Impact of Empathic Storytelling in Branded Videos on Forwarding Intention

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
OF THE EXECUTIVE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME IN MANAGEMENT
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, INDORE

By

Subhendu Pattnaik

Marketing Management

Date: Jan 25th, 2022

<u>**THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**</u>

Prof. Abhishek Mishra [Chairperson]

Prof. Rajendra Nargundkar [Member]

Prof. Subin Sudhir [Member]

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भा. प्र. सं. इन्दौर
IIM INDORE

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Prabandh Shikhar, Rau – Pithampur Road, Indore – 453 556 Madhya Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT

In 2007, a leading market research firm, Yankelovich reported that the number of ads which an average person sees is almost about 5000 per day. And post surveying over 4000 people, half of them said that advertising was "out of control". Fast forward to 2020, we are estimating that these numbers would have more than doubled at the least to about 10,000 ad exposures per person on an average per day, making it increasingly difficult to engage, comprehend and recollect the brand messaging and communication.

The cost of commanding user attention and engagement has grown multi-fold over the last few decades, more so in the recent years because of huge proliferation of diverse competing product choices. With the onset of digital media, customers are getting exposed to an exponentially higher number of advertisements than before which has also made consumers' engagement with branded messages way less effective. And this volume across different channels is also leading to consumer fatigue towards processing the messages in advertisements. To further complicate issues for the brands, consumers are developing resistance and indifference towards cold emails, banner ads and more such formats and channels of brand communication with customers. Further, with customers getting increasingly aware of available choices to block such advertisement messages using ad blockers, or opting to take up premium subscriptions promising ad-free experiences, the battle for customer engagement with branded content has unprecedentedly intensified.

Consumers lay more trust on messages, endorsements from people in their inner trusted circle and thus advertisements and videos which are forwarded by peers are received better than messages broadcasted by the brands through sponsored mechanisms in multiple channels. For brands to succeed in cutting through the clutter of a hyper-crowded world of marketing messages and reach the targeted audience, and more importantly, get forwarded from one

receiver to the other through online e-word of mouth (eWoM), it is imperative to explore the content format and type which increases this sharing behaviour and intention to forward.

With the exponential rise of video content consumption globally (Akpinar & Berger, 2017), we wanted to understand what factors would lead to a higher forwarding intention of branded video ads among receivers. More specifically, would branded videos with an empathic storytelling narrative gets forwarded more, thereby increasing the reach of the content, is the core thing we wanted to focus on. We did not find any study which attempted to study empathy comprehensively specifically in video ads context. As the impact of empathic storytelling is under-researched, it becomes even more important in the current times, to study empathy in branded content forwarding intention, as the world fights the unprecedented global crisis of COVID-19 pandemic where enterprises and brands are heavily banking on their understanding of the crisis, customer problems and thus are taking an empathic stand in all their brand messaging and communication, including advertisements.

However, the empathic ads, in contrast to informative ads, are subjected to individual perception and thus their 'likeability' and 'shareability' would probably be influenced by other finer aspects related to the individual. And at times, those would be also influenced by not just intrinsic factors but also extrinsic factors. In this study, we aim to explore and find the relationship between other finer aspects which may influence the relationship between empathic storytelling and forwarding intention and thus bridge the gap in understanding which exists in literature today.

To achieve the said objectives, we started with extensive literature review of storytelling narratives in general in advertisements, followed by use of emotions and more specifically empathy in video ads, affect intensity of individuals, narrative immersion and transportation, ad exposure, subjective norms. The research design we used, relied on online surveys to capture

the participant responses and then leveraged Structural equation modelling (SEM) to validate the relationship between constructs. After a pre-test with 32 people and basic empirical analysis, the final questionnaire was developed.

Participants were probed to recall an empathic advertisement which they saw in the past. Subsequent questions in the survey questionnaire attempted to capture their perceptions about the different dimensions of the advertisement message such as storytelling, empathy in the ad, ad fluency, ad reflection etc. Finally, they were probed on their affect intensities, the immersion and narrative transportation they experienced while watching the advertisement, their perceptions on how often they came across these advertisements and how this affected their intention to forward.

A total of 255 respondents filled the questionnaire. Reliability and Validity of the constructs were established using stringent methods. Structural Model revealed that there was a positive relation for all the hypotheses except two. Moderation analysis also supported the role of affect intensity on narrative transportation, and second moderation impact of subjective norms and exposure frequency on behavioural intention.

By referring to empathic storytelling, narrative transportation and behavioural intention to forward advertisements, this study empirically verified the role of empathy in branded video content towards greater engagement and intention to forward among the recipients. As a contribution, the study should provide a cue to brand marketers, advertisers and also academicians to understand the significance of empathic storytelling in the brand messaging towards cutting the clutter of branded communication and creating high engagement with target audience. The model thus can also be used as a predictive tool to ensured success of a particular product messaging. By studying the effect of narrative transportation on forwarding intention, marketers can also optimise the stories which click with the consumers and catch on, thus

leading to peer sharing of the brand messaging and subsequent distribution of message without any additional costs for the brand.

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CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

A core objective of the study was to understand what caused empathic feelings to stick on, what enabled these empathic feelings to cause the viewers of the advertisements to pass on the ad, to forward the advertisement to others. The study investigated the relationship between empathic storytelling and forwarding intention, composed of two stages – empathic storytelling leading to narrative transportation for the viewer of the ad and narrative transportation in turn affecting the forwarding intention of the viewer. Stories depicted in the narratives which evoked empathy in viewer's minds cause them to get immersed in the narrative and at times also get them get transported by the narrative as well. The study focused on the impact of narrative transportation on forwarding intention of the viewer.

In addition, the study also examined the importance of affect intensity of the individual viewer on the intensity of narrative transportation. The study also covered the role of social proof and exposure frequency in impacting this relationship between narrative transportation and forwarding intention. It also helps in bridging the gap between psychology literature and marketing literature discussing the effectiveness of advertisements and branded content effectiveness and its ability to move forward through user interactions.

It also provides managers insights on how to make advertisements and branded content more engaging and impactful so as to create a compelling desire in the viewer's mind to share it with others, thereby reducing the overall cost of distribution of content and effectively increase the brand reach. Brand advertisers and managers would find it helpful to cater to the empathic emotions of their consumers and connecting with them at a higher level for their messaging to be impactful.

The present chapter contains four sections. The first three sections highlight general discussion, theoretical contribution, and managerial contribution emerging from the research objective.

The final section concludes with the limitations and future directions that the current study leads to.

