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## ITC Classmate: Underlining individuality



Ashw ini Gangal, afaqs!, Mumbai, July 04, 2013 Section: News Category:

In its latest film, ITC Classmate underscores individuality once again to promote its pens among school children.



Extending its 'Un-clone your child' thought, ITC Classmate Education & Stationery has rolled out a new film that tries to capture the sense of pride children feel when they start using pens for the first time in school.

Born out of much internal deliberation and consumer research, the idea is to capture the sense of empowerment that children feel when they learn how to use a pen to write their own name in a unique way.

Explaining the insight, Sam Ahmed, chief creative officer and vice-chairman, Rediffusion-Y&R, says, "A child discovering her own unique signature is perhaps one of the most important and earliest expressions of herself."

The idea, Ahmed feels, bears adaptability across languages and cultures.



Komal Bedi Sohal, executive creative director, Rediffusion-Y&R, adds, "In a digital world, where we are all mostly communicating via SMSes and emails, it is only our signature that uniquely requires the use of a pen. We linked this insight to the beauty of a child finding her first expression of identity through her signature." According to Sohal, this is unlike what she calls "typical pen ads" that feature kids writing in a classroom.

The girl in the film represents today's 10-year old, as it is around class four or five that children start using pens instead of pencils at school. Even so, isn't a signature something we associate with adults and not children? Did the brand team consider this perceivable mismatch?

According to Karan Kumar, marketing manager, education and stationery business, ITC, the film draws on the insight that when kids start using pens, they try and emulate the adults around them. "The pen is a device of empowerment. Children at that age see teachers and parents signing various documents and want to ape them," he explains.

At first glance, the film and the accompanying soundtrack remind one of last year's Khayal Aapka film for ICICI Bank that featured two little kids in a similar setting. When quizzed about his decision to give the ad a similar Northeast bend, Kumar responds, "We wanted to create a piece of communication without any clichéd visuals or sounds like schools, corridors, teachers, playgrounds and ringing bells. The attempt is to make it visually fresh."



Komal Bedi Sohal



## Peers sign off happily?

Priti Nair, founder, Curry-Nation, calls the film a "very sweetly executed commercial." Appreciating the production value, she calls the casting and music "endearing"

"Practicing your signature as a part of growing up is a beautiful insight," she says, adding nevertheless, "I felt the link to the final product was a bit sudden. The ad goes well but the product suddenly comes 'pat'!" According to Nair, a lot more can be done when it comes to children because they make for very memorable communication

About the brand's earlier 'Un-clone' campaign, the one the current one has roots in, she says, "That one truly had a powerful behavioural insight; adults keep comparing you to some famous person and usually that is taken as a positive thing but I liked the incongruity of breaking that

tried-and-tested mould. It was brave and well-executed."

Vidyadhar Wabgaonkar, senior vice-president, strategic planning, Interface Communications, sums up the brand thought in his own unique way. "As they take in funny, wondrous, joyous discoveries of childhood, subtly, unknowingly, their personality and uniqueness gets shaped. They bloom into unique individuals. Signature is but one



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expression of their individuality. Classmate is their companion in this journey – Such appear to be the lofty words to which the latest Classmate TVC may have been written," he articulates.

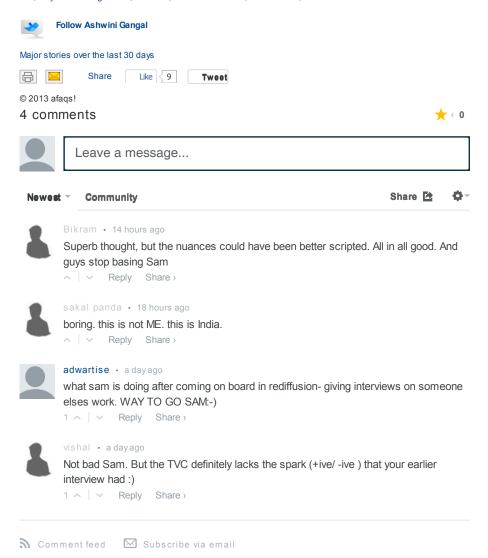
"Take a careful look at the real effort," Wabgaonkar goes on, "and the lofty words of the strategy get blown away! Normally, the signature is practiced on scraps of waste paper. Even the layer of 'signature getting shaped by experiences of life' and not by other people's signatures is a farfetched point for most common people." He feels the idea necessitates long sequences of visualisation. When the minute-long version is cut down to more practical lengths, the mood will not build, he predicts.



Vidyadhar Wahraonka

About this film, he adds, the grandfather-granddaughter interaction confuses the viewer at first, as do many other things in the film. However, commenting on the film in the light of the previous campaign, he feels this time the brand has been given a stronger role and has been better integrated with the narrative.

Tags: Classmate Education & Stationery, ICICI Bank, Rediffusion-Y&R, Interface Communications, Curry-Nation, ITC, Vidyadhar Wabgaonkar, Priti Nair, Komal Bedi Sohal, Sam Ahmed, Karan Kumar



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