

# The Business Of Emotions

\* Divya Soni

## INTRODUCTION

A spate of recent advertisements made me sit up, think and wonder - is this how we do our shopping? These advertisements never really talked about the real product qualities or benefits, but they promised nothing less than self-actualization!

Why should you read this article? Well, you need to read it if you suffer from any of the following misconceptions:

- ✿ I am a smart shopper. (All my purchases have a logical reason);
- ✿ To increase sales, all you need is superiority of the product;
- ✿ Branding is all about market share (and not about heart share or mind share);
- ✿ All advertisements talk about the product in order to convince their target audience;
- ✿ I don't get emotionally manipulated. (Maybe by my wife/husband, but certainly not by the marketer);

Let us go through some of the things that we may see on the TV ..... some adventurous guys hanging on a cliff and about to go for a bungee jump, but they hesitate, as the jump scares the hell out of them.....and to their rescue comes an aerated drink!! They take a sip and then go down the valley with all the confidence and style. The drink - *Mountain Dew* (*kyonki darr ke aage jeet hai*). That does not work for me ... unless the drink is spiked with something very potent. I would like to know how it works. Did I miss something here?

Didn't your heart miss a beat to see a young Indian business man chewing Rajnigandha, who decides to buy the East India Company (saying *ke inhone hum pe 200 saal raaj kiya hai, ab hamari baari hai*) the tagline says *Mume Rajnigandha ,kadmo mein duniya!*

Really, wonder if Rajnigandha would have been there way back in 1600s, wouldn't India's history be any different??

If you are wondering that more number of advertisements are talking about everything but the product, your observation is right. There was a time when in marketing campaigns, the marketers highlighted the benefits of the product as the main assumption was that the consumers can be convinced for a buy if they are given logical reasons. However, in today's marketing world, we see a guy touching the feet of his teary-eyed mother, who is proud of her son's new promotion. The son is taking his mom along to the foreign posting, and we hear the words *Raymond - The Complete Man*. Not a word about the fabric, the range, the benefits, the use, the durability, and the price of the product. Is this marketing message a logical message?? ***No, this message is the new wave of emotional appeal!***

## THE WAVE OF EMOTIONAL APPEAL

Brands and their Taglines :

- ✿ **Fair and Lovely** : 'Beauty that empowers a woman to change her destiny'
- ✿ **Tanishq** : 'Jewellery that wants to make you marry'!
- ✿ **HDFC** : 'Sar uthake jiyo'
- ✿ **Tata Tea** : 'Har subah sirf utho mat. Jaago Re'.
- ✿ **Haywards Soda** : 'Haywards hai to honsla buland hai'
- ✿ **Bank Of India** : 'Relationships beyond banking'
- ✿ **SBI Life Insurance** : 'Taaki pyaar ke beech paiso ki kaami na aye'!
- ✿ **Hero Honda** : 'Desh ki dhadkan'
- ✿ **Tata Salt** : 'Desh ka Namak'

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\*Assistant Professor, New L. J. Commerce College, GNFC Tower, S.G. Highway, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Email :divyasonihere@yahoo.com

4 Indian Journal of Marketing • March, 2012

❖ **Hippo** : Mom Made Munchies ('maa ke hathon se bane flavours')

❖ **Idea** : An Idea Can Change Your Life

❖ **Bournville** : You Don't Buy A Bournville , You Earn It.

You might wonder what has emotion got to do with marketing? Well, emotions are the new mantra of branding. Emotions can be understood as a state of physiological arousal and Branding is giving a product its identity (may include name, term, sign, symbol or a design). Marketers have never been so desperate to make an emotional impact on their consumers. Earlier, they were taught in business schools to capture the mind share of their consumers, but now, they are after their heart share also. According to Marc Gobé: *"Emotional branding focuses on the most compelling aspect of the human character; the desire to transcend material satisfaction, and experience emotional fulfillment."*

## **RATIONALITY VS. EMOTIONS**

Why this shift from rational advertisements to emotional advertisements? Well, the answer to this question is rational and not emotional. Having a competitive advantage/ USP always helps... but that alone isn't enough. The intense competition washes off the uniqueness of the offering. Companies can copy competitor's advantage in a flash and so, the positioning moves from the tangible plane (functional plane) to the intangible plane (emotional plane).

When product differentiation cannot be done based on functions, it is done based on emotions. Thus, the marketer's new weapon against eroding USP / competitive advantage is - emotional advertising.

Piyush Pandey, Chairman, O&M India, states: *"Ninety nine per cent of the decisions in life are not rational. Besides, liking something is an emotional statement anyway. So, one needs to make the communication for any product or service work towards establishing a connect with the audience."*

Another important reason is that the biggest villain for the marketer is 'THE REMOTE'. Before the message reaches the viewer, he may change the channel! Thus, in the first few seconds, when the marketer has to capture the audience's attention, he has got to come up with something interesting rather than something logical. Why? Well, because talking plainly about the product could sound like a boring documentary of facts.

