





Greetings from team mPower,

We are pleased...rather delighted, to launch the first edition of our newsletter, 'KONSUME'!!

True to our tagline, 'Marketing..Everything..', we plan to bring to you views from the masters, interviews of industry heavyweights, happenings in the world of marketing, blogs, campaigns and anything under the sun that manages to catch our attention.

Not only do we plan to make this a monthly affair, but also flood the web by the **sheer amount of interest in the marketing vertical at K. It's an interesting time in the world of marketing.. we thus invite you to come be a part, share, express, debate** and learn from others, because as you will read on- even at the top of the game, there is always someone or something that manages to beat you!

For our first edition and trust us it's not just to raise eyebrows or create a wow, we take a critical look at Sex in Advertising...We assure you that the insights passed on by our Gurus on this topic will go a long way in helping you to build a perspective, and probably the right perspective. We also bring to you our Tete-A-Tete with Mr C K Ranganathan (CMD, CavinKare)...pay homage to some of the best blogs by **our PGPI2ers and much more....**

Comments, Feedback, Criticisms always welcome. Do let us know at [mpower@iimk.ac.in](mailto:mpower@iimk.ac.in)

Till then..Cheers and Adios,  
Team mPower  
IIM-Kozhikode



### Blogs of The Month



We start off by looking at some interesting blogs from our PGP12ers, to try and not only appreciate their efforts, but also gain insights into how to do it in style...

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### Cover Story

Are you Ready for this?? We bring to you, Direct Dil Se articles by our very own professors, Keyoor Purani and A.F. Mathew. Need we say more??!!!!

**'More Sex, Please. We are Marketers!'" by Keyoor Purani**

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**'Sex in Advertising' by A.F. Mathew**

### Tete-A-Tete



As promised, we bring to you the big gun. A mega interview with the Chairman and Managing Director of CavinKare. Read on to know more...

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### Time Pass!!!

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Gyaan received and the funniest and most embarrassing moments faced during PGP13 summers...



*What's In Store For you*



## “Tennis and Lights off”

This was an incident that happened during the finals of Wimbledon 2009 which PGP12 and PGP13 was watching in the mess. The final was being played between Roger Federer and Andy Roddick. The match was a thrilling 5 setter with both players putting up a good fight. The crowd was also equally divided between Federer and Roddick. The match was down to the 5th set with both players holding on to their serves in every game. Sometime during the middle of the set, the lights in the mess (where the food was being served) turned off. At that same time Federer won a gruelling point to take the game. The moment a student went and turned on the light back in the mess, the entire audience erupted and insisted that the lights remain off until the match was over. A few minutes later, the lights were switched on and this time again Federer won the point but the audience still insisted that the lights remain off. Through the entire match the crowd made sure that the lights remained off. And thank the lord, FedEx won! (Or maybe I should just thank the tube light that remained off!!)

It was very interesting to note that the entire audience was actually moved to believe that the reason Federer was scoring his points was not his ability or his hard work and talent but

