

# INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN PRINT ADVERTISING

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## Introduction

The contemporary sphere of advertising is making the call for innovation intense day by day. Advertising today has become a gladiatorial combat and innovation is the sure shot winner's weapon of the advertising arena.

This paper analyses the relevant contemporary innovative practices as observed in print advertising nationally and internationally and the response of the consumers towards it. It combines information about the consumer behavior towards an innovation used by a brand in advertising through print media. This paper also throws light on the adequacy and appropriateness of innovative practices of national and international print advertising.

## Objective of the Research

This research paper will try to judge the effectiveness of the innovative practices being used in print advertising today. The World Newspaper Advertising Conference examined many of the new trends and some unusual projects that show just how flexible newspapers can be.

## Research Problem

The research problem of the proposed study is to find out whether any impact is created by the advertisements in newspapers which are using various innovations.

## Hypothesis

An advertisement using innovations will have more impact on the viewers (readers) than an advertisement not using any innovations.

## Literature Survey

In the chapter on "Advertising" in his book *Marketing Management*<sup>1</sup>, Philip Kotler stressed the effectiveness of innovation by saying that the advertiser must develop a creative concept or a big idea that will be the message strategy in a distinctive and memorable way. Usually, copywriters and art directors will team up to generate many creative concepts, hoping that one of these concepts will turn out to be a big idea. Kotler is silent about any specific study which proves the hypothesis of this research.

In an article "Media Innovations Are Not Brand Ideas," published in *The Economic Times*, Mar 25, 2010<sup>2</sup>, it has been stated that the future of brand building will be about creating brand-consumer conversations through media-neutral ideas, and not about buying idea-neutral media. Fragmentation, regional complexity and media costs have resulted in media agencies developing specialized skills to master this new landscape. As a result, they have grown in size and stature. However, by no stretch of imagination can media be said to be more

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important than the idea creators themselves, for the simple reason that media innovations are not brand ideas. A media innovation can make a good brand idea great. But, a weak brand idea renders a strong media innovation useless. In a world of over-choice and hyper competition, merely focusing on brand awareness is futile. The goal of brands should not be to increase awareness, but to reduce choice. And the only way this can be achieved is through avid consumer engagement. This again proves the hypothesis of this research paper. Though the book *Advertising Management* by C. L. Tyagi and Arun Kumar<sup>3</sup>, also reinforces the idea discussed by Philip Kotler, it is silent on any specific Indian study conducted on print media. Batra, Myers & Aaker in their book *Advertising Management* have discussed many articles about media innovations but haven't quoted any research study which comes closer to the research problem put forward by the research paper.

The relevance of the research paper can be proven from the book of Manendra Mohan titled *Advertising Management*<sup>4</sup>. This is a comprehensive book presenting an integrated approach to concepts and cases in advertising and sales promotion. It is written in the Indian context but lacks comprehensive reference to media innovation studies. Another famous Indian book *Foundations of Advertising Theory and Practice* by S. A. Chunawala and K. C. Sethia<sup>5</sup>, covers a lot about print media – newspapers and magazine – advertising in a perfect and comprehensive manner with supporting data, presenting good examples and case studies but does not deal in depth about media innovations. *Response to Innovation: A Study of Popular Argument about New Mass Media* by Robert Edward Davis<sup>6</sup> talks about mass media, motion picture and social aspects of the USA but is silent on the print media innovation in display advertising and on Indian application of media innovation. *Handbook of Print Media – Technologies and Production Method* by Helmut Kipphan<sup>7</sup>, does talk about the different technology of print innovations, yet lack knowledge of acceptability and effectiveness of print media innovation which again makes this research paper very relevant as we can see that everyone is talking about the innovations in advertising but none is discussing their effectiveness as far as audience's perspective is concerned.

Engelbert Dockner and Steffen Jorgensen's article "Optimal Advertising Policies for Diffusion Models of New Product Innovation in Monopolistic Situations,"<sup>8</sup> discusses how to determine optimal advertising strategies for new product diffusion models. The above authors have tried to characterize the structure of an optimal advertising strategy for various versions of diffusion model which lacks the full reference and study of the effectiveness of media innovations.

