

# The number game



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LAST MONTH just a few days before Diwali, cola maker PepsiCo India launched its digital-only ad film #GharWaliDiwali. The seven-minute film focused on young Indians who had to give

festive occasions a miss due to work commitments. It reached out to over 40 million users across the web within a week of its launch with over 4.3 million views across platforms and has been shared more than 100,000 times on Facebook.

Along with the ad film, PepsiCo India had also created a microsite –gharwalidiwali.com, where people were asked to leave a message and the winner received a gift hamper containing goodies from the company. That the campaign tasted such huge success wasn't just a happy coincidence. In the run-up to Diwali, PepsiCo, through its dedicated band of social media analysts, were monitoring consumer conversations on social networks where people were talking about cancelling plans to meet family members on Diwali due to work commitments. In recent times, every digital campaign by PepsiCo has targetted specific consumers based on their consumption pattern and then the feedback was further monitored by the company in tandem with its media planning and buying agency Mindshare through a unique practice called the 'Loop Room'.

“The Loop Room brings together not just social media listening but also our owned media and paid media together. This is a way of looking at technology differently. We analyse multiple screens and identify the activities that are creating buzz and by correlating the factors affecting these conversations, we are able to take instant decisions on our marketing strategy,” said Rishi Dogra, head, Po1 digital marketing, PepsiCo India.

PepsiCo India is not the only one tracking social media conversations and mining the data to create relevant marketing strategies. Packaged foods company Nestle India is another player who has a digital room called Digital Acceleration and Service Hub (DASH) located at its head office in Gurgaon. “We have a dedicated digital acceleration team which is surrounded by video monitors and screens streaming real time social media data. It helps us listen to brand conversations, manage social communities for our brands and develop projects that are focused on the three pillars of our digital strategy – listen, engage, inspire,” said Chandrasekar Radhakrishnan, head of communication, Nestle India.

This year with the aid of the digital team from its agency Maxus Digital, the company has launched many digital-only campaigns such as its corporate campaign, ‘Share Your Goodness’ which generated over 7 million views on YouTube. Additionally, Nestlé released a ‘Superbaby’ campaign in August this year on social media to support World Breastfeeding Week.

Hot on the heels is another beverage giant Coca-Cola India which too has its digital room at its Gurgaon office. The digital conversation is monitored by a dedicated team handpicked from its agency, Interactive Avenues. “Digital plays a very important role in our life, especially as our content strategy is based on the theme, ‘Liquid and linked’,” said Wasim Basir, director, integrated marketing communication, Coca-Cola India and South West Asia. This year the beverage major launched the ‘Sprite teen till I die’ contest which was specifically targeted at 18-24 year-olds.

KFC too has been tracking its social media pages to launch custom made marketing solutions for its consumers. “One of our biggest campaigns for the year was the ‘So Veg So Good’ campaign with a reach of 7.9 million. We customised our content with an innovative ‘veg separation video’ specifically for online platforms and this gave us a phenomenal reach of 3.5 million. Most recently we had activated #KFCWishBucket campaign and used Twitter to spread awareness on the cause by involving our fans. This campaign gained 18 million impressions,” said Dhruv Kaul, head, marketing, KFC, part of Yum! Restaurants International.

It’s the high return-on-investment apart from accurate targeting that is getting brands to increasingly look at social media. Mining of social data is helping brands to understand their consumer behaviour better, respond in real time, plan campaigns and communication

contextually and measure. “As platforms where consumers are present, where conversations and interactions are happening, the new digital social platforms are important for brands. Not merely for delivering a brand message, but to listen and respond to consumer queries and complaints, listen and understand consumers better,” said Unny Radhakrishnan, head of digital, Maxus South Asia.

Hence, over the years advertising spends on social media too have increased. “As they say, advertising dollars follow eyeballs, and these days they are on social. The increase in social-ad spending is driven by this continuously growing reach, particularly on mobile, better analytics and targeting, and performance,” said Anil Kaul, co-founder and CEO, Absolutdata Research and Analytics, a data analytics company.

According to analytics firm Research and Markets, social media advertising spend in India stood at \$102 million by end of 2013, accounting for 13.8% of online advertising. During 2009-13, social media advertising in the country has increased at a compounded annual growth rate of 91.1%. This growth is expected to continue in 2014 with brands expected to spend \$164 million, representing an increase of 61.6% over 2013.

As Debarpita Banerjee, vice president, marketing and communication, National Geographic and Fox International Channels, says, gone are the days when a brand would allocate 10-20% of its advertising budget to digital media, and social media would only get 5% of the total spend on digital. “At times we allocate the entire marketing budget to social media depending on our marketing strategy,” she explained.

Agrees Dogra of PepsiCo India who says the company doubled its spending on digital this year including a 20% rise in digital budgets for the Pepsi Indian Premier League (IPL) 2014. “For the past few years, we have been investing heavily in social media to support the launch of campaigns such as ‘Pepsi Oh Yes Abhi!’. This year, we took digital engagement to a new level with @ThatPepsiIntern campaign which brought together all the excitement from the Pepsi IPL, including the Tweet20, through a common social media property,” he added.

