

# Vodafone Essar's Advertising Strategy

## - The 'Zoozoos' Campaign

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**SYDENHAM INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES  
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## Executive Summary

In today's world of competition, firms are selling goods and services through a variety of direct and indirect channels. Mass advertising is not nearly as effective as it was, so marketers are exploring new forms of communication, such as experimental, entertainment, and viral marketing. One such innovative idea is Vodafone's Zoozoo campaign. Never in the history of Indian advertising we witnessed a campaign that generated so much interest and curiosity among all the segments of the society be it young or old.

In this report, we analyze the marketing strategies used by Vodafone, the efforts that have been put in the making of Zoozoo, and the impact it had on the customers mind. We also discuss what exactly were the objectives behind this idea of marketing. Zoozoo actually was a well directed social media campaign. We need to have a look at the statistics which prove this fact.

The Zoozoo character looks quite funny and easy going on screen. But it has been lots of efforts and expenses that have gone behind making of Zoozoo. The ideas used to make Zoozoo are quite interesting. One of the important concepts used to make Zoozoo a buzz is 'viral marketing.' IPL2 was probably the best time to launch these ads.

Almost all the Zoozoo ads promoted VAS services of Vodafone. The discussion of 4 P's of marketing, the BCG matrix, and SWOT analysis will help in analyzing the approach of Vodafone and kind of research they have done before launching its products. It will also give us an idea as to where Vodafone could have done better. We also discuss persuasion matrix to understand promotional planning of Vodafone.

We conducted a public survey to know people's reaction to the Zoozoo ads, its effect on their approach towards VAS services, can Zoozoo really replace pug as an icon for Vodafone, etc. The data which we have gathered through this survey sheds light on success of Zoozoo in the minds of customers. Finally, we discuss some of the things which could have been done better based on the information we gathered and the survey we conducted.

In a nutshell, Zoozoo campaign is a revolution in the Indian market and we will have lot to learn from the strategies used by Vodafone and also the weaknesses they have shown. Hope you have nice time reading this report!

## 1 Introduction

During one month of IPL second season, it seemed the world cares nothing but Zoozoos. And we can feel it even now, when the ads and the iconic figures are not on air. So what can we call this Zoozoo phenomenon? A brand building masterstroke? Well, let us analyze various aspects of this Vodafone campaign.

Zoozoos are white, ghost-like creatures with ballooned bodies and egg heads who are used to promote various value added services of Vodafone. These ads though look animated are actually real humans in the Zoozoo costumes.

