

Panel Discussion Day 1: MARKETING TO MILLENNIAL

Day 1 of IBAICM had a steaming panel discussion on 'Marketing to the Millennial' scheduled for the afternoon with 6 renowned individuals from the industry including; Ms. Yasmin Hyder, Ms. Arshy Ahmed, Mr. Jamil Mughal, Mr. Tahir Khan & Mr. Omer Abedin. Mr. Qashif Effendi; a renowned personality in the world of marketing, was the Moderator.

In order to break the ice, Mr. Qashif Effendi began the discussion by defining the millennials; *'An excerpt from a Times article defines the millennial (who are born in between 1980 & 2000) as lazy, narcissistic, civilly and politically disengaged, materialistic, who likely to face problems of unforeseen heights, who live in the fear of missing out, are open minded, liberal, more supportive of gay rights, confident, receptive, & have an acronym for everything'.*

He continued further by saying that while millennials are digital natives, the Generation X are digital immigrants.

Mr. Effendi then asked his first question to the panel; 'How do you see Millennials against Generation X?'

This was picked up and answered by Ms. Yasmin Hyder.

She said: *'The two are very different in approach to professional and personal lives. Gen Y (Millennials) is very confident and vibrant in terms of communication & is willing to receive new ideas. I also disagree with the statement that they are politically disengaged. I believe it's Gen X which was more towards institution building whereas Gen Y is more creative in terms of fulfilling its needs.'*

She then continued elaborating the changes that have taken place in the Marketing Industry. *'There is a huge change in services marketing and how clients behaved. Earlier our strength was based on long term relations and SOP's. In the last ten years with communication explosion and social media, we have been forced towards more creativity. Social media etc. has made it that we have to customize and meet everyone's needs especially.'*

Mr. Effendi asked his second question from Mr. Jamil Mughal who belonged to the food industry. *'What are the changes in the dynamics in the food industry?'*

Mr. Mughal answered: *'In the Pakistani Market, we do not have much digital coverage and the legalities further make the shift a difficult one. PTA says it is illegal to give free wi-fi in restaurants, while the small hotels get away with it, the bigger brands get stuck. The shift has been much smoother in US and other foreign markets.'*

He further continued:
'For big Brands; like Mc. Donalds, having years of heritage, it is difficult to adapt & shift to being digital. Panera Bread, Chipotle, Starbucks came into being in Gen Y while Mc. Donalds was born in 1950 which makes it more difficult for it to adjust to the digital shift in Pakistan.'

The moderator then took the discussion forward by asking that What Exactly has changed? This question was answered by Mr. Taher Khan who said: *'We have had a very different effect of change in Pakistan. For Pakistan, Gen Y is a large part of population while for USA it is a smaller portion. Therefore I think we need to make sure we refer to local case studies. Marketers need to come up with stories and connect with the audience. Co-creation is the buzz word and customization along with two way communication is the way to the market.'*

He further continued by comparing the Gen Y & X saying: *'In Gen X the consumer was a couch potato. We took a large time figuring out how to make a good packaging, then we took time making good TVC's & every MNC had a manual for it. But for the digital foray today, there is no manual. There are only case studies along with a process of evolution. What we need to do is gain a deeper understanding of the millennial generation. There is a huge rural urban divide and ethnic divide & we therefore need to understand the people in Gen Y.'*

Turning to Mr. Omer Abedin, Mr. Effendi asked him as to what his comments are on digital immigration versus digital natives.

Mr. Abedin said: *'I think they aren't natives because millenials are old enough to remember life without technology. They were just younger and adapted quicker while Generation Z will be the true natives. For gen Y every moment is for sharing and HAS to be shared. We have social identities. We upload everything online; from the most trivial to the largest events. The other concept is of fame, it is their expectation to be famous. They aspire for 15 minutes of fame. It will happen someday. I will make one of my videos viral. Gen Y measures the data it*

creates. They measure and track data we create because they believe they are worthy of creating data. The above three points about self-portrayal define how gen Y sees the world. On the other hand it is very difficult for Gen X to accomplish putting themselves in the shoes of Gen Y.'

