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Meet Ambika Sharma, Founder of Pulp Strategy, marketer, avid biker, speed buff

She is attractive; she loves to ride motorbikes; has a passion for swimming and travelling; and she is a successful marketing professional and entrepreneur

Sarmistha Neogy | Mumbai | October 16, 2014



She doesn't have ten hands like Goddess Durga, yet she deftly manages several roles and dons many hats. She started biking even before her feet could touch the ground; she is in love with water and loves any form of outdoor sports; she is a traveller who has her secret list of destinations around the globe; and she is a successful entrepreneur. Meet the attractive Ambika Sharma, a 15-year veteran in the marketing domain and Founder of Pulp Strategy, a company which provides one-to-one marketing technological solutions to industry giants.

Sharma, who holds an Honours degree in English Literature, is also a trained software professional with an additional postgraduate degree in Mass Communication. A summer job right after school helped her identify her stream and ever since, there has been no looking back. Before Pulp Strategy happened, she served as Chief Operating Officer for Jagran Solutions, Encompass and Kidstuff, and handled big-ticket clients like Google, Yahoo, Nokia, Philips and Renault.

On being asked why she decided to set up Pulp Strategy, Sharma replied, "The space of engagement driven media and interactive communication is vast and it is people oriented. If you love it, it will also love you back. The downturn of 2008 put a lot of pressure on the industry and things got tougher, revenues were under stress and clients were asking for more 'value' against spends. They also began to demand measurability and amplification, and some of the best work at that time was when we combined digital and experiential. I realised that this was the future of the fastest growing experiential mediums. There was a void in the market where there were very few agencies that could really harness the power of the interactive mediums and place them in an Indian context on ground. And this is how the seeds of Pulp Strategy were sown in my mind."

"Pulp Strategy is, therefore, not just a company; it's a state of mind. Innovation unites us and sets us apart. Our consumers are businesses and brands that look to actively engage with and grow their consumer base. This essentially puts us in the B2B space with B2C expertise. Our strength thus rests in creating result oriented partnerships which embrace mutual respect, dignity and long-term value creation," she added. Pulp Strategy under her entrepreneurship, has gained the distinction of being India's Youngest and most awarded agency with 45 global and national recognitions.

One of the interesting innovations of Pulp Strategy is Pulp I Cafe channel. "These I Cafes are an interaction driven touch-points. We built the channel from scratch when we realised that it was a potential waiting to be harnessed and realised what our clients could gain out of this potential. These cafes are mapped to youth consumers 15-35

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RISING STAR

Rising Star: Gary Curzai, Fellow, D&AD New Blood Program



Gary entered the New Blood Program after being nominated for a Yellow Pencil and winning Best in Show at the New Blood Festival. He feels that design and advertising should shift from 'just profit' to 'pursuit and profit'

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years of age which contributes to the chunk of their patronage. These are the people who spend an average of 45 minutes at the café. The cafes see an average daily footfall of 1.9 lakh consumers. Therefore, look at what this translates to: 5.7 million sessions, 57 million page views, millions of messages read, websites visited. The behaviour pattern of the young consumer at I Cafes shows that they are researching products, chatting in forums, checking out entertainment options, and also connecting with friends on email or social. Thus, by creating small innovative call to action based campaigns it is possible to build engagement and most importantly product trials," Sharma explained.

Adventure girl

Her love for outdoors and adventure keeps her going even in the middle of a tight schedule. She rides every weekend for more than 100 km, even it is just to catch breakfast and head back home. She is the proud owner of a Suzuki GSX-R1000 and a Harley-Davidson Road King. She indulges her adventurous streak through extensive road trips, diving, swimming and kayaking. Biking helps her unwind and, therefore, she makes it a point to ride out to a weekend getaway at least once in two months. As she said, "My best business growth ideas germinate when I am riding."

In her 15 years in this domain she has witnessed many changes. On being asked to name the major changes, she said, "The market is consolidating much like it did with the media agencies two decades ago. Internet penetration is growing in India with consumers adapting to higher media consumption in online and e-commerce is seeing an upswing. With India showing strong growth as compared to a lot of evolved markets, Digital (digital + mobile) ad spends in India has grown by 38.7 per cent in 2013 and is expected to have the highest CAGR of 27.7 per cent in media. The industry has immense potential for long term growth and change is evident in spends as well as action."

Throwing more light on the evolution of the market, she said, "The market for engagement and experience in India is poised for growth while experiential is not new and mobility platform for engagement is very nascent. The ability to be able to bring together the only three experience-driven mediums together in an integrated fashion is our niche and we have seen very promising responses from the market. There is a strong and growing demand from marketers who want to integrate and drive exponential value from leveraging multiple mediums to drive stronger engagement and track sentiment towards positive impact on adoption. At a very basic level it puts an end to broken pieces in the same communication at a larger level the potential is large enough to adoption as well as brand sentiment positively. The market is evolving towards convergence; it is a need based movement."


Pulp Strategy, which addresses specific brand marketing objectives through cutting edge solutions, is headquartered in New Delhi and has branches in Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Mumbai. The company's business network extends via international associate offices in Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, UAE, Uzbekistan, South Africa, Australia, Sri Lanka, Europe, the USA and China.

Pulp Strategy has gained the distinction of being India's youngest and most awarded agency with around 50 global and national recognitions. With Sharma's immense faith in the Almighty, she believes that her baby – Pulp Strategy – will continue to drive value for clients by creating better connectivity, stronger content, meaningful mobility, intelligent engagement and seamless experiences, supported by cutting edge technology, research, innovation, talent and training on a global scale.

Among the many accolades she has won are Young Achiever of the Year at the CMO Asia Awards 2011 for Excellence in Branding and Marketing; Marketing Professional of the Year at the CMO Asia Awards 2011 for Excellence in Branding and Marketing; Jury Member for Promotional Marketing Awards of Asia in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011; Young Achiever of the Year at the Global Awards for Marketing Excellence 2010; and Star Youth Achiever Award at the Global Youth Marketing Forum 2010.

As our meeting ended, Ambika Sharma was raring to take off on a long ride on her heavy-duty motorbike. Attagirl!

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