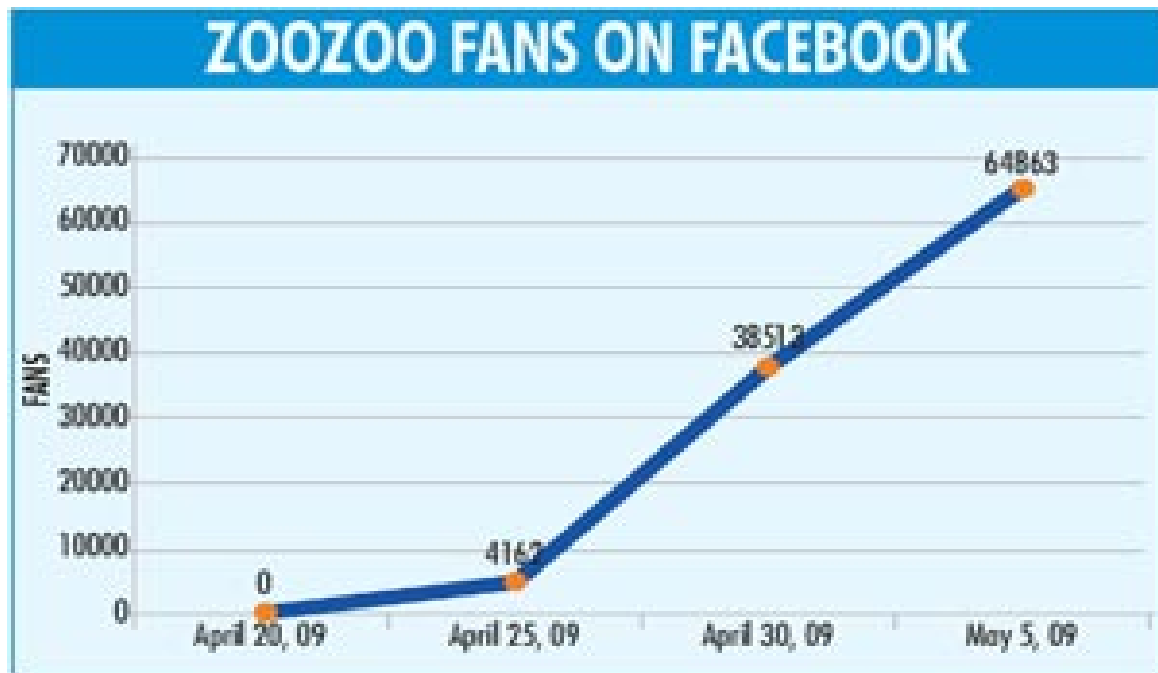


Like it or hate it, Zoozoo itself has become a phenomenon. The number of Facebook fans of Zoozoo have swelled to 3,20,000 (as on Oct 28, 2009) far surpassing the number of fans for cricketing and Bollywood icons like Sachin Tendulkar and Amitabh Bachchan, legendary superheroes like Superman and even comic characters like Asterix.

The real test of effectiveness of Zoozoo lies in its objective achievement. Yes, this campaign didn't generate the sales number to justify the return on the massive investment. Yes, this campaign will never create the pull for Vodafone value added services or increase revenue to that extent.

These were never the objectives of this campaign, therefore we shouldn't judge the effectiveness based on these parameters. What this campaign set out to do is create some much required buzz around the brand and break the clutter among the frenzy surrounding the IPL. Did they succeed? Well, we hardly have doubt on that. In fact, the IPL 2 will forever be remembered as the season of Zoozoos.

## 2 A Well Directed Social Media Campaign



Source: Neo@Ogilvy

The official fan page of Vodafone Zoozoo campaign on Facebook has so far attracted over 70,000 fans. Neo@Ogilvy, the digital arm of O&M, which is managing the Zoozoo Facebook brand page, claims that the official fan page on the social networking site has received more than 2.6 million page views till date, since its launch on April 20, 2009.

On May 4, the keyword Zoozoo was the third highest search word on google.co.in and its YouTube channel is the second most subscribed channel in India.

These ads are typically different in terms of audience acceptance and real good use of user generated content. If we talk about the engagement then it has reached the level where fans have started using Zoozoo characters to create images, which they are uploading on the brand page and thus spreading the word. We must also appreciate its simplicity and subtleness of communicating messages. Here, Vodafone is trying to tell us VAS stories in a world akin to, yet different, from humans.

### 3 Best Marketing Practice

Zoozoo campaign is one of the best campaign in marketing. Never in the history of Indian advertising, we witnessed a campaign that generated so much interest and curiosity among all the segments of the society, be it young or old.

Vodafone was trying hard to capture the VAS Space because it is a potential cash cow for cellular companies. Vodafone also wanted to make the most of the IPL season 2. Although IPL is a crowd puller, it is also a marketer's nightmare because of the clutter. IPL attracts all the deep pocket advertisers and to stand out, one needs to think out of the box.

Thus, ZooZoo was born. ZooZoo is a semi alien semi-human character living in an earth-like place ( lot of which is left to the viewer's imagination). These are very simple beings that are very expressive. They laugh aloud, cry loud and have a child like simplicity around them. I think many of us wanted to be such an expressive being which makes ZooZoo very personal.

The success of ZooZoo is the success of minimalism and simplicity. Although the production process of ZooZoo ads are not simple, as a consumer I was attracted to the simplicity of the concept and the execution. ZooZoo also highlights the power of storytelling. Each ads tells a very simple story. After all, brands are made through story telling.

Another factor that aided the success of ZooZoo is the scale of the campaign. Reports suggest that there are around 25 different ads of ZooZoo aired during IPL 2 season. This unprecedented scale has kept the curiosity high among the viewers. It has in fact dwarfed all the other advertisers in this season.

There is lot of risk being taken behind this campaign. The Vodafone managers who Okayed this campaign may have risked their jobs to bring out such a massive campaign. The agency also risked their credibility. One should appreciate the creative talent of O&M and Nirvana Films who proved that Indian Advertising has come of age.

