

## INSIGHT

# Brands throwing challenges to engage consumers but is it delivering ROI?

Use of social media challenges by brands is picking up as it generates a good amount of UGC. BuzzInContent.com finds out what kind of ROI brands are able to generate via such challenges



Akanksha Nagar  
Mumbai, August 27, 2019

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After the popularity of the ASL and Kiki challenges, there has been a surge in social media tasks by brands across platforms. Leveraging user-generated content (UGC) in the current business environment is considered one of the most benefit reaping experiments. Being a good way of capturing moments and boosting the overall share of voice, these have become an interactive way to engage with the audience.

In recent times, social media has seen a flood of such challenges, which build a lot of user-generated content around brands on multiple platforms. But is the content it generates for a mere challenge worthy of the attention it gets? What potential do these challenges have in terms of content they generate?

With UGC flooding social media, how challenging and difficult would it be for a new brand, which is looking forward to break this clutter with a new challenge? BuzzInContent.com interacted with a few experts to discuss and know why brands choose to ride on such challenges and what else can be explored.



Fahad Patel

“Challenge is one of the most proven techniques of engaging the audience in the most creative way. The person who indulges in a challenge relates to it easily and never forgets that they did something like this,” said Fahad Patel, Social Media Manager, Hats-Off Digital.

Sowmya Iyer, Founder and CEO, DVio Digital, said, “Riding on trends and offering a platform to create UGC brings brands closer to the consumers’ lives. It’s not one-way and top-down communication any more like in the case of traditional media. The way social algorithms bring visibility to trends also create media value to bring top-of-mind-recall for the brand.”



Sowmya Iyer

These challenges receive likes, shares and generate awareness among the target audience. For instance, The Pepsi Swag Challenge earned 135 million views, given how the young audience loves the trio of Baadshah, Disha Patani and Tiger Shroff. Given that Pepsi was targeting this young audience, the whole concept was woven around a challenge.

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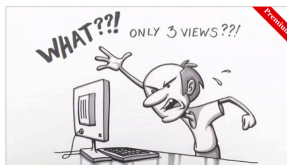
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Chandan-Bage

It is important to understand that not all brands can generate huge engagement. It can happen only when the content hits the correct sentiments and chords, said Chandan Bage, Founder of C Com Digital. Another aspect is the popularity of the artists and their fan following. It is not necessary to always have a high-budget campaign such as that for Pepsi or Horlicks.

However, due to the fleeting nature and short life span of the trends, unless the brands have intervened to create a larger story with more impact and meaningfulness, the value of participating in the trend too will be short-lived.

**So what exact potential do these challenges have?**

Though social media works, it is hard to quantify how and how much. While the very first successful challenge — The Ice Bucket challenge — wanted to raise money for Lou Gehrig’s disease; there are various other challenges that either want to raise awareness regarding a cause or for the purpose of selling a brand story/song, etc.



Ishha Kapoor

Ishha Kapoor, Digital Integration Head at Chimp&z Inc., said, “If the key objective of your brand is awareness and increase in share of voice, challenges can do justice to your brand. Thus, if a brand needs to increase its positive sentiment or generate awareness, the right kind of planning and execution can lead to the fulfilment of ROI.”

“Such brand-led challenges are highly beneficial as they help the brand in getting ‘talked about’ through mass participation in the challenge. This engagement helps brands not only in increasing awareness but also nurturing loyalty among users,” said Kalyan Kumar, Co-Founder and CEO of Social Catalyzers.



Kalyan Kumar

These challenges make participants feel part of something bigger, something that an influential personality performed, something that evokes emotion and something they can share and discuss with their peers, said Ankita Chauhan, Group Head Strategy, Tonic Worldwide.

With its participative nature, these kinds of trend have multiple ways of execution — starting from drenching yourself to dancing off in front of an open car.

**So how else this trend can be explored and executed?**

Brands can explore tapping on existing challenges relevant to their tonality and consumers for an instant boost or can piggy-back on a popular trend. Kapoor said that another way to make this interesting will be the involvement of innovation and technology to take this to a different level.

“I feel this trend should be used to bring something good out of it. More than promotion of any brand, it should be focused to send a social message,” said Patel.



Rishi Sen

Trend-jacking is a great way to make these activities much more relevant. The internet has a habit of voicing opinion on almost all current events and conversations. Rishi Sen, Chief of Staff, The 120 Media Collective, said building campaigns around these trends and conversations will give it a significant boost.

While almost all major brands and movies are riding on this trend already, how can a new brand that is looking forward to this trend be creative enough to step up its game?

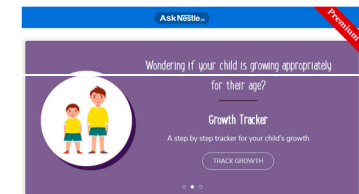
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## How can a new brand break the clutter?

Any category or brand primarily targeting Gen Z and millennials has some space where they can fit in. While this segment can be explored by most of the sectors, the easiest industries to explore this are FMCG, educational and entertainment but challenging ones are BFSI and government bodies.

It's crucial to remember two things: the brand's narrative and its DNA (what the brand stands for). All social media tactics must be in line with the overall brand's DNA and the matrix it operates in.



Pranesh Mishra

The clutter-breaking challenge is higher for newer brands, as it would not have a ready fan following. The UGC/challenge has to be relevant to the category, exciting enough for the target group and creatively outstanding. There is no formula; the scope for creative thinking is great, said Pranesh Mishra, Chairman and Managing Director, Brandscapes.

“If it is a new brand that needs to break the clutter, the idea needs to be crazy and unique enough for the consumers to start doing them. And if you have the right budgets, to invest in some famous faces, you can easily expect yourself to be the brand that set the trend for a challenge,” said Kapoor.

When planning a social media challenge, a brand should ensure three things. Ease of performance, a catchy name and initial boost. Apart from this, they should ensure it's a new format or activity. Apart from that, any brand, new or old should focus on the longevity of the content. It needs to be sticky and shareable. The 'challenge' should present a task for the next user that participates. A challenge needs to be a natural extension to a brand's offerings and tonality else it will just create noise and give no brand lift.



Pawan Shahri

Pawan Shahri, serial entrepreneur and speaker, said, “For brands planning to dive into it, one very important thing would be to understand the usability of the product and plan something around that. While the target base on social media is huge and smart, the audience these days connects itself to brands that seem interesting to them on a personal level.”



Sameer Makani

Sameer Makani, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Makani Creatives, said, “It would be highly recommended that brands come with challenges that create an instant CTA by users to create a better version of the task in the challenge. It is also important to creatively integrate the brand within the challenge.”

One can make use of recent news or any funny incidents – local or otherwise. Experts also concluded that a brand should have a cause behind the challenge, famous faces or entertainment or thrill factor to break the clutter



Agam Choudhary

“The brand should make the challenge a part of its core channel rather than adding to the clutter in social media. Brands should not give in, just because everybody is doing it. If your challenge is necessary for your brand communication, do it regardless of any engagement,” said Agam Chaudhary, CMO of Digitalabs.

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