

Subhash Kamath elected ASCI chairman

Mumbai, September 10, 2020: Subhash Kamath, Chief Executive Officer at BBH & Publicis Worldwide, India, has been unanimously elected chairman of the board of governors of the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI). The vote was held at the board meeting that followed the 34th annual general meeting this afternoon. Kamath is an industry veteran, having spent more than 32 years building brands across various sectors.

NS Rajan, Managing Director, Ketchum Sampark P. Ltd. was elected the Vice-Chairman and **Shashidhar Sinha**, CEO, Mediabrands India P. Ltd was reappointed as honorary treasurer at the same meeting.

The Board of Governors includes: **Abanti Sankaranarayanan**, Co-Chairman & Board Member, ISWAI; **D Shivakumar** Group Executive President, Aditya Birla Management Corporation P. Ltd; **Girish Agarwal**, Director, Dainik Bhaskar Group; **Harish Bhat**, Director, Tata Consumer Products Ltd; **KV Sridhar**, Chief Creative Officer (Global), Nihilent Ltd; **Madhusudan Gopalan**, CEO, Procter & Gamble Hygiene and Health Care Ltd; **Rohit Gupta**, President - Network Sales & International Business, Sony Pictures Networks India P. Ltd; **Prof SK Palekar**, Centre For Developmental Education, IFIM Business School; **Priya Nair**, Executive Director Beauty and Personal Care, Hindustan Unilever Ltd; **Prasun Basu**, President – South Asia, Nielsen (India) P. Ltd; **Sivakumar Sundaram**, President Revenue, Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd; **Umesh Shrikhande**, CEO, Taproot India Comm. P. Ltd.

Incoming chairman, Subhash Kamath said: “It’s a genuine privilege to accept this role as Chairman of ASCI. Having served ten years on the board, I have had the honour of working and learning from very senior and experienced leaders of the industry. More importantly, I have learned the immense value of self-regulation and the far reaching impact of the work ASCI has done over the years. Our industry today is at a crucial stage. With the digital revolution influencing brand messaging and engagement with consumers, advertising is evolving rapidly. And with the recent formation of the Central Consumer Protection Authority constituted by the government, self-regulation will be even more crucial in promoting consumer confidence and trust. As I have always said, with great creative power, comes great responsibility. So I look forward to working closely with the ASCI team to continue the good work set up by my predecessors and to introduce some newer, more future-facing initiatives as well.”

Recalling his year-long tenure at ASCI, **outgoing chairman Rohit Gupta**, said: “I thank all my colleagues, ASCI members and everyone who was part of this incredible journey. I am glad I was given an opportunity to drive the body that spearheaded important changes in the advertising industry. This year has been the most eventful for ASCI as we tackled several challenges. The pandemic saw many misleading ads, which were dealt with immediately. The Ministry of AYUSH reached out for help in flagging misleading advertisements regarding prevention and treatment of COVID-19. We also signed up with TAM to monitor 3,000 digital portals for misleading claims. We successfully met the three objectives we had set: increasing our consumer base, monitoring the digital space and working closely with government bodies. I wish Kamath and the board the very best.”

Over the past year, ASCI’s independent Consumer Complaints Council met 45 times and deliberated on complaints pertaining to 3,773 advertisements.

Press Release

- Complaints were upheld against 2,126 advertisements (versus 1,486 in 2018-19) while those against 298 were not Upheld as the advertisements in question were not considered to be in contravention of ASCI's codes
- 192 advertisements were found to be prima facie in violation of The Drugs and Magic Remedies (DMR) Act or The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules (Schedule J). These were promptly escalated to the Ministry of AYUSH or the Ministry of Health for their immediate attention
- In several cases, state AYUSH officials, the FDA or the Central Council for Indian Medicine issued show cause notices to the advertisers.

It concluded with a touching tribute to Brahm Vasudeva, non-executive chairman of Hawkins Cookers and the first chairman of ASCI, who passed away in July. His commitment to self-regulation in advertising and to the ASCI cause was recalled fondly.

About 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 interests of consumers. ASCI was formed with the support of all four sectors connected with Advertising, viz. Advertisers, Advertising Agencies, Media (including Broadcasters and the Press) and others like PR Agencies, Market Research Companies etc. The independent Consumer Complaints Council is ASCI's heart and soul. It is the dedicated work put in by this group of highly respected people from Civil Society and the Industry that has given tremendous impetus to the work of ASCI and the movement of self-regulation in the advertising. For more information, visit <https://ascionline.org>.

For further information, please contact:

| The Advertising Standards Council of India | Pitchfork Partners |
|---|---|
| Manisha Kapoor, Secretary General, ASCI 91 9821331442 manisha@ascionline.org | Arpit Tiwari 91 9082049493 arpit.tiwari@pitchforkpartners.com |
| Hilda Macwan 91 9665050812 hilda@ascionline.org | Shilpa Shanbhag M: +91 8097342664 shilpa.shanbhag@pitchforkpartners.com |