

VIKAS MEHTA

Marketing & Brand Communications Leader | Strategic Planner | Thought Leader in Consumer Marketing

Professor of Marketing, Firebird Institute of Research in Management, Coimbatore

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PROFILE SUMMARY

Vikas Mehta is a senior marketing and marketing-communications leader with over three decades of experience across the Indian subcontinent, Middle East, Far East and North Africa, spanning Electronics, Telecom, FMCG, Two-Wheelers, Durables, Retail and Food categories, with postings in Mumbai, Kolkata, Gurgaon, Cairo, Jakarta, Dubai and Muscat.

He has evolved from an advertising-focused practitioner into a new-age marketing leader, having headed large business groups at Asian and Indian levels and led large multinational, multicultural teams, with client and brand experience including Unilever, Walmart, Hero, Yum, GSK, Sony, Philips Consumer Electronics, Nissan, Oman Air, Emirates, J&J and Nestle.

Fluent in Hindi, English and Bengali, with working knowledge of Marathi, Punjabi and Assamese, he is an active thought leader who writes on marketing, communication and consumer experience, and now brings his corporate and international experience into the classroom as Professor of Marketing at Firebird Institute of Research in Management, Coimbatore.

CAREER PROFILE (Present to Past)

Professor of Marketing | Firebird Institute of Research in Management, Coimbatore

Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu • Jun 2021 – Present

- Teaches marketing-related courses including Integrated Marketing Communications, Retail Management and Sales Management to postgraduate management students.
- Ensures ongoing curriculum updates and explores new avenues for contemporary marketing education, bringing three decades of industry practice into the classroom.

Visiting / Guest Faculty & Independent Advisor | Dehradun-based, engagements across India

Dehradun, India • 2015 – 2021 (Seven years)

- Took guest and adjunct lectures at leading management institutes including Symbiosis, Woxsen School of Business, IMS Unison, SPJIMR, MICA Ahmedabad, Firebird Institute of Research in Management (Coimbatore), North Point Khandala and Delhi School of Communications, covering Principles of Marketing, Marketing of Services, Advertising & Sales Promotion, Integrated Marketing Communications, Brand & Product Management, and Business Ethics & CSR.
- Contributed regularly to The Times of India, Dehradun on civic and societal issues, and wrote a fortnightly column, "With apologies to none at all," for MXMIndia.com on current marketing topics; also authored a personal blog at www.admaadmusings.com.
- Advised and mentored small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures, including students-turned-founders, entering FMCG and AI-backed FMCG marketing.

General Manager | Havas Worldwide, Muscat

Muscat, Oman • Aug 2012 – Mar 2014

- Reversed a loss-making cost structure by aggressively growing revenue through new business wins and expansion of the existing account portfolio, repositioning existing brands with a new media focus.
- Prioritised Digital and Social Media growth given Oman's high smartphone penetration and young demographic, winning digital mandates from non-aligned global clients including Oman Air, Nissan, Infinity and Friendi Telecom (Virgin Mobile), alongside local property and FMCG clients.

- Scaled digital operations within a year to become the largest digital outfit in Oman, in sync with Havas Dubai, and built a PR division from the ground up, cutting agency losses by more than 75% while significantly improving client appraisal scores.

Executive Business Director & Vice President | JWT, Delhi

Delhi, India • Sep 2009 – Jun 2012

- Led the largest vertical in JWT Delhi (the network's 3rd most profitable office worldwide), managing key clients GSK (Horlicks, Boost, Iodex), Hero MotoCorp, Yum (Pizza Hut), Sony and Bharti Walmart — a top-5 agency in its own right by revenue and headcount.
- Successfully defended the Pizza Hut pitch weeks after joining against three competing agencies, relaunching the brand around innovation and new offerings.
- Revitalised Horlicks from a regional children's health drink into a nationally relevant brand through new offerings (Noodles, Lite, Biscuits, Oats), growing market share in North and West India, winning creative and effectiveness awards, and defining the brand's long-term architecture, approved by GSK Global.
- Defended Hero MotoCorp's business against competing agencies by developing new product insights (e.g., Splendour) and creating sponsorship properties, including the widely awarded “Phir Dil Do Hockey Ko” campaign, and countered rising Korean-brand competition on Sony by deploying celebrities (Dhoni, Kareena, Deepika).