Most people think that they are rational logical consumers, so, if the marketer pulls some strings here and there and manages to strike an emotional chord, what's the big deal? Emotion may not lead to action or an actual purchase. Well think again!

## **POWER OF EMOTIONS**

Emotions are very powerful. The word itself comes from the Latin word *movre*, which means to move. It not only drives behavior, but also affects the information processing including encoding and retrieval of information, evaluation, judgment, creative thinking, brand recall and brand loyalty. Years of research and experiments of lots of brainy people has proved that:

❖ Emotional responses are central to consumer's perceptions of and reactions to advertisements (Aaker and Bruzzone, 1981).

❖ Emotions are capable of enhancing the perceptual readiness of a perceiver.

❖ Emotional responses can also directly impact brand attitudes and purchase intentions (Stayman and Aaker, 1988; Edell and Burke, 1987 ; Burke and Edell, 1989).

❖ Free recall as well as experiential cues appear to lead to faster, higher recall for emotional advertisements (Friestad and Thorson, 1986, 1993).

❖ Emotional responses account for significant levels of variance in advertisement attitudes, over and above that are provided by the traditional cognitive responses (Batra and Ray, 1986).

Now that we are clear that emotions affect consumers, let's talk about Indian consumers. We Indians are known for being emotional. Our family ties, festivals, rituals and our culture make us more vulnerable and a soft target for all kinds of emotional appeals. From marketing of tea to soap from reality show contestants to politicians, emotional appeals are used by all, and at times, the consumer is not even aware that a hot button was just pressed! A hot button, by the way, is a turn on or an emotional pull that causes a person to execute an action or buy the product.

So when Indian mothers watch a commercial saying that your kids need to survive and win in this ruthless and tough world, and a health drink is here to help you in preparation of a champion (*Taiyaari Jeet Ki - Bournvita*) or make your kid taller and save him from being made fun of! (*Complan*), the hot button is pressed!

## CAN EMOTIONS OVERPOWER LOGIC?

The question that strikes a thinking mind is that emotions are powerful and can lead to action. But can it overtake logic? Can emotional appeals make a customer go against his own better judgment?? **The answer is a Yes and a No.** A Yes customer can certainly fall prey to emotional appeals and overlook logic. The Four main reasons behind this are:

✿ **Reason No. 1 :** Emotional branding works behind the scenes. Emotional motivation is beyond conscious awareness as it operates below the surface and beyond the consumer's ability to articulate (it is popularly known as the subliminal effect).

✿ **Reason No. 2 :** Research has proven that customers purchase their products emotionally and rationalize their choices intellectually. You can tell these mothers that their purchase of the health drinks were completely emotional and irrational. You may argue that kids used to grow before, and champions were produced without these drinks. They may convince you instead that their buy was logical and not emotional. The consumers', many a times, take action due to an emotional pull, but find it difficult to accept it, as it adversely affects their belief system. Thus, even if a consumer is emotionally manipulated, he may find it difficult to accept and may continue to believe that he is a rational customer. For example, the customer may feel that height of their kids can increase by intake of a health drink, and overlook the fact that Maharashtra State Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is all set to challenge in court the claim - health drink that makes children grow tall. In its charge sheet, the FDA has charged the makers of a well-known health drink with violating the 1954 Prevention of Food Adulteration Act that forbids exaggerated claims in advertisements.

✿ **Reason No. 3 :** Every customer draws some emotional benefit out of such advertisements. It satisfies some need of the customer. Let's consider this: AXE is a youth brand, which claims that the formulation is a base with higher efficacy to help men in attracting the fairer sex better than ever! Its tagline is '*gets you more than before!*' The emotional benefit - A guy using AXE feels more attractive. The logic says - hey, a mere deodorant doesn't make you irresistible to the ladies!

✿ **Reason No. 4 :** The marketers have mastered the art of playing the emotional card and targeting customers' deep-lying desires, aspirations and emotions. The scientists of advertising carry out research in their labs and successfully find out the hot buttons which make the customers reach for their pockets. They are successfully coming up with ads that target a specific emotion. For example: Let's say you are a responsible person who's earning to support his family. The thought that after retirement, you may not be financially sound to an extent that buying a Barbie doll for your granddaughter or buying that bike for your grandson won't be possible!! Becoming a broke grandfather - could be your biggest fear. To help you overcome that fear, you have along your side HDFC (*sir utha ke jiyo*).

Almost every woman has a desire to look younger than her age (almost?? I am certain all women want to look sweet sixteen all their life). Looking old with wrinkles on their sagging face is not an option! Products like *Ponds Age Miracle*, *Olay*, *Santoor* (can already hear a girl screaming "*mummy*" and the jaws dropping in the santoor ad) help your dream come true. *The answer to the question that can emotions overtake logic is : No, not always.*

Consumers are now targeted by the marketers with hundreds of emotional appeals. The information bombardment has made today's customers smarter. It isn't that customers are so naïve that they don't read between the lines. Customers have learnt to take things with a pinch of salt. For example: Most of us know that success doesn't come by wearing a specific brand of underwear! Even when a superstar like Shah Rukh Khan promotes the idea of "*Success comes from the luck factor*" in the ad of Lux Cozy (tag line '*apna luck pehen ke chalo*') we see the commercial and move on.

