

# Homing in on super consumers

Companies are laying special emphasis on key influencers by identifying and targeting them carefully

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American fast-food brand KFC goes out of its way to engage with its key influencers - teenagers and young adults - on social and digital media. It does everything from running promotional schemes, offers and contests to creating apps to solve customer grievances and complaints; the idea being keeping its young audiences engaged enough on a platform it knows they are constantly wired into.

While critics may argue that this strategy is not uncommon to most other fast-food brands, KFC claims its efforts have borne results. According to Dhruv Kaul, KFC's chief marketing officer in India, the brand has the highest number of social media fans at over 7 million in the quick-service restaurant (QSR) segment. It also ranks among the top six most socially devoted brands in the larger consumer goods category in the country. "There are fun ways to engage with your target audience or key influencers. Like the Tweet Shop just launched, where you can buy our value products under the Wow range. One tweet is equal to a rupee. So 49 tweets would entitle an individual to a coupon of ₹49, which can then be redeemed for a product from the Wow range," he says.

What KFC is doing is something that many other companies are beginning to do aggressively - constantly speak to the core audience and ensure they stay tuned into the

category at all times. Nielsen calls these groups of people, super consumers. "Typically, super consumers are responsible for 30 per cent of category sales, 40 per cent of category growth and 50 per cent of category profit. They are well-informed about the category, talk a lot about it, give their opinions, are active on social media and experiment a lot within the category," Roosevelt D'Souza, senior vice-president, Nielsen India, says.

While Nielsen says that super consumers constitute 10 per cent of the category, some market experts believe this number could be as much as 20-30 per cent of a category. Identifying and targeting them requires effort because while loyal, they also expect to be pampered, experts say. "They love the category and are buying a lot of it," D'Souza says. And since they are vocal, something good could get bouquets, while something bad could invite brickbats, he says.

Different companies have evolved different tools to target this set. Consider what one of the country's largest consumer durables firms LG is doing to reach out to its key influencers: males, 30 and above, belonging to socio-economic classes A and B. Besides using above-the-line as well as digital advertising and marketing, LG makes it a point to entice these men aggressively at the point of sale. The reason is simple: Many of them simply don't have the time to watch



TV or spend time as much as their kids do on social media. "So, in-store communication in the form of product demos, ease of financing, purchase options, offers, if any, are some of the tools commonly used," Saurabh Baishakhia, business head, air conditioners, LG Electronics, says.

While traditional categories such as ACs and television sets continue to target their consumers aggressively within stores, segments such as smart phones bank on the power of digital to keep interest levels going for their key target audience: young people. Sneak peeks, product reviews, ease of availability, both online and offline, affordable financing options are some of the ways in which handset makers have been wooing their key consumers. The latest trend in smart phones, especially, the international ones, has been to synchronize their India product launch with the global rollout, in some cases the former

preceding the latter owing to the importance of markets such as India and China. Key influencers get excited by initiatives such as these, market experts say.

Sunil Kataria, business head, India & SAARC, Godrej Consumer Products, says, "The bigger challenge in my view is not only how you keep these loyal consumers engaged, but also whether you are able to help light consumers move up into the heavy consumption category or even get non-users to use your products. As your consumers keep trading up they could get into the super-consumer bracket," he says. So, fast moving consumer goods companies are constantly innovating, running special offers and promotions to pique consumer interest.

Consider what Marico, the maker of Parachute and Saffola, did. Its ayurvedic hair oil Parachute Advansed is targeted at women suffering from hair loss. The company gave out blank letters of recommendation along with free samples of the oil. Following use, the recipient had to fill up these blank letters with names of people she wished to recommend the product to. The company would promptly deliver free samples to the people recommended and the cycle continued. First started in Tamil Nadu the initiative has spread to all states in the south and will soon be taken to other parts of the country.

## THE POWER OF THE SUPERCONSUMER



Top 10% of  
Category HH's



~30% of  
category sales



~40% of  
category growth



~50-60% of  
category profit

Source: Cambridge Group