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HUL's Dove won't alter looks of models in ads using Photoshop

The global practice being introduced in India is in line with the brand's Real Beauty positioning launched in 2004 when it started featuring "real" women in its ads.

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Hindustan Unilever's Dove says it won't Photoshop models for ads in India

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NEW DELHI

In the perfection-obsessed world of beauty marketing, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL)-owned skin care brand Dove said it will not digitally enhance images of models in its advertisements in India. The global practice being introduced in India is in line with the brand's "Real Beauty" positioning launched in 2004 when it started featuring real women in its ads.

Noting that beauty is a source of confidence and not anxiety, the company said it has rolled out 'No Digital Dis-

ortion Mark' under which it is committed to showing real women without airbrushing their images in all its ads across print, outdoor, in-store, digital and social media platforms. Genuine pictures will be used in Dove's ads for deodorant, soaps, shampoo and conditioners.

All branded content of Dove will show the 'No Digital Distortion Mark' beginning with the brand's deodorant campaigns and by January 2019, it will be incorporated into all static imagery

which will clearly state that the image is not distorted.

"It's a proactive measure from Dove to ensure that women and young girls should not feel the pressure to look a certain way and fit into a pre-defined notion of beauty," said Sandeep Kohli, executive director-personal care, HUL.

According to 'Dove Girls Beauty and Confidence Report (2017)', 76% of Indian women believe it is critical to meet certain beauty standards and 71% cited increasing pres-



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Image concerns

The global practice being introduced in India is in line with the brand's "Real Beauty" positioning

The company said it has rolled out 'No Digital Distortion Mark' for ads across platforms

Dove has been running a self-esteem project since 2004; in India it works with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

sures from advertising and media to reach an unrealistic standard of beauty as a key force in driving appearance anxiety. Dove has been run-

ning a self-esteem project since 2004 and it said that in India, it works with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts to build self-esteem

in thousands of young girls.

HUL's Kohli believes brands with purpose have served their company well, translating into sales and growth.

"Dove, both globally and in India, is a faster growing brand in our portfolio. For us, being purposeful is one of the key drivers of this growth," he added.

Globally, brands like online retailer Modcloth have taken a pledge not to digitally modify models' photos, while US-based department store Target has run non-edited ads of women swimwear for all body types. Aeropostale's sister brand Aerie has been running ad campaign 'Real Aerie'

using untouched images of their models such as gymnast Aly Raisman, actor Yara Shahidi, singer Rachel Platten, and model Iskra Lawrence since 2014. However, in India, there has been no step in this direction so far.

Samit Sinha, managing partner, Alchemist Brand Consulting, feels that it is an appropriate decision by Dove as it aligns with Dove's core value of real beauty and it will only enhance the brand's image in India.

"With digital and social media platforms where peer-to-peer communication is happening, it is pertinent for brands to walk the talk or

ready to face the ire of consumers who can call a brand out on their unvalidated claims," he said.

Nimesh Desai, director of the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences, believes there has been over-emphasis on one's physical appearance, especially owing to peer pressure and anxiety caused by the desire to project a certain image on social media platforms. "While I think what HUL is doing is commendable and impactful, it is only a flash in the pan since most of the beauty marketing still harps on the idea of perfect beauty which needs to change," he said.