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MASH Marketing Club



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SUMMER IS HERE!

KEEP CALM & READ ON

Marketing 101

How to prepare for a marketing interview

Written by- Pavithra Mutyap

General Preparation

For any interview you attend, firstly, always remember to keep a smile on your face, no matter how stressful your interview is. Be thorough with your resume, anything or everything from your resume can be asked at the interview - Be thorough with your work experience/internship and ready with certain situations at work to answer HR questions. Do not globe around. Say politely that you don't know, if you really do not know. Try to prepare and give some unique answers: It will make interviewer remember you. Do not give a generic answer, give specific situations and include lots of examples to quantify what you are saying. Take a minute or two before you answer any question - Do not hesitate to ask for time in case you really need it.

Kotler concepts

Be thorough with some concepts from Kotler in order to answer with ease in the interview. Cover the following from the textbook - Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning (STP), first few chapters- basics of marketing strategy, new product launch. If you have time, you could also cover Maslow's needs, Branding, IMC, Brand equity (Keller's pyramid) to get basics right.

Company related information

Whenever you attend an interview with a company, you must have a basic idea of what the company is about, what is the kind of work they do, in which fields are they pioneers, etc. In specific for a marketing company, know the wide range of brands under the company. Be careful not to mix brands of other companies. For example, know that Surf belongs to HUL

whereas Tide belongs to PnG. Learn about the important campaigns and sensational/interesting advertisements the company has come up with. Read about important CSR activities the company has undertaken and talk about it if you get a chance or are asked about it. It will give the interviewers a feeling that you are genuinely interested in the company and are following up on its initiatives. Be ready to come up with your favourite brand of the company. Don't say routine things like Coke is my favourite brand. Try and explore unique brands. Also, for whichever brand you choose, learn about its - target group, positioning, tagline, brand ambassador, brand personality, brand image, campaigns, etc. You may be asked for any improvements or suggestions for the brand. Be prepared to answer that. Finally, in case you have any questions to be asked to the company, shoot (politely though)!



Commonly asked Marketing questions

Written by- Eashwara Krishna Sashank Koneti

Disclaimer: The following answers have been written from previous experiences. However please consider the suggestions/procedures given below as only a starting point and work towards making your own answers that can set you apart from other people

Format: This article would have a few questions and a structured approach you can follow while answering those questions

Questions

Tell us about a brand you like and the reasons why you like the brand.

- The first step in answering this question is the choice of the brand. It is not a rule that you need to choose a brand only from the portfolio of the interviewing company (For ex: P&G) but it is preferable to choose a brand that is in the domain (FMCG) of the company. Through this you are giving the company an opportunity to question a lot about the brand and thereby let them know that you know a lot about that domain. If you are choosing a brand from their own company, be very sure you know very well about the brand.
- You could then mention if the brand got their STP right. Does their target seem reachable and attracted with the product? Is the positioning coherent with their target segment? etc.
- Talk about what you like about the brand. You could first start with the brand elements (like a catchy tagline/logo/packaging) and what is special about them. Following that you can talk about your favorite advertising/off-line marketing campaign that the brand has undertaken (For ex: Kuch Meetha Ho jaye from Cadbury). It is essential to critique that ad and convey how it is a good ad (Refer the article on Ad analysis in this issue)

In quite a few cases, this question shall lead to other questions 'What is one thing you don't like about this brand?' Be ready for all such questions. One quick tip while handling

a negative question (like the second one) is that you need to be subtle in making your point but show that you have done strong analysis to answer that question

Tell us about the advertisement you love/hate the most.

A clear detailed framework has been covered in the Ad analysis article in this issue. One strong suggestion is that all of you need to keep watching ads of different companies and different products and try to develop an understanding for yourselves as to which advertisements worked and which didn't. While the article covers a basic framework, you can amuse the interviewer by going beyond that to talk of a few more concepts like 'Does the brand ambassadors image match with that of the brand?', 'Which other segments can this ad work for etc.'. The same aspects can be kept in mind while answering the advertisement you hate the most.

General marketing related guesstimates. For ex: Number of people using Red Label Tea at this instant?

