



Vivek Chaturvedi, Associate Director, Brand Marketing, Tupperware India | BI India

BRANDS

Marketing in the times of Covid-19: Tupperware India

SAMARPITA BANERJEE | JUN 9, 2020, 10:00 IST


How brands are navigating the new normal

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- In our latest interview series, we talk to brands to understand how they are coping with the new normal and their strategies towards navigating these difficult times.
- In today's interview, Vivek Chaturvedi, Associate Director, Brand Marketing, Tupperware India to understand how the last few months have been for the brand, and how things will change in the future.
- He also tells us what Tupperware will stand for in a post-Covid world.

The government's call for a national lockdown, while probably helped a lot in curbing the rapid spread of the virus, hit shop owners and retailers across the country hard. However, with relaxations under Lockdown 4.0, shops are now opening up and there is hope that things will slowly fall in place.

While things are still far from getting back to normal, shops and retailers are now opening up to almost new world where they have to follow the government's guidelines, following all necessary safety measures.



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Premium homeware brand Tupperware recently announced that it has reopened close to 40% of its outlets spread across 17 cities. The brand is now planning to focus on e-commerce to meet the demand from its consumers.

Since social distancing might become an intrinsic part of this new world order, it is interesting to know how retailers will navigate this change. We recently caught up with Vivek Chaturvedi, Associate Director, Brand Marketing, Tupperware India to understand how the last few months have been for the brand, and how things will change in the future. He also tells us what Tupperware will stand for in a post-Covid world.

Excerpts:

Q) How have the past few weeks been for the brand? Since both retail and e-commerce have been shut down, how is the brand dealing with this new situation?

The last few weeks were full of challenges as our entire production unit, warehouse and retail outlets, e-commerce deliveries were shut with direct selling being the only medium that was operational but with limitations. With certain relaxations provided under Lockdown 4.0, we are looking forward to revitalizing business operations in line with relaxations. Now, we will be able to accept orders and deliver Tupperware products to our consumers via online retail and e-commerce platforms. We also plan to revive operation of few retail outlets keeping intact with government guidelines and safety measures. We are also training and equipping our DS Salesforce with technology enabled virtual solutions for enhancing consumer outreach, engagement, and drive sales.

Q) As a marketer, what are your priorities during times of crisis like the one we are living today?

Currently, our actions are ranging from rapid responses to more fundamental and strategic shift to match with constantly changing business and community landscape and positioning the organization to thrive in a new normal. Irrespective of where your brand was on consumer perception curve pre Covid, now it is likely to change and might also need a course correction keeping up with change in consumer behavior and habits at global level. As a marketer, in-the-moment marketing is important and brands should focus to re-ignite their faith in customers during these tough times making them feel heard, valued, and cared rather than spreading messages around just products and sales. Thus, we are looking for technology enabled virtual solutions for enhancing consumer engagement with compassion and outreach.

We are optimistic for the opportunities in coming future and utilizing the down time to Reboot, Reinvent and Reignite through analysis of the way things are currently actioned and then doing them better in coming future.

Q) Do you believe it is important to communicate with consumers in adverse times? Do you think the correct communication in times like these can help cement your place in the consumer's life?

Interacting with the customers regularly in these unprecedented times is our utmost priority as a brand.

An open communication with a long-term perspective is essential and we are glad that we are doing that effectively. When you help people during an emergency the emotion stays; you are likely to have a stronger connect in the future. Catering to the shift in consumer behavior, brands should not be pushing sales messages piggybacking a crisis.

While social distancing will be the new norm, video platforms of YouTube, Facebook and Instagram are mediums to highlight the new ways people are looking to educate and entertain themselves as well as be socially connected. Thus, we are keeping pace with the new demands of the consumer. Our YouTube platform is constantly talking about Try at Home recipes as there is a huge set of audience who is looking online for quick, healthy & immunity building recipes.

Apart from SM handles, we are also sending direct communication from our MD's Desk to our customer database.

Q) How have you been communicating with your consumers in the past few weeks? How have you tweaked your marketing strategies to adapt to these changing, dynamic times?

As we continue to face the Lockdown 4.0, it is extremely important to make the consumer believe that we are all in this 'together'. As we stay together by being apart, communication via digital platform will certainly remain our best tool to link us all together. We are reaching out to our consumers via social media to talk about the things a person can do indoors.

