

Mother Dairy skips to a digital beat

The dairy major goes for a brand refresh with new packaging and sharper digital tools, looks to set itself apart from clutter in the dairy market

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Mother Dairy is rewriting the brand rule-books to talk to an audience that is younger, premium-paying and more diverse than its traditional stronghold of milk-guzzling North Indian states. The brand is positioning itself for a national audience and looking to wear the mantle of a millennial dairy label (despite its legacy of 45-odd years) by infusing quirky humour and agility into its digital persona, thereby differentiating itself from rivals Amul (Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation) and Nestle among others.

Sanjay Sharma, business head, value-added dairy products, Mother Dairy Fruit & Vegetable, says, "Our focus on digital media has increased significantly. While we have one of the leading media agencies to handle traditional media, there is an exclusive agency only to meet the digital requirements." The campaign, 'Rishon Ka Swad Badhaye (prolong the taste of relationships)' relies heavily on digital (alongside a mix of print and outdoor), he adds.

The campaign revolves around food and time spent with family and friends, positioning the brand as an integral part of both. Sharma explains, "It is more than just what satisfies our hunger. No matter what choices we make, food is powerful because it invokes rela-



The campaign narrative stays the same across media, but the tone varies between print and digital ads

tionships and emotions." The message will be relayed across all media and while print and TV speak to the traditional and national audience, digital media is expected to deliver the brand to its target niche, within the new, urban geographies that it hopes to explore.

According to Sharma, marketing budgets, especially around digital, have increased in the past few years to stand at 3-5 per cent of its dairy product revenues. Moreover, the salience of spends on digital media in its overall media mix has also increased significantly. The company's overall turnover stood at over ₹9,500 crore in FY19, of which, the value-added dairy products business contributed over 15 per cent.

"Digital is about 10-15 per cent of our overall marketing mix. Our share of investment on digital platforms will gradually increase as our target consumers consume a lot of digital media. In recent years, we have



खाना खत्म करने की वजह बन जाए



रिश्तों का स्वाद बढ़ाए



The new design remixes the brand's old colours to create a fresh look and uses a chat box as a label

engaged our consumers by curating digital-only campaigns for our dairy products with the basic thought being, make each creative relatable and strike conversations," Sharma adds.

Experts point out, Mother Dairy has been able to wrap itself around the unique needs of social media branding quite effectively. Its posts, memes and campaigns are topical and funny, something that Amul has mastered on offline (OOH)

media with its pithy one-liners around current affairs.

Mother Dairy campaigns are high on engagement and shared widely, which unfetters the brand from its North Indian moorings, experts point out. And by finessing the narrative on digital media, the brand is setting itself apart from Amul and also Nestle, which has focused its messaging around health and nutrition in recent times.

"Mother Dairy is a strong old brand but has remained largely regional. The current campaign does well to build on its positioning and digital media is a welcome move given that it now occupies a larger share of consumer attention. However, the brand will have to find the right mix in order to deepen its reach in other regions," says Harish Bijoor, CEO of Harish Bijoor Consults.

By its own admission, North India, including the Delhi NCR region, is the strongest market for Mother Dairy, apart from particular markets across the eastern and western parts of the country and a limited presence in the southern region.

"However, we are focussed towards gradually building a national footprint. In the newer markets, we are more of a challenger brand and hence we have disproportionate investments for branding and marketing in these markets," says Sharma.

Its campaigns have also been digital media-friendly experts said, the campaigns being easily adaptable to multiple events and occasions. An ad campaign must be able to relate with equal ease for instance, to Republic Day and Holi and lead conversations around these moments on social media, said experts and that is what Mother Dairy has been doing. The current campaign is a good example of malleable messaging, as it can be extended to multiple scenarios, believes Robinson Varghese, founder-director of Left & Right Communications, a company that has worked with other homegrown dairy brands.