The moderator than shifted the focus of conversation towards fashion and asked the Fashion Expert; Ms. Arshy Ahmed: 'Do Gen Y take more interest in fashion & cosmetics?'

Arshy said: 'When I moved to Pakistan the first thing I noticed were the women on the street. They are a lot more confident and self-aware who want to take care of themselves as compared to Europe. L'Oreal captured the confidence and the need for cosmetics and beauty in the market. Gen Y is definitely more aware of exactly what they want. They are much more confident as compared to Gen X. Even men use face wash.'

She then continued: 'You need to build a relationship with Gen Y. They do not just listen to rational points, one needs to reach their hearts. That is why L'Oreal emphasizes so much on Personal Relations. Everyone looks up to someone in Gen Y; models, actresses etc. & one needs to tap that.'

Open Question and Answer session:

When we look at the numbers we see that Millenials send around 88 SMS to each other daily. And sometimes they even message themselves. So who are they really looking up to?

Mr. Talha answered: 'They do have role models. But sometimes their role models are now those who have rose to fame very quickly. Dr. Shahid Masood has 800000 followers on Twitter. The role models are perhaps not essentially as different as they were in the Gen X days.'

Ms. Arshy added: 'It is very quick in the modern day. The models are created and destroyed perhaps before the world even has a chance to see them. We judge very quickly'.

'Gen Y is seeking authenticity. When you see someone completely caught up and passionate about what he is doing although it may be a completely horrendous sight and they may be

bad at what they do, it doesn't matter. What matters is that they are passionate and they don't care about societal norms and expectations. They will make role models from people who show the guts to do something with such passion. It's authentic. If you try to humiliate them they will fillet you like yesterday's dinner!' Mr. Omer commented.

These thoughts were accepted by the audience who then added that the strongest opinion builder was media followed by peers, teachers and parents. But it was different in times of Gen X. Stats have shown that gen Y trusts peers over media and the relation between Gen X and Gen Y has been a parent child relationship. Gen X wants conformity from Gen Y which wants empowerment. The audience then asked how the panel views this angle:

Mr. Taher Answered: *It is true that the power of authority has changed and it's not only this generation. It has happened over time but it hasn't changed that much in our society. These are the last golden days of television advertising. The TV has not raised its rates in the last 15 years. So advertisers don't turn to TVC's. But once rates start going up they will have to turn to digital.*

This opinion was objected by an individual from the audience who said: *'TV is still very important in the country. I work for non-profit sector and no scheme works until you go on TV. That is my experience'*

Mr. Omer then entered the discussion and said: *We don't deny that TVC is important. But you need to go on many different media. And if you don't use the free social media you are being a lazy brand manager.*

A lot of brands in the country give a large portion of budget to digital without knowing what to do with it. They have not yet perfected the media (Mr. Taher)

Dr. Huma Amir, the Chairperson of the Marketing Department then shared her views from the Audience. She added: *TV is very important yes but that is because most purchases are made by Gen X parents. And we live with our parents even when they get old. Once the Gen Y gets hold of purchasing, things will change. Gen Y even today does not watch TV. They watch series online. So what will happen when they get hold of purchasing?*

The question was finally taken up by Mr. Jamil from Mc. Donalds who said: *It is easy for specialized brands to go for digital because there are economies of scale for them on digital e.g. fashion brands. But for the major mass consumption brands e.g. McDonalds, it is more difficult. We need to compartmentalize the industry. There are people who are not on digital and will be won only through TV.*

The Panel discussion was finally concluded by the Moderator; Mr. Effendi; *'Gen Y and digital marketing is still being discussed throughout the world. However, there is no clear cut solution, not only in Pakistan but also globally. Clients just come in and say they want a Facebook page, though they have no idea what to do with it. Also, the technological issues are a problem in the digital marketing sector.'*

