



Happy Creative Services founders Praveen Das and Kartik Iyer reveal the true story behind Flipkart's television campaign

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Clean & Clear's new brand campaign reopens the debate on true beauty, and thereby, the promotion of beauty products

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Future Ready

The Indian consumer's fast growing enchantment with new media is seeing advertising networks bolster their internet play through a flurry of deals involving local start-ups in the digital space



Anindita Sarkar

MARKETING communications conglomerate WPP Flc last month announced that Kantar, its wholly-owned data investment management arm, had acquired UK-based Guardian Digital Agency (GDA), a specialist data visualization, site design and interactive development agency. The month of July also saw Merkle, the US-based customer-relationship management agency, acquire RKG, a search and digital marketing agency to form the largest independent search ad agency in the US. Merkle had earlier in the year

bought New Control, a Chicago-based creative communications agency. Soon after, around mid-July, the advertising world had one more acquisition story. Publicis Worldwide, Australia had scooped up Cubed to firm up its digital capabilities.

It is a similar story in India with digital start-ups being picked up domestic and international ad networks. In February this year, DDB Mudra bought independent digital agency 22feet, bringing the entity into the Omnicom Group. 22Feet was then merged with Tribal Worldwide India creating a new entity known as 22feet Tribal Worldwide, and part of the DDB Mudra Group. John Zeigler, chairman and CEO, DDB Group Asia Pacific, India and Japan, had then said, "We see this as a strategic move to continue evolving our capabilities in the fast-moving Indian market."

Around the same time, Infuseem, an Ahmedabad-headquartered e-commerce player, announced that it had bought Bangalore-based digital marketing company ODIGMs for ₹32 crore. Just a month later, JWT acquired around 55% stake in Social Wavelength, a full service social media agency headquartered in Mumbai. Said Colwyn Harris, CEO, JWT South Asia, "Social Wavelength adds a huge dimen-

sion to our existing clients and the brands we steward. Across the marcom value chain and across various digital touch points the skills and capabilities of Social Wavelength will be that edge."

Behind this acquisition spree is the Indian consumer's fast growing enchantment with new media. John Sheehy, president, global operations, Starcom Media+West Group, notes that internet, mobile, social, search and e-commerce habits are exploding in emerging markets including India. Internet penetration is growing at a fast pace.

Social networks such as Facebook that have over 100 million subscribers in India are becoming platforms for brands to reach out to potential and existing consumers. That has forced advertising networks and advertisers to bolster their internet play, and the easiest way is to acquire local digital start-ups. For the domestic players, the idea is to create a clear growth path via strategic alignment. For multinationals, there is an added reason—India is a serious destination with a digital spend of ₹3,500 crore.

"From a business perspective, we have an incredibly well-educated and globally connected young workforce in India.

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"YOUR FRIENDS ARE SPENDING A CONSIDERABLE SHARE OF THEIR MARKETING BUDGETS ON DIGITAL MEDIA. THIS HAS PROVED THE INTEREST OF GLOBAL PLAYERS WHO DON'T WANT TO GET A SHARE OF THESE MAINTAINING SPENDS."

AMIR KHAN
Senior vice president, Global, Microsoft Advertising

Microsoft Advertising is a leading provider of digital advertising solutions. Amir Khan, Senior Vice President, Global, Microsoft Advertising, discusses the challenges and opportunities in the digital advertising space. He notes that while many companies are investing in digital advertising, they are often not seeing the results they expect. This is due to a lack of understanding of the digital advertising ecosystem and the need for a more integrated approach. Khan emphasizes the importance of data and analytics in driving digital advertising success and the need for a more holistic view of the marketing mix.

The Perspective
As a leading provider of digital advertising solutions, Microsoft Advertising has a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities in the digital advertising space. Amir Khan, Senior Vice President, Global, Microsoft Advertising, discusses the importance of data and analytics in driving digital advertising success and the need for a more holistic view of the marketing mix. He notes that while many companies are investing in digital advertising, they are often not seeing the results they expect. This is due to a lack of understanding of the digital advertising ecosystem and the need for a more integrated approach.

"A DIGITAL AGENCY IS A GREAT COMBINATION OF AN AD AGENCY, A SOFTWARE DEVELOPER AND A COMPANY, WHILE THERE IS A LOT OF CREATIVITY INVOLVED, THERE IS ALSO A LOT OF HARDWARE TECHNOLOGY UNDERPINNING THAT CREATIVITY."

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Senior vice president, Global, Microsoft Advertising

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"WE WILL SEE A LOT MORE INNOVATION AND BUYOUTS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS IN THIS SPACE. MEANWHILE, MANY NEW COMPANIES DRIVEN BY TECHNOLOGY WILL ALSO BE COMING UP."

THOMAS
Senior vice president, Global, Microsoft Advertising

As the digital advertising landscape evolves, companies are looking for ways to stay ahead of the competition. This involves not only investing in the latest technology but also in the talent to use it effectively. Companies are also looking for ways to measure the return on investment of their digital advertising spend. This is a challenge because the digital advertising ecosystem is so complex and constantly changing. Companies need to have a clear understanding of their goals and the metrics that will help them achieve them.

The Paid Advertising Challenge
Paid advertising is a key component of a company's marketing mix. However, it is also one of the most challenging. Companies need to have a clear understanding of their target audience and the channels they are most likely to use. They also need to have a clear understanding of the metrics that will help them measure the return on investment of their paid advertising spend. This is a challenge because the digital advertising ecosystem is so complex and constantly changing.

More Innovation and Buyouts in the Next Five Years
The digital advertising space is expected to see a lot of innovation and buyouts in the next five years. This is due to the increasing importance of digital advertising in a company's marketing mix and the need for companies to have a clear understanding of their target audience and the channels they are most likely to use. This will lead to a consolidation of the digital advertising space and the emergence of new players.

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