

News monitored for: Pepsi - Brands

# Pepsi adds fizz to IPL sponsorship

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With the Indian Premier League kicking off from Tuesday, chief sponsor PepsiCo India is looking to add more fizz to its association with the T20 cricket league.

The beverage major is pulling out all the stops to get bang for its buck. From branded player dug-outs and digital in-stadia signage to launching a special fan can, Pepsi has lined up several initiatives with eight of the nine franchisees it has tied up with. It is also a co-presenting sponsor on the official broadcaster SET Max.

"We look at IPL as a strategic acquisition as it is the most popular cricket tournament and offers the biggest broadcasting opportunity. Nearly 50 per cent of the volumes of beverages for us come during the summer season and the tournament offers a strong correlation for us," said Deepika Warrier, Vice-President, Beverage Marketing, PepsiCo India. "IPL is a perfect platform as it provides wider reach and engagement opportunities with our core target audience in the peak beverage season," she added. The company expects a substantial sales spike



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during the IPL season as well.

Speaking to *Business Line* about the company's strategy to tie up with eight of the nine franchisees, she said besides a national marketing strategy, PepsiCo India will also have specific regional plans for its entire brand portfolio. "In the South, our collaboration is with Chennai Super Kings, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Royal Challengers Bangalore for 7 UP. We have similar strong partnerships for Mountain Dew in the northern region," she added.

The firm, which has mostly multi-year deals with the franchisees, hopes it might be able to extend it to all the nine franchisees in the next season.

Besides launching the first leg of its campaign featuring Ranbir Kapoor in a dramatically different look, Warrier said that the company has managed to leverage the visibility in the stadiums far more powerfully than ever done before.

The BCCI has allowed Pepsi to spruce up the player dug-out which will have Pepsi branding

and will be shaped like a Pepsi Can. It will also have branded air-conditioned VIP boxes in stadiums offering a chance for fans to watch the cricket action with access to celebrities and experts. PepsiCo is also launching a specially branded 500 ml Fan Can priced at Rs 35 to mark its association with IPL.

Asked if the company is looking to launch new products during the IPL, Warrier said the company plans to use IPL as a launch pad as well test

its products in the stadiums but did not reveal specifics.

It has also introduced the Pepsi Cheer Horn which will take the Vuvuzela sound (made famous at the Fifa World Cup in South Africa) and mix it with Pepsi's Oh Yes Abhi anthem.

Also at the start of each innings, the match countdown will end with this chant. Stadiums will also sport Pepsi 3D pitch mats, stumps and digital signage and perimeter boards. "We have taken the integration and brand association with the T20 league to the next level," said Warrier.

Also on the cards is the launch of the new Pepsi Web site to engage with consumers online as it also plans to launch a twitter application that will allow consumers to play a cricket match through twitter.

Asked if PepsiCo expects high buzz for IPL in terms of television viewership ratings as well as in the stadium, Warrier said that the stadiums were full even in the last season. The male target audience ratings have been growing and the organisers are also working towards growing the family and female viewership for the league.

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