6.1 Discussion of Research Objective 1

The first research objective was to develop a holistic understanding of effect of emotional empathic storytelling in branded video content and its effect on target audience's (story-receivers) intention to share the content further. Understanding of these effects are essential because when competing products in the market have very really thin product differentiation, one of the ways to still connect with the consumers in the target audience is when the brand connects beyond the products, and mostly appeals to the consumers in an emotional narrative. In a highly competitive market, when products and brands are struggling to create differentiation for higher recall and growth, emotional messaging and emotional branded content speaks to consumers' hearts and is able to drive greater engagement level of users with the content. As more consumers continue to seek to evaluate brands which emotionally connect with their needs, we undertook this research to understand the role powerful storytelling plays when it is mixed with a special emotion, empathy to see if the video ads with a narrative, with empathic storytelling does influence consumers to turn to advocates and spreaders of information, thereby helping in amplifying the brand voice of the products and brands. The impact of this research is huge because it not only solidifies the positioning that empathic ads yield higher effectiveness in terms of product appeal and consumption but also cause the product advertisement through peer to peer forwarding, thereby amplifying the impact of the branded content, without any additional cost implications to the advertiser.

A rigorous quantitative analysis ratified the scales conceptualized from an exhaustive literature review. Through extensive research on studies related to social transmission, attitude towards branded content and advertisements and empathic storytelling, and a detailed quantitative study, we not just reviewed the theories that exist, their origin, applications and applicability

in this context to identify if there existed a relationship between empathic storytelling and forwarding intention, but also to empirically verify the causality and the additional factors which impact this relationship.

6.1.1 Theoretical Contribution of RO1

Consumer response to branded messaging is the starting point of a dyadic relation between the product and the user making it critical for the marketers and researchers equally. Emotional messaging is an attempt to form a relationship between the consumer and a product or brand, by evoking emotions. The content which appeals to the emotional state, needs and aspirations of consumers would help marketers achieve the objective of this relationship building. Past works have focused more on emotional appeals but not on empathic appeal specifically in video-based messaging and are thus, general and broad in nature. Storytelling as an incredibly powerful tool has been there for ages. It is way more powerful than facts and can break through content overload, making the audience take notice, stay engaged and remember it for a long time (Spiller, 2018). Storytelling creates a compelling narrative (D. Aaker, 2018) and creates a participatory and immersive experience that allows the audience to absorb the message in an entertaining way and reduce critical processing. With video being one of the topmost content formats being consumed globally, influencing consumers via vivid information (such as in videos) is now a commonly used technique in advertising strategies (Appiah, 2006; Spalding et al., 2009). Though Bagozzi and Moore (Bagozzi & Moore, 1994), researched on the response to branded content and have shown that responses are affected through empathy, this study advances the contribution by looking at video content format instead of text based stories. Additionally, the study also highlights that since forwarding of the branded content aids greater reach and impact at no additional costs, a particularly notable contribution of this study is to drive attention towards forwarding intention for video ads as a response to empathic storytelling in them.

6.1.2 Managerial Contribution of RO1

As modern-day marketers fight the fierce battle for consumer attention, clearly for messages to be effective and impactful, they have to be remembered by the consumers. With an explosion of marketing messages, the costs of brand messaging and communication are being driven high. Even though classical approaches of segmentation allow marketers to increase contextual relevance with their consumer segments, the presence of large number of products, competing and non-competing as well, which vie for the attention of the same consumer does make the space crowded. The core purpose of the study was to explore whether the presence of empathy as an emotion in the narrative, affects the consumer's receptivity to the product or message, has them retain the information for a longer time and even urge them to share the content forward. Emotional advertising in video content is absolutely complex; the product has to reach the right target audience, provide clarity about the product details and also connect at a purpose level and when done incorrectly it can leave brand's audience feeling confused. With careful consideration and use of emotional appeal, however, emotional advertising can be highly effective. Three key things which are brought into focus with this study – emotions in branded content, especially empathy, storytelling as a concept in the branded advertisements and finally, the construct of narrative transformation and how it impacts the consumer behavior.

With the conceptualization of these key themes in a consumer's cognition as found through this study, marketers need to create powerful, emotion-laden stories which evoke empathy in the mind of the consumer. Companies can create emotional ads in response to major events, while also promoting their products or services. This is equally applicable to both B2C as well as B2B brands as Cigniti. During this study, we also evaluated the performance of branded video content for Cigniti, an independent Quality Engineering Services & Software Testing services company which helps its clients to build better software by uncovering defects before

the products are launched. Global events such as technology glitches which crash the stock markets, malware or virus attacks which exploit system vulnerabilities and expose confidential data, or software failure which bring down flights or cause crashes are events which happen because the piece of software which was launched did not undergo thorough evaluation and was not subjected to proper quality engineering approaches. While creating branded video content which empathizes with the end customers of these enterprises, Cigniti would be able to create a compelling message which builds a relation with the customers. This empathy will cause consumer to remember the ad and also will lead the consumer to take action. With the most efficient format of messaging being video content, the conceptualization of the message has to be done with empathy in mind, given that the study confirms that irrespective of age and gender, consumers do get affected by empathic messaging. Advertisers, whether Business to Consumer (B2C) or Business to Business (B2B), can pick and choose the relevant core themes of the product and design stories which highlight them, which presents the product's unique proposition in a way that is more relatable to the consumer, in line, of course with the overall positioning of the product as well as the brand itself. Additionally, items within each construct provide good leads in the direction of storytelling conceptualization. Further, since the study also focused on recalling ads from memory, it clearly confirms that empathy evoking stories are strongly etched in memory for a longer time, thus aiding better recall, and this can be readily adapted in different contexts and products such as automobile, household durables, computers and everything else because the message has to be thought with the benefits in mind and with the end-consumer in focus, rather than the product features and brand in mind. This makes this framework a ready reckoner for marketing practitioners.

6.2 Discussion of Research Objective 2

The second research objective was to investigate the role of Narrative transportation in impacting the forwarding intention of the consumer and how empathic storytelling is aiding Narrative transportation and thus subsequently the forwarding intention, thereby increasing branded content reach and impact. When viewers are engrossed and immersed in a narrative that the author has laid down, viewers can lose the cognizance to their surroundings and also seem like losing a sense of time and space. Stories are incredibly powerful in influencing behaviour, moulding opinions, and even driving us to action. In this study we aimed to understand the role played by narrative transportation on action orientation related to forwarding of the video ad from one viewer to another.