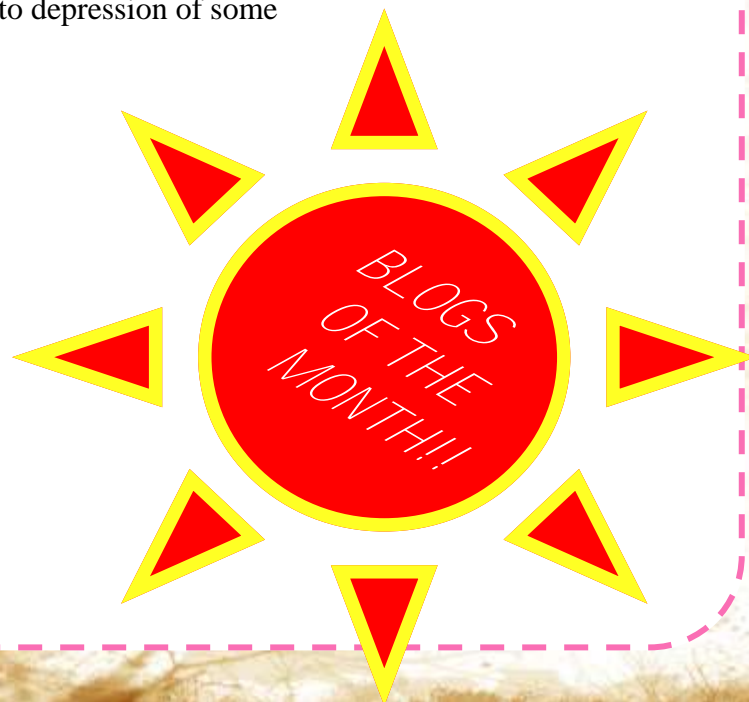
the lights being switched off instead. Sitting there even I was supporting the crowd, insisting that the lights remain off during the match. But then in retrospect I realised how hilarious the entire situation was especially since I consider myself fairly rational and non-superstitious. Such a situation occurs in several variations. I knew this one guy who would wear the same shirt to every exam (even if it wasn't washed... yuck!) because he felt that he would pass the exam. For that matter even I used to have a pencil, a bright orange and blue one, that I carried to every exam. Funny thing was that there are some exams that I barely passed when I used that pencil but that did not prevent me from bringing it to the next exam.

And if I did an exam well, then this reinforced my belief that the pencil was lucky. I remember I once forgot the pencil before an exam and practically went into depression of some

sort. Sadly I have lost that pencil now (Rather reflective of my grades me-thinks!).

This emotional attachment to certain objects, etc can be quite strong. And this sort of a funny superstition is held by several people who claim they are not at all superstitious but secretly indulge in such idiosyncrasies. It is also interesting that one small connection can induce people to confuse causation between two completely non-correlated events. While I write this blog, I realise what fool I was to carry that pencil religiously to every exam but then again I wonder if I would continue doing the same if I had the pencil with me right now. I think we all know the answer.

- Namratha  
( Class of 2010, IIM-K )



Maslow's need based hierarchy predicts every person to have an urge to be accepted by the society. True, but it does not touch upon the degree of acceptance by the society. This need has become so strong that it results in behaviours giving rise to peer pressure, bulimia etc. This urge to be accepted by others effects consumption patterns in more ways than one can imagine. We are always engaging into activities that will increase our social position whether we realize it or not. One aspect that is of particular interest to me is the behaviour of people in their friends circle.

I have lived my whole life in Delhi except for last one year and don't know to what extent I can generalize my experience. I have observed that different friend circles are quite similar to each other in terms of roles that play. Inevitably in all groups of 5-10 friends you will find:

**The Leader:** This person is the opinion leader of the group and has maximum influential power. He might or might not be aware of this. Such a person generally is very diplomatic which reflects in his consumer behaviour. He will generally buy things that are appreciated or pre-approved by some other influential people in the group. The poor fellow has to worry about losing his position.

**The Joker:** This is a very important role. Each group must have this character to break tension in long silent pauses in awkward times. He is also the one everyone wants to hang around with (this is the primary reason why The Joker chose to be a joker). Again his casual and funny sense will be reflected in his consumer choices. The person will most likely not be a Brand Fan and may make very eccentric choices while selecting goods. Please note that Joker behaviour is enhanced if there

are girls in the group and choices may become more eccentric to catch attention.

**The Gyaani Singh:** He is the one with answer to all things. He knows all things before they occur and is the biggest opponent of the Black Swan theory. If this person is more evolved, he will not only give answers to your problems but theories. He is prone to giving lot of unsolicited fundae more commonly known as 'Zindagi Ka Gyaan'. Such a person will be least bothered about fashion and will try to show that he is not bothered by what others think of him.

**The Binder:** He is the one who is holding together different sub-groups in the friends circle. Someone must rise to the occasion to do this thankless job. Mostly this guy will be very logical and analytical. This will also be passed over to his buying patterns. He will probably evaluate all buying options very objectively.

