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14 Bubbly Side Up

PepsiCo is set to bring back the magic into cola advertising. Will Coke follow suit?

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ADVERTISING

Return Of The Colas

Will PepsiCo succeed in bringing back the magic in cola advertising?



CREATING BUZZ:
The company says the new ad campaign is its most ambitious yet

THE FIZZ IS BACK IN cola advertising. At least, PepsiCo is betting big by bringing it back for its flagship brand, Pepsi cola. Four years after its Blue Billion campaign for the Cricket World Cup, PepsiCo India is launching what its executive director, marketing, Punita Lal, calls “its most ambitious commercial yet” by blending a game show within a TV commercial.

The five-week campaign titled The Game

(in which viewers help Pepsi’s blue-eyed boy Ranbir Kapoor reach his Pepsi) kicks off with a teaser on 27 March, followed by four 30-second episodes — the plot unfurls every Thursday — offering viewers a grand prize of Rs 50 lakh apart from other prizes.

The commercials use the IPL as the backbone of their media plans to bring back the advertising magic in cola advertising, something that

successful campaigns such as Vodafone Zoozoos have usurped in recent times. “Consumers are looking for dialogue that will interest them, involve them and will enable them to stay longer with the advertising, rather than advertising having a wallpaper effect on them,” says Lal.

With four Bollywood-scale sets in Mumbai’s Film City and a cast featuring Sanjay Dutt and Ranbir Kapoor, the cam-

paign is of the “make or break” variety: just making the commercials cost Rs 5 crore. Rohit Ohri, managing partner, JWT, says the thinking behind this campaign is “the most unsafe thing in current times is to play safe”. With an online game to follow once the month-long TV burst runs its course, Pepsi is pulling out all the plugs on this one. Will Coke respond?

Prasad Sangameshwaran

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