Before we understand how to approach this guesstimate, we would strongly recommend all PGP1s to go through a few guesstimates from books like Case Interviews Cracked etc. Practice a lot more amongst yourselves either in pairs or triplets and discuss the approaches that one could follow.

To specifically tackle this guesstimate, continue following the rules that any book preaches but let us look at some of the aspects that a Marketing interviewer would be delighted with:

- **Intended and unintended users/target segment of the product.** (For ex: M-seal used for decoration purposes/ Haldirams being used as a topping on other products etc.)
- **User behavior of each target segment** in case a product caters to multiple target segments. Old people might have tea for lesser/more number of times than young adults. Tea shop owners might buy the product in bulk while households purchase one pack at a time etc. Mind you, your assumptions should be logical and coherent to reality.
- **Various usage occasions and the usage frequency.** (For ex: Tea is consumed at home once in the morning and once in the evening and a couple other times at workplace)
- **Identifying the right players competing with the product given in the guesstimate.** This would be required when you follow a top down approach and come up with a number of tea buyers in India. But then the interviewer would want to know how much have you understood about the product positioning. (For ex: Because of the positioning and pricing, Tide & Rin compete with each other in the market and not Tide & Surf Excel)

These are just a few ways in which you can show the interviewer that you understand the intricacies involved in the target segments, users, their consumption behavior and the competition as seen by them.

How will launch a product (For ex: Fabric Conditioner) in your city? What is the approach you will follow?

This is a question asked to understand how well you can apply the basic frameworks learnt in your Marketing Management course. First find out from the interviewer whether the product is a new one or an existing one. Before you start answering the question, learn what the objective of this product launch is. If it is a new one you probably need to do a detailed STP. Post that dwell on 4Ps of the Marketing Mix in detail. Look at the first chapter of Kotler for all the elements under Product, Price, Promotion and Place.

According to the objective you might realize that one or two Ps aren't relevant. In that case mention a few words about them and eliminate them and delve deep into the main Ps. (For ex: If the objective of the launch is to ensure that Bournvita biscuits reach East India, then probably distribution channels, pricing etc. might matter the most)

Basic marketing related questions to find out how clearly you have understood the concepts.

A few questions are difference between sales and marketing, difference between consumer and customer, various possible bases of segmentation, difference between brand and product etc.

Even though these questions might not be in their direct form, all your answers in the interview must have clear clarity about the concepts.



How to Excel in a Marketing GD

Written by- Aachal Bapna

Group Discussion or GD is probably the most important part of selection process for the Marketing companies. Marketing GDs are generally of two types –

1. **Case-Based GDs:** In these GDs, a marketing problem like launch of a new product, identifying new market, diversification of a brand is given. It is expected that students will use marketing frameworks and concepts in order to arrive at the solution and recommended next steps. Arriving at a final solution or recommendation is important in this case. Hence, group has to take care of the time and allot last 45 – 60 seconds to state the solution and future steps.
2. **Abstract GDs:** In Abstract GDs, there is no right or wrong answer. However, abstract GDs are best way to judge the logic that person employs to take a particular position. In abstract GDs, generally group can't come to a consensus, hence there is no solution at the end. However, it is advisable to use last 45 seconds to summarize the whole discussion keeping in mind the different viewpoints made during the discussion.

Generally, in a GD, there will be a panel of 8-9 shortlisted students. Number of students selected from the panel for interviews depends on the performance of individual as well as the group. Sometimes, 4 or 5 people from the same panel get selected or sometimes the whole group gets disqualified either because they have transformed the whole GD into a fish market (be aware some companies like Times Group expect their GD to be a fish market: P) or because the group has misinterpreted the topic. The following do's and don'ts of GD, will help you

perform better in GD and efficiently utilize the GD time to reach to next stage.

Do's of GD

1. When you enter the GD room, acknowledge the moderators as well as your other panel members.
2. Try to give the structure in the beginning of the GD either by specifying the parameters on which the topic can be evaluated or by specifying any marketing framework, for e.g. STP for launching product in new market.
3. If you have spoken enough, give other's chance to speak by pointing at them or helping them get some bandwidth.
4. Quality of your content should be good, Quantity does not matter.
5. Look at everybody while speaking and making a point.
6. Try to acknowledge other's points by building on them.

