

SERVICE ADVERTISING IN INDIA

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Advertising is, perhaps, as old as civilization. It has always been there in some form or other. In the ancient days the advertisers paraded down the road making announcements on the beats of drum. They are still seen mainly in village markets. Technology has helped them also. Instead of hiring a drum-beater, they use blaring speakers that send out recorded messages. The medicine men were to follow and demonstrate their medicines. The print medium gave a canvass to the advertisers. The first service advertisement, perhaps, came from the entertainers - the theatricals. It has come a long way since then to achieve a status of presenting a wide range of services. The first service advertisement that appeared in the newspapers was in the form of classified advertisements of passages to Europe, particularly England. It appeared on the front page of The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce on Saturday, November 3, 1838. The first formal advertisement appeared in 1840. It was an ad of Amateur Theatricals. a chronological development of Service Advertisements since then is presented in table-1. A look at the advertisements tells the story of the development of advertisements with regards to base used for positioning and copy layout. The present paper is an attempt in this direction.

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was aimed at studying the trends in service advertising in India. In doing so it looked at the different aspects of advertising of services. It covered three aspects:

- a. Proportion of Service and Product advertisements in India vis-a-vis abroad;
- b. Bases of positioning used over a period of time; and
- c. Copy Layout.

The methodology used an exploratory design. Advertisements were collected from leading magazines for the years of 1978, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1990 and 1991. The year 1978 was chosen as the magazines started getting popular around that time. The magazines as a medium were chosen to represent national advertising as against newspapers that contains mostly local

Table - 1 : History of Indian Service Advertisements

	Advertisement	Year
1	Sherrif's Sale (Auction)	1839
2	Viegas Circulating library	1840
3	Homes for Children in England	1840
4	Ameteur Theatricals	1840
5	Perukes	1844
6	Bounty Theatre	1849
7	Yatch Race	1850
8	Bullock Carts Rates	1850
9	Railways	1853
10	What is Railways	1853
11	Electric Telegraph(Telephone dept.)	1855
12	Telegraphic line installed	1855
13	India & London Life Assurance Co.	1856
14	Philippe Debarr's	1857
15	Dental Surgery	1858
16	The Colonial LIC	1858
17	Wax Work Exhibition	1858
18	Puppet Show	1858
19	Oilman Stores	1858
20	Ballock Shigrams & Carriages (Aoverseer)	1859
21	Pestonjee Jeewanjee & Co.	1860
22	Europe Hotel	1860
23	Clarion Hotel	1860
24	Imperial Hotel	1861
25	"South Carolina" Ship for Liverpool	1861
26	Italian Opera	1865
27	Prof Vanek's Magic Show	1866
28	Deccan Horse Dak	1868
29	Hotel English	1870
30	Conveyance of Opium	1870
31	Adelfy family Hotel	1870
32	Essence of Chiretta	1870
33	Great Eastern Hotel	1870
34	Bombay Philharmonic Society	1870
35	Cure of Cholera	1870
36	Photograph Enlargement	1870
37	Drawing Room Operas	1871
38	The Strangers Home in London	1874
39	Burlington Saloon	1875
40	Railway Schedule	1875
41	H & Co. Tailors & Outfitters	1879
42	Photographic Saloon	1880
43	Esplanade Hotel	1880
44	Hydropathy	1880
45	Taylor Milliner and Dressmaker	1882
46	Wardes Capillare	1882
47	Red Boot Mart	1883
48	East Indian Railways	1884
49	Esteem Launch	1884
50	Hardwick's Hotel	1884
51	Changes	1886