6.2.1 Theoretical Contribution of RO2

The study investigates and provides insight into the underlying mechanisms mediating relationship between empathic storytelling and forwarding intention in two stages – empathic video storytelling leading to narrative transportation and that, in turn affecting the consumers' forwarding intention. While earlier studies provided insights on what caused narrative transportation including empathy for characters and imagination of the story plot (Van Laer et al., 2014), whereby story-receivers actively use their imagination to co-construct the narrative (Chronis, 2008), whether empathy as a specific powerful emotion also causes it, was under researched. In this study, we studied that narrative transportation mediated the relationship between empathic storytelling and forwarding intention and thus we also focused on examining the effect of narrative transportation in explaining higher forwarding intention. It also represents a cross-domain effort and helps in connecting the realms and bridging the gap between literature in user psychology and marketing literature discussing relationship of content formats, brand recall and intent to share. Also, since recent research on narrative

content highlighting diverse outcomes with less consensus about its positive effects on consumer attitudes towards advertised brand surfaced, including researchers like Dessart (Dessart, 2018) warning about risks of carrying story-receivers away from their own reality excessively, to a point at which they lose their self-awareness and do not identify with story characters. This study provides more support towards building the consensus that narrative transportation induces higher forwarding intention as a consumer attitude towards the brand.

6.2.2 Managerial Contribution of RO2

Narrative transportation causes viewers to develop an attachment to the characters in the story, can cause viewers to mimic them, and the more the immersion of the viewer into the story, the higher the probability to get transported by the narrative. The higher the transportation, the better is the reception of the message and also higher is the intent to forward the message. Knowing that narrative transportation process impacts consumers' intention to forward is a key managerial contribution made by this paper as it significantly helps in creating avenues for higher advertising effectiveness.

As an advertising strategy, the findings in this paper indicate that putting the consumer in the driver's seat and having him feel the driving experience is a more effective way of having him get immersed in the narrative and get transported into the story, thereby reducing his critical processing of the ad. When a compelling empathic story is created about the advertiser's brand, which may include highlighting the benefits of the product for the consumers which touches "human" aspect, and evokes empathy, the story will resonate with the target audience and using narrative transportation, brand advertisers can generate favourable viewpoints which will entice consumers to consume more, evaluate the product and brand more favourably and also take action, including passing the information forward.

As the study also affirmed that with narrative transportation led by empathic storytelling, it helps in a greater display of sharing behavior, it now becomes a weapon in a marketer's arsenal to create brand content which highlight on the benefits of the brand where consumers can experience them and thus be interested in sharing them with others.

For advertisers, successful narrative transportation in marketing messaging results in their audience feeling engaged with their brand and product which in turn drives consumption and also, loyalty. To create compelling marketing collateral so that audience engages, stories have to be woven in a way where the customer has to be the hero and not the product and when the customer is able to use the product of the advertiser to solve a challenge which he is facing, that successful outcome drives viewers watching the narrative to empathically get immersed and transported by the narrative. Every narrative must have a conclusion and the story has to end and this ending has to have the customer achieve success after using the advertised product or service. Screenwriters have to bring an emotive ending to the narrative which touches the viewer and when it is done, empathic appeal will cause narrative transportation. In essence, by imagining that they themselves are undergoing the experience of using the product with favourable consequences, and by seeing how the product or service 'touches' the lives of consumers in ways they can relate to, this study confirms that it does generate positive emotions and stronger intention to share such content with other consumers who they think would be interested. This approach of snowballing to the next probable consumer would work very well for brands who thus invest into creating content which help in triggering this narrative transportation.

6.3 Discussion of Research Objective 3

The third research objective was to understand if there are other additional factors such as Affect intensity as an individual characteristic trait which impacts the degree to which narrative transportation is caused because of the empathic ad narrative and which moderate the relationship towards the forwarding intention for branded empathic videos. Our prime objective was to understand if same empathic narrative has different effects on narrative transportation of different viewers. In addition, we also intended to understand the impact of perception of social proof and the role its existence plays on consumers' forwarding intention. Another factor which this study aimed to observe was ad exposures and if higher number of exposures to the brand video ads translated to a higher intent to share or did it have an adverse impact on it.

6.3.1 Theoretical Contribution of RO3

The observation that people differ in the intensity with which they respond to emotional stimuli introduced a line of research called affect intensity, which is defined as "stable individual differences in the strength with which individuals experience their emotions" and is considered to be an important predictor of mood experience (Larsen & Diener, 1987). Individuals vary in their affect intensity and thus the way they perceive a branded ad would be different. With this premise, we initiated this study and found that the degree of consumer's narrative transportation is effected by their individual affect intensity. Affect Intensity moderates the relation between empathic storytelling and narrative transportation such that higher value of affect intensity of the consumer strengthens the positive relationship between empathic storytelling and narrative transportation and vice versa. Viewers with high affect intensity experience a significantly higher narrative transportation than those viewers who have relatively lower affect intensity.

Also, presence or absence of social proof, perceived over-exposure or under-exposure to branded content could also help reinforce the ad impact or raise critical processing of an ad. Thus, we started with studying the moderating impact of both these factors on forwarding intention. To the best of our knowledge, none of the previous studies had looked into this aspect of forwarding intention of branded videos. To fill the gap in literature, we addressed these in the current study. The study uncovered that presence of social proof moderates the relationship between narrative storytelling and forwarding intention and that higher social proof existence will have a stronger impact on the relationship between narrative transportation and intention to forward. In addition, the study found the hypothesis supported when evaluating the moderation relationship between narrative transportation and forwarding intention by perception of exposure frequency.

The study also highlighted the fact that the intention to forward varied significantly with gender and age and thus contributed theoretically to augment our understanding of the psychological impact of emotion such as empathy on behavioral intention.

6.3.2 Managerial Contribution of RO3

This study's findings have multiple deep managerial implications. It will serve as guide points to brand marketers embarking on a journey towards crafting messages which will not just stick but catch on and spread. Understanding that affect intensity of individual consumers play a major role in achieving narrative transportation will be helpful to create content which immerses the viewer in the message. Understanding that social proof helps in spreading the content, high emphasis can be given by marketers on influencer or micro-influencer-based content dissemination strategies which increase social proof. Also, with extant literature warning about over exposure to advertisement frequency and this study providing support that perception of higher exposure frequency aids greater recall and greater forwarding intention for empathic emotion laden ads, the study clearly brings to focus the fact that marketers should

spend their campaign budgets on first creating the empathic ads and then spend on higher ad exposure frequency for the consumer.

In addition, another key contribution from this study were the findings that younger audiences have a different level of forwarding intention than older audiences but contrary to the hypothesis we started with, younger audience were found to have lower forwarding intention for similar level of empathic storytelling as compared to older audience. And that older respondents show a greater intention to forward with empathic storytelling. The study also found that younger consumers were difficult to be narratively transported with empathic storytelling as an approach, but once narratively transported, they demonstrated way higher intention to share the branded content, than the older consumers. This also helps marketing professionals to augment their understanding of the psychology of their consumers and thus opportunity for them to adapt their marketing strategies to better realize the outcomes they expect from their marketing initiatives.