## WHAT'S THE TAKEAWAY?

Now that we are almost through with the article, you must be thinking what's the take away? Well let's say if you are a company with an advertising budget, you might want to keep the following things in mind:

**Companies** should aim to make products that have a competitive advantage. When you have a superior product with functional benefits, creating a position in the market is always easy. However, if that's not possible, you will have to create a symbolic difference in the minds of the customers with the help of advertising.

The first lesson to remember is ' *the consumer no longer purchases the product based on what he thinks about the product, but it's more about how he feels about the product.*'

He estimates how the product will make him feel...powerful, safe, important, special, healthy, sexy and then goes for the product. Logic may help the consumer in identifying the need of the product, but the choice of a product is based on emotions.

When a company offers a lot many products to its varied base of consumers, it has to design a new marketing campaign for all the products. Instead of being a product-specific approach, the marketer can try to develop a company-specific approach. If you can create a good emotional positioning of the company, every time the company launches a product, it gets an easy access into the hearts of the consumers. For example, *Amul - The Taste Of India* has got a great positioning in the hearts of the consumers, when it sells milk, ice cream, ghee or any other product, the company gets benefits of its emotional connect with the consumers. Companies can turn to anthropologists and psychologists to develop advertisement messages that touch the consumer's emotions more deeply without offending their rationality and common sense.

However, using emotional appeals could come with a price! Companies have to deliver the emotional commitment made, and it's not that easy! If you take the emotional bonding route, you will have to continue to reinforce the bond, so you will need to keep investing in advertisements to keep the emotion alive. Remember an old joke people haven't figured out. How much does a marriage cost as they are still paying for it ... it's the same for every emotional bond. It doesn't end there: sometimes, it calls for a lot more investment than in the advertisement alone.

If you are a **Marketer**, you may keep the following in mind: A marketer must first develop the right attitude to look at his customers. He should remember that they are not devoid of emotions, but at the same time, a word of caution: Marketers who consider consumers as emotional fools are also missing the point. In designing the advertising campaigns, the marketer has got three choices :

✿ **The Rational Way** : He can capture the mind share by focusing on logic and convincing customers to purchase the product based on its features and benefits. For example: Samsung's new range on *Inspira* refrigerators comes with a dual sensor control. Priyanka Chopra is shown as spinach and ice cream in the ad, where the spinach gets spoiled as the cooling sensors are in the freezer only. However, Samsung provides two sensors; one controls the cooling for the refrigerator and another one for the freezer. Incredible India is also a good example. The ad depicts a foreign tourist wanting to write a postcard about his experience of exploring India.....all the wonderful memories of traveling India surround him, and the only thing he is able to pen down is *Incredible India!* This method works fine as long as it doesn't sound boring. The biggest limitation of this method is it lacks creativity and may sound dull.

✿ **The Emotional Way** : He can capture the heart share by focusing on the emotions of the customers and convincing the customer by ensuring that the product will result in enhanced self-esteem. According to Prahlad Kakkar, (ad guru) - it's the human element in ad films that makes all the difference. Being able to pick up mannerisms and emotions are the key to a successful film, his idea is to be able to relate to human emotions. For example: Platinum bands promote celebrating the "*Platinum Day of Love*" (for married couples) to acknowledge the day they realized about their true love for each other. The NACO and NBTC's advertising message of increasing blood donation shows a girl (thalassemia patient) thanking people for donating their blood. The tagline is '*Karke dekho. Accha lagta hai*'.

The only drawback of this method is that sometimes, they tend to get manipulative and are not that effective in areas like B2B or technical products. They can also boomerang if they treat the viewers as emotional fools.

✿ **The 50-50 Way** : It can cater to both the mind and heart of the customer. He may correlate the functional benefits and emotional benefits of the product. For example: Naukri.com - the ad depicts a rude boss who is unhappy with his subordinate. The subordinate spells out his boss's name (Hari Sadu) on the phone as H- for Hitler, A - for arrogant, R-Rascal, I - Idiot (This ad not only targets the feeling of frustration of having a ruthless boss, but also talks about the opportunities provided by the job portal). Surf Excel, of Hindustan Unilever Limited, promotes the proposition of '*Daag achche hai*'. *Agar kuchh accha karne me daag lag jate hain, to daag acche hain.* "

This ad talks about simple acts of innocent kids which is based on good values...the central message that '*the detergent helps you get rid of stains and saves you from stopping your kids to do something good without worrying about stains*' - is implied. This method is the best as it uses a combination of value oriented and utility oriented reasons to attract the customers.

If you are a **Consumer** then,

The consumers should be on a vigil, as the advertising world increases the number of manipulative ads with loads of emotional appeals. Let emotionality be received rationally. Go on, watch those commercials, but when you see a tailor using *zatak talc -thanda* (only for men) getting the girl, you know what (not) to do!

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