52	Pearce's Restaurant	1888
53	Flower's Light Railway	1888
54	Zinco Copyist	1890
55	Ehhain dressers	1892
56	Atlas Assurance Co.	1894
57	Ericssons Telephones	1894
58	First Telephone	1894
59	Cinematographs	1896
60	Photography	1898
61	Domestic Servants Suppliers	1899
62	Mail Phaeton	1904
63	Railway Hotel	1905
64	Lawrence & Mayo	1905
65	Medical Electr. Home Treatment	1905
66	Taj Mahal Hotel	1906
67	Dr.Dastur	1906
68	Yarrow's Steamers	1909
69	Airmail	1911
70	Coranation Cinematographic	1911
71	P & O Mail Lines	1912
72	Pundlik Pundlik(Film)	1912
73	Esanofell	1912
74	Widespray Roadwatering Car	1914
75	Breast Feeding	1916
76	Thomas Cook	1916
78	The Mettle of Jerry McGuire	1916
79	Standard Life Assurance Co.	1916
80	Mogul Line	1916
81	X-Ray Accuracy Exposures	1917
82	War Bonds	1918
83	The Clive Insurance Co.	1918
84	Rajvaid Sri Bhamandasji Kaviraj	1918
85	Save the Children Fund	1920
86	Charleville Hotel, Mussourie	1923
87	Houses for Children	1923
88	Railway Advertising	1924
89	Marconiphone	1924
90	Gresham Life Assurance	1925
91	Light of Asia(Film)	1926
92	Broadcasting	1927
93	Blind Beggars	1927
94	Fascist Newspaper	1928
95	Steamer on Ganges	1928
96	Prudential Insurance	1930
97	Special Trains of Poona Races	1932
98	Cornaglias Restaurant	1932
99	Imperial Airways	1932
100	Bovarine	1932
101	Night Raid in Paris(Film)	1932
102	Cleve Hall Hotel	1933
103	Cricket Carnival	1933
104	Trunk Telephone	1934
105	Telephone,India-England service	1934
106	Election	1934
107	Japan Tourism	1934

108 Telephone, Bombay	1935
109 Central Bank of India	1940
110 Bus Reply System	1940
111 Western Hotel	1940
112 Indian Defence Loans	1940
113 Air Mail	1940
114 Royal Hindu Hotel	1940
115 Indian Postal Order	1940
116 Deccan Queen Schedule	1941
117 National Warfront	1942
118 Mount Abu	1943
119 Mahabaleswar Hotel	1944
120 Kashmir	1944
121 Air India	1944
122 Tata Airlines	1945
123 Black Market	1945
124 National Savings Certificates	1945
125 Millowners Association, Bombay	1945
126 Information & Broadcasting	1945
127 Star Line Airways	1947
128 Mistri Airways	1947
129 New India Assurance Co.	1948
130 Birla Lines	1950
131 Tour Circular	1955
132 Whiteaway, Laidlow Fashions	1960
133 Indian Airlines	1961
134 Forum of Free Enterprise	1962
135 State bank of India	1965
136 Bank of India	1967
137 Detection	1968
138 Figurette-Figure Cont.Parlour	1969
139 Department of Tourism	1969
140 Family Planning	1969
141 Congress party Election campaign	1970
142 Census	1971
143 All India Radio	1971
144 Centaur	1971
145 Sholay (Film)	1975
146 Ramda Searock Hotel	1976
147 Eatwell Clinic	1977
148 Forum of Free Enterprise	1981
149 Air freight	1982
150 Palace on Wheels	1982
151 Hakim Haji	1982
152 Food Adulteration Prevention	1983
153 Times of India	1984
154 Appu ghar	1984
155 CMC Ltd.	1984
156 Speedpost	1986
157 Medical Hair Centre	1987
158 Vayudoot	1987
159 Le Chalet (Opera)	1988
160 Jeevan Ki Gaddi	1988

161 Human Rights Now(Rock Concert)	1988
162 Pigmalion:My Fair Lady	1988
163 Indian Railways	1988
164 Dalmia Resorts	1988
165 Nehru Yatri Ticket	1989

Source : "Brand New : Advertising Through Times of
India", The Times of India, Bombay, 1989.

advertisements. A total of 885 different advertisements were collected. These advertisements fell in 12 service categories. These categories are : Banks, Financial Services, Mutual Funds, Credit Cards, Insurance, Couriers, Travel Agencies, Airlines, Social, Tourism, Hotels and Others, which included services that were very few in number such as Hospitals, Tutorials etc. Some services like Computer Education and other educational institutions were left out as they used newspapers as the primary medium and hence did not classify as national advertisements. Side by side data regarding the "Product" advertisement is also collected in terms of number of advertisement from the same magazines where services data is collected. Data regarding the count of both services and products advertisement is also collected from foreign magazines such as World Executive digest, Harvard Business Review and Business Week.

