Advertising In Multiplexes : Brand Theatre

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Raj Juneja, 38, a Gurgaon-based businessman, can be found at any of his three favorite multiplex theatres based in malls on Sundays catching the 3 p.m. show. He is always accompanied by his wife and two daughters.

Weekends are multiplex time for many metro-dwellers. Where better to go than to kick start the movie's promotion well within the cinema halls themselves.

In a number of product categories, the multiplex option is being considered for media plans. Therefore, multiplexes are selling themselves and the space within, in the most innovative ways possible. Even BPO and ITES information technology enabled services companies have been using this option seriously.

WHY ADVERTISE IN A MULTIPLEX ?

Multiplexes, in their effort to create one-stop entertainment destinations, have succeeded in creating ideal spaces for high-impact advertising by extending the amount of time a customer spends in the property**.** For marketers, the multiplex is a growing and clutter-breaking mode of advertising, just as it is for the filmmakers when posters plus promos on TV are not enough.

This has the dual benefit of increasing the engagement of the consumer with the advertised brands. Advertising space in and around multiplexes is ideal for ground activation of marketing campaigns due to the captive audience that a multiplex provides.

A good number of cinemagoers walk into multiplexes every day. Multiplexes like Inox, PVR, Adlabs etc. are a lifestyle statement rather than just any cinema hall. In today's context, the cinema exhibition business has proved to be a complex inter-play where an outstanding location, state-of-the-art technology, luxurious and plush ambience, and warm customer friendly service integrate to provide a world class cinema viewing experience to the patron.

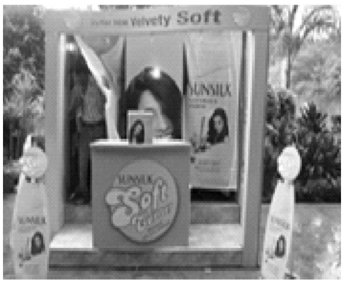
Pillar branding

Two-wheeler Display

Complementing this is the professional approach to support their marketing communication and strong logistics and systems to support any kind of Brand Promotion.

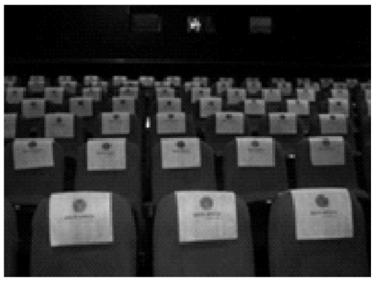
Almost all multiplexes are located in either premium residential areas or prime business districts. It guarantees a target audience that is upmarket in its composition and large in numbers.

Moreover, theming the marketing plan with a blockbuster movie seamlessly integrates one's brand into the multiplex experience. Movie merchandise, T-shirts, key chains, branded pop corn tubs, ticket jackets etc. will ensure viewer-involvement with your brand. For year-round advertising, multiplexes offer a host of opportunities in and around their chic properties to innovatively display, demonstrate, sample, sell or simply build a brand. They



Sampling Kiosk

Car Display



Seat Flap Branding

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provide excellent sites to guarantee maximum visibility
Options for a brand at multiplexes are virtually unlimited. One can find a number of advertising opportunities; all strategically located to attract instant attention.

AN ALMOST-PERFECT STAGE

It is an activation space and consumer connect is what is most important here. For a sampling exercise, a multiplex fits in as well. You know exactly what kind of audience would be visiting the place and you target them. For Instance, HDFC Bank would want to sell insurance to the entertainment division of group M.

The film exhibition segment per se is growing by leaps and bounds since watching movies is one of the foremost entertainment options in India. The number of screens per million population is just 12 in India- the average in the west is approximately 40. The potential is, therefore, huge.

A UNESCO study has estimated that India needs 20,000 screens to cater to the cinema viewing population: it has only about 12,000 currently. Besides, the majority of traditional theatres in cities and towns are expected to be converted into multiplexes. Advertising in multiplexes actually came in with PVR Gurgaon which has guaranteed footfalls. It is a new trend and helps deliver more value to advertisers and goes beyond the traditional use of the onscreen advertising in cinemas.

Why should one get excited about a medium that spends a mere Rs.80 crore over 12,000 cinema screens? The answer again lies in the rise of the multiplexes.

The engagement metric in a cinema is much higher than in ones' living room, making the brand recall at 18% for TV advertising vs. 39% for product placements in films.

