



The
Advertising
Club
Bombay



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AD Review

The D-Day Returns

The annual Ad Review organized by the Advertising Club Bombay reads as the D-day on the calendar of the advertising fraternity for more reasons than one. Between the client briefs that have to be followed, the deadlines that have to be met, the new creatives to be made, new thoughts to be churned...one gets a little too buried in the narrow hole of the subjective perspective. Debates over the latest advertising trends, the new marketing moves and split opinions on the latest ad campaign seldom find their place outside of coffee table conversations. The annual Ad Review therefore, lends a concrete and formal platform where these ideas can be officially voiced, discussed and debated. For the seniors, it is a warm feeling to see their friends/colleagues share their points of view (which hitherto only they were privy to) on a public platform. For the juniors and the aspirants, it is an evening well spent to be the recipient of experienced observations. On the threshold of Ad Review 2008, let us recapture the past few Ad Reviews that made their impact in a significant manner...

Santosh Desai's Drilling Session in 2007

- In his own words, he explicated the process- "The way that I went about the study was that I looked for patterns and examples, and read, saw through the entire material that I had. It mostly encompassed making sense of a chaotic and large number of information that I had gathered."
- Desai began with attacking age old, repetitive propositions of ad makers for a category of products. For instance, soft drinks claiming the

taste of real mangoes and the Haywards 500 TVC manifesting male prowess and muscle power.

- In a year when Bollywood stars and cricketers were selling everything from toothpaste to a soft drink, what emerged was a 'Celebrity Fatigue'.

occupy the domestic space but in a fashion where they are playing out their fantasies. Their anxieties seem to have shifted from the mother-in-law to the boyfriend.

Prasoon Joshi's "Masti ki Pathsala" in 2006

Circa 2008

- **Slated to unveil on March 7, 2008, the Ad Review 2008 is aspiring to reach an all new scale with a brand new venue- the exotic location of Taj Lands End by the Bandra sea line in Mumbai from 7.00 pm onwards.**
- **In a dynamic industry, change is the only constant. Therefore, the dais of the Ad Review 2008, for the first time in its history, will have two speakers with two varied points of view on the advertising work of the past year.**
- **The first speaker is Sonal Dabral, Chairman, India & Regional Executive Creative Director, Bates Asia and the second speaker has been nicknamed the "Mystery Guest" that will be kept under wraps until the end moment.**
- **This will then be followed by a panel discussion that will be moderated by Anuradha Sengupta, Features Editor, CNBC TV 18.**

This was a result of excess of celebrities with a simultaneous dip in creativity.

- Gender sensitivity cannot go amiss when Desai is around. He underscored the shift in the representation of women. They are shown to

- "Even news has become a means of entertainment", said Prasoon Joshi, Regional Creative Director, South and South East Asia, McCann-Erickson in order to put forward his point on the emerging entertaining factor in the world of advertising. There is a thin line between reality and fantasy, and that too is fast vanishing.
- Joshi also raised concern over the possibility that the audiences should not become co-creators of ads. Their increasing involvement with reality shows on television anticipated this, which made him apprehensive.
- Also, he urged the ad makers to increasingly make optimum use of the technology available and pointed out how the lack of it will reflect poorly on the industry work.
- The maturity of the Indian audience was also underlined. The Indian viewers were able to deal with images of a poverty stricken girl or a disabled man or obese people and accept it as part and parcel of reality. The examples he cited included Airtel's 'Dil ki Baat' and Saffola's 'Guilt' TVC.
- Joshi discussed promotional advertising. "If one believes in one's product, the promo won't harm the brand." he said. Some examples of good promos that he cited include McDonald's 'Lucky' commercial featuring postmen, MasterCard's 'Natkhat Saiyyan', Tata Indicom Non Stop Mobile's 'Chal Chala Chal', and Citibank's 'Sab Kuchh Bik Chuka Hai'.



Each year the Ad Review theologizes on the events of the year gone by. However, given the fast pace of life, every year is

distinct in terms of changing mindsets and consumer trends. Media agencies conduct a plethora of researches to understand the 'ever evolving consumer'. The annual Ad

Review also facilitates this process by creating a platform where an industry leader shares his view by analyzing breakthrough innovations of the past year and envisions the future outlook. However to offer varied perspectives to our audience, we have changed the format wherein two industry veterans do the Ad Review thus giving us diverse perspectives and enable us to comprehend trends in a holistic

manner.

To take you down memory lane, this issue of *Solus* brings you the highlights of the sapient Ad Reviews by Santosh Desai in 2007 and Prasoon Joshi in 2006, along with a photo gallery. Mr. Desai, in an interview with *Solus*, narrates his experience of doing the review and his expectations from this year's speakers. Apart from this, some very interesting opinions are voiced by

eminent personalities on their idea of an ideal Ad Review. Lastly we speak to Subhash Kamath, the commander in chief of Ad Review on what to anticipate from this year's event.

