



Marketing Strategies adopted by selected organizations during the Pandemic

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Abstract:

Pandemic has hit majority of the Industries. The resources of the Organization have been majorly hit by the Pandemic. This Paper will throw light on the various Marketing strategies adopted by the Organizations in various sectors to name a few- Aviation Industry, FMCG Industry, Education Industry, Service Industry, Entertainment Industry during the pandemic.

Keywords: Pandemic, Marketing Strategies, Aviation Industry, FMCG Industry, Education Industry, Service Industry, Entertainment Industry

Objectives of the study:

To analyse the Marketing Strategies adopted by selector organizations during the Pandemic.

Sources of data:

The data was collected using secondary source of Information through various Journals, websites etc

Discussion:

Some of the strategies adopted by the selected Industries are as follows:

A) Aviation Industry :

Aviation is an Industry which was majorly hit by the Pandemic. Following are some of the strategies which were adopted by selected airlines:

1) Indigo : Strategies applied by Indigo were as follows:

- a) Refund passengers for flights cancelled

Despite of the economic slowdown, the airline said that it will complete the payments against all pending credit shells which were created when flights were cancelled by the customers. It had processed close to Rs 1000 crore refund.

- b) Assures employees no salary cut during lockdown

There were times during pandemic when no one worked "For those who didn't work during that temporary session of lockdown, Indigo had not deducted salaries or leaves".

- c) Will suspend onboard meal services for some time post lockdown

To maintain the safety and hygiene factor meeting the need of the hour, Indigo had come up with no meal service for passengers right after the unlock was initiated.

- d) 81% Travelers confident of flying with Indigo

A consumer survey conducted by Indigo revealed that 81 per cent of the travellers are confident that Indigo will ensure clean and safe travel for their journey. This shows the level of trust that consumers have on Indigo

- e) Touch-less flying experience

Even though the world was opening up, business and other activities was coming out of the lockdown, the fear of infection is still a paramount challenge. For this, Indigo had made web check-in mandatory and has digitally enhanced the process of doing it. The volume of remote check ins on their digital platform has increased from 40% to 94% which is a very encouraging factor.

2) Go Air : Strategies adopted by Go Air were as follows:

- a. Expansion of services to UAE

It had seen an enthusiastic response from its passengers travelling between India and the UAE, and there is immense pent-up demand for the same, so It had started scheduled direct flights to and from Mumbai, Delhi, Kochi, and Kannur to Sharjah. This was designed to provide convenience and flexibility to the passengers.

b. GoMore Scheme

To cater to the needs and requirements, GoAir launched GoMore scheme, which will allow passengers to book adjacent seat on the same PNR in order to maintain social distancing. Besides, this GoAir also launched 'Online Doctor Consultation' facility in association with MFine, an on-demand healthcare platform. It is the third domestic airline after Vistara and IndiGo to come out with such an offer.

c. Faces action for ferrying passengers

There was an incident where in a flight of GoAir airline took off from Chennai with 160 passengers, without the clearance to land at the destination. Because of which, GoAir took an air turn back/diversion and landed in Chennai with 160 passengers on board."

d. PNR Valid for a year

If a customer cannot or chooses not to travel, they can simply not show up for the flight and GoAir will protect the PNR for a period of one year.

B) Healthcare Industry: The Pandemic had a serious impact on Healthcare Industry. Some of the Rural Marketing strategies for the Healthcare Industry were as follows:

1. Fortis Healthcare Limited

With the aim to provide quality medical facilities to the people living in rural areas and small towns, the Common Services Centre, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under the Ministry of Electronics and IT, has partnered with the Fortis Memorial Research Institute (FMRI), Gurugram to launch telemedicine service that will be provided through a network of 3.76 lakh CSC's across the country. Under this initiative, super-speciality teleconsultations with doctors from FMRI in Gurugram, Haryana, will be provided to citizens, particularly in rural and remote areas, at an affordable price through CSC telemedicine platform.

2. Apollo Hospitals

In March 2020, after a month of intense planning and diligence, Apollo launched "Project Kavach", a multipronged program to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. While the core underlying principles were similar to those employed by U.S. health systems, Kavach was designed to overcome some unique challenges through innovative new health delivery approaches.