"The Effect of Information Overload on the Innovation Choice Process Innovation Overload,"<sup>9</sup> a study by Paul A. Herbig,<sup>10</sup> Hugh Kramer,<sup>11</sup> talks about information overload which is a subject of immense debate among consumer marketers. Does too much of information bombardment on consumer cause an overload on the consumer resulting into adverse judgmental decision making? Can the consumers control the flow of information towards them? Similar is the case with a lesser known and little researched phenomenon called "Innovation Overload," which deals with the ever increasing pace of innovations. The article examines the effect 'Innovation Overload' will have on diffusion curves and adoption patterns. The article does talk about the information overload of innovation but lacks specific reference to any media innovation which may generate overload and decrease the effectiveness of advertisement. Hence the literature survey proves that the proposed study is unique and will significantly add to present knowledge of media innovation, especially in the Indian context.

## **Research Design**

This research paper seeks to study the facts about the innovative practices that are being used by advertisers and advertising agencies to popularize their products. Thus this research is of exploratory type and the data that has been used for analysis are taken from secondary sources, mostly journals, magazines and various Web sites.

## **Operational Definitions**

**Innovation:** "Innovation" in this paper means those creative ideas and technological improvements which are used by the advertisers or advertising agencies to make the ads more attractive and eye catching.

**Advertisements:** "Advertisements" in this paper means the advertisements which are published in newspapers or magazines.

**Creating a buzz:** In this paper "creating a buzz" means to get the audience talking about you to create a recall.

**Effective frequency:** In this paper "effective frequency" means the number of times you need to publish an advertisement to create a recall in the reader's mind.

## **Data and Data Analysis**

Gone are the days when attractive color schemes and punch lines were enough to make a mark. Today, you have to go far beyond that. Surely, the advertisers today are not leaving any stone unturned.