6.4 Limitations and Future Scope of Research

Although we have made all efforts to develop a rigorous model to observe forwarding intention, our method is not without its limitations, overcoming which may provide leads for future work. A marketing campaign has higher chances of success if the marketer is able to create marketing message and communication strategy which resonates with the target group, in other words, appeals to one of the key motivations of sharing the information further. We find that evoking empathy through branded ad content is surely a way to motivate recipients to forward information to others and also as a way of helping others. Therefore, we recommend that marketers consider empathic appeals in their product messaging. However, the implications drawn from this research should be considered in light of several constraints. First the generalizability of the study is limited by the use of a convenience sample of folks in specific WhatsApp groups, LinkedIn groups, and other online communities. While we also had

respondents, who filled the offline version of the questionnaire for the study, given the primary objective of this research was to provide theoretical insights into the psychology of forwarding intention, we believe the use of this sample is justified.

Although we have made all efforts to do a rigorous study based on literature review and also with the quantitative analysis to measure the impact of empathy and narrative transportation on forwarding intention, our method is not without its limitations, overcoming which may provide leads for future work. As a conceptual drawback, we have looked at the advertisements which have been recalled by participants, which only represent a portion of the ads which they come across on a day-to-day basis. Since we were not able to proceed with an experimental method because of limitations imposed by the COVID pandemic, to further this study, future research could focus on diverse ads, rated for their empathy quotient and tested with participants using experimental method and understand how the parameters impact overall intention to forward and offer a more concrete understanding of forwarding intention.

Second, our results are limited to the particular scales used. Since a number of different scales are available that can potentially tap the same constructs used in our study, it is possible that the use of different scales might impact the results. Also, since we studied the advertisements' impact mostly within folks in a single country, as more and more brands expand bases to different countries beyond their home states, it would be interesting to explore how cultural differences cannot just demand altering of product specifications but also the marketing messaging as well. Future research should examine empirically the findings of this study and provide and explanation of underlying cultural differences in engagement with the advertising narrative from a multi-country perspective.

Further, while we studied the impact of empathic storytelling on evoking narrative transportation and subsequent effects of it, there may be differences in content format itself. Across the many different types of content formats that may cause narrative transportation by evoking empathy such as text, video, images with text, audio, immersive content in AR and VR and even content which are conversational while interacting with chatbots on a website, there may be differences in the degree to which they elicit narrative thought and/or transportation and their subsequent effects. Additionally, when people gain exposure to video ads, the attention they pay to them can vary in the setting when they are coming across the ads. It would be interesting to observe how narrative transportation gets impacted when the ads are consumed in partial and complete captive environments which provide an immersive experience through the use of virtual reality and augmented reality (Thales S. Teixeira, 2015). Hence, further detailed investigation of narrative transportation and its effects is warranted and this study has brought attention to the need to investigate the difference between communication in the physical world and the virtual immersive world, thus provides an opportunity for further insights into the dynamics of important constructs including engagement, involvement, and persuasion through transportation (Jennifer Edson Escalas, 2004a).

As media platforms vary on their way of communication and broadcasting platforms allow messaged to be communicated to a large audience while narrow casted messages are shared with a few in private, Barasch and Berger (2014) suggested that both these narrowcasting and broadcasting behaviours are associated with two fundamentally different drivers of WOM: helping others and self-presentation (Dichter 1966; Engel, Kegerreis, and Blackwell 1969; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004), respectively. This is an interesting area to observe if empathic

videos will be narrow-casted more or broadcasted and to research this in detail would be a future study.

Also, we have checked the moderators individually and we have not tested their interaction effects. Hence, we are able to claim only the individual contribution of each moderator to the model we proposed. This is a limitation of the study and in our subsequent research work on the topic, beyond this thesis, we will also look at be able to take it up and address in future studies. Finally, since research shows that WOM has greater impact on product decisions compared to more traditional marketing communications such as advertising (Gilly et al., 1998; Herr et al., 1991), a future research direction is to shift the focus to content which is created by recipients as a response to the branded content and observe the spread and 'virality' of those messages. Also, it would be interesting to understand how user-generated memes in response to branded ad content would play a role in breaking through the clutter, get forwarded, thereby increasing the reach of the message and brand.

We also acknowledge, that as future research work, we will explore data collected from different channels such as offline questionnaires, paid ad campaigns in Facebook, whatsapp etc and do an across group analysis and publish papers around this.

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Observations from Respondent #1	Overall it was good. Some observations: • It would be better if you can explain what you mean by empathetic ad. • The section about engaging with video was not clear - I did not know what you meant. • Formatting needs to improve - at places question spills over to multiple lines with one two words per line.
Observations from Respondent #2	You can't give them an ad if you are thinking of asking how many times have they watched the ad. Not many would have seen the ad. What you can do is, ask your recipients to recall the ad and then have a question which asks them to write about the ad in 2-3 lines, so that they are tuned in to the survey and get involved.
Observations from Respondent #3	I saw the survey and started filling but I don't watch empathy ads on internet...just skip them hence couldn't answer questions related to it. The survey layout i liked...
Observations from Respondent #4	Ok, but you can probably eliminate the first or the last out of the 4 generic questions- they mean the same thing.
Observations from Respondent #5	A few of the points I would like to highlight. It is purely my personal opinion. 1. Initial signing in requirement - Many prospective respondents might not do it, either because of security reasons or one more time-taking step. I signed in because I know you personally otherwise for an unknown person, I won't. 2. Name option – Not required, one more time taking step. 3. City / State – You might ask respondents for their region. East, West, North, etc. Put the options so that respondents can just choose. Make it mandatory. 4. All sections instructions font size – Please increase font size. 5. If possible, incorporate attention check questions (Dworkin, Hessel, Gliske & Rudi, 2016; Kung, Kwok & Brown, 2018; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Happy to know that you are on with your survey. Wishing you all the best.

Empathic Storytelling in Video Ad

1. **Attitude towards Ad Narrativeness**

Dimensions	Items	Source
Attitude towards the Ad Narrativeness	The commercial tells a story.	(Kim et al., 2017)
	The commercial shows the main actors or characters in a story.	
	The commercial shows a series of events unfolded in a story form.	
	The commercial shows when and where things happened in a story.	
	The commercial shows why things happened in a story.	