In the early days of the pandemic, Apollo had to rapidly standardize protocols across its 71 hospitals, in anticipation of a large volume of Covid-19 patients and to avoid disrupting the care of people with other conditions. Apollo employs approximately 80,000 people, including some 11,500 nurses (of whom 14% worked with Covid-19 patients). Many staff lived in relatively small joint-family homes where they could not easily isolate themselves and so staff welfare was a priority.

In March 2020, after a month of intense planning and diligence, Apollo launched "Project Kavach" (meaning "shield" in Hindi), a multipronged program to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

Apollo also had to adapt to the health policies of each of the 16 Indian states in which it operates. There were variations by state in requirements for allocation of Covid-19 beds, how to isolate patients, prices for tests or hospital stays, and who can be cared for at home.

C) FMCG Industry : The Pandemic had seriously hit the Fast Moving Consumer Goods Industry. Some of the strategies adopted by them were as follows:

a. Innovation Of New Products

To Strengthen the Portfolio of Brands through bigger and better innovations the companies focused on meeting high demand for Ayurvedic Products, as Healthcare And Hygiene — both Personal And Household as they were gaining prominence in the consumer mind space.

b. Supply Chain Innovations

During The Initial Days Of The Lockdown, When Supply Chains Were Badly Disrupted, Fmcg Companies That Had Traditionally Been Laggards On Digital, Realized The Significance Of ECommerce. Many Of Them Co-Created Products With E-Commerce Players And Launched Online First Products. Take, For Example, Godrej's Hit Anti-Mosquito Racquet Or Dabur Himalayan Apple Cider Vinegar, Etc Earlier, The Estimation Was That The Contribution Of Digital Channel In The Total Fmcg Market Would Be Around 10 Per Cent In The Next Ten Years But It Could Now Be Achieved In The Next Three To Four Years

c) Speedy Launches

The Companies Showed Rare Agility, They Were Innovating Quickly, Experimenting With New Products, Packaging, Pricing, And Changing Their Distribution Strategy In An Attempt To Stay Relevant With Their Consumers.

Companies Also Quickly Tied Up With New Entrants In Essential Products Distribution, Such As Swiggy, Zomato And Dunzo, To Strengthen Last-Mile Deliveries.

Few of the selected FMCG companies and their strategies are as follows:

1) HUL

HUL has been a key player in Personal Health And Hygiene Sector with help of its products For eg their soap Lifebuoy. They during Pandemic, started promoting Lifebuoy as a virus Fighting Soap which in turn made their consumers feel Safe and secure.

Rather than promoting their own product, they promoted basic sanitization. Habits by appealing to consumers to use a disinfectants soap of any Brand, which made their consumers aware of the precautions they should take in order to keep themselves safe. This gave the consumers the confidence and a feeling of familiarity with the company.

2) Dabur

Dabur India Ltd. is fast-tracking its new product launches to tap demand as people become more health conscious during the pandemic. The Consumer Goods maker saw demand for its Chyawanprash rise sevenfold during the Lockdown, According to Chief Financial Officer Lalit Malik, “ Indians also increased consumption of Honey, Ghee, Gooseberry Jam, Sesame Oil, Berries and various herbs and spices-known to boost the immunity.”

Consumer Goods makers are trying to tap demand for such products as people look for ways to avoid contagion dabur has launched over 50 new products recently and within weeks of the pandemic outbreak introduced immunity-focused juices, immunity kits, hand sanitisers, antiseptic liquid and germ protection soaps with the coronavirus around, individuals are looking for robust ways to strengthen their immunity. and as regards our desi folks, they always turn to ayurveda, the ancient medical science often regarded as the “mother of all healing”.

this kind of favourable transition in consumer preferences along with increased consumer spending towards immunity boosters has become a blessing in disguise for dabur india.

some of the rural marketing strategies for the fmcg industry were as follows:

The Fast-moving consumer goods (fmcg) company has reported strong growth since april, backed by sustained efforts in driving demand for its ayurvedic healthcare, hygiene, and nutrition products, coupled with strong innovation to meet the emerging consumer needs in the wake of the covid pandemic.