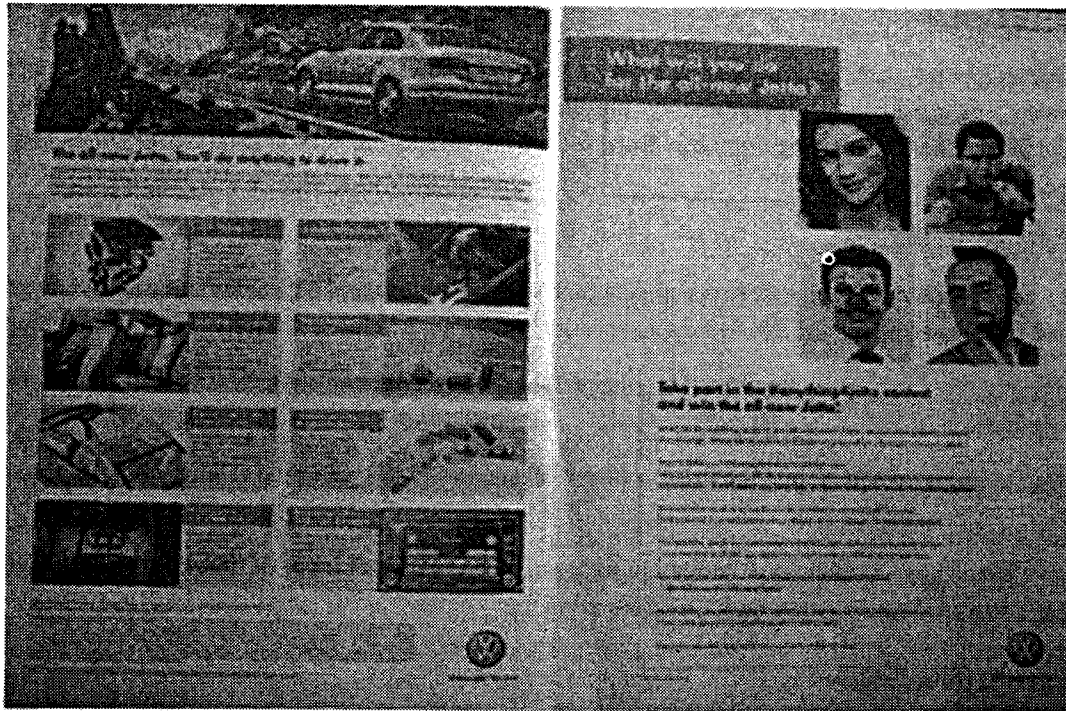
## **Inks**

Ogilvy India launched HULs with a creative innovation where the aroma of coffee was added to the newspaper ink. The idea was to launch Bru Gold with its concept of being 100 percent coffee and having a strong aroma. The advertisers wanted to highlight this aspect of the coffee as it stands for the aroma. According to the critics, it was relevant enough to create an aromatic appeal amongst the readers of 19th February's, Sunday Times in Mumbai, New Delhi and Bengaluru. Similar perfumed ink concept was used by Godrej when it launched the campaign for its AER range of home and car fragrances with a perfumed print ad in the Bombay Times. These ads were very successful in creating a buzz amongst the audience and the critics of the advertising world. And this surely can be seen from the reviews of AFAQS advertising review magazine's articles. Hence it proves the hypothesis of the research paper to be right.<sup>12</sup>

## **Advertising Innovations Used by Advertisers and Advertising Agencies**

Could you imagine the moment when you are surprised and have your eyes widened to find your entire newspaper of hard silver paper with the headline on the front page as "Time for Volkswagen"?

A bright shiny silver jacket was used to create an impression of the all-new silver Jetta, which was actually the USP of Jetta. Lutz Kothe, Head of Marketing and PR, Volkswagen Group Sales India, said, "The jacket connotes the USPs of the all-new Jetta. Silver is our communication color and therefore the jacket is silver, a much thicker cover represents the quality of the car while the glitzy looks stands for the all-new design of the new Jetta."<sup>13</sup>



(Image source: [www.exchangeformedia.com](http://www.exchangeformedia.com))

### Audio-in-print – "A Talking Ad"

The main aim of this ad was again the same: to create a buzz amongst the customer community. And it really was a buzz to be cheered for in the Volkswagen group as well as the Mediacon Ad Agency, the creators of these innovative ad campaigns. The prime motive of this ad innovation was to get the audience talking about the product for a long time. And not only the people but the media and news channels were also talking about Volkswagen's giant leap to touch the unexplored boundaries which print media was yet to see.

And it needed no magical wand for that; but Mediacon deserves great applause for creating the magic using a photodiode, audio clip and a small speaker. They get activated when the reader turns the leaf of the newspaper and start playing in an endless loop until the leaf is refolded. This buzz factor which Volkswagen has created helps the company reduce the advertisement's effective frequency to 1. Effective frequency means the number of times the ad has to be shown to get the word spread amongst the audiences. And to achieve that at a cost-cutting price was really commendable. And the retention period was around a year.

Print media, which advertisers were almost beginning to neglect, was threatened to be on a verge of demise due to the tremendous use of cyber-space advertising and various other stronger medium available. But this audio-in-print truly proved to be a carpet bombing strategy for Volkswagen for its self-introductory advertising in India.

Print has its advantage of still remaining the strongest news delivering agent, especially for the age groups above thirties, and it has a longer shelf life as well. And Volkswagen has given it stronger reasons to be called a priority advertising medium by giving India its first print Roadblock.<sup>14</sup>