Don'ts of GD

1. Never start in a haphazard manner or by directly stating the result.
2. Do not interrupt while someone is speaking especially a lady. If someone is interrupting you when you are making a point, politely say 'Sir/ma'am, please let me complete my point' and continue with your point.
3. Don't shout or use derogatory language.
4. Never point fingers at anybody while making a point.



AD Analysis

Written by- Mishita Jaiswal

MP Tourism – Sau tarah ke rang hain

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_AREWFSwdA

(Notice the use of the ABC framework. Choose an ad that you can truly resonate with. The words should translate into appropriate emotions which make it more real for the interviewers.)

What is advertised:

The elements that are advertised through this beautiful TVC are the various tourist destinations that are a must visit when one comes to Madhya Pradesh. The TVC clearly succeeds in highlighting MP as a great destination when it comes to eco-tourism, heritage tourism and spiritual tourism and that people should definitely come and visit MP.

The Target:

The advertisement targets the tourists who are making their travel plans. It tries to focus more on the foreign tourists so that they include MP in their travel itinerary.

Grabbing ATTENTION:

The TVC is based around the Indian festival Holi- the festival of colours. Shot at picturesque location, with all the colours in the background, it scores really high when it comes to grabbing attention. The TVC shows people throwing colours at the tourists and just before it is about to touch the tourists, the colour transforms to depict a particular tourist destination at MP. The ad stops and flows. Ample time is spent on the statues and patterns that are created out of the colours. The background song is catchy and reinforces the impact of the TVC.

Another important element that they have advertised is the happiness of the locals (have especially taken children to signal the happiness and the enthusiasm) as well as the tourists who are mesmerized by the beauty of MP.

Reinforcing the BRAND:

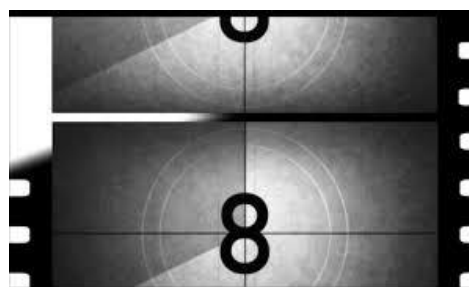
The ad is created in such a way that it reinforces the brand of MP tourism throughout the TVC.

The music is brilliant and the beats truly emphasize the “Indian-ness” of the whole act and boost the energy and the impact of the TVC. The visuals combined with the music appear to be in great sync with the culture of the place (People usually attach such pomp and show associated with celebration and colours to India). The background score clearly describes the USP of the destination and after each location is depicted, the words “MP mein aaya har koi” just reinforce the attractiveness of MP as a tourist destination. In the end, sufficient time is spent on the logo so that people retain it. Details of the website are also given.

COMMUNICATING benefits:

The background song not only describes the place but also the lists down the spiritual benefits the destination provides to anyone who comes to visit. The TVC is not overloaded with information on the no of places one can visit at MP. It focuses only on 5 destinations- Kanha National Park, Khajuraho temples, Sanchi Stupa, Mandu Mahal and Ujjain’s Mahakal Aarti- but the communication is really effective and is able to create an aura of grandeur and mystery to those places, which tourists would love to go and see as to how they appear in real life.

Hats off to the creativity of the team behind the TVC! The ad sure will be catching many more eyeballs in the days to come.



Innovate, don't invent! Lessons from Global BOP marketing campaigns

Written by- Srikanth Sridhar

A majority of the world's population live on annual incomes below \$3000 and constitute what is called in academic parlance, the Base of the economic pyramid (BOP). The sheer numbers of this segment make it a very attractive prospect for leading multi-national firms to develop strategies for serving this segment. The past decade has seen the average purchasing power of rural BOP go up, which makes it all the more interesting for marketers. By developing sustainable products for these consumers, companies can significantly expand their consumer base, increase revenues and help empower people by providing them with a better standard of living. A few case examples of innovative products shed light on some of the challenges faced worldwide.