Smaller packs across our brand portfolio are growth drivers for the rural market. new launches like sanitisers and soaps from our personal hygiene range are showing early signs of good demand," emami director harsha v agarwal said.

The kolkata-based company has launched initiatives like loyalty programs in these markets. awareness amongst consumers on health and hygiene has got heightened across both urban and rural india. hand hygiene and specifically handwashes have seen an exponential rise across india and penetration has increased significantly," an itc spokesperson said the companies are also investing in digital marketing to connect with our rural consumers.

ITC launched its hand sanitiser pack priced at just 50 paise to target these markets.

FMCG brands are investing in the rural market and they are seeing a strong potential compared to urban markets. the traditional atl such as outdoor, tv, print and cable tv still play a vital role in establishing brand awareness. but today, digital marketing has become important element in the media plan for almost all the brands operating in the rural. digital marketing has also expanded its horizons in the rural market. with increase in smartphone penetration and internet access, more videos and content are being developed for consumption by the rural customer. consumers are showing interest in learning about new products via social media platforms. given the smart phone penetration and increased digital consumption, there is a trend setting in. the companies anticipate rural marketers will leverage it to ensure last mile reach.

The rural consumers will steadily, over time, embrace online purchases. already we have seen Amazon and Flipkart establishing partnerships with stores in creating online purchase access for the nearby villagers.

D) Education Industry : Education was also an Industry which was majorly hit by the Pandemic. Some of the strategies in the Education Industry were as follows:

Few events in recent history have caused as much disruption, across spheres, as Covid-19. This rupture was most acutely felt in the realm of education. While e-commerce took seven years to pick momentum in India and billions of dollars to change consumer behaviour, this occurred almost overnight for the education technology (edtech) sector. The pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital education in education sector. According to Hindustan Times, education sector received over \$2.2 billion of funding.

Customer priorities

- a. Seamless education- Parents behavioural pattern got changed suddenly. Both parents and children wish to get education same as they use to get in offline times. 2. Concept clearance- In India online education sector is ill equipped because of which teachers find difficult to teach and students find difficult to learn concepts. 3. Live lectures for better understanding- Students cannot go for tuitions, so now they are opting for online lectures where they can learn in better way. 4. Downloading option- Time constrain students require lectures to get downloaded so that they can see it according to their conveyance.
- b. Online Education platform

There are many online education apps available in market like Bju's, Unacademy, UpGrad, Topper, etc. which took advantage of this opportunity and tried to cater all the priorities of their esteem customers.

1) Bju's

According to the BYJU'S team, students do not care about the product, they care about the problem it solves for them. Hence the ed-tech company planned to solve one of the biggest problems for the students during the time of crisis and offered a free-access to the live classes from the best teachers on BYJU'S. These online classes were backed with interactive videos, revisions and practice tests.

The edtech company is targeting to increase their business in other regions of the nation and has recently partnered with Sudeep Sanjeev to launch their first-ever campaign in a regional language (Kannada). They have created two ad-films in Telugu starring movie star Mahesh Babu which means to focus on the growing preference of online learning among students.

To encourage students they came up with "Brightest Sitaras: BYJU'S Young Genius Anthem" featuring Salim Merchant. Children are more visualizer kind of customer and so in their anthem they showcased how by using their platform students can excel in their career giving an emotional appeal to the advertisement.

A) BYJU's Transform Parents to Partners

BYJU'S launched an Ad campaign named "Transforming Parents to Partners" which focuses on how parents become learning partners when their children love what they learn. The advertisement show that with guidance from parents and help from technology, children can transform into active learners who love learning on their own. The advertisement also focus on BYJU'S learning content that enables children to engage better, gain conceptual understanding, and even learn according to their own pace and style.

Conceptualised and created by Spring, the ad campaign brings out the importance of conceptual understanding and how it helps children gain confidence while learning. Both the films show children comfortably explain concepts to their friends too.

B) BYJU'S thanks teachers for embracing tech-based learning- #THANKYOU

BYJU'S launched a campaign celebrating Teacher's Day, expressing gratitude to the teachers and mentors who went above and beyond their call of duty to ensure that students continue learning seamlessly even during the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown.

