



# No Skin Please

While innerwear brands for long have been sold, like condoms and deos, as a passport to dating and mating rituals, Jockey has stuck to its brief — or, rather, briefs

**Amit Bapna**

**F**rom the 'knight in small Frenchie' rescuing the young damsel in distress in the 80s to the present with the likes of Akshay Kumar and Shahrukh Khan doing pretty much the same thing, the men's innerwear paradigm has continued to be built around variations on overt machoness.

By and large most players have found recourse in playing innerwear up as a seduction accessory much like condoms and deodorants, using a celebrity or both. Page Apparels, the manufacturer and Indian licensee, for Jockey opted out of either of these two routes early on. It has stuck to its briefs, in a manner of speaking. Its recently launched integrated campaign by L&K Saatchi & Saatchi, carries forward its established positioning of 'Jockey or Nothing'.

Says MC Cariappa, senior general manager — sales and marketing, Page Industries, "We do not agree much with the trend of celebrity models because we are very clear that we do not want to be boxed by the borrowed equity of the endorser. For us our product is the biggest hero." The current campaign is an effort to make the brand's positioning more relatable to the day to day lives of today's youth, he shares.

On the back of changing lifestyle, the category is gaining traction being about both comfort as well as badge value. The consumer has been shedding inhibitions about conventional innerwear and getting experimental with colour, style, cut, material, patterns, designs, aided to a great degree by the international fashion brands like CK, FCUK, Tommy Hilfiger, etc opening up the options on innerwear in India. According to Harinder Sahni, founder of the consulting firm Wazir Advisors, "International brands

have invigorated the whole game and led to more consumption at better and higher prices, growing the market faster."

Jockey, a US brand of considerable heritage, is manufactured and distributed in India by the Bengaluru Based Page Industries that was set up in 1994. Page currently along with India is also the licensee in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and UAE. The brand is sold through both MBOs (multi brand outlets) as well as EBOs (exclusive brand outlets) spread across high streets and malls in metros, tier one, tier two and tier three cities. "The company has got a manufacturing base in India giving it full control on the end product — we even make our own elastics," shares Cariappa.

Says Anil Nair, CEO & managing partner, L&K Saatchi & Saatchi "With the current brand campaign, the plan is to renew the vows with the existing customers to stay relevant to them and at the same time, engage and acquire newer, younger consumers of the next generation and of today". The campaign marks a shift in the voice from talking about just the functional attributes — it is talking about the person inside. "It is not how about how you behave but as much about what you believe in," says Nair. The medium deployment is also multi-layered — while the television is being positioned to reinforce this belief, print and OOH are used to introduce the new product ranges. In addition, the brand plans to create a lot of crowd-generated content going forward as well as deploying retail in a big way to enhance engagement at the 'moment of truth' culled out from the insight that men mostly spend very less time in buying inner-wear making it a very low involvement category.

According to Joono Simon, executive

creative director, Ogilvy Bangalore, "By and large, the efforts in the inner wear category in India haven't been brave enough to create something that is game changing, as exemplified by the brand Calvin Klein with its signature minimal-

ism-led campaigns in the US with Brooke Shields and Mark Wahlberg among others." In his view, while the previous 'Just Jockeying' campaign reinterpreted 'comfort' in a new way and at the same time managed to make the brand younger, the task at hand now, would be to hit that sweet spot between the product and the personality in a more memorable way. That could well be a communication challenge for a category that does not have too many distinct campaigns and has been mostly found working on being the wearer's daily fantasy allowance. To Jockey's credit, says Hari Krishnan, chief operating officer, Cheil Worldwide SW Asia, the world they have created is that of liberated young people,

friends, not necessarily in seduction mode, always active, physical and outdoorsy. And there are hardly any sexual innuendos, he adds.

In terms of the growth and market penetration, the brand is on a happy trajectory showing with 35% year on year as it increases its aggression in the women's, kid's inner wear and the sportswear categories. Views Sahni, while the product range and the distribution reach are its strength, the brand could do well to stay clear of the curse of its dominant market share. Just the way Maruti in cars and HP in printing did, they could also lose market share to others as everyone will be attacking them from all sides.



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**— MC Cariappa, Page Industries**

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