

Press Release

8 out of 10 people exhibit trust in advertising, finds joint ASCI – ISA report

4th December, 2020, Mumbai: A study commissioned by the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) and the Indian Society of Advertisers (ISA), and conducted by Nielsen, shows a high level of trust in advertising. Maintaining and growing trust in advertising by ensuring honesty and truthfulness has been the core focus of ASCI, which was founded with the support of ISA.

The **Trust in Advertising** study was conducted with people across age groups in 20 centres in India, including metros, smaller towns and rural areas. The study found that eight out of 10 people trusted advertising messages across media.

TV (94%) was the most common medium for consumption of advertising, followed by digital (82%), print (77%) and radio (29%). Viewership of TV ads is driven by non-metro markets. Interestingly, viewership of ads on digital is the same in rural (82%) as it is in metros (83%). According to Prasun Basu, Global Head, Strategic Alliances and New Verticals Nielsen, this demonstrates the growing importance and centrality of this medium in the hinterland. ASCI spotted early that the growing consumption of digital content and advertising pointed to a permanent change in consumer behavior and marketing. Accordingly, it set up robust monitoring mechanisms for digital platforms alongside its monitoring of print and TV advertising. It now scans more than 3,000 digital platforms for misleading messages.

Advertising seen on traditional media continues to enjoy high trust amongst consumers. Advertising in newspapers (86%) emerged as the most trusted, closely followed by that on TV (83%) and Radio (83%). Text/SMS ads were the least trusted at 52%.

In terms of shifts, consumers put greater trust in advertisements consumed on TV, print, radio, social media, outdoor and search engines as compared to what they did in a similar survey conducted by Nielsen in 2015, but there is a fall in the percentage of consumers trusting text messages over this period (58% vs. 52%)

Among sectors, audiences displayed a very high level of trust for advertisements of educational institutions at 82%. This is possibly because culturally, Indians have a strong belief in education as a means to secure their future. Ironically, ASCI finds that a significant portion of misleading ads come from the education sector. ASCI therefore has a high focus on education sector advertising.

“ASCI’s job of monitoring the education sector is even more crucial, given these findings. In India, the poorest of people prioritize education spends over other necessities. Most educational

Press Release

institutions promise job guarantees or make false claims of being the No 1 or guaranteeing 100% placement without any objective data or evidence. We are doing our best to make sure that such false advertising is removed from the market,” said Manisha Kapoor, Secretary General, ASCI. Home care products such as detergents, mosquito repellents etc. as a sector also enjoys relatively higher trust levels. However, real estate advertisements were amongst the least trusted by consumers.

About 70% of the respondents said they trust advertisements which are endorsed by celebrities.

In terms of taking action when they see a misleading or offensive advertisement, about a third of consumers are likely to discuss this with their family/friends, another third take some action by posting it on social media, or reporting the same. However, almost 30% of consumers do not take any action. This, too, is a major focus area of ASCI. It has used every tool available to make it easy for consumers to point out misleading claims in advertisements. Consumers can lodge complaints on its website (www.ascionline.org), or via email (contact@ascionline.org) Consumers can also send their complaints via WhatsApp (7710012345).

As the self-regulatory body of the advertising industry, ASCI has over the past 35 years, established codes and guidelines to promote ethical and responsible advertising and, consequently, ensure high levels of consumer trust. These codes and guidelines have evolved with time, keeping pace with the changing marketing and consumer landscape.

Kapoor said: “I thank ISA for being a joint convener of the Trust in Advertising study. ASCI feels responsible for not only maintaining consumer trust in advertising but also guiding brands to advertise honestly and impactfully. Consumer trust and brand reputation are some of the most valuable assets an organization owns, and honest advertising is a key to building brand value over the long term. This is the basis of self-regulation. This study has revealed some very interesting findings that will help brands understand where they need to do more work in the area of building trust levels with consumers. For ASCI, an independent self-regulator, there are several insights that will help us engage better with consumers.”

According to Sunil Kataria, Chairman of the ISA, “Brands are built on the back of long term communication with consumers and audiences. It is in the advertisers’ own self-interest to make sure that all communication is honest and truthful, so consumers can trust advertising messages, and thereby, brands. This study helps advertisers, agencies, media owners and planners understand what works well and introspect on what needs improvement”

The detailed findings of the study are enclosed, click [here](#) to read the report.

Press Release

About The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)

The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), established in 1985, is committed to the cause of self-regulation in advertising ensuring the protection of the interest of consumers. ASCI seeks to ensure that advertisements conform to its Code for Self-Regulation, which requires advertisements to be legal, decent, honest and truthful and not hazardous or harmful while observing fairness in competition. ASCI looks into complaints across ALL MEDIA such as Print, TV, Radio, hoardings, SMS, Emailers, Internet / website, product packaging, brochures, promotional material and point of sale material etc. In January 2017, the Supreme Court of India in its judgement affirmed and recognized the self-regulatory mechanism as an effective pre-emptive step to statutory provisions in the sphere of advertising content regulation for TV and Radio in India. ASCI's role has been acclaimed by various Government bodies including The Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Ministry of AYUSH as well as the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB). MIB issued an advisory for a scroller providing ASCI's WhatsApp for Business number 77100 12345, to be carried by all TV broadcasters for consumers to register their grievance against objectionable advertisements. ASCI is a part of the Executive Committee of International Council on Ad Self-Regulation (ICAS). Among several awards bestowed by the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA), ASCI bagged a Gold Global Best Practice Award for the Mobile App "ASCIonline" (2016). As well as a special recognition for its "Guidelines for Celebrities in Advertising" at the first-ever 'Global Awards for Effective Advertising Self-Regulation' hosted by the ICAS (2019).

About The Indian Society of Advertisers (ISA)

ISA is the only national body as a strong voice to advertisers over the last 68 years. It has advertiser members from across industries who approximately contribute to over half of the annual national non-governmental ad spends. ISA, which is a founder member of the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) and one of the founders of ASCI, continues to partner with other industry bodies that connect to the advertisers. The ISA played a significant role in formation of BARC and is closely partnering with it towards advertisers getting robust and credible data.

Press Release

For further information, please contact:

The Advertising Standards Council of India
Manisha Kapoor - Secretary General, ASCI 91 9821331442 manisha@ascionline.org
Hilda Macwan 91 9665050812 hilda@ascionline.org

Pitchfork Partners
Arpit Tiwari 91 9082049493 arpit.tiwari@pitchforkpartners.com
Maanvi Yadav M: +91 8443915355 maanvi.yadav@pitchforkpartners.com

Nielsen
Prasun Basu 91 9820089060 Prasun.basu@nielsen.com

The Indian Society of Advertisers (ISA)
Sushil Matey 91 9920288803 ssm@insocietyad.com