Conceptualised and created by Spring, the video highlights the role played by teachers to overcome challenges and support students over the last few months and sees different students thanking their teachers for various reasons.

2) Unacademy

The brand launched a wide-spread outdoor campaign to keep students motivated in the hard times. Positioned with a hard-core tagline – ‘For the Determined’, the online education brand came up with an extensive OOH campaign with a sole purpose to spread a positive message to students and aspirants looking after themselves during this lockdown and urging them to stay at home. They offered 20000+ online free classes for students and promised to continue this until lockdown gets over.

They came up with billboard advertisement to connect with mass customers and target them showing that the learning should not stop even though any bad condition occurs. And to showcase this they came up with the tagline- “Take care of yourself and let us take care of your exam preparation”. This gave an emotional touch and relation building marketing strategy.

The brand promoted social distancing through their Instagram page. Although an educational platform, they used Hinglish to spread the message of social distancing instead of using English. Under their regular Student Dictionary series, they put forth ‘Social Distancing’ as the ‘need of the hour’ and ‘the need to avoid social interactions’ just like how students do during exam preparations or ‘Exams ki tayyari’.

A) Celebrating Children day- Celebrate the learner in you

Unacademy came up with occasional ad on children’s day special showcasing that even pandemic cannot stop student from learning and achieving their goal. They also showcased that how their content and professors are well versed which help students to gain interest while studying. So they used the tagline “Aao milkar ek naya kal crack kare”.

B) Cracking the Game- “Cracking the Game”

Unacademy associated with IPL 2020 and launched the ad campaign which draws a fun correlation between students desire to learn and the passionate Cricket action seen onfield during the Dream11 IPL 2020. Unacademy's new IPL ad film connects sports with learning in an innovative and "product-first" manner. This ad is measuredly targeted to students of age 15-20 as this demographic students are more intended to watch IPL.

If there's one thing that is culturally relevant to every Indian, it is that every experience – be it a movie, a story, a book or a game – is something to learn from, brought to life with the quintessential question, "Kya Seekha?". Powered with this insight, the film – aimed to appeal to 15 to 30-year-olds – starts by asking students what they have learnt from the IPL this year and then beautifully connects intense sporting moments with learning concepts such as the Pythagoras theorem, magnetic induction, Darwin’s theory of evolution, the melting point of metals, etc.

Rural Marketing Strategies for the Education Industry

In India 70% population resides in rural area. Ad campaigns carried out on digital platform does not create more impact on this population. Online education sector saw a huge opportunity in market but positioning them in rural market is still a difficult task for every company.

Personal selling is one of the effective way of positioning the brand in front of rural parents and students because sales people can provide them with demo as they are less tech savvy. Even such customers are highly dogmatic and resist to innovation, so connecting with them personally can increase the chance of converting leads into prospect customers.

On the auspicious occasion of Diwali BYJU'S came up with activity called "BYJU'S Give- Light the Lamp of learning" in which they started collecting used Laptops and Mobile phones and provides it to the needful. This is another way of promoting a brand in front of needful people which majorly stays in rural areas as this help in increasing the brand awareness.

E) Service Industry:

Due to emergence of COVID-19 the service industry was affected a lot and herein we have taken two mostly used services which are Zomato and Uber. Let's take a quick look towards their marketing strategies once the lockdown was over. 1) Zomato

Covid 19 related Initiatives

Contactless Delivery – Customers can opt to allow the delivery partner to leave the package outside their home, ensuring no human-to-human interaction and hence lowering risk of any transmission.

Face masks – Not only to wear but also started to distribute face masks to their delivery partners to keep them, as well as the customers, safe from the spread of covid.

Disabling COD – for safety reasons, to avoid contact between the users and delivery partners, they've temporarily disabled the COD (cash-on-delivery) option on their app.

Maintained Strict hygiene standards at restaurants by – Have set up hand washing & sanitisation stations Sanitising their kitchen slabs and utensils at periodic intervals. Checking the body temperature

Grocery delivery – They started grocery delivery in 80+ cities across India to help with the supply of essentials. They are putting in every effort to make sure that they put it to good use to serve the community and partnered with government authorities, grocery stores, FMCG companies & other start-ups.

