

News monitored for: Pepsi - Corporate

Modern Family

The crooked *namkeen* is back with a whole new family and this time it means business

Delshad Irani

PepsiCo's salty snack brand Kurkure's latest ad campaign has arrived at a rather appropriate time. The ₹ 9,400 crore Indian snack market is growing at a very healthy pace, about 25 per cent a year and as a recent survey by VML Qais indicates Indians, the 18 to 30 year old lot, are particularly fond of a crispy snack in air-tight plastic packaging. And in comparison to consumers in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Korea, Philippines and Singapore, Indians are most likely to try a product based on its advertising. However, the injection of several new aggressive players has slightly soured the taste of victory for Kurkure, that has built a presence in the market since 1999.

However, with the introduction of the new Kurkure family, the brand is trying to establish its Indian roots again. Last year PepsiCo brought on board five new brand ambassadors. A list that includes actors Parineeti Chopra, Boman Irani, Farida Jalal and Kunal Kapoor, among others. This new family (taking over from actress Juhi Chawla's fictional clan) will introduce Indian consumers to new variants of Kurkure. According to Vidur Vyas, marketing director - foods, PepsiCo India, it was time to refresh the snack brand's identity. "The snack category has grown exponentially over the past few years. Different consumers have varied snacking needs and we will introduce more products, flavours and packs, covering everything from bite experience to packaging and eventually create occasions of consumption. With this campaign we are on our way to create a Kurkure umbrella brand," he says.

The campaign began with one simple brief 'Tedha Hai Par Mera Hai' a tagline that has been around for a while now, since 2008 to be precise. "We were particular about just one thing - it had to be a family," says Vyas. The Kurkure bunch may not be a mirror image of the average soap family; it is however a caricature of the modern Indian family and its changing dynamics, a modern twist on tradition. There's the sassy young *bahu* (daughter-in-law) riding a bike in traditional gear, her husband the suit

with a heart full of Bollywood dreams, his older brother who is a father playing video games away from the steely glare of his loving wife and their child who can hardly tear himself away from his snack pack. And, finally, there's the grandmother, the kind who would insist her grandchild call her aunty rather than *dadi* in public.

In addition to these characters Vyas tells us more characters will be introduced as the story unfolds. For instance, an NRI from Italy to introduce a new flavour of the snack called Punjabi Pizza. And that's not all; there are more, for instance Andhra Bangkok Curry and Rajasthani Manchurian.

Alright so perhaps they are not as "modern" as the Pritchetts and Dunphys from the American sitcom 'Modern Family.' But they are the *desi* version of the quirky clan everyone wants to hang out with and can relate to. Consumers have the option to go online and learn a bit more about individual members. Eventually, as the campaign progresses they will have the chance to form more meaningful interactions with the characters and



become its extended family of sorts, says Vyas.

It is most certainly a family-pack size, five pronged approach. However, says Bobby Pawar, chief creative officer, JWT India, for now it is important to establish these characters and familiarise Indian consumers with them via mass media before jumping prematurely into social media to deepen engagement. "There is no parallel for this in advertising," says Pawar, "we are looking at it more from the point of view of a sitcom. And when new situations and characters are introduced the interactions between them will reveal more about each member of this family." And let us not forget the brand that is an important part of this whacky tribe. According to Priti Nair, founder, CurryNation, the biggest challenge for brand Kurkure going forward will be to find an integral spot for the brand in the family and its story as it evolves. "Episodic advertising is great but the brand has to be incorporated in a meaningful fashion, only then will it work. That itself is quite an exercise," she says. Add to that the fact they can't just depend on the characters, The creatives in charge will have to find equally absorbing plots and situations to put them in, and not just of the *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* or even the *Uttaran* variety.

delshad.irani@timesgroup.com