

CAREER WORKSHOP

Exploring Directions

The Advertising Club Bombay has always sought ways and means to reach out to the young, nascent aspirants waiting at the brink of the ad world. And the workshop on "Careers in Advertising and Media" held on March 15, 2008 at the Welingkar Institute of Management, Mumbai struck just about the right chord with the young community. The illustrious list of speakers included: R. Balki, Chairman & CEO, Lowe India; Madhukar Sabnavis, Country Head- Discovery and Planning & Regional Director, Thought Leadership, O&M; Ramesh Iyengar, Managing Director, Select Direct Marketing Communications; Veena Gidwani, CEO, Madison Public Relations; L. V. Krishnan, CEO, TAM India; Punitha Arumugam, COO, Madison Media (West) and Bharat Dabholkar. Here's encapsulating the essence of each of the presentations...

R. Balki, Chairman & CEO, Lowe India

Digging into the memories of his days in MICA in 1988, this advertising czar did what he is best at: Selling. Defining advertising as the only profession which, "pays you to just be", he said that the only learning one requires in advertising is to just be yourself and watch life. It was all about remembering life and making connections. He further went on to share few stories of how some ads came to exist the way they did. For instance, when Lowe had received the brief for Idea cellular service; the ideation for the much admired TVC emerged through thorough brain storming discussions. It was led by one person asking, "Why don't people have numbers in stead of names?"

Madhukar Sabnavis, Country Head- Discovery and Planning & Regional Director, Thought Leadership, O&M

For this planning person, this profession was one that spelt no authority, no responsibility and no accountability. The creative guys are always on the

edge from the clients, the consumers and the client servicing people. But, the planner guy is the most disposable. Therefore, to convey the fascinating process of knowing the consumer more than she reveals, he showed a 10 minute clipping of similar scenes from Mani Ratnam's "Saathiya" and its Tamil version "Alai Payuthey". The tools of ethnography, experts and experience were enumerated through the discussion following the clipping. He ended his delightful presentation with a bow to two people he thinks are the master planners- Gandhi and Chanakya.

Ramesh Iyengar, Managing Director, Select Direct Marketing Communications

Iyengar harped on DM and CRM being the sunrise career option and breaking the myth that there is no scope for creativity in Direct Marketing. The job profile includes accumulating customer knowledge, data management and analytics. To demonstrate the strength of DM, he outlined the example of Shopper's Stop that generated tremendous change in consumer behaviour in 2000 exclusive women customers with the help of direct mailers.

Veena Gidwani, CEO, Madison Public Relations

Hitting the nail on its head, Gidwani began with differentiating between advertising and PR- one is incredible, the other credible; if one is funny, the other is serious, while the former is expensive, the latter is comparatively inexpensive. With its effectiveness in terms of credibility, cost effectiveness, internal communication, crisis management and investor management; PR is required by a range of organizations. This pioneer of OOH media, left the young audience with promising growth figures- 30-35% of average growth and employing 10,000 people annually. Lastly, the following words by Al Ries resounded- "Advertising is the wind, PR is the sun."

Punitha Arumugam, COO, Madison Media (West)

This media person started off by throwing a figure- 15739130 i.e. the number of TV ads that get beamed every year. But, then it's not all about crunching numbers- there are several reasons that make this career option exciting: a) it is challenging b)it is logical and c)date "m". It is like playing Sherlock Holmes and figuring out what the competition is doing. Add to that, lots of fun and invites to parties/events. To cut a long story short, it requires the following qualities: Work like a Partner, Speed with Accuracy, Innovate-Break the Rules, Open Mindedness, Comfort with Numbers.

L.V. Krishnan, CEO, TAM India

Harping on broadcast organization as a career, Krishnan pointed out that with 350 channels in the country, and only 50% homes possessing their own TV sets, the growth potential is enormous. There are several core areas that one can look to be a part of: Distribution, Programming, Ad Sales, Strategy, Marketing, Research, Specialization in Broadcast. This has a further well defined breakdown in terms of merchandising, events, sponsorships, grid planning, promotions, content acquisitions, affiliate, trade and franchise management.

Bharat Dabholkar, Actor and Ad Film maker

As they say, the best was preserved for the last. His charisma and fame preceded his presentation and his arrival on the stage was followed with applause. Not believing in loading information on to the youngsters, this former ad film maker and theatre artiste made an instant connection with the young minds. Anecdotes delineating blunders made during his advertising days and clippings of humorous ads, answering the myriad range of questions that emerged from his adolescent fans; marked the course of this free flowing talk. All in all, the audience left delighted and inspired.