2. **Fluency of the Video Ad**

	Items	Source
Ad Fluency	This advertisement is very easy to understand.	(Yan, 2016) (4 items picked based on Experts)
	Viewing this advertisement gives me a sense of feeling right.	
	Information contained in this advertisement is congruent and coherent.	
	Information contained in this advertisement is believable.	

3. **Credibility of the Video Ad**

	Items	Source
Credibility of the Video/ news story	I think the news story was honest.	(Wojdynski & Evans, 2016)
	I think the news story was trustworthy.	
	I think the news story was convincing.	
	I think the news story was biased.	
	I think the news story was not credible.	

4. **Reflecting on the Story of the Video Ad**

	Items	Source
Reflection of the Story	I thought about the meaning of the story.	(Hamby & Brinberg, 2016)
	I thought about the 'message' of the story.	
	I thought about what the story was trying to express, overall.	

5. **Empathy in the Video Ad (Affective Response to the Ad)**

	I felt emotionally involved in the ad.	(Kim et al., 2017)
	I found the ad moving.	
Empathy in the Ad	The ad affected me emotionally.	
	I was able to connect with the ad emotionally.	
	This ad hooked me in terms of my feelings.	

Affect Intensity of Recipient

1. **Individual Recipient Empathy Quotient**

	I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a video.	IRI Subscale of Empathy (Fantasy), (Keaton, 2017), 3 Items picked based on experts.
Empathic Response	After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.	
	When I am watching an interesting video story, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.	

2. **Vicarious Experience**

	While I see a friend crying, I feel myself getting teary-eyed.	(Innamorati et al., 2019)
	Scenes in movies where the main character cries because everything turns out for the best, give me tears of joy.	(7 items picked based on experts)
	When I see someone get hurt in a movie, it's as if I can feel the pain too.	
Vicarious Experience	When I watch dramatic movies, I feel the same sadness as the characters in the story.	
	Seeing an adult cry because of pain makes me suddenly get teary-eyed.	
	Those who know me tell me that I am very affected by the emotions of others.	
	People that come with me to the movie theater tell me that I get completely involved with the emotions of the characters in the movie.	

Narrative Transportation

1. **Attitude towards Ad (Joyful Nostalgia)**

Attitude towards Ad	While seeing the ad I was transported back to joyful moments in my life.	(Hartmann et al., 2016)
	The ad reminded me of some positive events that have happened to me in the past.	

	The ad made me think of pleasant experiences I have had.	
	The images in the ad take me back to positive moments in my life.	
	The ad makes me think back in joyful events in my life.	

2. Ease of being persuaded

	While watching the ad, I experienced difficulty in resisting the message.	(Chang, 2017) 4 items picked by experts.
Persuasion by Ad	While watching the ad, I experienced difficulty in counterarguing the message.	
	I found myself being easily influenced by the message.	
	I found the ad persuaded me easily.	

3. Cognitive

	While I was watching the narrative, I could easily picture the events in it taking place.	11-item Transportation Scale (Green & Brock, 2000)
Cognitive	While I was watching the narrative, activity going on in the room around me was on my mind.	
	I could picture myself in the scene of the events shown in the narrative.	Picked 4 items from the Cognitive Section of the 11 Item Scale based on expert reviews.
	I was mentally involved in the narrative while watching it.	

Subjective Norm

	There are a lot of people in my social circle who have viewed this video.	(Ham et al., 2015)
Descriptive Norms	There are a lot of people in my social circle who have liked this video.	
	There are a lot of people in my social circle who have shared this video.	

Perception of Ad Exposure (From Memory)

Ad Exposure	I believe I saw this video ad multiple times.	Self-Developed

	I remember seeing this video ad more than once.	"Recall Test" – Page-5: Memory measures for Pretesting Advertisements
		(Krishnan & Trappey, 1999)
	I saw this video ad more than once.	Self-Developed

Behavioral Intention

Engagement intention	I have the intention to engage with the Video ad.	(Sanne & Wiese, 2018)
	I will engage with the video ad.	
Forwarding Intention	I always discuss such ads with my friends / relatives.	(Kapoor & Munjal, 2019)
	I like to share such kind of ads.	

Indian Institute of Management Indore

Prabandh Shikhar, Rau - Pithampur Rd, Indore,
Madhya Pradesh 453556

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study!

Attached is the survey designed to study "Empathic Video Ads" released by brands for promoting their products. This study serves as part of doctoral thesis of Mr. Subhendu Pattnaik, who is a doctoral candidate at Indian Institute of Management Indore, Indore.

All your responses are anonymous and will be treated as confidential and will be used purely for the purpose of academic research. Your participation is highly important and it will help towards understanding the area further.

We hope you can spend 13-15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. I would be thankful to you for your cooperation.

As we wish to complete the final report by June 2021. If you wish to know the details about this study, please feel free to contact at my email address given below.

Sincerely

Subhendu Pattnaik

EFPM 2015
Marketing Area, IIM Indore
Email: fi15subhendup@iimidr.ac.in

Empathy in Video Ads Survey

Please fill in the following details				
Your Name (Optional)	_____		**Gender (Please encircle)**	• Male • Female
Age* *Please encircle*	• 18 or younger • 18-25 • 26-35 • 36-45 • 46-55 • 56-65 • 66 or older	**City and State** _____ _____	**Employment Status** *Please encircle*	Employed/ Unemployed/ Student/ Other
Marital Status (please encircle)	Single/Widowed/Separated Married with children Married with no children	_____		
Have you watched videos using Internet? *Please encircle*	• Yes • No	**Have you watched video advertisements of different brands while browsing?** *Please encircle*		• Yes • No
How do you normally react to Video Ads / commercials? *Please encircle all that apply*	•	I skip the video ads.		
	•	I click on video ads.		
	•	I engage with video ads.		
	•	I like video ads by pressing like button, if available.		
	•	I share video ads.		

Instructions for Completing the Questionnaire:

This questionnaire is based on an empathic ad which you watched sometime in the past. Please recollect the video commercial and answer the questions below. **This questionnaire should not take more than 10 minutes to complete.** The Questionnaire displayed below is self-explanatory and will allow you to fill and submit your responses without lot of effort.

Please…

- Read the introductory paragraph before answering the question.
- Be specific in your answers and be sure to answer all questions and only select one answer per question.
- To answer the question, please ENCIRCLE the appropriate number with your response for each question given in the table. The meaning of each number is given at the top of the column of the table.