### **Man and machine**

Apart from using their own propriety tools companies use many third party tools such as listening and social measurement tools such as Radian6, Explic8, Unmetric. Web analytic tools

such as Google Analytics, Omniture, etc., are used to monitor conversations on their social media pages. “We use listening tools like Simplify 360 as well as platform analytics to create and monitor the hierarchy of effects in social media. When the need is advanced we have proprietary tools developed to be able to get real time data from ground up,” said Ambika Sharma, founder and managing director, Pulp Strategy Communications. “For instance, our ‘campaign trac’ app is used by retailers along with social data listening to develop insights for strategic planning inputs.”

What’s more, digital advertising solutions providers such as Komli Media which manages advertising for both Facebook and Twitter is also helping brands in mining social media data, to be able to target consumers based on definite criteria such as age, geography, interest, etc. “Social media allows you to granularly target consumers through various campaigns. For example, a company which has a range of brands may just want to target its consumers in the age group of 18-22 years. The brand can easily obtain the phone numbers and email addresses of such consumers from the list of followers on its social media pages. The brand can then create a campaign specifically for mobile apart from sending them direct mailers on their email ids,” said Matt Sutton, vice-president, social, Komli Media.

Moreover, agencies have developed tools that allow the use of social media data even in television media planning. For example, Maxus, Group M’s media planning agency, has a Social TAM (from TAM Media Research) tool which looks at TAM data as well as social listening data to understand preferences for TV programmes and this goes as an input to TV media planning. “We use chatter around channels and programmes to add a qualitative layer to our TV plans. With Facebook’s cluster audience tool, it is now possible to create targetable clusters based on ‘likes’ and active posts. There are also higher-end tools that mine social media data and predict what content is likely to work with an audience during a day-part,” said T Gangadhar, managing director, MEC India, a media agency.

### **Customised content**

Interestingly, content on digital too has evolved. From showing the same television commercial on digital platforms to specially creating content for digital, marketers have come a long way. Sutton of Komli Media says that if earlier companies used the data obtained from an older campaign to understand consumer behaviour, the very same data is now used to create content

for specific purposes. “In fact, it is no more about trial and error, as the game on social media has changed to creating relevant content using data obtained from social media,” he added.

Agrees Chandrasekar of Nestle India who says brands need to create meaningful content on social media that is true to the product and the brand. Citing the example of the latest Nescafe ad which features a stand-up comedian who stutters, he adds, “First released on the digital platform, the campaign succeeded because it connects with the youth who are today taking bold decisions that are leading them to not-so-easy journeys of life. It highlights the bond that the youth share with Nescafe because they see it as a friend who picks us up when we have doubts, gives us sustenance, and keeps us on plan.” The Nescafe ad film has clocked more than 2.5 million views on social media and has been shared more than 50,000 times.

Brands are also open to tweaking their marketing strategy after it has been launched. “During the Pepsi IPL, while our thematic campaign was pushed on television, we noticed a scope for building visibility over mobile and internet viewing platforms which were increasingly being used by the youth, so we shifted our spending from offline to online media to reach out to our target audience,” added Dogra of PepsiCo India.

### **Facebook, Twitter and more**

And that’s not all. If about a year back a single piece of content was created as part of the social media strategy of any brand, now different types of content is being created for different social media platforms. “While the role of Facebook is more personalised as one generally tends to discuss things with friends, Twitter is used to talk about a particular event which may have come under the spotlight on a particular day. For example, most recently fast food chain Burger King took to Twitter to announce its arrival in India,” said Rohit Ohri, executive chairman, Dentsu India Group.

Agrees Basir of Coca-Cola India who says that while the company uses Twitter to create a quick buzz, Facebook is meant to start long conversations. “We went to Twitter to announce the launch of Coke Zero in the country on September 19 this year. #Cokezero was trending on that day for the first eight hours. It was the best starting point for the brand. Similarly we announced the availability of the brand on e-commerce portal Amazon on Twitter. We used Facebook to capture audience feedback for CokeStudio@MTV. For instance we initiated CokeStudio@official blog where the audience wrote a review for every episode. We went

through the negative sentiments first. The format of the next season was altered keeping in mind what viewers had written in their blogs. This has now become a routine,” explained Basir. As of today, it is Twitter and Facebook which have hogged all the limelight but that too is expected to change soon. Brands are set to begin tracking and mining data of other social networks such as Instagram, Pinterest and Google Hangout. “The two platforms with immense possibilities are Instagram and Pinterest. While Facebook which had acquired Instagram is all set to launch advertising solutions for it, Pinterest is all set to roll out ad placement solutions for the Australian market soon,” said Sutton of Komli Media.

Meanwhile brands and agencies in India have already started testing the waters by launching small initiatives on these networks. Basir says the company is taking small steps when it comes to using these social media platforms. “While we use Google Hangouts time to time to initiate conversations between our brand ambassadors and consumers, we have also started to monitor Instagram,” he added.

However, Naresh Gupta, chief strategy officer, and managing partner, Bang in the Middle who had used Instagram for the launch of Diva’ni’s Mumbai store, a cinema-inspired ethnic wear label, says that while marketers have begun their journey on these new platforms they need to tread with caution since each platform needs a different strategy.