ADVERTISING EVOLUTION

About a decade ago, the concept of cinema advertising was restricted to commercials by the likes of Vicco Vajradanti and local opticians, which were screened before movies began.

Today, one is likely to see McDowell's Mera No.1 on the doors. Your popcorn bucket comes with a contest that could win you a conversation with Govinda and Salman Khan over Partner and your cola glass has Harry Potter solemnly looking at you.

The multiplex phenomenon started around 10 years ago, but the boom has happened over the past five years and there are around 450 multiplexes in the country today and that number is set to cross 1000 by 2010.

India's multiplex bandwagon has gone beyond the metros to redefine entertainment in B and C class towns. While the first phase (of the multiplex story) saw emergence of multiplexes in metros, now this growth is spreading to Tier 2 and 3 cities like Lucknow, Indore, Nasik, Aurangabad, Kanpur, Amritsar and so on," And PVR is not alone. Other top multiplex players like Fame multiplexes, Fun Multiplex of Essel group too have ventured to small towns across the country from Darjeeling to Mangalore to Ghaziabad to Pimpri to Pune to Panipat to Allahabad to Indore etc.

The number of functional multiplexes is currently put as just over a hundred. Between them ,they make up about 300 screens or just 2.5 per cent of the 12,000 screens (nearly all made up of old-style, large halls).In spite of their tiny number, industry estimates say that about 40 per cent of the Rs 80 crore already finds itself into multiplexes. In other words, an old style hall screen draws less than Rs.50 thousand worth of advertising annually.

A modern multiplex screen, in contrast, generates more than Rs. 10 lakh in advertising revenue. What are the advantages of going for a multiplex? And what are the brands that find it ideal?

THE BRAND EXPERIENCE

The opportunities that multiplexes offer for innovations are plenty. One of the most eye catching and innovating campaigns using Cinemax, PVR and Inox in Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore was cinema activation for Nike, just before the Football world cup.This was done to involve the youth who are soccer fans with a larger than life campaign like branding the walls, doors of the auditorium and branding of the candy bars.

Fun Cinemas recently did a campaign for Tata salt, in which the popcorn boxes were branded as Super Hit Tata Salt since the salt and popcorn go perfectly with each other.

The other very interesting campaign done at Fun was that of Stayfree branded washrooms. The creative was on the main door as well as everywhere inside the washrooms to educate women about hygiene. The activity was spread over nine locations across Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Delhi, as well as the NCR (National Capital Region).

In cities like Ahmedabad, local advertisers are using the medium very seriously and are spending a lot of money on it. Southern states like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu having very strong markets and have shown good growth. In one of the activities by Mahindra Tractors, they ran a 13-minute corporate film before the movie started in cinema halls across Uttar Pradesh ,Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh ,Bihar, Jharkhand ,Maharashtra and Rajasthan .They also placed a Mahindra tractor inside the theatres.However,not all the locations provided success.

Large Drop Down Banners

Backlit-Standees

Branding on Uniforms

Similarly, Ambi Pur, the home freshener brand from Godrej was also tried inside AC vents in movie halls in Bangalore, but failed because some people were allergic to such a fragrance. Axe, on the other hand, did a complete branding exercise across the top metros in India targeting the youth. Out of the usual seat branding and popcorn containers, one interesting innovation was the reflection of branding inside the mirrors in men's rest rooms.

One of the gaming site- Zapak's innovative launch campaign was in the men's toilets of Fame Multiplexes where the urinal wall had a series of lines stating level one, level two, level three and so on, leading up to the brand. The boyish humor caught on and the brand had made full use of the minute they had with their target audience-youth that was inherently competitive and could play anytime, anywhere.

McDowell's tried something unique during premier shows and night shows. They had set up temporary bars inside theatres in Bangalore with all due permission and licenses from the government. This was all done on invitation and the bars were shut immediately at the commencement of the movie. It was tried out in a couple of other theatres in the country as well.

A multiplex can promote the films it shows too.PVR, for instance, has been innovatively promoting each and every property inside theatres.During the time of release of ***Mangal Pandey***, a man dressed like a freedom fighter could be seen all over PVR.

Another recent branding exercise was by **Reckitt Benckiser** for its flagship brand -Dettol.For three months now, rest rooms in key multiplexes in Delhi and Mumbai have been sporting the brand message. The activity includes airing of Dettol hand wash onscreen during the intermission, branding the washrooms and lobbies of select theatres with dettol standees and stickers.

