

Branding from the inside



Standing from left: Regional Strategy Director Josh Gallagher, Kumarini Rajakaruna, Achala Ramanayeka, Mindshare Asia Pacific Head of Mobile and New Tech Narayan Murthy Ivaturi and Omnicon Media Group Strategy Managing Partner Deric Wong

Grant duo wins Silver at Young Spikes in Singapore

GRANT McCann duo Achala Ramanayeka and Kumarini Rajakaruna won Silver at the recently concluded Young Spikes Media competition in Singapore.

Spikes Asia is an annual event that brings together the finest creative thinkers in the advertising industry from around the world into one platform to showcase their talents. Achala and Kumarini were selected to represent Sri Lanka after winning a competition held amongst the local advertising industry.

“We got a very challenging brief centred on ‘Feminism’.

However we didn’t let this become an obstacle and focused fully on cracking a winning idea. At first we struggled until that figurative light bulb lit in our minds with a refreshing idea; from then on we crafted the presentation all guns blazing,” said Achala Ramanayeka and Kumarini Rajakaruna.

Team Singapore won Gold while two individuals from Australia took Bronze. “It was a real privilege to compete alongside industry experts and do our company and country proud,” said the happy duo.

eMarketingEye bags 6 awards at 2015 W3 Awards

Wins 2 Golds and 4 Silvers for ‘Hotel and Travel’ websites

EMARKETINGEYE (www.emarketingeye.com), the award-winning Sri Lankan online marketing agency, won a host of international awards for the second time this year, having bagged six awards – two Golds and four Silvers – at the prestigious W3 Awards held recently.

eMarketingEye won two Gold awards for the 98 Acres Resort & Spa – Ella website and the Cantaloupe Hotels website, under the category ‘General Website Categories – Hotel and Lodging’. The company also won four Silver awards – for the Aitken Spence Hotels and Citrus Leisure websites under the category ‘General Website Categories – Hotel and Lodging’ and for the Aitken Spence Travels and Walkers Tours websites under the category ‘General Website Categories – Travel’.

With these set of awards, eMarketingEye has won over 15 international awards in 2015. It won multiple awards at the prestigious ‘The 2015 Communicator Awards’ and ‘Interactive Media Awards (IMA)’ earlier this year.

Currently in its 10th year, the W3 Awards highlights creative excellence on the Web, and recognises the people behind award-winning sites, marketing programs, social content, mobile sites/apps and online video. This year, the W3 Awards received over 5,000 entries from ad agencies, PR firms, interactive agencies, in-house creative professionals, web designers, graphic designers and web enthusiasts.

eMarketingEye is a Google AdWords and Analytics Certified Partner Company that offers the total range of online marketing services such as e-strategy consulting, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), Pay-Per-Click marketing (PPC), web development, social media optimisation, online reputation management, e-mail marketing, web analytics and Internet Booking Engine solutions. Prior to these latest wins, the company has won numerous other awards – totalling over 70 national and international awards – over the past eight years. These awards include multiple Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards at HSMIA Adrian Awards, Best in Class

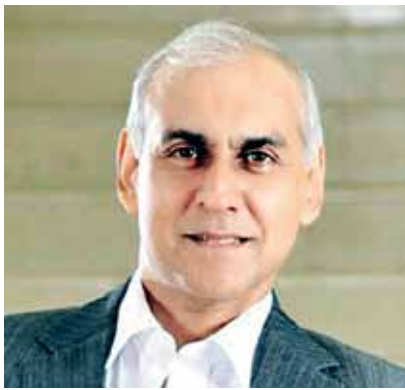


eMarketingEye CEO Rajitha Dahanayake

Awards at Interactive Media Awards (IMA), Best SEO Strategy Award from ad-tech, Google Campaign of the Year 2010 and Google SME Agency of the Year 2009.

Expressing his views on the company’s latest international awards, eMarketingEye CEO Rajitha Dahanayake stated, “It is yet another proud moment for the eMarketingEye team. We are thrilled to win as many as six awards at the W3 Awards. Together with the multiple awards at The Communicator Awards and Interactive Media Awards (IMA) earlier this year, this makes it a ground-breaking year for the company in terms of award wins. As an organisation in the forefront of Sri Lanka’s online marketing space, we continue to raise the bar in our solutions. These awards not only serve to portray how we continue to demonstrate excellence in our work but also drive home the point that our online marketing solutions for the Hotel and Travel industry are unquestionably of international standard.”

The W3 is sanctioned and judged by the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts (AIVA), an invitation-only body consisting of top-tier professionals from acclaimed media, interactive, advertising, and marketing firms. AIVA members include executives from organisations such as AgencyNet, AvatarLabs, Big Spaceship, Block Media, Conde Nast, Disney, The Ellen Degeneres Show, Fry Hammond Barr, Microsoft, MTV Networks, Polo Ralph Lauren, Sotheby’s Institute of Art, Wired, Yahoo! and many others. It is the first major web competition to be accessible to a wide spectrum of companies, from Fortune 500 companies and international agencies to even the smallest of firms.