Happy Reading!

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VIEWS ON THE AD REVIEW



Josy Paul,
Chairman & National Creative Director,
BBDO India

Your Experience at the Ad Reviews: I am an Ad Review 'have-not'. I have not been to one before. I am told that there were some good reviews in the past. Many of these speakers are good orators and come with well laid power point presentation and stimulus. That's really nice to know. But, I have never been attracted to an Ad Review. The idea of listening to the year that was, however well presented, hasn't excited me yet. May be it has something to do with the title 'Ad Review'. It's so old fashioned. Can we sound less pompous and have a little more playful joy?!

Your Suggestion Box Includes: Firstly, change the name. Secondly, make it more interactive. Thirdly, don't make it an Ad Review. What if it was less about us and more about the people who buy into us - clients, customer, future. What if it was about where advertising is going. What if it was about young people stating their views rather than some old fart telling us what he or she thinks about our world. What if it was presented in a new format - as live theatre or film.. or documentary format. Imagine going to watch a play about the year that was - with a youthful vision of where we should be going. A two act play put up by the best theatre and music talent from our business titled "Yeh, khatam nahin hua chu**#ye!"

You Would Want to Hear the Next Ad Review from: If it must be one person, I'd suggest Baba Ramdev. Might be a better idea to have a panel of experts - preferably not from advertising. On the panel I see jesuit priest Fr. Rudi Heredia, Baba Ramdev, Juggi Vasudev, Mr. Chidambaram and Mallika Sherawat. Piyush (Pandey) or Rajdeep Sardesai could lead and chair the discussions. At the end of the discussion, the audience is given a chance to choose six ads that would like the panelists to talk about.



Ramesh Narayan,
MD & Chairman, Canco Advertising

Your Memories of the Ad Review: I have vivid memories of Mohammed Khan's Review and the dust that was kicked up by his remarks about the "invisible" Krishnamurthy. I also remember Alyque Padamsee, Sylvie DaCunha, Goutam Rakshit's review, Piyush Pandey's review as well as Balki's.

Best Speaker so Far: Different speakers bring different aspects to the review. Sylvie and Alyque brought flair and pizzas, Mohammed brought sensation, Goutam brought an analytical approach (he even distributed a little booklet) Piyush and Balki brought some straight speaking.

Your Expectations from an Ad Review: I have always thought of the Review as a "creative" review and am more comfortable when "creative" people do the review.

Role of the Ad Review: Gives me an expert's view of the highs and lows of the year that was, and the trends for the coming year.

You Would Want to Hear the next Ad Review from: A young gun.



K.S. Chax,
Director, Mad films

"Frankly, it's been a while since I attended an Ad Review. Mainly because with the amount of opinions, reviews, ranting and raving one is flooded with by an ever increasing range of print and electronic media, an annual review seems a bit pointless. However, I think it's still a great thing for the kids in the industry. I welcome the change of format to a discussion this year. I think having 3 or even 4 speakers will liven things up even more."



K.V. Sridhar,
National Creative Director,
Leo Burnett

The Ad Review: Very good. As they are done by respectable professionals, you always look forward to get their views and perspective on the year gone by

Best Speaker so Far: Mohammad Khan and Prason Joshi as they expressed their perspectives frankly.

Your Expectations from an Ad Review: Listen to someone whom you respect. My enthusiasm depends on the speaker.

Your Suggestion Box Includes: Can't think of any one.

Disagreements with the Speaker: I do not think that does matter. What matters is every speaker having one.

Role of the Ad Review: Always good to get a bird's eye view.

Is the Ad Review a holistic view? They do in their own way.

You Would Want to Hear the Next Ad Review from: Agnello Dias.



Raghu Bhat, Executive Creative Director & Vice President, Contract Advertising

Your Expectations from an Ad Review:

Apart from evaluating the advertising, the Ad Review should mirror consumer trends, spending habits and buying behavior. Apart from educating, it should also inspire.

Best Speaker So Far: It would have to be a toss up between Rajeev Bakshi in 2002 and Santosh Desai in 2006.

Your Suggestion Box Includes: Many times, the presentations have been brilliant but not the attendance. We surely could do with more participation from agencies, clients as well as business school students.

Recount an Ad Review Moment: Mr. Bakshi's Ad Review really stood out. For example, to create a picture of the SEC C consumer, Mr. Bakshi showed us a clip featuring P. K. Dubey (played by Vijay Raaz). Dubey has an e-mail ID printed on his visiting card but doesn't know how to pronounce the same! This was probably one of the best target audience descriptions I ever heard.

You Would Want to Hear the Next Ad Review from: My wish list would be:

- 1) Prof. Jagdish Sheth- the most brilliant marketing analyst and trend spotter I ever met.
- 2) Dr. Narayanmurthy- it would be interesting to know his take on how to build a global brand without advertising.



REWINDING THE PAST AD REVIEWS





SANTOSH DESAI LOOKS BACK AT THE DAIS...



