

Labour of Love

Showing just the Hippo hands holding packets adds intrigue to the overall treatment and is a useful visual device that can be employed in static media as well

Spot Light | Hippo



Impressed: Raghu Bhat (left) and Manish Bhatt.

Reviewer: Manish Bhatt & Raghu Bhat

With around 13 years of experience in advertising, Manish Bhatt and Raghu Bhat, founder-directors of Scarecrow Communications Ltd, have worked on brands such as Cadbury, Asian Paints, Aegon Religare insurance, Wonderbra and Vaseline, among others.

Campaign: The ad for the baked snack is shot through the point of view of the mascot, Hippo. It shows him at different scenes of crime, war or

conflict, offering the involved parties some Hippo chips. Everyone takes a bite and this is shown to resolve issues.

What did you all think of the ad?

Hunger is the root of all evil—that's a great premise dripping with creative possibilities. The execution does full justice to the idea. The hand-held camera feel takes you on a roller-coaster journey into the underbelly of society. The track has "superhit" written all over it. The casting can't be faulted. The format allows them to display the product range intelligently. In short, this is a labour of love. I like it because it's funny without being inane. It projects a personality which is very confident of itself and doesn't try too hard. For this reason alone, I think it will resonate with the audience. And lovely packaging too.



Smart thinking: Showing just the Hippo hands adds intrigue to the ad.

What are some of the key things advertisers should keep in mind while advertising healthy food options?

Most brands, while advertising healthy food options, get too carried away with the "health" bit. This is not smart thinking because the consumer is well aware that even baked snacks have

their share of *maida* (refined flour), salt and preservatives. Copper sulphate might be healthier

than potassium cyanide, but only relatively. No snack can hold its own against a bowl of *dalia* or a plate of steamed *idlis*. So instead of pretending that the baked snack is a "health food", the communication should tank up on the parameters of fun, attitude and creativity. These can build an emotional connect. Health parameters like "baked, not fried" can be addressed as supers. Trying to build "health" into the storyline is as pointless as trying to shovel smoke.

What do you think of their use of Hippo, considering that it's not seen at all?

Smart thinking. Trying to show an animated hippo would've hiked production budgets and would've led to undue dependence on the animation studio. Plus, the hippo looks better as a flat coloured graphic as compared to the real thing (the real thing, with warts and adipose tissue, might have a slight bearing on the appetite appeal. Of course, if they had hired a celebrity to play the hippo, that would have added to the costs as well! Ha ha!). Showing just the Hippo hands holding packets adds intrigue to the overall treatment and is a useful visual device that can be employed in static media as well.

As told to Gouri Shah

gouri.s@livemint.com