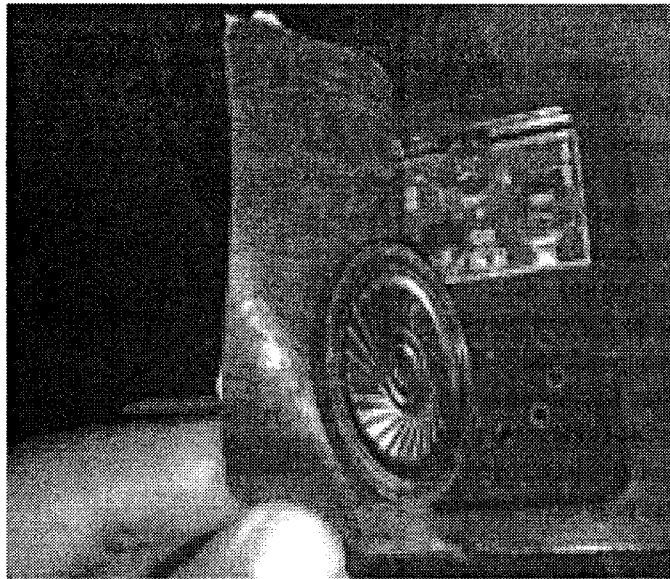
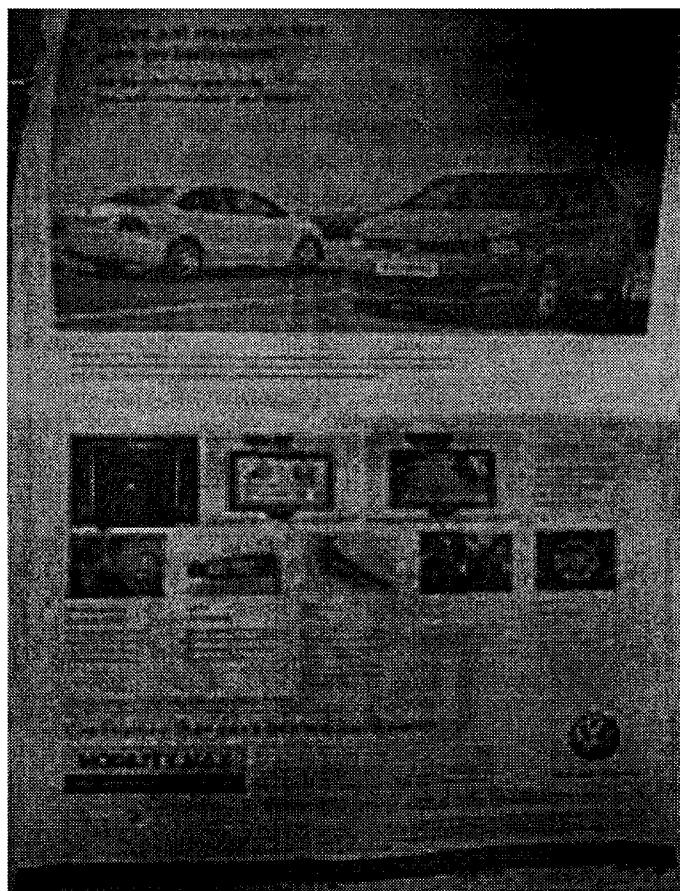


Image source: [www.meowlife.blogspot.com](http://www.meowlife.blogspot.com)

### Another Print Advertisement That Made the Readers Shiver

There can be no denial of the fact that VW is the master of creative strategies in print advertising. After the success of audio-in-print, to create a buzz amongst the audience, VW created a four-page ad which said, "Feel the shiver of excitement."

Not much other than a light detecting resistor (LDR) was required to literally create an ad apt to its punch line. The light detecting resistor (LDR) is connected to a battery-operated buzzer which started vibrating as soon as the newspaper leaf is unfolded and the vibration stimulates the vroom sound of an engine just to create an urge amongst the people to test drive VW cars. But this ad hardly surprised the audience because they had seen one of the greatest print media innovations in talking newspaper advertising.<sup>15</sup>



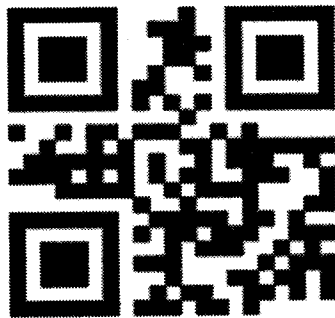
**Quick Response (QR) Code**

One of the most widely used markers today is the Quick Response (QR) Code, a small, square code that when scanned with a mobile phone, opens a file or links to a Web site. This file could be a list of train departure times, a music file or a simple Word document. Tourist brochures can deliver actual data on attractions, while advertisements can provide more information on food products.<sup>16</sup> The Indian newspaper *Mid-Day* has become the first in the country to use QR Codes as a way to give readers a more interactive experience.<sup>17</sup> Although the QR code was only used once to begin with, the newspaper plans to roll them out more frequently as readers become acquainted with the technology. The QR codes direct readers an mp4 video.