The Ad Club Bombay has always endeavoured to enhance advertising and communication standards in India by creating multiple

platforms to nurture and recognize talent. The "Careers in Advertising and Media" Workshop organized by the Ad Club

Bombay was one such initiative to educate young minds on the various facets of working in a burgeoning Advertising and Media Industry. The speakers at the Workshop included industry stalwarts from all spheres who emphasized on opportunities and challenges faced by professionals in this industry, thus presenting *Gen Next* with a holistic perspective and enabling them

make their career decision.

This issue of *Solus* captures the essence of the Workshop through the lead article aptly titled 'Exploring Directions'. Also in this issue are quick bites by speakers sharing their experiences on the Workshop and their interaction with young advertising enthusiasts. Lastly, an interview of students themselves who

present their feedback on the Workshop is captured in this issue of *Solus*.
Happy Reading!

BHASKAR DAS

Editor

(bhaskar.das@timesgroup.com)



Expert Advice



Punitha Arumugam, COO, Madison Media (West)

Given the crunch we have on quality resources in Advertising & Media agencies, this workshop is a great initiative to get freshers to open their minds to a career in agencies. I think we should do a lot more such forums across the country and more importantly focus on drawing a large student audience to these forums.

The only thing that we look for when we recruit a fresher in Madison Media is a passion to learn and a certain degree of comfort with numbers. We at Madison Media have been rigorously recruiting freshers for the last 3-4 years; in 2008 alone, we will have over 20 freshers from various institutes on board.

Madhukar Sabnavis, Country Head- Discovery and Planning & Regional Director, Thought Leadership, O&M



What did you think about the conception of a workshop on careers in advertising and media?

I think it's a great initiative by the Ad Club...to promote and take advertising to the youth. And to get senior weights from the industry to come and talk about the profession and careers in it, is perhaps the best way to push the industry. This gains particular significance in a world where options are increasing and advertising is no

longer the only glamorous field available to a young aspirant. I agree with what Bipin said in his opening remarks that it should be a yearly event.

Your experience at the workshop, interacting with the youngsters...

It was good to see a full crowd and doing it in a 'student's premise' is also a good idea. It's always good interacting with youngsters- I teach quite frequently and it's nice to hear their anxieties and concerns and also their perceptions of the industry I am working with. One thing I picked up is the declining value perception of client servicing in youngsters minds. We in the industry need to take note of this and do something immediately to clear the misconceptions people have.

Characteristics/traits one should have in order to excel in the field of advertising and media...

Passion, love for ideas, curiosity and patience. I think the last one- patience- is least valued but in commercial art where you need some one else to back and fund a great idea, I think that is very very important. Patience helps you to develop and grow ideas, it helps you to work around your environment to sell them and see them in fruition. It helps you to 'suffer' the lack of sensitivity to ideas among many people are in the business for the business end of it and not the idea enjoyment of it.

The rate at which you employ freshers at your organization...

Being in planning and away from recruitment, its a hard question for me to answer. But, I do see a lot of freshers in client servicing and creative around, so I guess Ogilvy for sure takes in lots of freshers.

We also look for culture match- this is very important in any organization- even if you have the skill set, you need to have a mindset and way of doing things that matches the way the organization operates. I am a firm believer of formal education/specialised skills. People who go through good courses are better for it. And while there are always a few brilliant guys who can overcome lack of education to hit it big (like Bill Gates), I think all things being equal, education adds an edge. To say education kills passion, curiosity etc. is also not right. There are enough educated, specialized trained people who have the right mindset and passion for the job. The challenge for agencies is to find them.

What would be the best way for a young aspirant to gain entry into the professional world of advertising and media?

There are enough specialised courses from degrees to diplomas that can give a grounding and then have placement procedures that can give them an entry into the profession. Alternatively, you could adopt a David Ogilvy approach. Draw up a wish list of companies you want to work for, study them and their needs and attack them with an advertisement- your CV- that makes it exciting for them to call you for an interview and then hire you.



Veena Gidwani, CEO, Madison Public Relations

What did you think about the conception of a workshop on careers in advertising and media?

It was a very good idea to have industry professionals share an overview of each communication discipline with students aspiring for a career in Media and Communication. Hopefully this would have given the students a clearer understanding of what to expect in each field.

Your experience at the workshop, interacting with the youngsters...

Since I had to leave immediately after my session, I didn't get to interact with the students one-on-one. My interaction was limited to the Q&A session, but they appeared to be a very bright and smart audience.

Characteristics/traits one should have in order to excel in the field of advertising and media...

To be successful in PR you need- a "Can do" attitude, a creative approach and thinking, ability to work hard and long hours, a lot of research, reference work and data collection, ability to get along with people, good writing skills

How much emphasis do you place on the formal education/specialized training one has gained?