**The Bakra:** The lifeline of the group. When he is in the room you don't have to worry about other people making fun of you. When you have done something idiotic, you are advised to hang around The Bakra for next few days. He is the primary target of The Joker (after all Joker has to provide constant entertainment to others). The Bakra will be somewhat sceptical in his buying choices and will be confused. He will never know that when people make fun of his belongings whether they are serious or is it a usual fun session.

**The SHtyle Bhai:** You always need someone to discuss latest fashion, cool cars and trendy shoes. Such people will always enlighten you why your favourite celebrities are actually not that great. He will obviously shop more frequently and go for big foreign brands that you are generally not aware of either. He is most likely to be found in Aviator Shades and Levi's Jeans. This behaviour is in-

duced in all characters of the group if there is a hot girl in the group.

**The Common Man:** This is the most fortunate guy. Everyone likes/needs his support. He is well accepted and has to do nothing for it. Generally a simple, 'always smiling' kind of a guy who never utters nasty words for anyone. He is the type that generally goes for brands and sober colours.

**The Struggler:** He is the one who is suffering from identity crisis. The poor chap is always trying to figure where he fits. He shifts from one role to other failing in all. He lacks the inherent qualities required by each of the specific roles which make him a leader material in case he stops trying. He has the maximum pressure on him to be socially accepted. He will buy things that others think are not bad. He will be most influenced from others around him.

These are the roles I can see in most urban male groups that are well knit. A person may play more than one of the above mentioned roles and there may be more than one of a single type.

Though there may not be such clear demarcation between these roles, it amazes me to find such a high pressure on people to be accepted even by their friends. I wonder if most people even realise that they are constantly striving to please their peers as subtly as breathing. Time to introspect I guess!

-Rohit sood  
( Class of 2010, IIM-K )

**“ So What  
Role are  
you  
playing? ”**

## More Sex, Please. We are Marketers!

The fact that mPower has decided to focus on 'Sex' in this first issue of its newsletter is perhaps a good attempt to market marketing to freshmen. While I am sure that most of you who lay your hands on this bulletin would be tempted to read it, I am not too sure about the kind of opinion you would develop about this professor after reading this article. Sex in advertising invariably gets eyeballs but could generate either positive or negative responses from the target audience.

'Astounding,' reads the headline of a glossy double-spread from Reebok in recent issue of Cosmopolitan. 'Simply wearing the shoe will get your butt toned. Take our 30 day challenge!' goes the ad of Easytone - Reebok's new range of shoes - with a picture of a semi-nude, curvaceous female body to stare at. Western version of the campaign is even bolder; it shows supermodel Helena Christensen dressed only in the shoes. (I could have avoided including the picture in this article but it may help get this article read!). Many may think that the ridiculous sounding proposition and the outrageous advertising is an outcome of some sex maniac's perverted mind and it may not sell the shoes. May be, it is too early to know the extent to which sex is

helping the brand in this case, but if the buzz on the internet is anything to go by, one can safely say that Easytone is already a hit. Another advert which I just saw in The Hindu using sex is a *desi* take on FCUK

style advertising. 'F\*\*\*\*\*ck!! Flat 20% off' shouts Fastrack promo in the daily's *Friday Review* supplement. Several years back, as young children, watching Liril ad film in cinema halls was a big attraction for many of us apart from the movies that we saw. It was surprising for many marketers to see this commercial, which showed a bikini clad woman under a waterfall, working for the brand in the late 70s and early 80s when the target audience - the Indian housewives - could not imagine wearing anything beyond a sari. Liril became a top-selling brand in



*"Sex in advertising invariably gets eyeballs but could generate either positive or negative responses from the target audience ...."*

toilet soap category during that time. Analysts believe that the ad worked because bathing was the only time when the housewives could be themselves and their fantasies came alive. Certainly,

for beauty products or for something like condoms, there is a 'functional' reason to use sex generously in their promotional messages but it's not just fitness, fashion, fragrance and fantasy brands that use sex appeal to sell.