**Augmented Reality**

Volkswagen has been successful in implementing the use of Augmented Reality and Quick Response Codes in its print ads where you just have to scan these codes with

your smart phone and a Web site link or a complete video of the brand begins where you can visualize the minutest of the details which cannot be published in the single print advertisement plus it also has an advantage that it can be viewed as much number of times as you want but yet in countries like India people are still not very familiar with these codes and tend to avoid them. But with the increasing use of smart phones and techno-savvy attitude VW will be able to use these advancements in India also.<sup>18</sup>



F2K 100091



(Image Source: www.digitalbuzzblog.com)

Talking about the numbers, Volkswagen had just had a meager growth of 1.3% increase in sales in 2009 as compared to sales in 2008 with the number of units sold standing at 19,001. But with the launch of the brand campaign in Nov 2009 its sales improved in the following year. There was a whopping growth of 181% with a total of 53,341 units sold and also a 100% increase in the number of employees. During the period of Jan-June 2011 Volkswagen had already sold 55,091 units recording a growth of over 217% during the same period. That is around 10 times the growth figure of Maruti.

### 3D in Print



Sources: [www.forum.xcitefun.net](http://www.forum.xcitefun.net) ; <http://www.bestmediainfo.com>

Providing three-dimensional experience in print advertisements has been tried out by many newspapers and magazines. For example, the Hindi daily Dainik Bhaskar, Jaipur, had its 5th November 10 issue full of 3D pictures and advertisements. Again on Diwali the same daily brought a unique interactive and spectacular 3D viewing experience for its readers.

Before trying out this concept, it was pre-tested with the readers and the advertisers and their reaction encouraged the daily to circulate this unique issue. Before the distribution of the 3D edition, the production department did a few dry runs also.

Speaking on the challenges in the execution of the task, Manoj Agarwal, COO, Rajasthan, Dainik Bhaskar Group, stated, "The task did look daunting at the start but then sheer belief in our capability and result-oriented project working made it possible with joint efforts of all the verticals. Doing unique things and providing newer, relevant experience to the readers and in the newspaper category has been a focus area for us and I am sure that this initiative will strengthen our image as an innovative and aggressive brand." This issue was surely read by maximum readers to know about the 3D effect and surely all the advertisements published in 3D got noticed very well and remained in the conversations for a long period of time. This again proves the hypothesis of the paper to be right.<sup>19</sup>

### Video-in-Print (VIP)

A newspaper from the movie *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* with moving pictures:

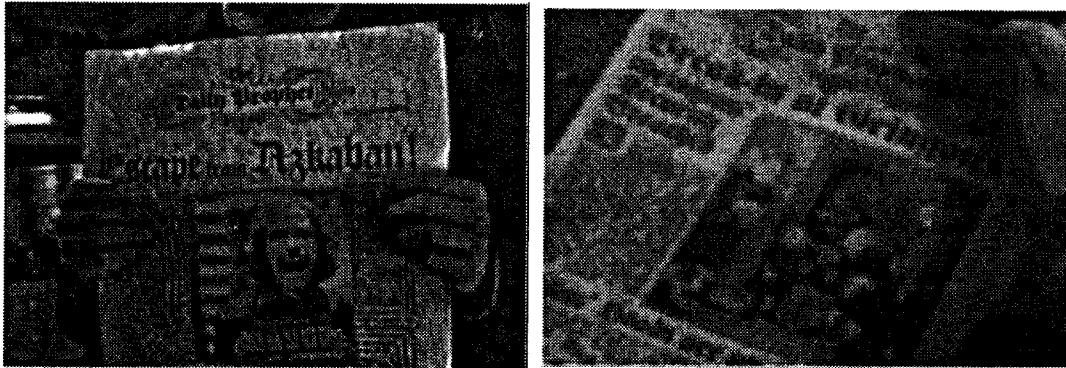


Image Source: [harrypotter.wikia.com](http://harrypotter.wikia.com)

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The print industry in contemporary advertising world is facing maximum turbulence and greater uncertainties. Surely, you need a magical wand sometimes to create the magic. Do you remember a newspaper of the wizardly world of Harry Potter movies *The Daily Prophet*, which had some moving pictures in it? Do you think this kind of magic can be really created in magazines or newspapers?