## 4 Making of zoozoos and Cost

The zoozoos weren't animated characters they were actual human beings who were made to wear body suits. The design of the characters is such that one gets fooled into thinking it is animation.

Prakash Varma, ad filmmaker, Nirvana Films, has directed the commercials, and reveals that the Zoozoos were a big challenge to create. The practical aspects of how they will move, talk, gesticulate and emote were very important. Essentially, costume design and artwork were crucial elements. It took him three weeks of pre-production to understand how it will work. There were two fabrics that were considered for the body suits, and one was rejected for it had too many wrinkles and was shiny. The wrinkles would have shown when the characters moved, thereby shattering the illusion of animation. So they chose the more practical, thicker fabric.

The production team divided the outfit into two parts: the body and the head. The body part of the outfit was stuffed with foam in some places, while the head was attached separately. To make it look bigger than a human head, a harder material called Perspex was used, which in turn was stuffed with foam (with scope for ventilation).

If one wishes to understand the size of this head, here's a fact: a human head would typically reach up to the mouth level of this giant Zoozoo head. They kept the hands and legs thin, which is why we cast women – and occasionally children – wearing the costumes. The thin limbs, contrasted with big bellies and a bulbous head, all add to the illusion that these creatures are 'smaller' than humans. Sets were created to suit the size of the Zoozoos.



Cinematically, this 'size' was a trick: the creatures look smaller than they actually are on screen, to portray a different world of sorts. For this, the speed of shooting was altered: Nirvana shot it in a high-speed format to make them look the size that they do.

Furthermore, simple sets/backdrops were created and spray painted with neutral Greys – a colour of choice so that attention isn't diverted from the main characters. For a supposedly 'outdoor' shot, even the shadow of a Zoozoo was kept 'live' and not done in post production: it was painted in a darker shade of grey on the ground. An even lighting was maintained throughout.

There was virtually no post production work done. The films were shot by Nirvana in Cape Town, South Africa, with the help of a local production house there, called Platypus. Incidentally, the same combination of people also worked on the 'Happy to Help' series last year.

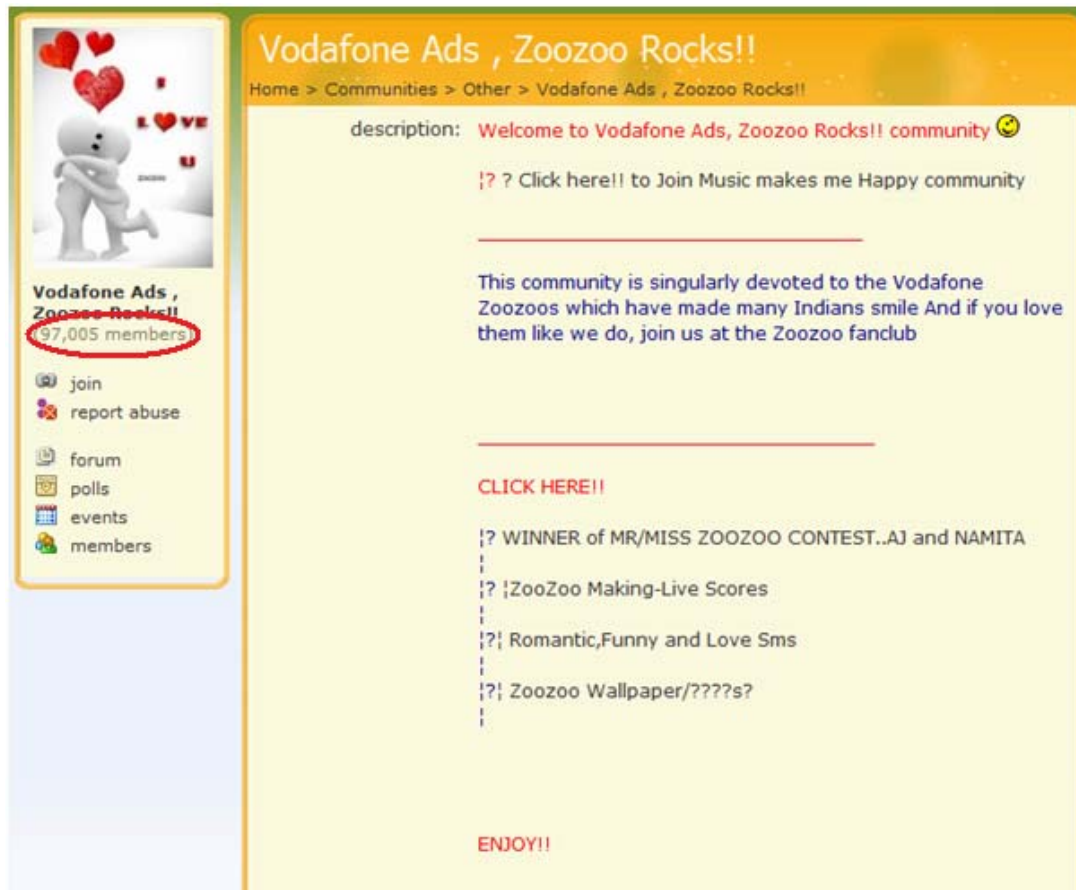
According to Mr Harit Nagpal, Marketing & New Business Director, Vodafone Essar, the biggest challenge in making the films was expense, the audience and creating such large amount of ad films in one month. O & M spent huge amount of money. Viewers would not like to see the same ad during the matches again and again. So, Vodafone decided to produce a series of films that will be shown each day. They made 30 ad films, 13 of which are on the air. O & M spent Rs. 2.5 billion for making the ZooZoo ads.