Santosh Desai's popularity as a man of words, is unsurpassable. And when he donned the dais at the Ad Review 2007, the discussion and debate that emerged post the Review, was a rare one. On the brink of Ad Review 2008, Solus caught up with this MD & CEO of Future Brands to look back at his experience as the Ad review speaker...

Recollect your experience at the Ad Review last year...

I thoroughly enjoyed doing the Ad Review. The discussion that emerged post the presentation was also interesting and encouraging. There were enough people who voiced their opinions and initiated a debate. So, like I had said then, what eventually should emerge is a good conversation. And that is what was achieved.

The role and importance of the annual Ad Review organized by the Ad Club Bombay...

I think this kind of a retrospective analysis is very important. The Ad Review takes stock of the whole year by looking critically at the output produced by the industry. It is not an overview of general trends or business imperatives but of what lies at the heart of the industry- its work. That makes the event invaluable.

What percentage of your presentation was an improvisation on what you had planned?

I do not have a clear memory about it now. But, the way I plan my presentations; I know the broad points that I am going to speak on. But, the specifics of it or rather the way I am going to present them, I am not aware of those myself. So, in any case, a large part of it is an improvisation.

Changes you would want to see in Ad Review 2008...

It's a good idea working well. The only thing they need to get right is the timing. Select a day and a time when there is no clash with other appointments/events so as to a larger audience.

How difficult was it to prepare for the Ad Review and ensuring that what you were going to give would be a holistic perspective?

It was quite difficult. It involved a lot of hard work. Reviewing the work of an entire year gone by is always taxing in terms of time. I was cursing while working on it but then it did give me an opportunity to have a closer look at the entire gamut of advertising- something one doesn't do too often.

While perusing through the creative work of an entire year, is there the likelihood that only the mainstream work gets reviewed?

I think here the Ad Club can play a role here. I mean the major impediment I faced was to search and get the whole stock of print ads. And if you ask the agency, they will only give their best works.

Would you like multiple points of view coming in for the Ad Review?

I am not sure- it would depend on the format. The question is whether multiple points of view will work because the Ad Review is meant to be one definitive take. If you break it up, it will become a favourite 5 listing and will be difficult to take it seriously. You can have multiple voices, but maybe not multiple reviews.

BEHIND THE SCENE



Subhash Kamath, CEO, Bates India is at the helm of affairs at The Ad Club Bombay and plays a critical role in structuring its events in the capacity of Chairperson, Programmes Committee. With each new event, there is a new challenge to innovate, to refurbish and improvise upon the old. Solus got in touch with this behind-the-scene man has in store for Ad Review 2008...

What are the plans for the Ad Review 2008?

It's one of the most sought after events of the Ad Club. And this year, we're attempting to make it even more exciting than ever before.

The new elements you plan to introduce...

For the first time in the history of the Ad Review, we'll be having two speakers instead of one, giving us two very different perspectives on last year's work. This will be followed by a panel discussion as well, where the audience can interact and ask questions freely. Ideally, we'd also like to bring in someone from outside the ad industry, along with someone from within. So, we can have two very different points of view coming out of it. Should be quite interesting.

Difficulties/hurdles you face while setting up the Ad Review...

The only real difficulty is finding the right people to do the Review. There are very few good speakers that people would pay to listen, and they're all very busy people. So getting them to agree to the dates etc., remains the only challenge, really.

The composition of the audience you have received in the past and the expectation this year...

It's a mixed audience, depending on the speaker. We have a lot of agency heads, seniors from account management and creative, a lot of youngsters, some clients, and students as well. This year, hopefully, we'll

have many more of the same. It is really going to be different and exciting.

What are the qualities you are looking for in the speaker for the Ad Review?

Stature, first and foremost. He or she must have the stature in the industry, whose views would naturally command respect, especially on the creative product. It's not about age or experience, but stature. Secondly, the person must be a great speaker, who can entertain, educate and keep the audience engrossed. There are a lot of brilliant people out there, but not necessarily good speakers. So, it's an ideal combination of the two that we look for.

The role of the Ad Review, in your opinion...

I think we're all very busy and caught up in our work everyday, almost often fighting terrible deadlines and stress. Sometimes, it makes a lot of sense to just take a step back and look at how the year has gone past, and the kind of work we've created as an industry. The Ad Review does just that. It's a great way to take stock. Also, if the speaker is someone you can look up to, there's a lot you can learn from a session like this.

How will you attempt to make the Review more interactive?

Like I said, apart from the speakers, there will also be a moderated panel discussion. The audience will have plenty of opportunity to ask questions, debate and disagree, as the case may be.

The response to the Ad Review last year as received from the industry people and if any of their suggestions have been built in this year's planning of the Review...

The Ad Review last year was loved by most people who attended. Some of their suggestions was to make it more interactive and to bring in greater variety in speakers. We've taken that on board. I think people will be in for a pleasant surprise!