



SPOT LIGHT | PEPSI

ARE YOU COLA COOL?

REVIEWER: BOBBY PAWAR

With around 17 years of experience in the ad industry, Bobby Pawar, chief creative officer, Mudra Group, has worked for brands such as AT&T, American Express, Volkswagen and United Way.



All about attitude: Mudra Group's Bobby Pawar.

CAMPAIGN

Ranbir Kapoor features as a waiter. Some security guards ask him to take the last Pepsi to the president. Kapoor behaves in a suspicious manner and the guards think he's trying to poison the president. They force him to drink the entire bottle—he does so happily.

What did you think of the ad?

On the whole, a nice effort. The production values are up there. Ranbir does his usual Ranbir-y thing, which I'm told makes a lot of teen girls, and a few boys, go weak in the knees. The story has a nice twist to it. The acting? Let's just say they got more than their money's worth from the guy who plays the Eastern European secret service type. He tried to cram an hour's worth of acting in 45 seconds, and he succeeded. But even that's fine. What I am a little uncertain about is the base line, "Youngistan ka wow". I don't get it. Maybe I'm not meant to, because at 42 I'm creeping up to the borders of "Middle-ageistan". Although, as they all say, I'm young at heart.



Nothing wow about it: Pepsi's new ad fails to convey the idea.

What are the challenges of advertising a cola?

The thing with a cola is that it's not so much a drink as an attitude. People don't want cola-coloured water in a bottle that quenches their thirst or refreshes them. What you drink a cola for is more for how you feel holding the bottle and chugging it than how you feel after you have drained the last drop. That feeling and the attitude that provokes it needs to be sharply defined. When Pepsi did "The choice of the new generation", the attitude was that of a subtle rejection of all the older generation stood for and desired. It was a cool, funky rebellion. What attitude do cola brands in India have? Is any of it powerfully relevant to what's going on in our society? Hmmm!

Which is your favourite cola campaign?

It's for Pepsi Max. The ad shows situations where men get hurt—a man getting whacked in the face by a stray golf club, another's flung across the yard after getting electrocuted, etc. In every situation, the guy gets up and says, "I'm good." Then the voice-over says: "Men can take anything except the taste of diet cola, until now. Pepsi, the first diet cola for men." It's based on a good strategic thought: "The first diet cola for men". The communication comes from great insight. And the execution is very male and takes a boys club look at the man-ness of all of us manly men. Hilarious and bottlelicious.

As told Gouri Shah.
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