A cross-sectional as well as a longitudinal study of the advertisements was carried out to trace the trends. SPSS, a statistical package is used in the cross-tabulation analysis.

RESULTS

A : Service Vs. Product Advertisements

A total 885 different service advertisements were collected, of which Airlines, Banks and Hotels have advertised the most. More than 50% of the advertisements belong to these services as shown in Table-2 below :

Table - 2 : Major Service Advertisers

Banks	18.0%
Hotels	17.5%
Airlines	17.0%

The proportion of service advertisements to product advertisements is more or less similar over the years. The product advertisements are more. This is in contrast to the advertising practices abroad. The proportion of service advertisements in foreign magazines is nearly double the proportion of service advertisements in Indian magazines. Overall percentage is shown in Table - 3. The yearly trend is depicted in Table - 4.

Table -3 : Indian and Foreign Advertisements

	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Foreign</u>
Service	23%	41.8 %
Product	77%	58.20 %

Table - 4 : Trend in Service Advertisements (%)

Year	Indian		Foreign	
	Service	Product	Service	Product
1979	28	72	47	53
1984	18	82	38	62
1989	20	80	48	52
1990	21	79	39	61
1992	25	75	42	58

B : Bases Used for Positioning

Twelve bases of positioning were identified in the study. The bases identified are shown in the box below :

1. Responsiveness	Responsiveness of the firm
2. Physical facilities	Space, Equipment etc.
3. Customer profile /Number	Typical customers/number of customers
4. Employees	Featuring employees in the advertisement
5. Achievement	Financial and Operational achievements
6. Reliability	No failures and safe
7. Range of Services	Better range
8. Convenience	Wider network, timings, frequency etc.
9. Comparative/Extra Benefits	Better benefits over competitors
10. New Launch/Branch	Starting new services/branches
11. Customer Dealings/Care	Customer Caring
12. Assurance/Commitment	No worries regarding delivery of the service

Advertisements based on Assurance/Commitment, Comparative/Extra Benefits and Physical Facilities provided, comprised 48% of the total advertisements. The changes that have taken place in the years with regard to the major bases are shown in Table - 5.

C : Bases Used by Individual Services

Airlines

The Airlines advertisements mainly used Extra Benefits the Airlines provided over others, Care for the customers, Assurance on using the airlines, Convenience in terms ease of availing the services, more number of flights, network, etc. and Reliability of the airlines.

Over the period Airlines advertised significantly after Banks and Hotels. On the whole, the Airlines advertisements were based on (23.3%) and Comparative / Extra Benefits they offered over their competitors. The other ways of positioning were Convenience (18.7%) and Assurance /Commitment they had towards their customers.

The movement of thrust on the Bases is as follows:

Table - 6 : Changing Bases _ Airlines

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basis</u>
1978	Extra
1979	Care
1984	Extra and Convenience
1989	Assurance
1990	Convenience
1991	Reliability and Achievement

Banks

Banks advertisements were based mainly on Customer Profile, Extra Benefits over other banks, Assurance for good service and Range of Service they are providing.

Banks used Comparative / Extra Benefits (17.6) they offered in their advertisements. The other advertising bases were Range of Service they offered (14.1%) and Customer Profile and Number of Customers they served (12.8%).

The various principal bases banks used in various years are as follows :

Table - 7 : Changing Bases _ Banks

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basis</u>
1978	Customer Profile and Achievement
1979	Extra Benefits and New launches
1984	Assurance and Responsiveness
1989	Range of Service and Assurance
1990	Extra Benefits and Reliability
1991	Customer Profile and Customer Care

Courier

All most all couriers companies were using Assurance as the main positioning base. Their advertisements were assuring the customers for better service. Some (11.1%) advertisements were based on New launch.