The rate at which you employ freshers at your organization...

Since our industry faces a huge shortage of trained people, we are always happy to get bright and talented youngsters into our team, so they can be groomed for responsible positions. We regularly hire graduates and post-graduates fresh out of college on a yearly basis.

What would be the best way for a young aspirant to gain entry into the professional world of advertising and media?

I am sharing the route that would work best for a career in PR. An initial training and learning of a year or two in a PR consultancy would give a good grounding in the principles of PR strategy and execution. Thereafter, depending on the aptitude and inclination of the person concerned, he could choose to grow in a PR consultancy or move to the Corporate Communication Department of a company. A good academic degree (any discipline) preferably with additional qualification in PR can be a good start.



STUDENT SPEAK

Sneha Saraf, Management Trainee, Motorola India Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai, 23 years

Why did you choose to attend the workshop on "Careers in Advertising & Media"?

Since I want to make a career in marketing, I figured there could be no better way to listen to these stalwarts share their knowledge and experience.. that too, all at one place!

How useful and relevant did you find this workshop?

The workshop did open my eyes to some careers, which I did not know existed. I brought back with me some good ideas and a whole lot of clarity about this profession.

If you had to choose the best speaker of the evening, it would be...

It has always been a pleasure to hear L. V. Krishnan speak as he has been my Professor of Advertising at University. Mr. Dabholkar was equally charming even though I was listening to his speech for the second time! Punitha, Mr. Madhukar, Ramesh and Balki were brilliant in their narration and I got some very good insights from them.. I guess the speaker line-up was brilliant so I can't complain!

Any bias/myth that you had about the field of advertising and media that the workshop helped you break/change...

Yes, that the profession is not all about glamour.. it's tough to churn out ideas daily as if the mind was a goods factory! Even worse is when six sigma cannot apply to its operations and 99.9% of the ideas are rejected?!!

The importance of formal education in forming a successful career...

I agree with what Ramesh had said about formal education being very important. I believe that formal education makes one curious and gives a new direction to think in... Of course, people without a formal education succeed too.. Because they are inherently curious and hungry for knowledge.

The career/ambition you want to pursue and why...

I want to be a successful marketer... someone who understands the consumer... because that is what keeps me charged!

Sidhesh Parab, Creative/ Illustrator, 22 years, Mumbai

Why did you choose to attend the workshop on "Careers in Advertising & Media"?

To get more exposure & information on Creative Advertising.

How useful and relevant did you find this workshop?

It was relevant in terms of my experience in the field of Advertising. But, I was in the expectation to know more about better U.G. & P.G. courses in Creative Advertising from reputed universities & colleges, which was not covered in the workshop. Yet, it was helpful for me in terms of shared knowledge in media & business activities.

If you had to choose the best speaker of the evening, it would be...

R. Balakrishnan... even Bharat Dabholkar was quite good also because of the time factor.

Any bias/myth that you had about the field of advertising and media that the workshop helped you break/change...

No, I didn't have any bias & myth about the field. I had already cleared those by being in the field.

The importance of formal education in forming a successful career...

Is very important. U.G + P.G (specialization) in the respected field is an essential factor nowadays. It serves as a strong base for the desired profession.

The career/ambition you want to pursue and why...

In my case, I have done an H.S.C.+ 3yrs pvt. Diploma in Applied Arts + I have worked for 2 yrs in an ad agency & a publication house as a Creative Consultant cum Illustrator. But, formally I'm still an undergraduate. I'm trying to explore various courses in Creative Advertising/ Creative Direction (degrees)...but I'm getting no options. Abroad, there are several degrees in the same field. But, in India, Creative Advertising & Creativity is often confused with Graphic Designing. It seems, the scope is almost microscopic. Please, help me to know more about the reputed and valid study options especially, Mumbai would be preferable. Well, I did heard about MICA &

Zinnia Dadachanji, Student, Mumbai, 22 years

Why did you choose to attend the workshop on "Careers in Advertising & Media"?

So that I can know the options available in these careers.

How useful and relevant did you find this workshop?

Very relevant because the things I wanted to clear was for surely cleared.

If you had to choose the best speaker of the evening, it would be...

Bharat Dhabolkar and Mr. Balki.

Any bias/myth that you had about the field of advertising and media that the workshop helped you break/change...

That you don't need a specific degree to do the above.

The importance of formal education in forming a successful career...

Is very important for guidance.

The career/ambition you want to pursue and why...

Lobbyist because no one has pursued it for from India.

solus VISUAL FOCUS

