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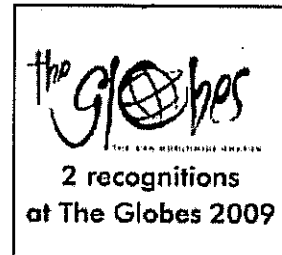
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FICCI Frames 2010: It is important to involve the youth in the creative process

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The inaugural day of FICCI Frames held at Hotel Renaissance in Powai, Mumbai on March 16 witnessed some interesting sessions. One of these was on the changing consumer patterns in young India, the focal point being the determination of trends in television content.

The panellists were: R Gowthaman, leader, South Asia, Mindshare; Monica Tata, vice-president and deputy general manager - Entertainment Networks, South Asia, Turner International India; Laura Kruger, consultant and project manager new media, Netwerk.cc, The Netherlands; Jasmeet Gandhi, head services, Nokia; and Zarina Mehta, chief creative officer, UTV Global Broadcasting.



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Panellists on the dais
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Beginning the discussion, Gandhi stated that the consumption of media in India has drastically changed in the past five years; today's generation could only understand brands like Google, You Tube, Facebook and Twitter and the language of uploading, tagging, commenting and updating status. He added that reality shows were popular because the maximum viewership came from the youth. Also, the price of a smart phone was less than \$100.

All this simply implies that with the usage of internet, content has become user-friendly; and now is the time when one should start developing content in unusual ways, he said.



R Gowthaman

Zarina Mehta talked about her early days at UTV and some whacky shows produced by the company in the early 90s. One can easily remember Saap Seedhi on Zee TV and Shanti, a daily soap on Doordarshan.

Stating that the core values have not changed with time, Mehta described three key influencers seen in today's youth. First, today's generation still believes in the idea of family and its importance. Second, earlier, the youngsters dreamt of America; but now, they see their dreams coming true in India, because the economy is thriving and has beaten the recession. Third, small towns in India are galloping and there is extreme curiosity about the future.



Monica Tata

She added that today's youth is fighting to be a part of reality shows, be it on Channel V, MTV or UTV Bindass. The younger lot only thinks of money, she said, and judges success on the acquisition of personal pleasures.



Laura Kruger

It is very difficult to predict trends in content, because what will be seen on TV two years later is hard to imagine; so, one has to be aware and be ahead of the curve, said Monica Tata. Today's youth is a lot like kids, she added. She classified the early youth between 18-24 years, middle youth between 25-28 years and the young generation above 29 years.

Tata urged that one should interpret the complicated mindset of children. To do that, one has to go beyond television, as kids always look for ways to get entertained. As media professionals, one has to provide content demanded by the youth.



Jasmeet Gandhi

India is the youngest consumer base of the world for the next 40 years; and it is the responsibility of the television, mobile or internet content providers to engage the youth. And to do that, the realization of the young language is essential, she explained.



Zarina Mehta

Laura Kruger opined that one should produce shows that connect with the youth, as youngsters are changing the definition of media consumption. Listening to the youth, or by asking other people as to what they think, can only set trends in the coming time.

Also, working with the youth, making them co-creators and participating in the team can change the scenario. There are 500 million Indians under the age of 24; and they have a propensity to spend. Therefore, she questioned, why not involve them in the creative process of creating content?

Recruiting younger people can do the trick -- this strategy was applied by Hungama years ago, when a few kids were given the responsibility to run the channel.

R Gowthaman laid his doubts in the open, by saying that there are challenges to connect with the youth and enough struggle is seen in that setting. The question is how to grab the youth in a consolidated manner, he stated.

Gaming has also brought a revolution in today's generation. But the other side of India is still in the dark, where millions of youngsters are still deprived of facilities such as internet and TV. The real answer lies in uplifting the whole generation of India, he said.

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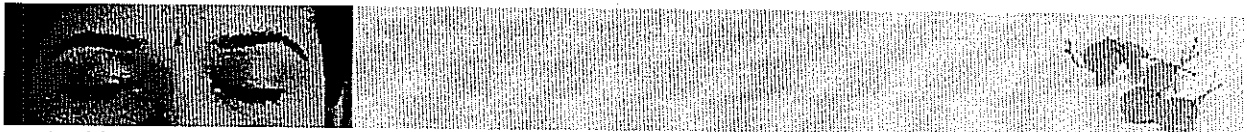
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