

COVER STORY

GROWING THE PIE

Sandeep Kohli, Executive Director, Personal Care, HUL is a firm believer in growing the overall consumption pie in India — a mission — critical of sorts for the company. And in the course, the category has been its busiest ever with a slew of new launches

ON more counts than one, the personal care category for HUL is among its biggest and busiest. This is also the category that has seen intense competition from several local players. Sandeep Kohli, Executive Director, Personal Care at HUL, while keeping an eye on competitive moves, is focussed on increasing the size of total personal care market with HUL's brands and category positions.

Growing With Others

Kohli reminds that HUL's legacy has been about growing the pie. The company's approach towards market development through more users or increasing penetration, more usage or increasing consumption and more benefits or premiumisation plays a significant role in this. "At the heart of doing this, is understanding consumer needs and insights that can help us unlock behaviour change. We operate multiple brands, crafted to meet specific consumer needs in each category. The mixes, if needed, are adapted for different parts of the country," he explains.

HUL also adapts its mixes to meet the needs of shoppers and customers in each retail channel. The digital medium also plays a critical part in taking the mixes to the market. Given all touch points that HUL has with people from media to on-ground contacts, the organisation believes it has one of the largest consumer database. "Our PDC (People Data Centre) helps us in creating better insights to understand what motivates and engages consumers. With our platform 'Be Beautiful', we are among the largest beauty publishers. Unilever Foundry helps us build our capabilities further — all this help us increase the size of the pie," says Kohli.

The Consumer Connection

HUL brands connect with people at the level of what it has popularly dubbed as logic and magic. Its various brand engagement platforms not only help connect the consumers with the product proposition but it also helps the brand



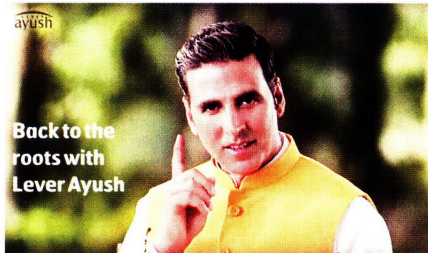
Three Qs to Sandeep Kohli on new launches in the category

Tell us more about the FAL relaunch and your expectations?

FAL is the largest skin care brand and, as a market leader, it has the responsibility of growing the full category. We need to constantly bring new users in and this was done by improving the full mix. The FAL relaunch was about shifting the conversation to how FAL helps protect the skin from darkening or from other skin duress. This is going back to the root of why one should be using this cream. This shift has helped us increase penetration like we have not seen in at least the last five years.

You have taken Lever Ayush national. What are your expectations from this?

Lever Ayush was launched earlier in the year in southern India and recently we have taken it national. The mix met with very good consumer and customer response in the markets where we had



connect with consumers at an emotional level. Some examples would be the FAL (Fair & Lovely) Foundation digital university, the Lux Golden Rose Awards, Lakme Fashion Week and Dove #RealBeauty.

Kohli observes that a lot has changed in India, and at HUL, in the recent past but what has not changed is its “obsession with the consumer and respect for competition”. He says, “The per capita consumption in India is still very low, and if I were to compare it to other emerging markets such as Indonesia, we should be twice the size as a market. The team is focused on growing the overall pie. This has helped us to continue to be the largest player in almost every category that we operate in.” **BW**

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initially launched it. This prompted us to accelerate our national roll out. In Lever Ayush, we have consciously ensured that we have formulated and created high quality and well tested products. We have done this in collaboration with Arya Vaidya Pharmacy.

There is a growing trend in India as is globally, for a section of the consumers to prefer products with natural ingredients. With the launch of Lever Ayush, and other brands that we have launched in the last one year such as Indulekha and Citra, we want to participate in this trend by offering consumers attractive choices to meet this need.

How are you expecting these launches to contribute towards overall revenue?

There is a big responsibility and privilege of leading the largest category for HUL or the second largest personal care business for Unilever globally. But what excites me is that, with our brands, we have the opportunity to make substantial difference to the lives of the people. That is what motivates me and my team to come to work. Business results and growth are markers which tell us if we are doing it well.

Purpose Driven Brands

Lifebuoy is among the prominent example where, the purpose of helping mothers so that their kids fall ill less helps guide every activity on the brand — from communication to product architecture. Another recent example is seen with Hamam’s #GoSafeOutside campaign aimed at extending the promise of safety from skin onto everyday life



Hamam’s new ad with a social message