To keep consumers engaged and motivated this month, we are running a week-long contest on social media - 'Bake with Love' as Tupperware is celebrating its 24th Birthday this year. We are encouraging our consumers to wish us by baking an innovative cake and stand to win exciting gifts from us. This is also a shout out to newly debuted audience in the kitchen. Earlier, we also shared musical face off along with 'Try this at Home' series for quick recipes to build immunity and even to satisfy hunger pangs as well as easy-to-do exercises to keep us all in good shape. This is still being continued on YouTube Platform.

It is important to encounter such situations with a positive outlook, be adaptive to new demands of the consumers, generate optimism and offer solutions to maximize consumer satisfaction and excel business objectives.

Q) Is Digital taking the biggest share of your advertising pie?

Post the strategic transformation that Tupperware India underwent last year, we have strived to be a Digital-first brand in our communication. In these trying times it's vital to keep a finger on the pulse of the consumer. The worldwide lockdown has resulted in significant shifts in customer behavior, specifically in terms of digital media consumption. Keeping pace with new demands of the consumer during is our supreme focus. Social media will be the core around which all our messaging will be taken forward in the coming times. Post lockdown also people will continue to prioritize virtual over in-person engagements.

We are also hosting Instagram Live sessions with influencers and health experts to provide authentic information to our audience to cope-up with the criticality of the pandemic. In addition to that we are making our DS Salesforce equipped and trained with tech enabled solutions for encouraging virtual meet ups to engage with customers and drive sales.

Q) Thanks to this experience, consumer behavior might see a permanent change. How are you as a brand making sure that you are still a part of the consumer's life?

A strategic digital shift has occurred as social distancing continues to be a practice. Business objectives and targets are being revamped to strategize, communicate, and act with compassion towards associated work force and communities. We are also focusing to innovate and revisit sales strategy - selling digitally versus in-person.

Tupperware adopted a harmonious multi-channel strategy - a combination of physical stores and online marketplaces along with our own webstore - to increase its presence as well as tap the online shopping boom in India. As per our online strategy, the company has listed majority of product portfolio on leading e-commerce platforms. We are encouraging our direct sellers to embrace technology and host virtual meet-ups and gatherings to drive sales. We are supporting DS by highlighting products that provide solutions to numerous families, like how to keep food fresh for longer, how to preserve bulk buying, create quick and easy meals and great ideas for family time while everyone is home together.

Also, challenges comes with a silver lining and the new consumer demands emanating from this changing scenario are in sync with the ethos and values of our brand as millions of people are spending More Time at Home. The newly debuted audience in the kitchen combined will introduce innovation in the Kitchen and homeware category. We are hopeful that this evolution will automatically lead to good business in the coming future.

Q) What have your key learnings from this experience been? Has it made you better equipped, as a marketer, to deal with unforeseen events in the future, making you more agile?

Primarily, this scenario has taught us that we must embrace creative, and timely approaches to communicate relevant brand value propositions. The way people are facing this challenge together at a global level makes this period an interesting case study. We can look at these learning from the situation as 3Ps of Pandemic Marketing- Panic, Purpose and Precision.

Panic implies an authentic reaction which is life-saving, brands must respond authentically during crisis. Which takes us to the second aspect purpose that implies going back to your roots and communicating what you truly believe in. All authentic communication tends to be purpose-driven. Precision comes when the consumer's purchase journey as well as her brand consumption journey primarily resides on the digital medium. So who do we talk to, when do we talk to them, and what do we convey to them, can all be planned with precision.

As a marketer, the larger objective is to generate goodwill for the brand so that in long run users connect with the brand authentically. From business perspective, online and social selling is the most viable way to realistically reach the customers even post lockdown as people will be hesitant to step out of their homes like before.

Q) In a post-COVID world, what would brand Tupperware want to stand for?

I would reiterate that ensuring health, safety, well-being, and livelihood of the extended Tupperware India family and the communities in which we serve, has always been our utmost priority and we will continue to do so, going forward. Our larger objective is to increase brand value and goodwill so that in the long run consumers connect with us truly.

Our brand line 'More Time Living' has been extended to communicate that it's for you, your family and the planet. Everything that we do has to have a positive impact on the community and the eco-system around us. This is something we have stood for irrespective of the crisis and we will continue to remain true to this belief even in the post-Covid world.

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