I have seen Brands of toothpaste, coffee, cell phone and even ball bearings using sexual imagery in their communications. Sexy ads seduce consumers to buy products but it may not work for all product categories. Theorists call it the peripheral route of persuasion. For product categories and market situations where consumers are not willing or able to process more information, it may be useful to take peripheral cues such as music, humour or sex instead of logical arguments or what they call 'combative' advertising to persuade. According to adman Ogilvy, the test is 'relevance'. 'To show bosoms in a detergent advertisement would not sell the detergent', he said.

Coming back to Reebok's Easytone, councillors in Glasgow banned its advert which used the slogan 'better legs and bums with every step'. It is believed that the regulatory committee had objection with the word 'bum' in the ad. Though, unconsciously, all needs of human beings can be linked to sexual needs, sex in advertising does not guarantee positive consumer response. Many followers of Freud argue that the negative consumer response to sex in advertising is more socio-psychological (an individual's behaviour in a group). And that's why the extent of negative reaction to sexual imagery in an advertisement varies in different parts of the world and changes from time to time. Indian models Madhu Sapre and Milind Soman were shocked to get a legal notice when some moralist had filed a legal case of indecent public behaviour against them for their much controversial Tuffs shoes ad. The 1995 ad featuring the models in nude wrapped with a python, was banned after public outrage. Some middle-aged women have found the new Close-up 'Pass Aaao Na' commercial, which shows young

couples kissing behind roses, more offensive than the Liril's bikini ad aired more than 30 years ago.

Advertisers, however, just can't get enough of using sex in their messages. Many brands use public outrage, consumer

*"...Brands use public outrage, consumer shock and negative reaction to sex in media, also to their advantage ..."*

shocking visuals to create social awareness and 'de-sell' some issues such as unprotected sex, racism, HIV; in turn winning a good mindshare for the brand. Advertisers, thus, use shock-sicken-stave off route to a brands advantage

*"...extent of negative reaction to sexual imagery in an advertisement varies in different parts of the world and changes from time to... time...."*

apart from sex -seduce-sell route of consumers' responses. In this era of social technologies, marketers have found UGC sites such as YouTube and viral marketing techniques quite useful to avoid legal ban

or public outrage for such ads. To all those first year students who are now aroused by marketing and advertising, let me tell what my boss in an advertising agency told me many years back on the first day of my new job. He said, 'Keyoor, advertising is like having sex with a beautiful girl 17 times a day. It is exciting but is also extremely demanding and exhausting.' So guys, work harder to discover secrets behind the sexy ads!

-Keyoor Purani

*(The author is associate professor in marketing area at IIMK. His co-authored book on marketing communications is a popular text book at many b-schools in India and neighbouring countries. )*

## Sex in Advertising

In films (especially Hollywood), sex is either hell or Heaven. It is never **in between**... as it is... in real life. Apart from this; sex is also perceived to be mysterious and elusive! To compound to this, sex is seen (many a time) as dirty and something to be ashamed about. To view it in these multiple ways is because none of us are ever counselled about the need to be comfortable with our bodies. Neither are we told to see sex as something which is natural and not be prudish about. All of these conflicting (yet always puritanical) views are derived from dominant religions such as Christianity where the premium (as in many other religions) is always on virginity. The result of all this and more is that we lead a repressed, abnormal life; for we have never explored all facets of 'what is but natural'. This in turn results in tendencies such as sexual harassment, politics of the male gaze and rape. One of the main by-products of such a 'repressed condition' is pornography. If there is repression and if there are sexual desires not fully, naturally explored, then; the end result would be to take refuge in pornography. That perhaps explains the widespread presence of pornography all over.

