

The Fevicol Brotherhood

Pidilite needs just the Ps of Marketing - Bharat Puri and Piyush and Prasoon Pandey. **Brand Equity** chats with the trio that's stayed together through thick, thin and sticky situations

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Fevicol is back with a splash. A new film for its Marine variant features a bunch of street vendors who dunk their makeshift stalls underwater to evade the watchful eyes of cops, and bring them back up shipshape, once the threat has moved on. All except the one guy who didn't use Fevicol Marine, that is. Pidilite also has a new ad for Ezeespray, a spray on adhesive with an ad that's a hilarious sendup of deodorant advertising.

A great time then, to meet the men who've created some of India's most consistently memorable advertising - the three Ps of Marketing, if you will. The core team today comprises Bharat Puri, managing director, Pidilite; Piyush Pandey, executive chairman and creative director, O&M South Asia and Prasoon Pandey, director, Corcolse. The trio have an association that goes back far longer than their most recent col-



Stills from Fevicol Ezeespray ad

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PHOTO: BHARAT CHANDIA

laboration. **Brand Equity** quizzed them on the new campaign, the recipe for great creative work and whether such a partnership can be replicated. For the complete interview and some great 'making of' stories, please check etbrandequity.com

How did the latest campaign for Marine come about?
Bharat Puri: Marine is a well-known product, but we found in a competitive context, a lot of people were passing off their 'waterproof' adhesives as 'Marine'. Our point was to tell them here's the real deal and do it in the trademark Fevicol tone and manner.

What was the experience like shooting the film?
Prasoon Pandey: We were like kids: all excited by a great idea. We started living in that world: thinking 'what would such a contraption be like?' Instead of shot breakdowns, we spent a month actually building this, and observing how it breaks down, folds etc. We believe if you enjoy it, so will the audience.

What's the reaction been so far?
Puri: I've returned from two conferences and showed the film to 1500 people. In both places, I had to remind them to start clapping only when the film ends, because they'd start two thirds of the way through! I'm a firm believer that whenever you want to see a real reaction, show a film to salespeople. They always vote with their hearts. They don't say things like *(In an offhanded voice)* "This meets the objectives at a stra-

tegic and temporal level." Or analyse the shot breakdown. They say *yeh chalega* or *yeh nahtn chalega*

After all these years, do you feel under pressure working on Fevicol?
Piyush Pandey: Pidilite didn't put pressure on me from day one and has never done so, to date! It's a challenge to yourself, but one that doesn't scare you; it liberates you. The idea on Marine came from the team; I didn't write it. My job is always to ensure that the core never gets diluted.

So, you are not even slightly possessive about the brand?
Piyush: The word is not possessive

but protective. For the last 20 years, I've been getting 10 letters a week from random people saying 'Sir, I have an idea for Fevicol.' *Hazaron aate hain!* I have to write back saying 'Well tried' or 'This idea is similar' etc. I also have to do this with my own people! (Laughs) Especially the new ones. They don't get the soul and think it's all about something funny. And then I have to say or 'Chalo, tereko mein Fevicol samjata hoon.' Over time, they get the hang of it. You have to hold their hand. Everyone thinks they can write on Fevicol. My barber came up with an idea about sticking hair to a bald person. And I had to tell him "This is not Fevicol, but I'm glad to have sparked some creativity in you." **Prasoon:** My mother used to use a phrase "*sehaj vyang.*" The humour is very gentle; it's never abrasive or demeaning but it packs a comment and a slice of life.

What do you tell your team when you are explaining the brand to them?
Piyush: Don't try too hard. Sometimes you have a lovely joke but it has to be converted to something within the zone. It's like RK Laxman. Don't ask me to analyse it too much; I'll lose it then (Laughs)

How do you bring out the best from your agency?
Puri: We have two creative souls who know the brand as well if not better than all the marketing guys put together; our job is easier. They have such a feel for what's right and what isn't, what will work and won't. All three of us are clients, in a way, and all three are creatives.

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Puri: The first time you hear the film, you know it is either there, or no. We don't have pre-productions with Prasoon since he's not just director but producer, creative head and marketing manager. At best, we have a half hour discussion, trying to build on each other. All marketing fellows want the brand a little more (Laughs). I've been trying that for 30 years with Piyush Pandey, but given the work has all been successful, I think, maybe he's right.

How do you resolve disagreements?
Puri: In the end, we are not trying to avert nuclear war or solve world hunger. We are just making people stick two things together, eat a little chocolate or paint their homes. We don't have to get into a situation where it's life or death. We learn and move on.

The Fevicol...



Bharat Puri Piyush Pandey Prasoon Pandey



From the new Fevicol Marine TVC

Piyush: When you know someone, a pause means a lot. The concept of selling an idea is not there, it's more about sharing. Selling an idea is something you do only when you are desperate.

Prasoon: If I'm telling Bharat something and he gives me a slightly controlled response, I know he's not as thrilled as I thought he'd be. If you are sharp enough, you work like that.

RATHER THAN PROVE SOMETHING TO THE OTHER PERSON, WE ARE TRYING TO WIN SOMETHING TOGETHER

Would you say what you have is completely natural? Or can you build such a relationship between agency, filmmaker and client?

Prasoon: One thing that's obvious is anyone would work harder when there's so much trust. I can't say 'I didn't do better because the client didn't give me time, space or was overbearing.' When the client says 'go win this for me', what excuse do I have?

Piyush: It is chemistry. But somethings can be learnt. On hindsight: mutual respect. Where you are not trying to prove something to the other person but instead win something together.

Puri: There are fellows you meet the first time and you hit it off. It's chemistry, but over time, the biggest single things are empathy, respect and not sweating the small stuff.

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