



# PUBLIC RELATIONS

## A gem of a communication tool

VEENA GIDWANI GIVES POINTERS TO MAXIMIZING PR TO YOUR ADVANTAGE.

**D**ID you know that there are over 3 lakh Jewellery stores in India and that the Jewellery industry spends approximately Rs. 280 crores annually to build national and local brands? Out of this, branded jewellery accounts for Rs. 150 crores. The remaining Rs. 130 crores is spent by individual stores.-

The Jewellery retailing business has some distinguishing characteristics.

- Very stiff competition but not too many differentiators between the offerings of many stores. A few stores though operating in just one or two cities however enjoy high reputation nationally. They get customers from across the country
- It is a business that has traditionally worked on Trust. Word-of-mouth plays an important role in getting new customers
- There is a strong need to create excitement among consumers through fresh/new happenings

- that build confidence and trust
- With growing disposable incomes and interest in lifestyle products, there is a need to educate consumers on design, variety, quality, and standards.

However one finds that in our over communicated society, consumers are shutting themselves off. They hardly notice print ads and commercial messages as content gets repetitive and indistinguishable. Sellers are finding it more and more difficult to reach their target consumers. Across high value items, barring the iPod, it's a buyers market- how else can one explain the slew of offers on cars, appliances or jewellery? As advertising becomes less cost effective, sellers are moving to other routes of communication, and are discovering the power of news, events, community activities, third-party endorsements etc. They are discovering the power of Public Relations (PR).

While PR is a very powerful communication tool for any

organization or individual, it can be hugely beneficial for the Jewellery Retailing Business, which is estimated to be Rs. 65,000 crores nationally. Out of this only about Rs. 1500 crores to Rs. 2,000 crores is branded Jewellery. The huge unbranded segment of approximately Rs. 63,000 crores spends a miniscule Rs. 130 crores on advertising. So PR can help in a big way. PR helps to communicate the value jewellery stores give to their customers, in a very credible and cost effective way, through media, events, word of mouth etc.

A look at some of the PR activity initiated by other categories (home furnishings, hair care products, women's personal care products etc.) brings to the fore how PR can enhance the Goodwill/Reputation of your business:

### NEW STORE OPENINGS

These can attract a lot of attention and a large number of walk ins/shoppers if something interest-

## PR THAT ROCKED!!!

**Shiksha 06:** The special program to lead underprivileged children on the path of education across India was launched by Procter & Gamble (P&G) in partnership with Child Rights and You (CRY) in April 06. A resounding response within the first eight weeks contributed saw 11,985 underprivileged children on the path of education. PR collaborated with the P&G Customer Teams to conduct Shopper PR Events held at Modern Retail (Food Bazaar in Kolkata & Mumbai) directly engaging consumers (painting competitions for Shoppers' children) to sustain awareness & participation in Shiksha. Supermom and Shiksha ambassador Malaika Arora Khan announced this initial contribution at a unique painting event where she felicitated children Shiksha ambassadors-cum-winners of the painting Competition organized to raise awareness for the cause. The result- P&G donated Rs. 1.43 crores to CRY to support more than 13,400 children's education this year.



Shiksha Malaika Arora children ambassadors at painting event



Lara Dutta takes up the Pantene Strength Challenge by Hair Expert

**Pantene:** During the re-launch of Pantene Pro-V shampoo with goodness of coconut oil, the P&G and Madison PR team effectively drove the product benefit via a multi-city PR campaign in key markets (Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad) leveraging former Miss World & Pantene brand ambassador Lara Dutta in beauty & consumer media events to drive recommendations, and simultaneously leveraged the Direct Marketing team's Pantene Strength Stations at Modern Retail outlets and malls such



TBZ Cupid Women's Era

**TBZ Cupid:** After the resounding success of its store at Borivli, Tribhuvandas Bhimji Zaveri (TBZ, Zaveri Bazar) launched its second Cupid outlet at Bandra.