SECTION A

In this section we would like to understand your observations about the various aspects of the video advertisement / commercial you recollected. Read the statements carefully. Based on your observation, please mark the level of AGREEMENT or DISAGREEMENT with following statements by ENCIRCLING [O] your choice. [1]= "Strongly Disagree" and [7]= "Strongly Agree"

*	I believe I saw this ad multiple times.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	There are a lot of people in my social circle who had viewed this ad.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	The ad tells a story.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I remember seeing this ad more than once.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	The ad showed a series of events unfolded in a story form.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	Viewing this ad gives me a sense of feeling right.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I think the ad was honest.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	The ad shows the main actors or characters in a story.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	This ad is very easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	The ad shows when and where things happened in a story.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	There are a lot of people in my social circle who have liked this ad.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	Information contained in this ad is congruent and coherent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	The ad shows why things happened in a story.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I think the news story was trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	Information contained in this advertisement is believable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I found the ad moving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	The ad affected me emotionally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I think the news story was convincing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I saw this video ad more than once.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I felt emotionally involved in the ad.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I think the news story was not credible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I thought about the 'message' of the story.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I thought about what the story was trying to express, overall.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	This ad hooked me in terms of my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I thought about the meaning of the story.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I think the ad story was biased.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I was able to connect with the ad emotionally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION B

In this section we would like to understand how you normally feel when you are facing the situations below. Read the statements carefully. Based on your observation, please mark the level of AGREEMENT or DISAGREEMENT with following statements by ENCIRCLING [O] your choice. [1]= "Strongly Disagree" and [7]= "Strongly Agree"

*	I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a video.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*	After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	When I am watching an interesting video story, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	While I see a friend crying, I feel myself getting teary-eyed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	Scenes in movies where the main character cries because everything turns out for the best, give me tears of joy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	When I see someone get hurt in a movie, it's as if I can feel the pain too.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	When I watch dramatic movies, I feel the same sadness as the characters in the story.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	Seeing an adult cry because of pain makes me suddenly get teary-eyed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	Those who know me tell me that I am very affected by the emotions of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	People that come with me to the movie theater tell me that I get completely involved with the emotions of the characters in the movie.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION C									
In this section we would like to understand how you felt when you watched the emotional ad. Read the statements carefully. Based on your observation, please mark the level of AGREEMENT or DISAGREEMENT with following statements by ENCIRCLING [O] your choice. [1]= "Strongly Disagree" and [7]= "Strongly Agree"									
*	While seeing the ad I was transported back to joyful moments in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	The ad reminded me of some positive events that have happened to me in the past.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	While watching the ad, I experienced difficulty in resisting the message.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	The images in the ad take me back to positive moments in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	The ad makes me think back in joyful events in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	While watching the ad, I experienced difficulty in counterarguing the message.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	While I was watching the narrative, I could easily picture the events in it taking place.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I found myself being easily influenced by the message.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	The ad made me think of pleasant experiences I have had.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I could picture myself in the scene of the events shown in the narrative.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	While I was watching the narrative, activity going on in the room around me was on my mind.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I found the ad persuaded me easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I was mentally involved in the narrative while watching it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION D	

In this section we would like to understand how you felt after you watched the emotional ad. Read the statements carefully. Based on your observation, please mark the level of AGREEMENT or DISAGREEMENT with following statements by ENCIRCLING [O] your choice. [1]= "Strongly Disagree" and [7]= "Strongly Agree"									
*	There are a lot of people in my social circle who have shared this video.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I have the intention to engage with the Video ad.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I will engage with the video ad.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I always discuss such ads with my friends / relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*	I like to share such kind of ads.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

-- End of Survey --

CURRICULUM VITAE

SUBHENDU PATTNAIK

Phone: **+91 7674012781** (Hyderabad)

E-mail: subhendu.infosys@gmail.com

Date of Birth: **27-05-1981 | Linkedin**

Profile Summary

Technology Marketing, Sales, Alliances and Partnerships Professional with 20+ years of experience in Large and mid-sized IT Services & Fintech product firms. Currently working as Vice President & Global Marketing Head for Cigniti Technologies, World's Largest Independent Quality Engineering Services company, a $125 Mn USD firm. Responsible for developing and executing marketing strategy and Go-to-Market (GTM) plan and execution for Cigniti and manage P&L for the entire Marketing and Inside Sales function – Accountable to influence 15 Mn USD in new business revenue year on year with a 7 Mn USD budget.

My career objective is to pivot into academia as that is the natural calling I have to be a senior academician in a respected business school, with major responsibilities, that will effectively utilize my communication, leadership, and organizational skills.

Academic Contribution

PhD Dissertation:
Role of Empathy in Branded Video Ad Storytelling on Forwarding Intention
- Committee: Prof. Abhishek Mishra (Chairman), Prof Rajendra Nargundkar (Member) and Prof Subin Sudhir (Member)
- Mentors: Mr. Atma Prakash Ojha (IIM Kozhikode), Mr. Sudhansu Sekhar Senapati (IIM Kasipur)

Education			
FPM (PhD) – Marketing	Pursuing	**Indian Institute of Management, Indore (IIM Indore)**	*Pursuing, EFPM.*
MBA (IT & Marketing)	Mar 2009	**S.P. Jain Center of Management, Dubai Singapore (S P Jain)** **Gold Medallist** (Top 10% of the batch)	**3.45/4**
B. Tech (Electrical Engg.)	May 2003	**NIT Rourkela**	**73.0%**
XII Std (CHSE)	June 1998	B.J.B. College, Bhubaneswar	**86.7%**
X Std (CBSE)	June 1996	D.M. School, Bhubaneswar	**87.8%**