## 5 Viral marketing

Vodafone came up with creative advertising campaign of zoozoo during IPL-2. This strategy was a buzz and lived up to the brand image of great creative's and clever marketing. In the first 10 days of IPL-2 it reached 89 million people. This was a wonderful strategy adopted by Vodafone. This has helped its company to raise not only its profits but also tremendously increased its brand image. This strategy captured imagination of millions all across the country.

Zoozoo became so popular that Vodafone succeeded in its viral or buzz marketing. Their add campaign has gained popularity all over the world. The viewership of the ads is the highest among all the ads. These ads were highly liked by public. Every age group was interested in the ads and the related VAS products. Even the fans of zoozoo on the facebook has reached 320000 far surpassing the number of fans for cricketing and Bollywood icons like Sachin Tendulkar and Amitabh Bachchan, legendary superheroes like Superman and even comic characters like Asterix.. It has come out with various quizzes, wallpapers, screensavers etc. All these has transformed into a great viral movement. There are already a great plethora of mail forwards and blog spots celebrating Zoozoos. Also in Orkut the number of members on zoozoo community has grown to 97000.



People all over the world were attracted towards zoozoos.

- Vodafone took the advantage of the IPL -2 and broadcasted all its ads at that time. Zoozoos became famous and word of mouth publicity was taking place.
- People will always remember IPL2 as the year of zoozoos. But, more than anything else, people will remember the ZooZoo, a ridiculously cute marketing campaign dreamed up by Ogilvy and Mather India and brought to life by ad-filmmaker Prakash Varma of Nirvana Films.
- Vodafone's ZooZoo viral videos have been rated as the most viewed viral videos according to Visible Measures, a site that specialises in measuring the consumption and distribution of online video.
- According to Visible Measures, Vodafone's ZooZoo spots, created by O&M to communicate the telecom brand's value added services, have 1,449, 218 views as on 25th may 2009. Visible Measures' Top 10 Viral Video chart looks at brand-driven viral video ads that appear on online-video-sharing destinations. On 6<sup>th</sup> May 2400 messages had been posted on the ZooZoos brand page's wall.

- On May 4, the keyword 'ZooZoo' was the third highest search word on Google.co.in and its YouTube channel is the second most subscribed channel in India.

Yes, the iconic image of the league's sophomore season will be far removed from the pitch. ZooZoos are strange all-white alien-esque humanoids who run around on our television screens, chirping in their incomprehensible language and breaking into belly laughs at the drop of a hat. They're silly. They're funny. They're adorable. Most importantly, they're a massive success and a viral marketing miracle.

ZooZoo is a great marketing story. Vodafone has benefitted immensely by this campaign. It caught the attention and fancy of the consumers, aroused curiosity, told stories and made people retell the story.