Worldbike initiative in Uganda

Residents in Uganda have relied on bicycle-taxis called Boda-bodas, for personal and commercial transportation, the same way we are accustomed to courier companies using trucks. Standard model bicycles are not equipped to carry huge loads. The other issue that Boda-bodas face is not something unfamiliar to most of us- bad roads and old bicycles which have maintenance and serious safety issues.

Worldbike, a US non-profit organization tied-up with Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum to design two prototype cycles capable of solving these problems- the *Big-Boda* and the *Worldbike*. These bicycles were built in local workshops in Uganda and could be used as an effective transport vehicle for goods and people. It consisted of an add-on bike frame that extended the bike's wheelbase, allowing two adults or three children, or bulky cargo to ride

with stability. These bicycles were sold for around \$110, a cost that could easily be

recovered in a few months owing to the additional cargo it allowed the rider to carry. Leveraging conventional bicycle distribution channels, Worldbike was able to successfully reach all major rural communities in Uganda.



Fig 1: Big-Boda bicycle design

The Hippo-roller project

A problem faced by 750 million people across Africa is access to water. Rural women and children often had to travel several miles before reaching a water pump, fill huge drums with water and carry them back to their house, an activity which they had to carry out every single day! This had some severe health effects including long-term neck and spine damage,

Designed by two South Africa engineers in 1991, the Hippo roller, a 90-litre drum created from LDPE, was designed to cope with the rough surfaces found in rural areas. It had a large opening which made it extremely convenient to refill water and clean the drum. By enabling water to be transported in a painless, hassle-

free manner, the Hippo roller project has touched the lives of several million rural communities. However, at \$125 per drum, the price was out of reach of several rural households. Initially sponsored by Infotech, an IT company, the project is currently financed by individuals, corporates, and non-profit organization partners collectively known as Hippo Water International. This has enabled them to charge a minimum fee from the rural communities. Currently, all Hippo rollers are being manufactured in South Africa and transported to various parts of Africa. To enable scaling-up, a mobile manufacturing unit was devised which helped several countries in Africa benefit from the project. Most of the manufacturing is outsourced to keep operational costs low and the project team has tied up with several NGOs across the country to identify communities who are in need of the roller and distribute directly to these villages.

With over 20 years of experience, the Hippo Roller project has gained international acclaim and featured in conferences and publications around the world. Since its launch, 45000 Hippo Rollers have been distributed across 21 countries, touching the lives of more than half a million rural people.



Fig 2: The Hippo Roller Project in Africa

Conclusion

On carefully analyzing some innovative BOP solutions across the world, a few things can be

inferred, which can serve as learning to marketers:

- **BOP consumers want solutions, not freebies.** This was clear with both examples mentioned above, where BOP consumers are willing to pay for solutions that they see value in.
- **The real world demands solving practical problems, not breakthroughs!** Both the Hippo Roller and Worldbike did not use cutting-edge technology or a complex solution to come up with breakthrough innovations. They simply understood the core problem and came up with a feasible, practical solution.
- **Keep operational costs low to ensure scalability.** Firms serving the BOP markets must strive to keep operational costs as low as possible since marketing will inevitably drive up costs. The fragmented nature of rural markets demands firms invest in a large sales force which is another major challenge.

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Bottom of the Pyramid Marketing Strategy – India

Written by- Krithikha

If we stop thinking of the poor as victims or as a burden and start recognizing them as resilient and creative entrepreneurs and value conscious consumers, a whole new world of opportunity will open up

– C.K Prahlad

As per CK Prahlad, serving the BOP market requires new managerial capabilities. This segment, also called the aspiring poor can be tapped by not just selling products at low prices. But by helping them improve their standard of living. Besides this market is open for innovations that are sustainable and sensitive to culture and environment.

Bursting the myth - Why BOP is not all about sachet marketing?