Why talk of all this when the issue is that of 'Sex and Advertising'? This is simply because advertising does not exist in vacuum. It is but a reflection of dominant structures in society. What is seen as human desires (even if it is repressed) gets reflected in mass communication mediums such as advertising. There is no space in this article to explore every facet of dominant sociological imagery in advertising; however the attempt would be to give some glimpses of the same. Another point that could be raised is that why is such an attempt important? Such attempts are crucial as it is important to know the underlying reasons for such portrayals around us. This could help us make business practices 'sharper'. For instance, does it always pay to show any constituent of society (women, Dalits, blacks, homosexuals, religious minorities or *any* community) in bad light? The answer would be a resounding no, simply because it always 'pays' to be inclusive. However, the predominant imagery in advertising is overwhelmingly against this sentiment. All kinds of prejudice are seen in vivid detail in all advertising. Very few advertisement campaigns can really be classified as free from some sort of prejudice. There are exceptions to the rule but the dominant imagery in adver-

tising always seems to reflect some prejudice or the other.

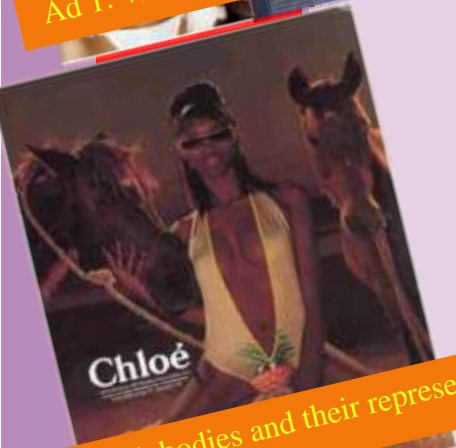
If one takes dominant representation, the only image that comes out is an overtly sexual image as far as women's bodies are concerned (See Ad 1). What is significant is not just the question of women's bodies but also how phallic and male the representation is as seen in Ad 1. This "transposition" is an enduring theme in all advertising.

This is not to say that men's bodies are not objectified but the point is in the degree of representation. This also varies depending on the question of race. For instance when it comes to black female bodies there seems to be a linear representation. The pornographic duplication of black bodies as being sexual machines is seen in advertising too (See Ad 2). Time and again black bodies are portrayed akin to athletic stereotypes which in turn correspond to bodies that go on and on sexually. This obviously (again) comes from pornography and racist stereotypes that reside in our mind. This creeps its way into advertising (See Ad 2).

Similarly, what is being played out in advertising is just duplication of prejudices when it comes to Gender and sex. Gender demarcations are also compartmentalised into specific roles that are required of women whether it is at the work



Ad 1: Women as sexual beings



Ad 2: Black bodies and their representation



Ad 3: Specific role play



place or at home (See Ad3).

These roles get converted into being an 'object of sexual fantasy'...male fantasy to be precise. Since most professionals in the work place are men (repressed men actually), it is not surprising that their fantasies are played out in their work place (here being advertising). One such example is ad 4. What is particularly interesting to note is the continuity of themes in the history of advertising. When one examines how gender roles are codified in advertising, there is a persistent duplication of the same stereotypes down the ages. As an example, compare Ad 3 and Ad 5.

Then and now, women are shown in the same expected roles. Check out the advertisement copy of Ad 3 and Ad 5...from 1963 to today....

Further more; sex is subject to the 'normal and abnormal' set of oppositions just as any other variable of life. Our lives are ruled by these 'set of oppositions.' For instance, we are all either Rich or Poor; Brahmin or Dalit; Man or Woman; White or Black and Heterosexual or Homosexual. So it follows that we should be bound to the rules of class, caste, race, gender and sexuality and none of it can be surmounted. Hence these set of oppositions play havoc in our lives as the rules for the 'normal' are determined by

such hegemonic set of binaries.

When one examines sexuality in advertising, one notes that the western market has responded to this segment. This is because of two reasons; the gay and lesbian market is huge and that it is also seen as a 'stylish segment' which could enhance the brand image. However, here too there are contrasting portrayals of sex. The male fantasy gets played out time and again. Lesbian sex is widespread on internet porn. Research shows that it is men who access the same and that is primarily because women do not access as much porn as men do! This continuous quest for the male fantasy sex is seen in advertising, an example being Ad 6.