Advertising in multiplexes has moved out of the screen. With a demographically filtered, captive audience that spends over three hours in a multiplex environment, a brand can reach out to their target effectively. The brand exposure and connect one gets in these theatres is indeed much more effective.

PROUD OWNERS

With the advent of multiplexes, the entire movie experience has undergone a sea change. Modern multiplexes are high investment propositions providing consumers with all the comfort and luxury that they demand .The wide expenses in a multiplex-the parking lot, the foyers, the lobbies have allowed advertisers to explore new platforms and space to engage the consumer in a favorable ambience and receptive mood.

Multiplexes make targeting a far easier task, as most of their owners are very different from traditional cinema theatre owners.

They are marketing practitioners themselves, and clearly understand the value of databases, demographics and targeting.

WIDER AUDIENCE, DEEPER POCKETS

The typical multiplex audience too has widened from college goers and the youth to a greater societal cross-section.

Advertising used to contribute around 1-2% to multiplex revenues five years ago. That figure has risen to 8-10% today and is expected to touch 15% by 2010.

While multiplexes are a strong advertising platform for upcoming films, one sees branding activities happen from a range of sectors including life insurance companies, credit cards, colas, cellular service providers, cosmetics and

FMCG products.
Multiplexes are cashing in and improvising on technology to offer wider options to advertisers. PVR is converting doors to plasma doors where advertisements will be screened until the doors open and will have magic mirrors in all bathrooms, where the mirror doubles up as an advertising screen until you come closer to have a look at yourself. They're also looking to introduce interactive floor stickers which can have animated floor advertising.
Advertisers realize that with so many brands vying for attention, they need to be creative and entertain, not annoy.

CROSS PROMOTIONS

Cross promotions too are on the rise. Inox has linked upcoming film Surf's Up with promotion for Mumbai's Water Kingdom. Fame Multiplexes in Pune have a tie-up with McDonald's-a Fame ticket can get you a free soft serve ice-cream and a meal bill from McDonalds will shave off Rs 25 from your next Inox ticket.
Multiplexes are an exciting outdoor medium since you have a young audience with high disposable income waiting to be targeted .However, it's still in the nascent stage much like the internet
Advertisers think that the best possible utilization of space is a sampling counter. Recently, Fame had a tie-up with Spinz (deo talc)-those who could match with the spinz dancers won a hamper while the rest could spritz some deospray on.

REALITY CHECK

However, despite the euphoria over innovations, marketers are discovering that categorically, there is no way of measuring the return on investments. There is no accurate measure of the results of an activity done .Monitoring too is an issue. Checking the execution part is a real challenge.
But these drawbacks pale when compared to substantive factors like a very well defined segment of people, space, the OTS (opportunity to see) and all the age groups that can be leveraged. How far it can go will depend entirely on marketers and media agencies. For mall owners, it's just giving space and earning rentals for it.
Apart from monitoring and measurement of the ROI, an additional difficulty is evaluation of price point. There needs to be a benchmark set for standardization of price. Take Reliance Web world for example. For any activity that is to be done over its 400 outlets, the arterial needs to be given at just one place. The cost of logistics here is small .However, at present, there are no set standards on what rates should be charged for a promotional activity.
Traditionally ,FMCG firms like HLL, ITC, Nirma along with beverage clients like Coke or Pepsi had been the big advertisers in the cinema medium, but with the youth returning to cinema after the coming up of multiplexes, new generation companies like Airtel, Samsung ,Nokia, Sony have got on the big spenders' list. Companies like Microsoft, Vodafone, Honda, and retail majors like Lifestyle stores and even ITES clients like Xansa are taking the medium quite seriously.

CONCLUSION

Cinema is certainly going to be a reinvigorating experience-for both the brands and the visitor. However, multiplexes cannot become the mainstay of any serious branding activity given their limited reach and will always remain a support function to print and television advertising. Multiplexes are a good place to run a quick awareness generation exercise more as a reminder than as contest. Infact, today with digital cinema emerging, single screen cinemas too are opening up.

Staircase Sticker Branding

Elevator Branding

Floor Graphics

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rupees. Therefore, for modern retailing to be successful, it must offer the convenience of the push cart peddlers and traditional retailers without compromising on the quality aspect of their commodities. Another bottle neck is the high rentals paid by modern convenience stores in the metropolis and other fast growing cities as they eat into the profit pie. Therefore, modern retailers should try to find a solution to this problem at the earliest.

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