By RUCHI GUNewardENE

SUCCESSFUL brands are built in the laboratories and not in the media. This involves research and development departments where companies invest in creating new products, systems and processes or gathering and mining data to understand trends in the laboratories of our minds. Facts, imagination, insights and a sense of the future are the bedrock on which truly successful brands are built.

Doing so requires diligent gathering, harnessing and applying the right resources to create unique products and services. For example Body Shop offered ethical products way back in the 1980’s, before it became a trend and reaped the benefits of that differentiation for many years, before competitors took notice and followed suit. Similarly companies such as Amazon were built on technological innovations in the 1990’s with a future view on how consumers would purchase products before others followed.

Even business to business companies need to look at branding in similar vein, by searching beyond their core manufacturing capabilities and exploring ways of enhancing systems, processes, practices which can create points of service differentiation that customers appreciate.

This is what consumers who are inundated by products and offers are looking for, and is the essence of a strong brand. It is what sets one brand apart from another.

In order to ensure there is consistency in this delivery, and there is continuous improvement, there has to be a clear definition of what the brand stands for. Unless this is done and grounded in each individual company, there will be little incentive or direction for the employees to follow.

In this context, the brand is no longer a logo or a sexy design. It is not limited to what the packaging looks like. Instead, it is a holistic expression of the user experience.

THE annual certification ceremony of Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing (SLIM) was held on 7 September at the grand ballroom of Waters Edge, Battaramulla. The ceremony was held for the purposes of recognising and awarding all those who have passed out and successfully completed the Preliminary Certificate in Marketing (PCM) and the Certificate in Pharmaceutical Marketing (PharMa).

The PCM qualification is a course especially designed for beginners in Marketing with a duration of three months of study leading to the Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing (Sri Lanka). It is an entry point for an internationally recognised professional status in Marketing. The rich content of PCM coupled with practical scenarios provide an individual with adequate knowledge to commence a career in marketing or add value, if employed in the field of sales or marketing.

Students of the PCM intakes PCM III and PCM IV of 2014 and PCM I and PCM II of 2015 attended the Certification Ceremony. Medals and special certificates were awarded to the best students, first runners-up and second runners-up of four PCM intakes in recognition of their achievement. Overall, a total of more than 1000 PCM holders qualified at the certification ceremony 2015.

M.M.T.N. Rajapaksha, G.D.K.C. Fernando and K.N.M.L.N. Kosgahakubura were awarded as the Best Student, 1st Runner-up and 2nd Runner-up of the PCM

Step 1: Define the brand

Defining the brand and what it is expected to be, along with a supporting set of beliefs for employees to follow, is the first step in the brand building process. This is linked to both the business rationale and the aspirational role that it has set itself to play. This involves introspection to understand what it can deliver, coupled with an outward view to ensure it does so in a uniquely different way, which is how Ceylinco Insurance revolutionised the motor insurance market and stamped its leadership through “on the spot”.

Step 2: Getting employees to believe in the brand

Ensuring consistent behaviour or service delivery across all employees is a challenge which involves strong and sustained internal communications and carrying through the meaning of the brand from awareness, understanding, belief to actually acting on it. This has been the Dialog mantra around delivering the ‘future today’, which instils innovation across all platforms.

Step 3: Delivering the experience

It is the front line staff who meet, greet and assist customers, who are the face of the brand in any service related or business to business company. Hotels, hospitals, retail stores including those selling products directly to other businesses (e.g. apparel manufacturers) need to get their employees to ‘live’ the brand, to uniquely differentiate themselves. An employee at Embark for example is bound to be an animal lover, which makes the brand delivery so much more authentic.

Step 4: Reward and recognise

Rewarding employees who live the brand on a continuous basis and aligning the recruitment to hire those who are most likely to suit the brand ensures continuity to build for the long term. Looking for the right skills and aptitudes that will represent the brand promise, results in over-coming the difficulties with employees who are not in step with the expectations of the business. Based on the clarity of the Ceylinco, Dialog and Embark brands, they are able to fully align employee’s actions to deliver each experience.

Singapore Airlines is a brand that captures all of these steps.

Looking beyond the Singapore Girl

The highly aspirational Singapore Girl is only the tip of the



iceberg. By delving deep into the organisation, and identifying its systems and processes we can truly understand how they are able to deliver the brand experience.

Singapore Airlines starts its service delivery by identifying its weak points, which it does through customer complaints. Every customer letter be it a complaint or a compliment creates a chain reaction throughout the organisation. Depending on the issue at hand, it gets the rigorous attention of the relevant people cascading up the organisation and is then resolved with the single minded objective of fixing it with a proactive solution.