The basic positioning of courier services is based upon Assurance and Commitment (38.9%). The other important bases used for positioning are Physical Facilities and Comparative / Extra Benefits.

Except in 1979, where most of the advertisements were based on New Launch (due to new companies or new centres or new services), in other years most of the advertisements were using Assurance as the main bases.

Other bases used were Range of Services, Extra Benefits, Physical Facilities and Achievement.

Credit Cards

Initially in 1978 and 1979, Range of Services offered got more importance in the advertisements and customer profile was getting less importance but gradually the trend changed and by 1991 Customer Profile was used in most of the advertisements.

Credit cards advertised mostly on the Comparative or Extra Benefit (30.8%) they could give over their competitors. They also advertised using the Customer Profile and Number of Customers using (25.6%) their services. Some of the advertisements (20.5%) were based on the Convenience aspect. The gradual change that took place is as follows:

Table - 8 : Changing Bases _ Credit Cards

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basis</u>
1978	Range and Customer profile
1979	Range and Extra benefits
1984	Extra and Convenience
1989	Physical Facilities and New launches
1990	Extra Benefits and Convenience
1991	Customer Profile and Comparative

Financial Services

Over the years most of the financial services advertisements were talking in terms of Achievements their companies obtained. Other bases used were Customer Profile and New Launch of services.

Achievement is the main orientation of Financial Services advertisements (37.3%). It was followed by New Launch or New Branches (20.3%).

The movement in bases is as follows :

Table - 9 : Changing Bases _ Financial Services

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basis</u>
1978	Extra Benefits
1979	Customer Care
1984	Extra Benefits and Convenience
1989	Assurance
1990	Convenience
1991	Reliability and Achievement

Insurance

Insurance services which started in late 70's were basically using extra benefits and care for customers. Later in early 90s the advertisements shifted the thrust to "Range of Services".

The two important bases used by Insurance companies in advertising were Range of Services (21.9) and Customer Dealings and Care for customers (23.3%).

The change that took place over a period of time is as follows:

Table - 10 : Changing Bases _ Insurance

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basis</u>
1978	Extra Benefits
1979	Customer Care
1984	Extra Benefits and Convenience
1989	Assurance
1990	Convenience
1991	Reliability and Achievement

Hotels

Physical facilities, more or less had considerable importance in the advertisements. Initially the advertisements were based on Comparative Benefits or Extra Benefits, but later the shift took place through Assurance to Physical Facilities. In 1991, Physical Facilities was the main basis for advertising.

Hotel advertisements used Assurance/Commitment and Physical facilities equally (28.4%). They were also advertising on comparative and extra benefit they offered (20.6%).

The change in usage of bases is as follows:

Table - 11 : Changing Bases _ Hotels

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basis</u>
1978	Extra Benefits
1979	Customer Care
1984	Extra Benefits and Convenience
1989	Assurance
1990	Convenience
1991	Reliability and Achievement

Mutual funds

Mutual Funds advertising started only in 1980's. So largely their advertisements (45.9%) were based on New Launch of various schemes. The other basis they used was Achievement (21.6%).

The bases used from 1984 to 1991 are as follows:

Table 12 : Changing Bases _ Mutual Funds

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basis</u>
1984	Extra Benefits and Convenience
1989	Assurance
1990	Convenience
1991	Reliability and Achievement

Social

All the social advertisements used Assurance and Commitment they had towards the society.

Tourism

Advertising of Tourism started only in 1980's. They mostly used Assurance (27.3%), Extra Benefits (27.7%) and Physical Facilities as basis for advertising. There were not many of advertisements of tourism.