Professional Awards & Accomplishments

- Won multiple awards including Oracle "**LetsTalkCX Fast100**" from Oracle India in Jan 2019, **Adobe Digi100 2018**, a recognition for top digital marketing leaders in the country from Adobe. Won **Top 50 Brand Leaders Asia Award 2017** in Singapore from World Marketing Federation, Won Top 100 Digital Marketers award in 2017 from Pluralsight & Paulwriter's CEO, Jessie Paul. Won Outstanding Global Citizen Award for Marketing & Strategy 2016 by MTC Global. Won **Top 100 Influential Global Marketing Leaders for 5 years in a row – 2015 to 2019** by World Marketing Congress. Also received **Marketing Leadership Excellence Award** (MILE) from Cigniti in 2017.
- Member of **NASSCOM Regional SME Council** Hyderabad; works closely with NASSCOM, on experience sharing workshops on marketing and business growth for regional SMEs. Got recognized as "**Pride of Odisha**" in Oct 2018 by Invest Odisha, Odisha Govt's Investment Sourcing & Marketing arm.
- Got recognized as **Distinguished Alumnus** from SP Jain & Got Featured on **IIM Indore Website**
- **Speaker at various Industry conventions** on Marketing – NASSCOM, HYSEA, African Next Einstein Forum, Hyderabad Management Association (AIMA Affiliated), Dun & Brandstreet Events, & Industry webinars including BrightTalk, DigitalVidya, Great Learning and many others. Guest Speaker at Digital Marketing Conclaves, FinTech Talks, numerous Meetups, B-Schools [NMIMS, IBS, Great Lakes, St Francis, VVSB & more].
- **Guest Author** on Marketing - Marketing Insights published in PaulWriter, Digital CMO Digest, Consultants Review, SDTimes, New York, Staffing Industry Analysts , CXO Insights & more. Podcasts - Sweetfish Media & Techpros.io; **Editorial Columnist** on Social Media in leading newspapers such as Orissa Post in October 2013.
- Been building communities of marketers in Linkedin & Meetup groups – Have 10,000+ people group of Marketers and Content writers in Linkedin & 3500+ folks in Marketing meetup groups; Chosen as **HP VIVIT Philadelphia Chapter Leader** to steer the VIVIT community in US. (2015)
- Recipient of **Mindfirean of the Year Award** for building Mindfire brand in a short period (2010).
- Won **TCS Smart Manager Contest** judged by **Mr. Narayana Murthy** (Infosys) & **Mr. S. Ramadorai** (TCS). (2008)
- Awarded 'Success in AIS', **highest excellence award** in Aetna in Nov 2007 at Middletown, CT, USA.
- **Founder-Editor** of student bimonthly commercial magazine 'the Epsilon' at NIT-Rourkela 2002. Published 6 editions.
- **Won 1ˢᵗ prizes** in State-Level Essay competitions 2001-2002; Articles published in National magazines (2000).

My Technology Marketing & Sales Journey (Infosys -> FINO -> Mindfire -> Tata BSS -> Cigniti)	
Jul 2022 to Present	**Forrester Research India Ltd.** **Strategic Advisor to Chief Marketing Officers in Asia Pacific, Principal Analyst** (Location – Hyderabad) In my role as a Strategic Advisor to CMOs in India & APAC region, I partner with and help Forrester's CMO clients ideate, implement and measure marketing programs that combine hybrid marketing approaches, benchmarked with their industry peers, that are aligned to their strategic business objectives and which drive their company's topline growth.

	My research covers the strategic priorities of a CMO - Marketing Strategy & Transformation, Planning & investments, designing a future-ready marketing organisation structure, and addresses skills, technology, process, and customer experience concerns that top marketers work with every day. Building a differentiated brand and communications strategy, and strategy for campaigns, content by integrating industry insights, changing buyer behaviour trends into programs also is part of my research agenda. I focus on advising clients on integrated B2B marketing, demand generation, sales and marketing alignment, digital marketing strategy, and customer engagement.
Jun 2014 to July 2022	**Cigniti Technologies Ltd.** **Vice President & Global Head, Marketing** Cigniti (Location – Hyderabad, & Philadelphia, USA) Cigniti Technologies, World's Largest Independent Software Testing Firm with annual revenues of **$125 Mn USD**) Summary: - Reporting to CEO, Srikanth Chakkilam & Cigniti board led by Mr. Phaneesh Murthy, Independent Director. Now reporting to CRO. Been part of the growth story since 2014 when Cigniti was a 25 Million Dollar firm. - In my current role, as the **Chief Brand Custodian & Global Head of Marketing** of Cigniti, I define and drive the overall Global marketing strategy for both services for diverse industries including Banking and Financial Services, Retail, Healthcare as well as product marketing for our IP, BlueSwan™. Leading a team of 20 folks in Core Marketing & about 55 People in Inside Sales (Demand Generation), I am responsible to enhancing brand Cigniti and generate demand for our sales team while building and strengthening the high-performance marketing team. 1. **Digital Marketing, Data Analytics & Lead Generation** - Heading Digital Marketing for Demand generation & Social media engagement using paid and unpaid channels. Researching and evaluating channels, platforms, messages, format, style on regular basis to understand which works best towards achieving our objectives. - Researching & implementing newer methods of lead generation, visitor engagement (Exit intent, Heatmaps, Custom events, Welcome Mats, Audio blogs, Podcasts and more) leveraging content from webinars for global audience (Gotowebinar, Techgig, Webinarninja, Webinarjam) and programmatic ad platforms and Demand Side platforms (DSPs). 2. **Strategic Partnerships, Alliances Sales & Marketing** - Handling Partner relations & joint GTM strategies with 40+ Testing tools partners – Microfocus, Qualitia, Tricentis, Appvance.ai, Experitest, and more with a Strategic, Solutions, Innovation standpoint. - Refined the Global Partnerships and Alliances function at Cigniti to build Partnership evaluation and onboarding checklists, joint PR, training, Sales and delivery enablement, Support CoE Setup and more - Achieve dual objective of leveraging partnerships to jointly Go-to-Market (GTM) with partners, serve clients better while getting margins on license sales and driving new revenue opportunities with top partners; Creating GTM strategies for new solutions and partnership roadmaps. 3. **Marketing automation & Marketing Data analytics**

- o Have setup Hubspot marketing automation & now migrating to Salesforce Pardot, leveraging email automation workflows. Also used tools such as Leadformix, Mailchimp, Sendy (Amazon SES), SendinBlue & others. Leveraging "Amazon Polly", Amazon's AI based text to speech converter and converted all the text into audio blog format. Also implemented CDN for website speed and performance.

4. **Account Based Marketing & Research**
   - o Doing Account Based Marketing including Buyer Persona & Customer Profile Mapping in pursuit of larger deals & Must-Have Accounts (MHAs), leveraging the Market Research Team of 4 people.
   - o Setup the Account based marketing team from ground up and are currently hiring for a grid based ABM approach. Hands on with 360 degree campaign management for micro-targets and hyper personalization.
   - o Actively done Sales Enablement, conducting training sessions for sales team on Social selling, leveraging marketing generated account intelligence. Evaluating Demandbase & Terminus currently.
   - o Responsible for unique campaigns such as Foamboard cartoon strip campaigns.

5. **Branding, Influencer Marketing & Thought Leadership**
   - o Creating the overall marketing strategy and driving execution. Drove the initiative of centralizing marketing assets for use across the organization as single source of truth (Marketing portal).
   - o Handling **Advisory Relations** & **Analyst relations** – Working with ISG, Zinnov, Avasant & Everest. Working with Industry and Testing analysts from Gartner, Forrester, NelsonHall, Everest, HFS.
   - o Handling Influencer relations – Media & PR, CXO branding, awards & speaker proposals.
   - o Building relationship with journalists and IT editors of leading publications for Named articles, Blog Syndication & Guest Blogging; Working with Adfactors for Investor Relations & Public Relations.