They also have a programme for staff ideas related to two specific areas, on how service could be improved to customers and how costs can be cut. Cost cutting is a demanding culture within Singapore Airlines.

The company also uses benchmarking studies to establish its service standards, not just from within the airline industry but from other industries as well. It studies all sources of intelligence available from IATA, Global Airlines Performance (GAP) survey and flying on competitor airlines to obtain intelligence and competitive offerings.

Outside the industry it would benchmark its service standards with the best hotels and retailers of the world amongst others, by carrying out similar surveys. The objective of these studies is to elicit the wow factor from customers through minute innovations. To further help in this process, there is a dedicated product innovation department that looks at global trends and customer lifestyle needs and future expectations and the resultant likely behaviour.

Innovations that they have created through such forecasting have included Krisworld on-demand entertainment for all classes, a class beyond first on the A380 airline, amongst many others which are now industry standards.

An investment of one million dollars in a simulator that created the identical air pressure and humidity as that of an air borne aircraft led them to discover changes in food on the palate, which led to moderating the level of spice in their servings.

The entire cabin experience of the Singapore Girl is so finely honed that they undertake research, trials, time and motion studies to assess the customer reaction during various phases of interaction to ensure that a service innovation is supported by a documented procedure.

Which then leads to the entire training system. The Singapore Girl air stewardesses undergoes training for 15 weeks compared to the industry average of eight weeks. Apart from being nearly double that of other airlines it includes areas of high specialty too beyond just the functional skills of a stewardess. It includes soft skills such as personal interaction, personal poise, grooming and deportment and even skills relating to managing one’s own emotions with handling highly demanding passengers.

In addition, the company supports extra-curricular activities such as performing arts, wine appreciation, gourmet food appreciation and compulsory community engagement at various welfare programmes. Whilst the training programme is transformational, these activities help build friendship amongst themselves and empathy with the community. They can also choose courses such as leadership skills, European languages amongst others, whilst moving from a system of directing the courses to one of self learning.

According to Brand Finance research, Singapore Airlines is the world’s most valuable airline brand. As can be seen, a significant portion of their brand building investment is made inside the business itself, which leads to customer loyalty and willingness to pay a premium to enjoy the Singapore Airline service experience, all of which is embodied in the iconic Singapore Girl.

(Ruchi Gunewardene is the Managing Director of Brand Finance Lanka and Founder of STING Consultants).



The head table

SLIM awards best performers at annual certification ceremony



SLIM President Ruwan Liyanagamage III 2014 respectively. The best performers of PCM IV 2014 were; best student, M.N. Weerakotuwu, 1st Runner-up, H.N. Matarage and 2nd Runner-up, N.S. Hewavitharana.

The award for the best student of PCM I 2015 was awarded to W.I.N. Perera while A.D.H.B. Udamvita and A.W.A.I.S. Wickramasinghe were the 1st and 2nd Runners-up respectively. PCM II 2015 best performers were, the best student, A.M. Meepage and 1st Runner-up, G.D.B.P. Premaratne, while N.N. Pathirana were joint 2nd Runners-up.

SLIM Past President and



Chief Guest Godwin Perera presenting a certificate

Ceylinco Insurance PLC and Ceylinco Life Insurance Ltd. Chairman J. Godwin Perera graced the ceremony as the Chief Guest. In his address he stressed on the initiatives taken by SLIM to improve the quality of education in the changing landscape of Sri Lanka.

“I congratulate this honourable institution for the vast advances made over the years in the vital area of Marketing Education and I must at this stage commend SLIM for the initiative taken in conducting a special course in Pharmaceutical Marketing. Also would take pleasure to offer my sincere congratulations to all those who would

be receiving their certificates today and my only wish for them, is that this will be only the beginning of their journey along the learning curve of marketing.”

While congratulating on the success, SLIM President Ruwan Liyanagamage spoke about the value of PCM and the future prospects of the certificate holders in his address.

“The PCM or Preliminary Certificate in Marketing is your doorway to the Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing and thereafter to an MBA. In tandem, or independently, you could also specialise according to your field of work, and choose from an array of

Diplomas and Certificate Level courses which have specially been designed by SLIM, with the needs of the corporate world in mind. Being the national body for marketing in Sri Lanka, we always look at how we could innovate and offer you a competitive edge so that it will arm you with the qualifications that you require to move upward in the hierarchical ladder of your organisation.”

“We are enthralled by the fact that students of other professions undertaking marketing studies and following the Preliminary Certificate in Marketing which is a testament to the value proposition created by this short course. We have observed many from different other professionals completing this course of study which provides an understanding of the marketing fundamentals and a philosophical notion that marketing is for everyone. Irrespective of one’s career, occupation or the profession, indulgence in the marketing arena makes a person successful. A more logical approach could be provided to the behaviour, interactions & Presentations of those who qualified by marketing theory,” SLIM CEO/ED Sanath Senanayake added in his vote of thanks.