- 1) Zomato Gold Extensions – They have decided to extend all paid Zomato Gold memberships by two months at zero cost.

For their delivery partners

Rider Relief Fund – They have donated money to and are raising funds from the community for the Zomato Rider Relief Fund.

Zomato's Ad Campaign (Safety Levels : Mom Approved)

Zomato has launched a marketing campaign, 'Safety levels: Mom Approved' by the a agency MagicCircle. Showcasing a typical quarantine mealtime. Zomato showed that when a mother believes in the food that u consume that means it's safe. Zomato tried to show that they always prioritized safety.

2) UBER

SaferForEachOther campaign by ad agency MediaCom which underscores the factor that safety too can spread, if each rider sanitizes their hands, wear a mask, and doesn't travel when sick thereby making the entire platform safer for the next rider. These was there 360-degree amplification plan to ensure greater awareness about the rider safety.

This campaign features several riders urging future riders to ensure personal safety and hygiene by following all the necessary steps.

Rural Marketing Strategies for the Service Industry

Not only urban but also rural places got affected a lot. Herein the above companies Zomato collaborated with various local groceries to not only provide essentials to the houses but also to support their business. Government took various initiatives to support various small business at rural parts of the country.

F) Entertainment Industry

As the spread of COVID-19 has affected most of the industries and economies worldwide, people have been forced to stay contained at home to prevent the spread of coronavirus. People have also been bored to death as they have nothing to do. In this locked up scenario, the Entertainment sector played an important role in helping people to maintain their sanity.

So let's have a look at the marketing strategies of the game Among us by Inner sloth and Netflix.

1) Among Us

a. Need of people to socialize

The lockdown led people away from social gatherings and the need to interact with others socially was higher than ever. Among us allowed people from all parts of the world to come together and play and interact with each other either through the game chat or through voice using Discord.

b. Simple yet challenging

The game has been designed in such a manner that it is very easy to play yet it is challenging and gets competitive and addictive as you continue playing. Because of it's simple nature even people who just join can easily compete against people playing from longer times. It is basically a mind game where you need to strategize and influence others to make your way to victory.

c. Influencers Marketing

Sodapoppin- a famous Twitch streamer started the streaming on Twitch in July 2020. Following this, many other Twitch streamers and YouTubers began playing Among Us, including prominent content creators. With the large base of audiences from such influencers, the game reached more and more people. Also, through this the exact target segment could be reached with minimum costs.

d. User Generated Content

Fanarts and memes are one of the most powerful social media marketing strategies nowadays. In fact, with the ability to go viral, create brand exposure, and drive the traffic to websites, memes have been utilized and promoted by many brands as one of their core social media strategies. The memes and fan arts created by the community of Among Us

have become the center of every talk. People also get more attracted because their friends post such content making them curious and excited about the game.

2) Netflix

a. Personalization at its best

People love using Netflix because they get a broad range of things to watch. Netflix's library of TV shows and movies from all over the world is there for consumers to choose from at any time. The reason that Netflix won the personalisation game is that its advanced algorithm continues to rearrange the programmes over time on the basis of your viewing history.

b. Netflix Party

The extension allows users to sync up their streaming platform with friends and family so everyone can watch the same show or movie at the same time – no matter if they're in the next room or across the country. It also has a chat feature, which allows users to share their thoughts on what is going on in real time, whether it be the show or something happening in the home such as a meal pickup or break.

c. Email Marketing

New Netflix customers receive a series of emails that make content recommendations and encourage new users to explore the platform.

Netflix will never bombard you with the bulk of their movie/shows recommendations, as their content library is huge. Instead, they prefer promoting a single TV show that has a clear call to action button, helping users to cut through the clutter easily.

d. Social Media Optimization

Today, social media platforms have become an integral part of the digital marketing strategy. If you want to connect with your audience in real-time, then it is the best platform to establish your brand image. Netflix posts nearly 90% videos and rest images. Videos featured on Netflix's Facebook page are typically clips from interviews with the actors from the upcoming movies, clips from the upcoming movies and TV shows, offering audiences a sneak peek into what's in store for them. Besides videos, the OTT platforms share images, GIFs, funny memes, simple text posts featuring questions about current movies and TV shows. behind the scenes clips and interviews with actors. A recent video featured a behind-the-scenes bloopers video from the set of Stranger Things, which garnered 1.2 million views and almost 3,000 comments. Netflix is renowned for its witty replies and comebacks on Twitter, and the brand tweets an average of 14 times a day. This shows just how important engagement is for the brand and how much it values brand awareness.

