

“CONSUMERISM HAS CHANGED DRASTICALLY”

CAROLINE WINNETT, CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, NEUROFOCUS, POSTULATES TO *4Ps B&M* THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF MARKET RESEARCH AND HOW NEUROSCIENCE CAN FIND ANSWERS TO THE MOST TWISTED QUESTIONS, HELPING BRANDS TO ACHIEVE THE BEST!

■ Swati Sharma

As they step on to the Indian soil, NeuroFocus, the world's leading neuromarketing firm, brings advanced neuroscience knowledge and expertise to the world of branding, advertising and entertainment. With Fortune 100 companies as its clients, the company is redefining conventional market research methodology. Caroline Winnett, CMO, NeuroFocus had previously founded Albany Associates, was the President of Wilderness Press and CMO at BroadVantage. In an exclusive conversation with *4Ps B&M*, Winnett expounds upon the future of this technology and how it can revolutionise the marketing landscape in India.

How does getting into the mind of a prospect help in crafting a marketing plan? Can science change the orientation of a brand?

At times, a marketer fails to understand the opinions of target customers. They, therefore, end up drafting a wrong answer to the right question.

CAROLINE WINNETT,
CMO, NEUROFOCUS.



Knowing what the consumer wants involves emotions and values; and that is what human nature is all about. The company's advertising and marketing is often the first point of contact with the consumer and the questions that every marketer struggles with is whether it captures the consumers' attention, engages their emotions and gets programmed in to their memory or not; what elements of the marketing mix are most effective? Perhaps, most importantly, will it prompt purchase? When traditional research cannot answer some of these questions... that's where we come in. We, through neurological science, provide detailed, second-by-second responses to these questions, including highly actionable insights into the effectiveness of advertising. Great advertising strikes a responsive chord with consumers where it matters most: the subconscious. Only neurological testing can make the deep impact that is required to access that level of the brain and discover how it responds to all forms of marketing, in every medium, hence transforming the brand as a whole.

How different or more effective is neuromarketing than other marketing researches, surveys or focus groups? How have marketers responded to this new research platform?

Five years ago, our concept was very new. People did wonder as to what we were exactly trying to do. But they soon realised that the application of neuroscience to learn and measure the resonance of a brand provides precise and reliable guidelines for designing, presenting and communicating the brand positioning to prospective customers. This understanding of subconscious preferences is the key to building brand passion and initiating relationships that could last a lifetime. Starting from a crazy new idea, we have managed to convince clients to trust our methods. Indians are very upbeat about technology and we expect prospective clients to use it.

There is a huge difference in the way advertising is approached in

India compared to the US. Culturally, emotion driven advertising is what works here. How long do you think is this trend likely to continue?

It is universally understood that any brand which aspires to be successful needs to strike an emotional connect with target consumers. The degree of this emotional connect might vary from market to market but, at a fundamental level, it does exist globally. In a country like India, where newspapers are published in 101 languages, it becomes extremely inconvenient for companies to understand and comprehend pan India attitudes with respect to a particular product or service. This becomes even more difficult with traditional market research

"This technology measures the brain response directly, without asking questions, bypassing language barriers"

being the primary source of insight. It is here that we expect to carve a niche for ourselves. We plan to move in to any domain where the client wishes to take us.

What are your strategic plans in India and globally? What, according to you, are the major challenges this concept might face?

We have great faith and confidence in the consumers and strong demographics of India. Market research and clients alike are less developed as compared to their western counterparts. So, there is a lot of scope to explore all the possibilities. Apart from media and cosmetics, FMCG companies form a large chunk of our customer base. In India, we want to establish ourselves as a brand that is authentic and delivers actionable, cut-

ting edge insights. Within a span of five years, we have managed to set shops in UK, Europe, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East. We are now strongly focussing on India and China.

But then, what is the future of neuroscience and neuromarketing globally?

It's NeuroFocus. Our technology directly measures the brain responses without asking questions. This allows us to bypass issues of language and regional culture, and helps us deliver to our clients a clear measure of their brands in the consumers' minds, across all regions. Neuroscience attempts to uncover what a consumer notices, likes and remembers about a brand. It measures brand preference in the subconscious mind and aid effective brand concepts early on in the development process. Besides establishing the deep subconscious responses to key brand attributes, it studies unique aspects of the male and female brain and determines insights at the precognitive level, where 95% of all decisions are made. Through these methods, it is possible to track purchase intent, a consumer's awareness of the brand and gauge the novelty value of the product. It sure is very futuristic and a more scientific approach to the worries of marketers/advertisers.

And how do you think has consumerism changed over the years?

Consumerism has changed radically. Earlier, the marketer used to offer limited products and services. Today, the consumers demand for more options. The power has shifted. Brands have started listening to the consumers and technology (social media) has been instrumental in making this possible. Brands undoubtedly have more work to do but the good part is that they know what has to be done. As far as India is concerned, consumers are surrounded with advertising, brands, products, and all sorts of messages. The deep understanding of subconscious preferences by our methodology will help build brand passions for a lifetime. **4Ps**