Ad 7 is the perfect contrast to Ad 6. In comparison to the male fantasy, Ad 7 is remarkable in representation of what can be classified as a truly wonderful print campaign under the category 'Sex and Advertising'. It was also the first to feature a real life same sex couple, Melissa Etheridge and her partner, Tammy Lynn Michaels. The harmony, the equilibrium and warmth in representation is seen blending with the brand.

Finally; as a way of a 'conclusion', what is one trying to say in this article? Firstly, it is a particular culture and history that is the bottom line to slow indoctrina-

tion of our thoughts. Secondly, it is all pervasive and is seen in advertising too.

Thirdly, just as there is bad sex and good sex and we choose good sex (Obviously); there is good and bad 'sex' in advertising...And we must choose 'good sex' in advertising. We must craft our messages and marketing campaigns so that it reflects an inclusive attitude bereft of prejudice. That would be good for the brand as well as for business. It is truly good business to practise good politics. If not, the option of retreating into the secret dark world of cyberspace is always there! And that would be a tragedy; after all *real* bodies are better to relate to... than virtual bodies!

-A.F. Mathew

(The author is presently visiting faculty at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kozhikode. He teaches Cultural Studies and Social Transformations in India. )





Mr. C K Ranganathan, the Chairman and Managing Director of CavinKare, entered the FMCG sector in 1983, with Rs 15,000 in his pocket. The company he started was called Chik India Pvt Ltd., and its product was Chik shampoo. The company was renamed Beauty Cosmetics in 1990 and later CavinKare in 1998. In 27 years, Mr Ranganathan has scripted the phenomenal rise of the company from a single product company to one of the most reputed brands in the FMCG market.

CavinKare took on the big players in the industry, by targeting the middle and low income groups. It popularised the sachet culture in India, providing these segments in urban and particularly rural India, the opportunity to buy products in small quantities. Today, the Rs 900-crore company has a diverse portfolio in personal care, home care and foods segments.

Mr Ranganathan, talks to Chirantan Shah on CavinKare's evolution from a sachet company to a formidable FMCG brand, the company's strategies for the future, the Indian FMCG market and about what is required to succeed in this cut-throat industry.



**The focus of the FMCG industry in recent years seems to be on capitalising on the volume markets and tapping the mid and low income level groups in both the urban and rural markets. CavinKare already has a strong presence in these segments. What is the company currently focusing on?**

CavinKare is a company, which has evolved from the rural segment. For a long time we have been known as a company, which caters only to the lower end of the retail market.

With the success of Fairever, we ended this notion, by successfully taking on the big players. We have proved that we understand the affluent class and its needs, as well. Our focus currently, is on having a product range that cuts across the market and caters to every type of customer. We want to have products both in the rural and the niche segment. But the primary focus of the company will be - continuing catering to the changing needs of the common man - there cannot be any compromises on this. We are committed to keep bringing in new products at affordable costs for this section of the society.

Today, Fairever has about 10 per cent market share in the Rs 1200-crore fairness cream market. The brand has a much stronger presence of close to 20 per cent in the southern markets. The company is focusing on catering local variants for this cream to increase its presence in the northern markets. The skin texture and complexion, climatic conditions and humidity vary for different regions and hence, we are localizing our products for the northern markets, to suit the needs of the customers in that region.

**CavinKare about two years back entered the fruit drink segment by acquiring the then fourth largest fruit drink manufacturer, Salem-based Maa. What is your strategy with respect to your Foods Division?**

Foods and Home Care products are the two fastest growing FMCG segments in the country. When we bought Maa, Foods division accounted for only 8% of the company's predominantly Personal Care product-based portfolio. We intend to diversify our portfolio and increase the share of Home Care and Foods to up to 50% in the near future. A lot of initiatives have been taken in this direction.

We are targeting a 50 per cent annual growth in sales of Maa. The manufacturing plant in Andhra Pradesh will cater to the increasing demands in the southern region. For the other states, we are looking for acquisitions in Maharashtra and northern UP. The company will also go for outsourcing manufacturing in the northern states.