VF Shiff Food Bazaar Offer

**VVF Shiff display at Food Bazaar:** When VVF Ltd.'s latest entrant in the market Shiff, was launched, many retail activities were undertaken. Shiff stands were displayed at some of the biggest Hyper Market chains across the country (Big Bazaar's Food Bazaar, Shoprite). The display at these retail outlets consisted of co-branded stands for display, shelf talkers and leaflets. The stand positioned at Food Bazaar had Shiff soap packs, a TV set, and enlarged photocopies of gift vouchers displayed on the stand. A promoter was positioned in a Shiff-coloured cream shirt, white scarf and denims to promote the offer and increase movement of stock. The objective was to communicate the brand benefits while giving an incentive to consumers to try the brand.

ing and unusual is planned at the store. For example at a recent launch of Godrej Lifespace a Home Solutions Store in Lucknow, the Company had a Feng Shui expert providing advice to prospective buyers during certain times of the day. The store's wide range of offerings, the convenience of being able to find all home and interior needs under one roof, coupled with the attraction of a Feng Shui Expert's consultation, have resulted in a lot of media exposure and brought in many interested buyers.

### EVENTS

In-Store events like contests and lucky draws by celebrities not only result in more sales but provide an excellent opportunity to know your customers better by seeking their personal information on the participation forms. These can be designed to draw media interest too. Depending on the response you generate for the first such activity, you could look at making it an annual happening, something that all your clients look forward to participating in.

### NEW OFFERINGS

New Product Ranges in Jewellery, gem stones, watches, accessories, gifts; Promotions and Offers; Services complimentary certification and laser scribing technology, can bring excitement. Educating your prospective customers on "What and Why" of the offering will create the required Buzz.

For instance, when IGI's Mobile Laboratory certifies diamond Jewellery at stores outside of Mumbai, this news draws a lot of customers to the stores. Special offers are sometimes made for on-the-spot certification. These can also be linked to festivals and special occasions.

### CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) / CAUSE-

### RELATED MARKETING (CRM)

Involvement/Participation in local events through sponsorships. For example sponsoring / donating bravery medals / awards or supporting people who showed outstanding courage during the Mumbai Blasts or the Surat Floods. A good instance is the Dimexon Groups participation at a charity dinner in Bangalore where corporate houses and members of the Indian Cricket Team gathered on a common platform to raise funds for the victims of 7/11 tragedy.

### VENUE FOR TREND SPOTTING

Making your store the place for trend-spotting and quality buying. Round-the-year activities that cover showcasing of rare designs, innovative techniques and fashion trends to cater to changing customer profits and needs.

### MEDIA SUPPLEMENTS, SPECIAL OCCASIONS FEATURES

Interesting Content could be created with little known information, facts and photographs for example on Women's Day etc.

### SPONSORSHIPS AND PROPERTIES

Design, fashion, sports depending on the equity to be owned. E.g. LVMH Regatta, Rolex Golf etc.

### MILESTONES

Historical or Growth-led, e.g. 1st, 5th, 10th, 25th etc anniversaries or expansion to other cities etc.

### PROACTIVE PHOTO-OPS OF CELEBRITY

Customers visiting the store and wearing jewellery e.g. Celeb brother-sister at Rakshabandhan, Mother-Son or Daughter on Mother's Day, Jewellery hung around the Flora Fountain Statues neck etc. These are just a few examples of how PR can be very cost effective and at the same time create excitement for your brand/store among

consumers. Depending upon the size, scale and offerings of each store, a host of ideas and opportunities could be created. These would come from having a good understanding of consumer profiles, their needs and behaviour patterns. We must also realize that customers today are spending higher amounts on lifestyle products, feel the need to be well turned out and are always looking for something new and exciting.

Creativity and Innovation are therefore critical in all the 4P's of your Marketing initiatives.

- Product : Contemporary Design, New Quality Offerings
- Price : Attractive Pricing with Higher Perceived Value
- Placement : Outstanding Branding, Display and Packaging
- Promotion : Exciting New Events, Activities, Offers and Communications that have you top-of-mind with consumers

PR is very credible, cost-effective and if creatively approached and executed, can deliver outstanding results that can be measured or evaluated in a number of ways. Qualitative and Quantitative techniques can show you whether your Campaigns have reached your Target Audience, the Success of Key Message delivery, and the Return-On-Investment (ROI). In addition, direct in-store feedback can provide further authentication.

To reap the rewards of strategically thought out PR, use the 4C's *Creative Idea*, *Content* that is Rich and informative, *Customized* for your particular audience, and communicated via a *Credible* third-party vehicle.

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