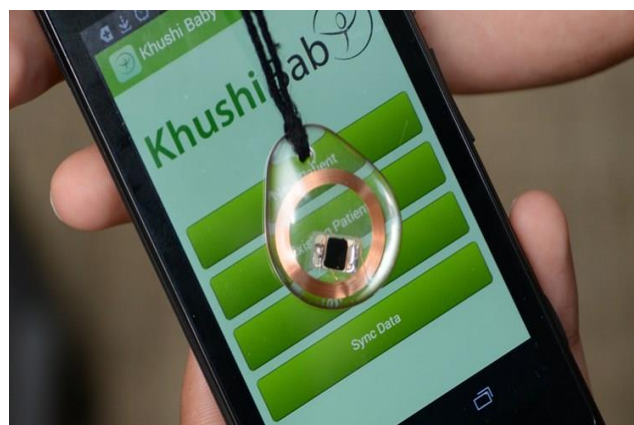
BOP proponents who believe in Prahlad, propose that BOP marketing is all about small SKUs. This has been proposed based on the observation that rural consumer look for single servings because of their inability to afford large packages. Anand Kumar Jaiswal in 2013 observes that, small SKUs work well only in cases of Shampoos and Razor blades. AC Nielsen shows that small SKUs in shampoos and Razor blades works well in urban context as well. Besides the best sellers in the consumer products like milk powder, jam, sanitary napkins are generally the bigger SKUs.



On deeper analysis we see that BOP markets can be best served by innovative initiatives that increases the power to buy, shape the aspirations and enhancing the access. The following sections discusses various initiative taken to tap the BOP markets of India.

Khushi Baby – Integration of culture, technology and Healthcare

Khushi Baby is a start-up in the wearable technology domain. In the era of Fitbits, Khushi baby (KB) uses mobile app for social impact. KB developed a digital necklace by integrating the cultural symbol – black thread (used to protect babies from evil eye) and the near field communication technology (NFC). This necklace serves the objective of improving the access and rate of vaccination for babies in deep rural



pockets of India. The necklace is a database of patient information and is available in cloud for the health officials to derive insights and act upon to protect the babies.

Thus cultural sensitivity, technology and social consciousness have led a group of young entrepreneurs to develop an outstanding solution for the healthcare needs of the BOP markets in India.

Shakti initiative by Hindustan Unilever

Project Shakti, is a sales channel expansion initiative by HUL. The initiative served two purposes. One is the business purpose of increasing the penetration and reach of the HUL products in rural markets of India. The other is to provide livelihoods and a stream



of revenue for the underprivileged women in the rural areas. In this initiative, a women entrepreneur is chosen and to be served by the rural distributor. Shakti amma in turn sells them to either the consumer or other rural distributor.

But the critics view on this BOP initiative is that the improvement in livelihoods is

sceptical as the entrepreneur is 1 in thousands of such women. And what might be the impact in BOP markets has to be analysed further.

Conclusion

To conclude, innovative and sustainable BOP initiatives though may appeal emotionally and garner wide attention, the key issue is scalability and the initiatives' ability to lift the BOP consumers out of poverty. The stakeholders must be aligned to minimize the risks and threats associated with measures taken so that no problems are further dumped on the already marginalized consumers. In conclusion, the MNCs can tap the real potential by making fortune for the bottom of the pyramid as their objective.

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MASH

ABOUT US

MASH is a student-run club with focus on marketing and related disciplines. MaSh conducts several events on campus throughout the year. Starting with the inter section PGP1 event- Mashterix, which is managed and conducted by the PGP1s for PGP1s. MaSh also conducts many events at Eximius- The entrepreneurship festival of IIM Bangalore.

MaSh hosts a variety of marketing events at Vista, the Annual Business Festival of IIM Bangalore conducted by the Forum for Industrial Interaction (FII). The events receive huge participation from top Business Schools across the country. The events are conceptualised and designed in a way to test the participants' knowledge and skills across various facets of marketing.

Apart from these we also organize workshops and panel discussions inviting industry experts and alumni. MaSh aslso conducts mock marketing interviews for PGP1s to help them prepare for summer placements and publishes comprehensive summer and final placement preparation guides.