Marketing Guru Seth Godin always emphasized that Brands should be Remarkable. He defined remarkable as "Worthy of Making a Remark about "

The ZooZoo is a classic example of being Remarkable.

## 6 4 Ps of Marketing Mix

### Product:

VAS services of Vodafone are the products in consideration. As mentioned earlier around 30 different services are provided by Vodafone.

### Price:

Each of the VAS services are offered at a rate of Rs.30 in general. This price varied for different kinds of services. Chota Recharge was available in various price ranges from Rs.10. Other monthly VAS services were charged accordingly.



### Place:

Most of the VAS services were promoted in urban areas and had urban audiences in mind while providing services. Since most of the services were luxury services, rural population could afford to spend extra money on them.

### Promotion:

These VAS services of Vodafone were promoted using zoozoo ads and various other ads before zoozoo. These zoozoo ads were made for each of the VAS service and made an impact on minds on customers.

## 7 SWOT Analysis

### Strengths:

1. Penetration in media as well as social networking sites:



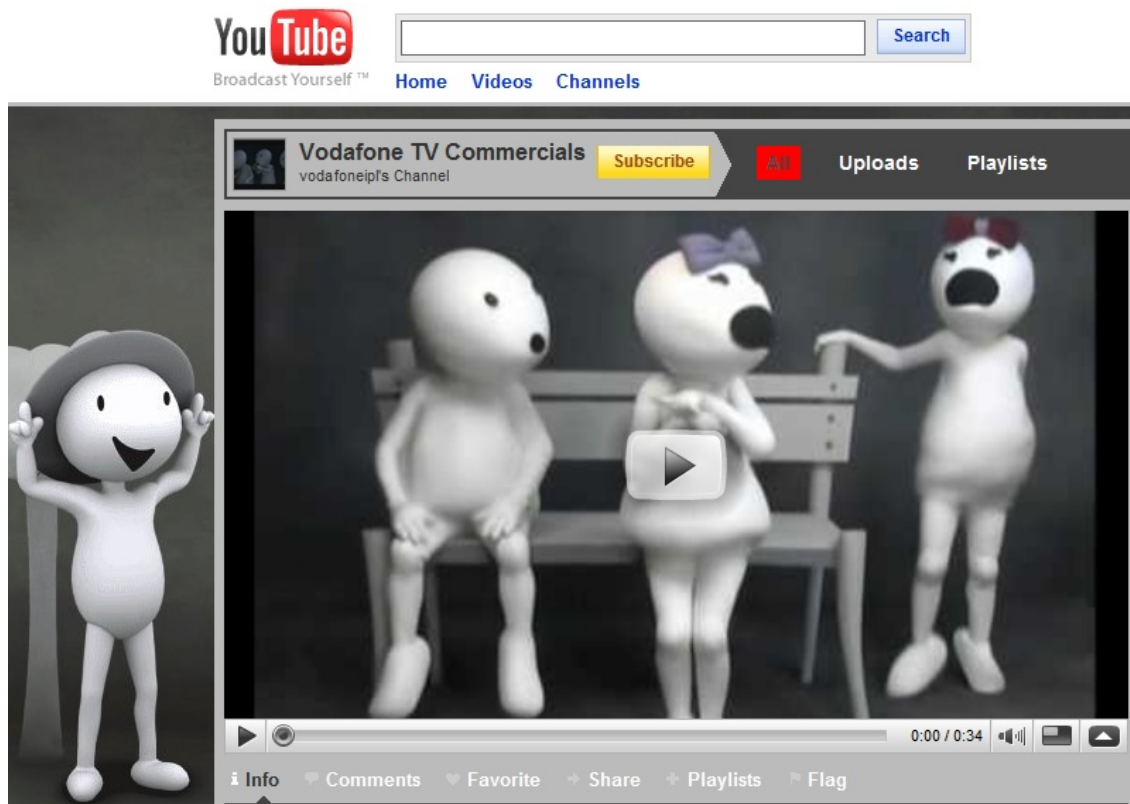
Vodafone operates in a market known as oligopoly. An oligopoly is a market which is characterised by few sellers and mutual interdependence. It is a market where the each seller tries to outdo the other through what is known as price wars and non-price wars. Advertising is part of non-price war where a firm tries to outdo its competitors through marketing and/or advertising strategies to generate mass appeal. Zoozoos are part of a unique and innovative advertisement strategy that has far outdone the strategies of Vodafone's competitors. Due to all these factors, the campaign had a good amount of penetration in media as well as social networking sites.