6. **Creatives & Content**
   - o Planning & executing the content strategy and content calendar for the organization. Hands-on with Content generation with lead generation focus - product material & marketing collaterals (online and offline) including website copy, microsites, landing pages, whitepapers, case studies & blogs. Expertise in Landing page optimization. Currently lead a content team of 3 ppl.
   - o Creation of Videos, explainer videos, infographics, social banners, digital campaign banners & Support for RFIs/RFPs & Sales decks as well. Strong in GTM (Go-to-market) strategy & Competitor analysis and competitive intelligence.
   - o Conceptualized & driving Cigniti QE Podcast show – QATalks. Working with external vendor Sweetfish to host podcasts and establish this as a new channel for lead generation.
   - o Excel in negotiating pricing with vendors for diverse services – list purchase, rental, managed ad placements, Email inserts, sponsorships, ad slots, Telemarketing vendors and many more.

7. **Offline Marketing (Events, Workshops, Conferences Marketing)**
   - o Responsible for maximizing Event marketing ROI - Speaker slots in top conferences, event planning including Booth & workshop planning, Collaterals, & increase CXO connects in post event dinners.

	○ Conducted & Anchored 15+ Software Testing meetups & thought leadership sessions in Philadelphia, California, Atlanta, London, Australia and more. Have conducted Cigniti's flagship customer event – Leadership in Quality Engineering (LiQE) to increase Cigniti Mindshare using Influencer marketing. Sponsored & hosted booths at big-sized events in US including DevOps East, StarEast 2017,19 StarWest 2017,19, GDS & Millenium Alliance Events in 2018. ○ Conceptualized and initiated Cigniti Testing Hackathon – Cignathon 2020 and Cigniti Software Testing Meetups in India. It became a very good vehicle for branding and talent acquisition. **8. Inside Sales Team & Telecalling team** ○ 55 people team with folks involved in Cold calling and Emailing. This engine works as the best lead generation engine. Entire team has been moved to Salesforce Pardot as of Feb 2021. **9.** *In addition*, here are the things I am responsible for. ○ Working closely with **IP & Innovation** team to provide them inputs for joint solution development with partners. ○ Handling the **Investor Relations,** by working closely with CFO of Cigniti. Engaging with IR firm Adfactors for both IR and PR; meeting fund houses, family offices and investor events. ○ Handling **Talent branding**, Employee engagement & Reputation management by working closely with CHRO, Cigniti. ○ Handling the **Patents & trademarks** by working closely with Cigniti Legal team. We have won trademarks for Blueswan and two US patents from USPTO for Cigniti's BlueSwan CESTA in 2018. ○ Handling the **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) team** by working with GMR Varalakshmi Foundation, to ensure we leverage that as a vehicle to engage with the society, give back to it, engage with employees and with clients. ○ Also, I have the additional responsibility of being a member of the **6-member POSH committee** for Cigniti, towards building a work environment free of sexual harassment.
Feb 2014 to Jun 2014	**TATA Business Support Services Ltd.** **Sr. Manager, Marketing** *(Work Location – Hyderabad)* • Reporting to Chief Customer Experience Officer • Led Digital Marketing function at TataBSS & responsible for Annual Marketing budget. ○ Created **comprehensive digital marketing strategy** including collateral creation calendar, organic and paid campaign strategy, Media & Analyst Relations, Video & Email strategy. ○ Extensively worked with Basecamp, Zoho CRM, Zoho Campaigns, Salesloft, Picreel, Aweber & other alternative tools for marketing automation (using Drip Marketing & Leave/Exit intent) ○ Involved in team & capability building, hiring and performance reviews for the marketing team. Team size handled – 12 (including interns from XIMB & Tata Administrative Services)
Oct -09 to Feb-14	**Mindfire Solutions Ltd.** **Sr. Manager, Marketing** *(Work Location – Bhubaneswar)* • Reported to CEO; Contributed to and developing long-term marketing plans and strategies and executed them; Hands-on expertise in E-Mail & Adwords campaigns.

	• Handled Sales for Mindfire for 1.5 years (IT Services – Remote Sales over Skype from India for US geography), for all of the Web leads & Inside Sales leads generated by my team. Also handled Sales operations for North America with a 3 People team. • Have extensively run digital marketing for Mindfire, setup teams for digital marketing for diverse industries such as Healthcare, Banking and financial services, Insurance, Retail and more. • Managed production of marketing materials, Case studies, Whitepapers, leaflets, posters and billboards and corporate video; **Managed budgets** for marketing activities like the Mega Mindfire DDM-IT Quiz etc. • Set up SEO team, Pay-per-Click (Adwords) team & traditional marketing team focused on events and roundtables. Handled distributed teams of designers, web-editors and freelancers for campaigns. • Have used Google Analytics & Adwords PPC tools extensively. Good expertise in Google Webmasters and Search Engine Optimization for both Google & Bing (Cleared Web CEO – "SEO Certification"). • Handled media releases, Mentored and led teams of people from XIMB, SPJain, Deakin University
Apr-09 to Oct-09	**FINO Ltd. (Financial Information Networks and Operations)** **Project & Product Manager, RSBY** *(Work Location – Mumbai)* • Managed RSBY Account & SPOC for Ministry of Labour and Employment Government officials, The World Bank, ICICI, FINO Operations and 3rd party vendors. Worked closely with the Product marketing team at FINO to launch the Central Server and Kiosk solutions. • Interim Rating within Probation – **Band '1'** within 3 months of joining FINO & Role realignment. • Won First Prize in Fino Quiz Competition and Nominated for *Employee of the Month-Aug 2009*.
Jun-03 to May-08	**Infosys Technologies Ltd.** **Programmer Analyst (Development, Testing & Account Mining)** *(Work Location – Aetna, CT, USA & India)* • Led 15+ member offshore project teams in Mainframe, Desktop, Web services in Testing and Application development area for Claims and Provider systems. • Awarded 'Success in AIS', **Highest excellence award** in Aetna Information Services in Nov 2007 • Received Infosys **PA – Band – 1** for 2 years in a row & Nominated for *IHL – MVP in 2008.* • Received **Outstanding Performance Award** for MFS Pricing Project in Nov-07 and other felicitations.

My Core Beliefs

• Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.
• What matters is that we stand. Standing tall is just a matter of time.
• Marketing is Science as well as Art. Data driven Insights is the science. How we use these insights to create a pleasurable customer experience is the art!
• Emotion laden Storytelling is the key to differentiation in messaging.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT INDORE

Prabandh Shikhar, Rau – Pithampur Road, Indore – 453 556 Madhya Pradesh, India

Website: www.iimidr.ac.in   Telephone: +91 731 243 9666