The bases used in different years are as follows:

Table - 13 : Changing Bases _ Tourism

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basis</u>
1984	Extra Benefits and Convenience
1989	Assurance
1990	Convenience
1991	Reliability and Achievement

Travel Agency

Travel Agencies which started advertising in late 1970's used Extra benefit (47.1%) mainly. Some (17.6%) of their advertisements were based on convenience also.

The shift took place as follows.

Table - 14 : Changing Bases _ Travel Agency

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basis</u>
1978	Extra Benefits
1979	Customer Care
1984	Extra Benefits and Convenience
1989	Assurance
1990	Convenience
1991	Reliability and Achievement

Other Services

Other Services comprised of various maintenance organisations, technical service organisations and corporate and personal services which do not figure in other eleven categories used. These services basically used Physical Facilities (23.3%), Range of Services (18.3%) and Achievement (16.7%).

In other services a mix of various bases were used in various years. The movement of usage was as follows:

Table - 15 : Changing Bases _ Other Services

<u>Year</u>	<u>Basis</u>
1978	Extra Benefits
1979	Customer Care
1984	Extra Benefits and Convenience
1989	Assurance
1990	Convenience
1991	Reliability and Achievement

D : Copy Layout

Analysis of the Copy Layout was carried out with regards to size of the advertisement, picture, size of the text, slogans and headlines. The results are described below.

Size

Airlines, Banks and Hotels advertise mostly in full page (A4) advertisements. Most of the half page advertisements belonged to banks and hotels. 80% of the total advertisements are full page only. 13% of the total advertisements are in double page. Less than 2% are quarter page advertisements.

Picture

More than 50% advertisements had Large Picture. Scattered picture advertisements were also used (11%). Less than 10% advertisements did not have any picture.

Text

Of the total, 64% of advertisements had Large text, 22% of which were Bank advertisements. Advertisements that did not contain any text were mainly Airlines and "Couriers" (81%).

Slogan

Most of the advertisements (68%) carried Slogans in the advertisements.

Headlines

Long Headlines were found in 44% of the advertisements. About 20% of the advertisements had the headlines in bold letters. Advertisements that did not contain any Headline were few (5%).

DISCUSSION

Service Advertising has been in India for a long time. Their ratio, however, with regard to products has been consistently low. This is in contrast to the advertising scenario abroad. This phenomenon may be attributed to the country's economic development. India is entering into a post-industrial economy. At present a major portion of the service sector is in the unorganized sector. Also a major part of the industry is managed by government monopolies. The changing government posture may lead to a change in service advertising also. Banks, Airlines and Hotels constitute about half of the advertisements. The presence of strong competition in these segments is a major factor contributing to this phenomenon.

Services are intangible and thus require tangibilization for the customers to evaluate and decide. They also represent a high risk proposition. The finding also suggests this. About half of the advertisements use Assurance, Comparative Benefits and Physical Facilities out of a total of 12 bases used. This trend has remained more or less unchanged over the years. Different services use different bases due to their nature. For instance, Hotels and Airlines are very high capital intensive services and they have the opportunity to 'show' their services. Hence the use of Physical Facilities is common. On the other hand Mutual Funds, Financial Services use their Achievements and Extra Benefit to help customers evaluate their services in light of competition. Services for which the customer depends very much on other's experience, like Tourism, use Assurance in their advertisements. Services like Travel Agencies seek to give Convenience to their customers. Social Services aim at giving a better life to the individuals in the society and hence show their Commitments and give the Assurance for a better life in their advertisements. The use of Comparative / Extra Benefits Advertisements by many of the services is an indication of the growing competition.

The copy of the service advertisements tries to achieve mainly two objectives; (a) Awareness through large, bold headlines and large pictures and a full page advertisement, and (b) Interest/Conviction through a large text that gives enough information to the customer to evaluate and choose the company, as in case of Financial Services.

In short, service advertising is an interesting area and requires a different approach since the requirements of the audience is different. This research touches only the trend of the phenomenon. Further research is needed to find the forces that have caused the changes. The impact of each of these bases used on the customers with regard to their decision making in buying a service is another area to be researched.