captures not only the attention but hits the bulls eye. Look at the series of ads, whether it is the baby oil ad, powder, moisturizing cream or no tears shampoo ad, makes not only the mother know what the product is all about, rather the whole family registers the benefit of the products. Johnson's soap shows a small girl making comparison between her eyes, nose, hair etc. with those of an infant are "same to same". However she is dismayed to discover that her skin and infants skin is "no same". The language expression provides clear message to mothers of being careful of well being of a child. The marketing strategies have been effortlessly penetrating into our hearts from ages and making use fond users of the product generation by generation.

Surf

The Surf Excel campaign with kids as models has completely shifted from intelligent decision making of Lalitaji to emotional bond with young customers. Beautiful surf excel ad reminds you of your childhood for sure. The brand that has married the need for a

stain-removing detergent for messy kids in a simple story line of brother sister relationship, teacher and student affiliation, friends enjoying life in the ground without being bothered about stains "Dag achhey hai". An out-of-the-box clutter breaking campaign (without a product window) that clearly communicates not only a bold message about stains being good but also educates the customer on growing children. Talk of any ad whether it is a brother making his little sister happy by literally hitting the puddle asking it not to repeat to his sister, or boy's lovely affection for his favourite teacher Rosey miss, we all enjoyed not only the ad but each second of the simplest and beautiful depiction of emotions. Overall, the ad conveys a wonderful message 'Dirt is good'. There are no big heads and big names, just a voice over still spreading the message that if something good prevails with stains, then stains are good. These are the ads we have seen over and over on almost every Indian television channel and still emotions in the ad gives long lasting impact even today. No harm in admitting that this innovative ad gave wings to nostalgic childhood memories; how those happy go lucky days our parents gave us to spend such a childhood.

Hutch

This is the company which has taken a very different route to catch the attention of consumers through small boy and a dog. The little Pug that made mobile company Hutch's television ad one of the most successful campaigns of recent times was amazing. The Hutch ad communicated effortlessly the infinite loyalty and love between the dog and the kid, with simple but catchy words 'wherever you go, our network follows,' These words of V Mahesh, group creative director at Ogilvy & Mather and the creator of Hutch's path-breaking 'wherever you go, our network follows,' ad campaign have bagged innumerable Abby awards in 2004. The Hutch pug ad borrowed one simple aspect of life and strategically used it across all various media vehicles. Even after 6 years we all remember not only the ad but the characters too. The ad has effortlessly made an impact on the viewer; the brand was not only recognized but was able to get desired results.

References:

Halve.Anand (May, 2004) "Child labour in advertising" Pitch

Sudhir Vinita (Sep 2005) "Kids riding onto celeb chat" Pitch,

Web Pages:

<http://www.tonicpanel.com/clients/mcdonald/option6/ChatpataMcAlooTikkiTVC.pdf>

<http://www.mcdonaldsindia.com/McDonaldsMadagascarTVC.pdf>

<http://www.vicky.in/straightfrmtheheart/amul-ads-the-real-taste-of-humour/>
<http://www.mouthshut.com/review/Dhara>

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/I-love-you-Rasna-Khambatta-kids-to-endorse-product/articleshow/5088279.cms>

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/catalyst/2008/12/18/>

http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report_hutch-campaign-wiz-returns-to-his-beautiful-world_1019264