



(Data courtesy: Duff and Phelps, 2018)

celebrity and whether it complements our brands' personality.

We look at overall response from our target consumer base towards the celebrity. Parle Agro brand ambassadors have to tell a story that is true to the brand. Through Salman Khan and Alia Bhatt, we have been able to drive stronger brand messaging, while staying true to the aura we have created around our brands."

Bling Entertainment, a celebrity management company, manages personalities like Kangana Ranaut, Vidya Balan and Guru Randhawa, while also working with brands to execute celebrity endorsement deals on their behalf. Swati Iyer, Director & Business Head, Bling Entertainment explains that celebrities, when used judiciously, can provide a point of differentiation based on the values and attributes they stand for, irrespective of how many brands they represent. She explains, "A lot depends on the product life cycle of the brand and its target audience. Sometimes, in a highly competitive market, a brand may still go with a face that is endorsing 20 other brands as at that time they need instant awareness to be built up. However most brands realize that in this market, popular celebrities very rarely may endorse less than 10-12 brands so instead of avoiding them altogether, they create memorable campaigns that stand out due to more effective messaging."

Sunil Raina, President and Business Head, Lava International Limited, agrees with Iyer and points out that a brand must work to create noticeable campaigns with an endorser who shares similar attributes. He says, "Celebrity endorsements are effective when they truly embody what the brand and its proposition stand for. Lava's brand proposition of reliability worked beautifully with Mahendra Singh Dhoni as our ambassador."

Lesser exposed celebrities might actually add more value to a brand than someone endorsing a slew of products. The endorsement has to move the product off dealer shelves. No other measure is acceptable, says Sandeep Goyal, Founder, Mogae Group, who has a PhD in his name for a thesis on

celebrities as human brands. "Multiple endorsements by celebrities kills value for the brand, leads to consumer confusion and dilution of message. An overexposed Virat diminishes his own effectiveness to sell, while a lesser exposed Rohit Sharma could work better, but then agency creative teams have to work much harder on ideation and execution. Most celebrity ads look as if they are (and they actually are) shot in a rush because the celebrity has no time available to do justice to a script," he says. He adds that Kent RO has gained more from using Hema Malini than any brand working with an A-list star.

Abhishek Maloo, Head-Marketing, TBZ-The Original

cautions against the one-size-fits-all method to celebrity associations. Celebrity associations must be long term, ambassadors must not be overexposed and must be clear of controversies. "The days of celebrities endorsing anything and brands just riding the wave are over. No one really believes that celebrities use the brand they endorse. However, celebrity endorsements raise curiosity and help break clutter for a brand if used tactfully," Maloo says.

Brands like Philips have been able to build recall by appointing different personalities for each product line.

Gulbahar Taurani, Marketing Director for Philips Personal Health, Indian subcontinent,

explains the reasoning behind the appointment of each brand ambassador. "For our air purification segment, we got on board Rahul Dravid, in whom we found a partner who embodies the sense of trust and dependability that Philips itself is associated with. We also recently appointed Virat Kohli as the brand ambassador of the male grooming segment because he can reach out to the Indian youth. Alia Bhatt is the brand ambassador for the beauty segment as she is a confident personality. We also got Chef Ranveer Brar on board for the kitchen appliances category in India," Taurani says. He notes that these partnerships perform an effective role in increasing the credibility of a brand, rather than the attractiveness of the endorser.

What a celebrity does is to reinforce her/his association and star status to ensure that the consumer's mind is constantly refreshed around the brand. It's like a shot-in-the-arm, and