Panel Discussion DAY 2: REAL TIME MARKETING

Day 2 of IBAICM commenced with a sizzling panel discussion on Real Time Marketing with the renowned Samra Muslim as the Moderator. The panel comprised of a number of well-known names from the industry. Samra started off the discussion with defining the topic: *'Real Time Marketing is how a brand is communicating & how well it's establishing its presence on the social media'*. She explained how going digital is a fashionable trend for brands nowadays and then asked a number of questions which were then addressed by the panelists. Some of the questions which Ms. Samra discussed were: *'With the Market being so diverse & Rapid, do we really need Real Time Marketing? Is there a formula for how Real Time Marketing should be conducted?'*

Mr. Faisal Sherjan answered the first question of whether RTM makes any sense in today's world. He said, *'Pakistan is 4th largest country in SMS trafficking, the first being; China, India and Philippines. We have an increasing young population and they have mobile phones to communicate and thus we know the mindsets of our customers. I've been in advertisement industry for years. In the year 2012; 350 billion messages went out and 40 million people purchased things on their mobile phones. The companies know the patterns and mindsets of Pakistani population so RTM is extremely resourceful in today's world'*.

Taking the discussion forward, Samra then asked whether discussions about Pakistan not being ready for RTM is real or just a myth?

The entire panel unanimously agreed that it is a myth and that Pakistan is ready for RTM. It was supported by facts that as 11 million people are on face book and twitter and 350 000 smart phones are being sold every year, Pakistan is definitely ready for RTM. It was discussed that when an individual is operating in the digital world, he is actually showing his inclination every time he clicks and has a conversation which turns into a powerful relation with the brand.

Mr. Muntazir Naqvi built upon this point and elaborated that digital should exist, especially in an environment like Pakistan. *'If someday the government decides to shut the twitter or facebook down, we still have the proxies which population is prone to using'*. He stressed upon the fact that digital media has made a huge impact and is here to stay and will eventually become a very important part of the marketing strategy. He gave the examples of *Shahzeb Saeed who started selling products online and now has grown outlets in Zamzama which shows the power of social sites.*

The panel stressed that there is no fixed formula as to how much a brand can spend on social marketing; however the brands can invest time into getting customer feedback and opinions.

The panel also emphasized on a valuable point that going on social media is useless if your customer is not on social media, instead the brand should understand their consumer base and invest into different mediums like SMS marketing. The case of Pizza Hut was discussed, where the marketing team used to upload the vouchers on facebook and then would determine the success by counting how many people printed it out and shared it online.

Samra then turned her attention towards Mr. Najawat Rehman who discussed how the profit motive is being challenged by the purpose motive. He said that *every organization is being driven by a purpose which makes it so successful. For example face book is being driven by the purpose to connect the world and Google has the purpose to organize the world's information. For IBA, the brand purpose was a place where your dreams come true. In that context, IBA's new logo was revealed to the audience. Hence, Najawat stressed that the brand purpose was the driving force behind the brand's success.*

The panel also talked about the difference between marketing and news jacking and stressed

on the fact that “it doesn’t matter if you have the solution as long as you are in the conversation”. The brands need to make use of the cheap, free technology available to us and understand where the conversations about the brands are taking place.

Mr. Ejaz Asil; one of the panelists, *then laid some light on the importance of listening to brands. He said that brands need to inculcate the habit of listening to their customers’ feedback and take part in the conversation that is taking place on the social media. ‘If a particular brand does not respond to the negative conversations, then it is solely the brands’ loss as the conversation will still go whether the brand participates or not’.* He discussed example of KFC whose sales have gone down drastically over the years because customers have used their power to go towards other brands. With such real examples given by people who’ve been in the marketing industry for years, the session ended with applause and appreciation towards the speakers who took the time out to enlighten the audience with their knowledge.