## 2. Depiction in the form of a cartoon character:



Zoozoo is a semi alien semi-human character living in an earth-like place. These are very simple beings but are very expressive. They laugh aloud, cry loud and have a child like simplicity around them. The success of zoozoo is the success of minimalism and simplicity.

## 3. Wide media coverage:



An important factor which aided the zoozoo campaign was the scale of the campaign. Around 25 ads were aired during the IPL season which kept the curiosity high among the

viewers. The fan club of zoozoo touched to around 70,000 and various interactive quizzes came up such as 'Which zoozoo are you?' There were also mobile downloads of wallpapers and screensavers. All these transformed into a great viral marketing event.

4. Low production cost:

The cost incurred in the implementation of the zoozoo campaign as compared with the benefits it generated was infinitesimal. Easy and cheap animation techniques were used resulting in low production cost.

5. No celebrity endorsement:

No celebrity was required as a brand ambassador which resulted in a dual advantage. Firstly, it greatly reduced the production cost and secondly it generated a massive appeal among the audience being an innovative concept.

**Weaknesses:**

1. Undermining effect on brand Vodafone:

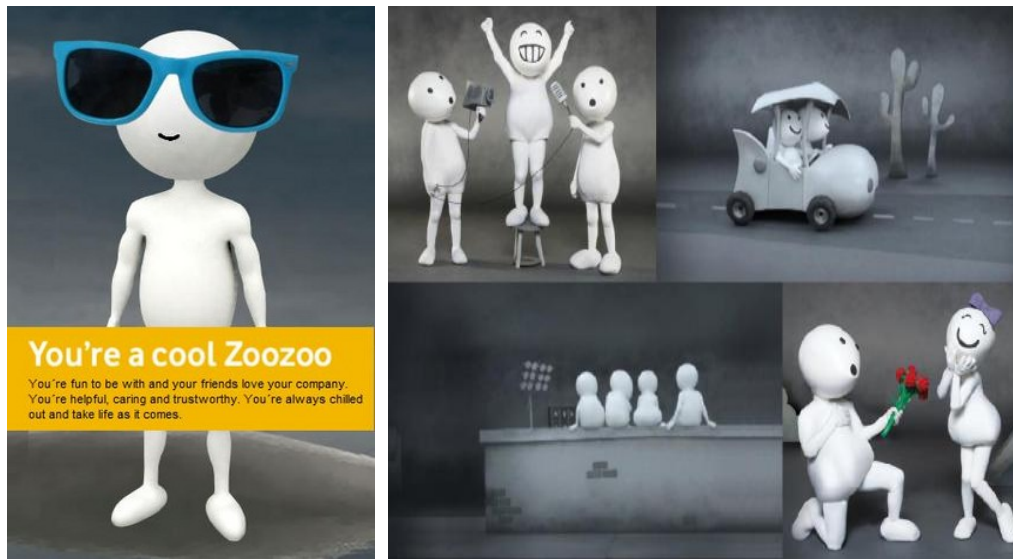
The campaign had an undermining effect on the brand Vodafone. This was because the campaign more focused on innovation assigning a secondary importance to the brand Vodafone.

2. Problem faced by rural population:

The ads used the art of depiction of man in the form of cartoon characters. This technique which seemed appealing to the urban population had interpretation problems at the rural level. The main cause for this was obviously low literacy levels in the rural areas which engendered a feeling of suspicion and weirdness in their minds.

**Opportunities:**

1. Advertising through zoozoos:



The campaign revolutionised the conventional way of advertising through public figures and celebrities. This being a novel and indigenous concept provided a great opportunity to excel.

## 2. Cost benefit:

As the advertisements did not make use of celebrities as brand ambassadors, it resulted in a large chunk of money being saved which be utilised for other useful activities. An important advantage of this was that since the concept was a novel one it, in fact, proved beneficial to use cartoon characters while simultaneously providing a cost advantage.