Rural Marketing Strategies for the Entertainment Industry were as follows:

1. Ramayan and Mahabharat Streaming

In many rural areas TVs are now available and they turn towards it for their source of entertainment. Amul ran 33 regular product TVCs, and as many as 101 classic ads (from 1969-1990s) during 'Ramayan' and 'Mahabharat' on Doordarshan (DD) during the lockdown. DD later announced that 'Ramayan' became the most watched entertainment show in the world, with 7.7 crore viewers on April 16.

2. OTT in Rural India

After being in the shadow of mainstream entertainment mediums like film and television for years, OTT finally had its time in the sun. The most obvious growth driver has been the pandemic. OTT was practically the only medium of entertainment to fall back on after the lockdown in March.

With theatres, multiplexes, and all outdoor entertainment venues shutting down, and lockdown restrictions bringing TV studios to a screeching halt, digital became the only stay-at-home entertainment option, with a steady stream of fresh content. OTT was the only segment of media and entertainment that continued to grow. Revenues climbed 26 percent and subscriptions rose 47 percent, according to KPMG.

Until 2019, OTT consumption was largely a metro phenomenon, with over half the audience spread across India's top eight cities. That changed in 2020. Due to a dearth of recreational options in Tier-II cities and beyond, with movie theatres — their primary mode of entertainment — shut indefinitely, consumers in these areas took to streaming services by the hordes.

During the lockdown, over 65 percent of OTT content consumption was recorded in rural India, according to the Broadband India Forum (BIF). The trend was accentuated by the fact that this audience was already smartphone-savvy and had access to affordable internet. This is also driven by aggressive telecommunications that are bundling a bunch of OTT subscriptions along with mobile data packs at zero additional cost.

Thanks to cheap data plans, especially from Reliance Jio, and affordable smartphones. Those who cannot afford to buy a smart, connected TV are now streaming OTT content on phones.

Gaming growing as a means of entertainment

The massive rural audience in India, nearly 70% of Indian population, has surpassed the urban Internet users base, during this unprecedented and unfortunate Covid crisis.

This has given them access to various free games available like PubG, Among us, Solitaire, Subway surfers and many more games.

Conclusion

Brands have adopted various Marketing Strategies like the Digital Push, Demonstration of Care for Society, Omnichannel for thriving during the Pandemic. The lockdown forced everyone to function online. While the trends like remote working were in motion, the pandemic made it now hit fast forward. This led to people spending loads of their time on social media and other digital sources of entertainment. Businesses that focused more on traditional advertising had to quickly adapt and set aside more budgets for digital marketing to reach the customers and maintain the connect.

Consumers prefer brands that care about the employees, customers and contribute to the society at large. Hence it is important to have good working conditions for employees during the pandemic like providing them with masks, sanitary kits, sanitizers, flexible working hours, work from home facilities, etc. This shows that the brand cares about its employees which creates a positive image of the brand. Also, proper sanitizing of stores so that the customers that walk in are protected is important. Donating towards the hospitality and upliftment of the affected also shows the values that the brand stands for.

The pandemic has proved how omnichannel shopping has become dominant and is the future of the industry. As of May 2020, 66% of global consumers were omnichannel shoppers. This shows the importance of having presence on online and offline channels. This brings in convenience and helps consumers to come back and re purchase easily or look for additional requirements they may have.

The Pandemic has forced consumers to push their non-essential purchases. However, with the restrictions opening up in most regions consumers have begun purchasing again. But the customers have turned more price sensitive than ever and are looking for deals that are cheap yet provide good quality. Hence it is important for brands to adopt value pricing strategies to meet the expectations of this class of consumers.

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