CEO | Vahid Associates / Contexture, Bahrain

Bahrain • Apr 2008 – Nov 2008

- Responsible for the management and day-to-day running of the agency's advertising, branding and media divisions.

Regional Strategic Planning Director & Senior Vice President | Lowe, Mumbai

Mumbai, India • Oct 2005 – Mar 2008

- Owned worldwide strategic planning for Lifebuoy, successfully implementing a new brand vision and repositioning the brand in India by upgrading its imagery from a “poor man's brand” through deep consumer insight work in traditional and emerging markets.
- Part of the core client-agency team launching the brand into white-space markets across Asia, Middle East and Africa, defining its activation platform and building out planning teams and systems across markets.

CEO | Lowe, Dubai

Dubai, UAE • Jun 2003 – Sep 2005

- Prevented the agency from sliding into loss after losing HSBC and key Unilever accounts amid global realignment, maintaining profitability through new business wins, structural rationalisation and cost discipline.
- Won new accounts including Electrolux, JVC, Al Marai (GCC's largest juice and dairy brand), Nayomi (GCC's largest women's wear brand) and TECOM (UAE's vision project spanning Dubai Media City, Internet City and Biotech City).

Technical Advisor (Regional Account Director) | Lowe, Indonesia

Jakarta, Indonesia • Oct 2000 – Jun 2003

- Led Unilever's Oral Care business across India, China, Indonesia and Vietnam, implementing a common brand idea across differently branded, differently positioned Oral variants in each market.
- Managed Unilever's Home Care and Oral portfolio for Indonesia (~US\$20mn), including Rinso, Surf, Domestos, Lifebuoy, Sunlight, Domestos Nomos and Super Pell, achieving a record score of 7 on 5 brands across two annual Unilever appraisals and earning record bonuses.

Business Group Director | Lowe Look, Egypt

Cairo, Egypt • Oct 1997 – Aug 2000

- Built and led a 15-person team handling Lowe's multinational client roster including Unilever, J&J, Nestle and HSBC, winning Unilever's media AOR business and achieving record appraisal scores and bonuses from Unilever.

Vice President | Euro RSCG, India

India • Apr 1996 – Sep 1997

- Led the Philips business for the subcontinent and Middle East, driving new business wins that propelled the agency to 3rd place in Kolkata.

Account Supervisor to Associate Vice President | Contract, Mumbai

Mumbai, India • Sep 1990 – Mar 1996

- Core team member driving the turnaround and creative repositioning of India's second JWT agency, handling BAT (555 and Benson & Hedges), Philips, Microsoft, Bajaj Auto and Finolex, among others.
- Grew Philips from a \$100,000 to a \$5 million account by winning business across divisions, managed the BAT relationship directly out of London in the absence of a local BAT office, and drove several media innovations for Philips and BAT.

Management Trainee to Senior Account Executive | Lowe, India

India • Jun 1987 – Aug 1990

- Joined directly after completing management studies; worked on leading category brands including Bata, ITC and Kitply.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

- Writes a fortnightly column, "With apologies to none at all," for MXMIndia.com on current marketing and communication topics.
- Regular guest columnist for The Times of India, Dehradun, on civic and societal issues.
- Authors a personal blog on marketing, communication and consumer experience at www.admaadmusings.com.
- Engages regularly with students through guest lectures, visiting-faculty courses and MBA recruitment at leading management institutes across India.
- Mentors and advises start-ups and businesses entering the consumer marketing space, including students-turned-founders in FMCG and AI-backed FMCG marketing.

EDUCATION

- Master of Management Studies — Mumbai University (1985 – 1987)
- Bachelor of Science, Physics — Mumbai University (1982 – 1985)

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Brand Strategy & Integrated Marketing Communications
- Advertising, Media Planning & Digital / Social Media Marketing
- Client Servicing, Account Management & New Business Development
- P&L Management & Multicultural Team Leadership
- Cross-Border & Emerging-Market Brand Building (Middle East, Africa, Far East)
- Management Education & Marketing Curriculum Delivery