This concept of Video-in-Print (VIP) has taken innovations in print advertising to the next level where you would least expect to find it. This was not really the work of some J. K. Rowling's wizard but of the creative heads of the advertising agencies. This effect was achieved by inserting a small screen (90 mm wide and just 3 mm thick), which can present high-definition video and audio, in a brochure or magazine. This technology not only increases the effectiveness of print advertisements but also adds content previously restricted to television or radio channels.<sup>20</sup>

CBS is embedding a video player in a print ad in *Entertainment Weekly*. The CBS's foray into a print-digital alliance plays full-motion video at a crisp resolution. The ad is dubbed by CBS and partner Pepsi Max as "the first-ever VIP (video-in-print) promotion." Opening the page activates the player, which is a quarter-inch-thick screen seen through a cutaway between two pages concealing the larger circuit board underneath.

Audience and critics did comment on the loud sound with no volume controls and poorly-shot videos but it was seriously considered as a dramatic shift in the advertising world by most of the advertising critique magazines and news channels.

The magazine not only earned a lot with this form of advertising, which had greater potential of catching the reader's eye in comparison with other existing forms of advertising but also managed to create a buzz around and earned a lot of publicity through word of mouth and by creating news.



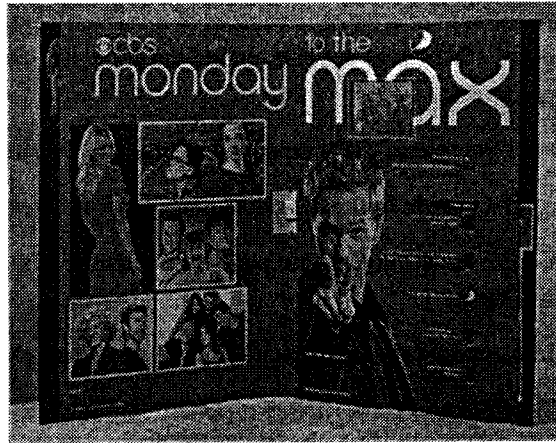


Image Source: <http://www.wired.com>

### Findings

- There are pros and cons to any kind of advertising, and it is beneficial to understand what these are before dipping into your hard-earned marketing budget.
- Every advertising innovation that we analyzed in this paper was successful in making a mark in the readers' mind and that is what innovation is all about.
- Q. R. codes and Augmented Reality have helped the readers not only get into the minutest details but also carry it along with them.
- The more technologically sound the people get, the better are the chances of advertising in print media.
- Print media, once thought to be on the verge of demise, is now slowly proving to be a charm for the advertisers as the innovations that it carries are more talked of and really create a mark, unlike the regular advertisements.
- Advertising innovations are liked by the people only if they are relevant to the brand they are used for.
- Advertising innovations are more successful in creating an impact on the readers than the usual advertisements, as proven by every innovation that we talked about.
- Innovations have helped the brands to turn their effective frequency to 1 and the retention period to around one year.
- Innovations create news on the Web sites and news channels and get the people talking about them for longer time duration. This helps good publicity.
- All the above findings are clearly proving the hypothesis that an advertisement using innovations will have more impact on the viewers (readers) than one not using any innovations to be right.

### Limitations

1. This research paper is totally an analytical paper and it had to rely only the secondary data because collecting the primary data in this type of research makes it as vast as a thesis.
2. The study did not take into consideration the frequency of ads as the innovative ads are not published frequently.