## 3. Good TRP's for IPL season 2:

IPL ratings were slightly below expectations given that the buzz or word of mouth that could have happened had it been held in the country was not there. But while volume may have been lower, the impact of one TRP (TV rating points) of IPL was much more than one TRP of a serial.

## **Threats:**

### Ads getting lost in marketing war:

In IPL season 2, people are more enthused about the matches as compared to watching advertisements. That is to say the advertisements assume a secondary importance. In this time, an ad has to be really eye catching and appealing so as to captivate the interest of the viewers. So there is a definite possibility of the ads getting lost in the marketing war.



## 8 Segmentation Targeting and Positioning

### **Segmentation :**

By the means of ZooZoo Vodafone has tried to represent an image of the urban common man who is the main drive force behind the increased usage of telecom & VAS services in the tele-communication industry. Through ZooZoo character they have tried to showcase how the various offered by Vodafone can be useful for an urban common man.

What Vodafone did was they projected the usage of their VAS services through various advertisements based on different themes as per the product (VAS) that they were offering. The various services offered by Vodafone such as chota recharge, group SMS service, busy alert service, fashion tips, recharge anywhere, bhakti songs, stock alert, voice SMS etc were shown to the viewers not by normal advertisement ways but through some funny & catchy ZooZoo ads which were successful in immediately drawing the attention of urban population including all age groups.

There is one more angle to this kind of advertisement strategy used by Vodafone. All the ZooZoo advertisements of Vodafone conveyed the message regarding the usage of their various service products, but the message was not directly conveyed through normal ads backed by some voice explanations.

Actually all of these advertisements were not very easy to understand as far as the rural population of India is concerned. Since none of the advertisements had voice explanations given to it so all of these ads were difficult to grasp & understand for the rural people which accounts to a very large portion of the total Indian population. So clearly the urban & rural population was segmented out & the core target of this advertisement campaign was the educated urban population.

As far as the reach of the advertisement is concerned, this advertisement campaign could have been made more effective by taking into account the rural population of our country. If some explanatory vocal sentences would have been included, the proportion of affected audience could have been increased to a great extent. Also these explanatory vocal sentences could have been dubbed into local state & region specific languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Kannad, Gujarati ...etc to make it more effective.

### **Targeting and Positioning:**

In all these ZooZoo ads, since Vodafone tried to promote all the Value Added Services offered by them, clearly the targeted customers were the people who would use these

Value Added Services. Hence in their ads Vodafone tried to showcase all the VAS services that they have to offer to the customers through different theme specific advertisements.

Each of the advertisement was specific to one particular VAS service & revolved around the same to make the customer understand the service. ZooZoos were used in all these different ads to show which all VAS services are on the Vodafone's menu card to offer to the customers.

Because of the uniqueness & attractiveness of these ZooZoos, Vodafone was able to draw the attention of the audiences quickly towards these ads & these ads became soon very popular & thus the VAS offered by Vodafone. As mentioned earlier since the urban population was taken into consideration while making these ads, the target customers were clearly the same.

## 9 Advertising

Around 30 ads were created by Vodafone with the theme, some of the ads were as follows.

1. Magic Box
2. Stock Alerts
3. International Roaming
4. Bhakti Saagar
5. Busy message
6. Dating Tips
7. Voice SMS
8. Fashion Tips
9. Recharge Anywhere
10. Ringtone
11. Facebook
12. Group SMS
13. Call Divert
14. Background Music
15. Exam Results
16. Beauty Tips
17. Phone Backup
18. IPL commentary
19. Cricket Alerts
20. IPL contests
21. Chotta Credit
22. Maps Live
23. Call Filter
24. Live Games
25. Musical greetings
26. Star of the match

- These were 20-30 second ads with and all of them ending with a message “Make the Most of Now” which encouraged customers to subscribe to these VAS services.
- Zoozoos had a dedicated microsite with tagline “What kind of Zoozoo are you”. This site was aimed at promoting different ads and relating oneself with the VAS services. The facebook site has quiz followed by which it gives your personality a type like Cool Zoozoo and suggests various VAS services that can be used.



- The website has downloadable ringtones, videos, wallpapers, screensavers etc. This allows for users to spread the message across and thus more marketing can be achieved.
- Orkut community, facebook group and Youtube channel all goes a long way in spreading the word across.