



Most advertisers struggle to reach out to consumers in rural India: Siddharth Bhardwaj

Bhardwaj CMO & National Sales Head, UFO Moviez talks about the movies-on-wheels campaign which allows brands to promote themselves through in-cinema advertisement and brand-activation campaigns

Caravan Talkies, a rural advertising initiative by UFO Moviez has empowered the arena of rural advertisement by creating high brand recall. The movies-on-wheels campaign allows the rural audience to get a big screen experience which allows brands to promote themselves in media-dark regions through in-cinema advertisement and brand-activation campaigns.

The brand recently collaborated with Imagica for Valentine's Day to bring UFO's Caravan of Joy – a unique movie on wheels concept coupled with tent camping in the open air. We asked Siddharth Bhardwaj, CMO & National Sales Head, UFO Moviez what is in it for these brands, making money out of it, the effectiveness and more.

Edited excerpts below:

Bhardwaj contends that the initiative has stemmed from the very little entertainment options that exist in rural India. "Caravan Talkies is an endeavor towards this mission fulfillment where it gives us accessibility and last mile connectivity at the grass root level. The thought of Cinema on Wheels-Caravan Talkies came up to bring the joy of cinema to these areas. Through the day, the van is parked in the most prominent marketplace where people do their daily work. In the evening, when the sun goes down, there is a sun-down movie show that happens which is free of cost."

When we asked him about how they make money out of this, he opens up that the activity is largely funded by brands. "The man-power deployed is used to do activations for the brands and there are activities undertaken for the brands which sponsor the van. There are brand commercials aired during movie breaks and free sampling opportunities which helps brands get a positive rub-off." "It provides 360-degree activation and brand experience solutions along with customer research to advertisers. Overall, it presents itself as an ideal mix of traditional media tools and experiential marketing," he continues.

Brands such as Coca-Cola, ITC, Hindustan Unilever Ltd and Dabur were among players who have tied up with Caravan talkies. When we speak about the effectiveness of it, Bhardwaj says, "Most advertisers struggle to reach out to consumers in media-dark rural India and our concept delivers guaranteed media reach in these markets. Besides, it also leverages on the movie passion and ensures the aggregation of consumers at the time of sunset movie screening. This gives an opportunity for brands to interact with the consumers using customized on-ground activation tools."

IMRB International conducted research on Caravan Talkies to assess the effectiveness of the activity across the villages, their findings have stated that: It is a great business opportunity for advertisers as it operates in villages that lack regular sources of entertainment like Mobile, Internet, and TV and where there are no possibilities of big-screen entertainment. The awareness about Caravan Talkies is 85% and on an average of 4.4 out of 5 audiences interviewed have liked the concept. The figures show that these villages have shown a great amount of interest in Caravan Talkies and has also empowered rural advertisement by creating high brand and activation recall.

Currently, the brand is operating 114 Caravan vans across 14 states viz Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, and Tamil Nadu. Caravan Talkies is fast becoming the preferred medium for brands planning to carry out rural outreach programs with a highly engaged audience. The fleet of vans has done rural activations+ screenings in 7000+ villages across India so far.