3. The study does not explore the role of creative variables of an advertisement such as headline, creative theme, illustration, body copy, advertising appeals, execution style, etc. as it is considered to be the job of the advertising agency producing the ad.
4. The study has not considered the role of the time of the release of advertisement using innovations.
5. The impact created by the offers made in the advertisements have not been considered by the study.
6. The effect of the editorial columns printed on the page on which the ads using innovations appear has not been considered by this study.
7. This study does not take into account the consumer behavior regarding the particular brand.
8. The study is exploratory in nature and conducted as a part of the Ph.D. degree; hence it will suffer from resource constraints in terms of time and money.
9. Any type of external environmental factors like strikes, agitation, political unrest, communal riots, etc. have not been considered by this study

### **Conclusion**

There are close to 70-80 ads in the newspapers and most of them the readers tend to forget even though the shelf life of newspaper is longer as compared to other traditional media. Readers mostly read the ads in which they are interested and which are really eye catching. Ad agencies have been creating buzz/viral marketing through the innovations that they use in print advertising. Innovations have helped the brands to turn their effective frequency to 1 and the retention period to around one year. To add to the cherry on the cake, the newspapers and TV channels also give you the required publicity by talking about these ads and taking interviews of the creators of these ads that have been shifting in unconventional directions lately in an attempt to break through cluttered marketing. Though these innovative strategies have been successful in creating a buzz, there have been many critics who pointed out that if everybody tried to make talking ads, then the newspaper will end up becoming too noisy; others were worried about the e-waste generated. Besides, not everyone likes the idea of having an unnecessarily vibrating newspaper. Moreover, many people complained that the speakers/pulsating devices had been stolen from the newspapers before they were delivered. Despite these limitations, it must be admitted that innovative advertising boosts up sales.

### **Notes**

- <sup>1</sup> Prentice Hall, 11th Edition, 2005.
- <sup>2</sup> [http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2010-03-25/news/27594814\\_1\\_media-agencies-brand-and-consumer-innovations](http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2010-03-25/news/27594814_1_media-agencies-brand-and-consumer-innovations).
- <sup>3</sup> Atlantic Publishers and Dist., 2004.
- <sup>4</sup> McGraw Hill Publication, 1989.
- <sup>5</sup> Himalaya Publishing House, 6th Revised Edition.
- <sup>6</sup> New York: Arno Press, 1976.
- <sup>7</sup> Springer, USA

- <sup>8</sup> *Management Science* Vol. 34, No. 1 (Jan., 1988), pp.119-130.
- <sup>9</sup> *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 11 Iss 2, pp. 45-54.
- <sup>10</sup> College of Commerce and Business Administration, Jacksonville State University, Alabama, USA.
- <sup>11</sup> College of Business Administration, University of Hawaii-Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii.
- <sup>12</sup> Shibani Gharat, "Bru Gold: Adding Fragrance to News" <http://www.afaqs.com>; Neha Sariya, "When TOI Smelt of Coffee!" Best Media Info. <http://www.bestmediainfo.com>.
- <sup>13</sup> "Volkswagen Jetta Paints the World Silver." [http://www.exchange4media.com/43292\\_volkswagen-jetta-paints-the-world-silver.html](http://www.exchange4media.com/43292_volkswagen-jetta-paints-the-world-silver.html)
- <sup>14</sup> Abhinav Yadav, "Volkswagen – Das Innovation in Print Media," [www.mbaskool.com](http://www.mbaskool.com). Retrieved: October, 17, 2011.
- <sup>15</sup> "Volkswagen Fixes a Vibrator at the Back of Some Newspapers," [www.oncars.in](http://www.oncars.in). Retrieved: September 11, 2012.
- <sup>16</sup> "Why Print Power?" <http://www.printpoweruk.co.uk>.
- <sup>17</sup> Nick Ford, "The First Newspaper in India to Use QR Codes." <http://qranywhere.blogspot.com>. Retrieved: February 21, 2010.
- <sup>18</sup> Morten Blichmann, "Ekstra Bladet Helps Boost Volkswagen Augmented Reality Campaign," <http://www.inma.org>. Retrieved: March 03, 2013; "Volkswagen: New Beetle Augmented Reality Ads" <http://www.digitalbuzzblog.com>. Retrieved: Oct 23, 2011.
- <sup>19</sup> Rajat Arora, "Dainik Bhaskar, Jaipur Brings Complete 3D Issue on Diwali," <http://www.bestmediainfo.com> Retrieved: November 8, 2010.
- <sup>20</sup> John C. Abell, "CBS Embeds a Video Playing Ad in a Print Magazine" <http://www.wired.com>. Retrieved: August 19, 2009.