There is a great opportunity for the organized sector in the Foods segment. However, understanding of the local markets and innovativeness is required. Every geography needs to be treated differently. The local taste has to be taken into account while introducing products in different regions. Right now, we are in the process of introducing various new products. In the past few years, we have launched products in the local-flavoured salted chips, vermicelli, pickles and chikki categories and they are doing very well.

What is the company's international strategy?

We are marketing different products in different markets. In Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal we are focusing on the lower end of the retail market and our products are mostly available in the sachet format. In Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Middle-East countries we are catering to the high-end niche segments. These markets have taught us how to relate and correlate with the high end customers and their needs for quality and packaging. We are deploying this learning to cut across the niche segment in India. We are looking at establishing a strong distribution network and brand image in the US. Once it is ready, the company will be entering this market. We already are outsourcing production in Bangladesh. We will be looking to have more third-party manufacturing units in the overseas markets as our share in these markets increases.

CavinKare has come a long way from being a sachet company. Where does the company go from here?

Our company started with a small base of Rs 15,000 about twenty-seven years ago. We are happy the way the company has evolved. With the meagre capital, we have grown at a commendable pace. But now we have set our sights higher. We will be growing faster. The company has ambitious targets of reaching sales of Rs 5,000 crore. Over the next five years we wish to become an FMCG company with a diversified portfolio catering to every section of the retail segment. The food segment will grow to become the largest part of our portfolio.

How do you see the FMCG industry perform in the current economic scenario? What according to you will be the key parameters that will decide who survives in the competitive market?

FMCG industry too was impacted to an extent by the slowdown. The long term picture for this sector remains very bright. The escalating per capita income of the ever-growing middle class and the disposable income that is available with the rural Indians will see the FMCG industry perform very well over the next few years. Innovation remains the key for the companies to beat the competition. Localisation of products is also important to ensure that the customers relate with the brand and stick to it.

For many years now, we have been spending about 4 per cent of our turnover on R&D and 25 per cent on advertising and marketing. Our focus has been on continuously closing the need-gap between consumer needs and the products catered to them. We constantly upgrade our offerings based on consumer feedback. Employee forums like 'cross functional teams' which discuss and plan new product developments while sharing learnings and insights from their successes and failures also help us keep abreast with the ever-changing consumer needs and come up with innovations to match them.

What do you have to say to future marketers?

Innovativeness and entrepreneurship are the key ingredients necessary for success. One should be open to taking risks. There is huge potential among Indian students. Most of them have very high aspiration levels. About 80 per cent aspire to start some business on their own. Only 4-5 per cent actually try. To avoid the frustration of failure, most of them avoid taking the risk. This must change. Entrepreneurs have a big role to play in making India shine.



*"Sir aap real waale IIM se ho? Aapke packages ke tho bade charche hai. Aap baitho, Paani waani peeyo."*

*- Sumit gupta, Nestle, leveraging on the IIM brand after being brutal ly col d-shouldered initial ly on a trade visit*



*"We are truly obsessed with the brand Unilever, but the consumer is not, don't forget that ever!!"*

*- Ravi Rambhatla, HUL, is told how HUL grew to the stature it finds itself in today*

*"Please put some circles in the project presentation; I have heard IIM waale gole banane mein expert hote hain..."*

*-Anshul Khandelwal, MnM, is told by his VP/guide while getting his final project presentation reviewed*





*"Here's the biggest corporate lesson for you.. In a subjective argument, it's always the guy with the highest salary who wins."*

*- Santosh Hegde, Marico, is told by his guide, in the middle of a fiery mid-term review*

*"Your id card is fake! You will take my details and sell it to companies and make money!"*

*-Hitesh Chopra, J&J, is told by the Lab Manager when he went to get a market research questionnaire filled*



*"What the hell are you doing in office.? Is this your day off? Do you get paid to cool your heels in the office AC.?? Report the progress only on your day off or when the markets are closed!"*

*- Naveen Nahar, ITC. is blasted by his boss after a week of sweating it out in the Chennai heat*



## The Marketing Club @ IIM Kozhikode

Please send in your comments/feedback at

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Or give us a buzz .....

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