

BILLBOARD INNOVISION

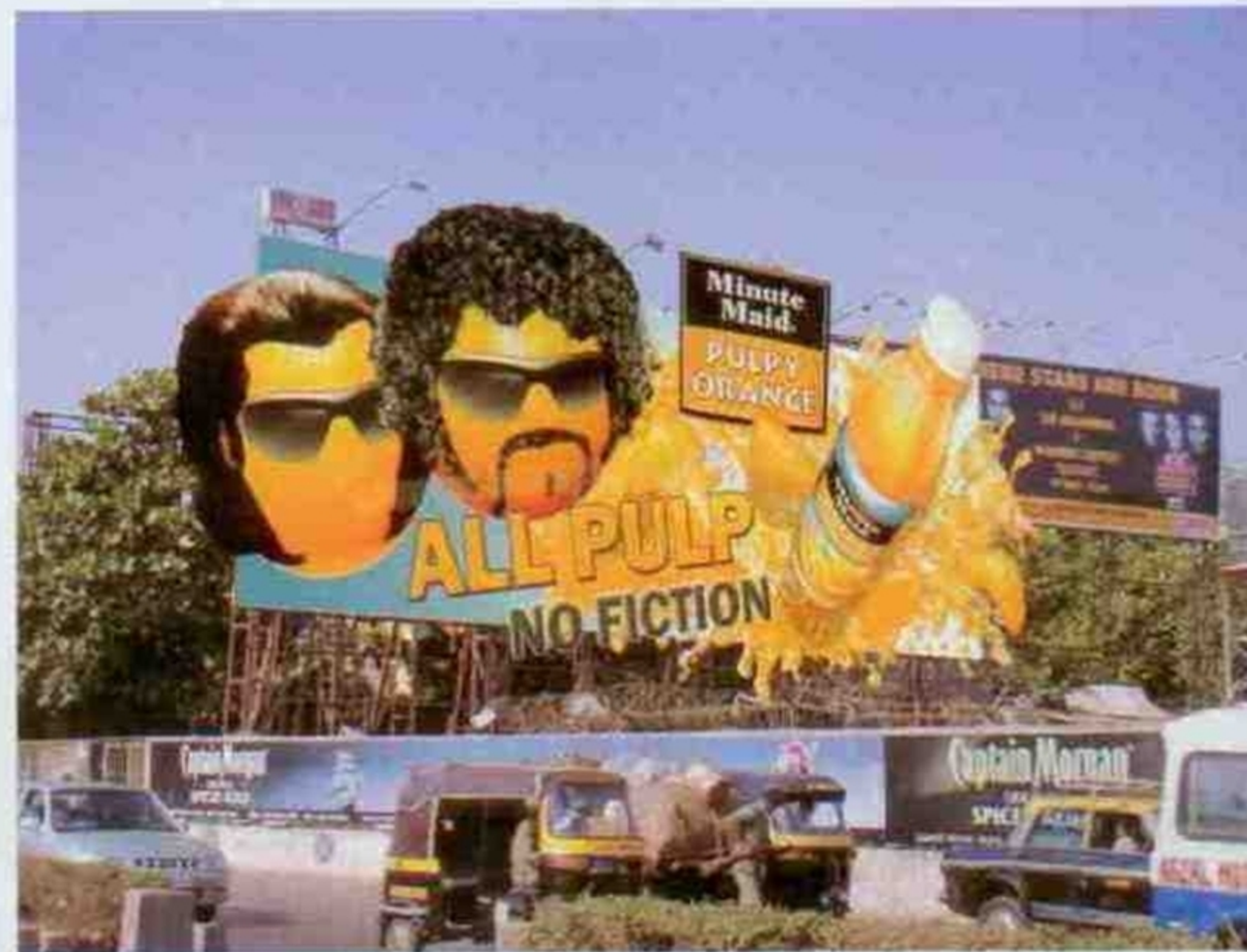
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Advertising is passé. Or at least advertising as we have known it definitely is. Advertising is a pervasive medium and often results in clutter and noise. Almost nothing stands out and there is a constant and tough battle for mindshare. The need of the hour is not only innovative ideas in terms of creative design but also the innovative and clever use of the media, not to mention innovative mediums of communication.

What pushes a sale is recall. Recall, which unfortunately most of today's advertisements, simply cannot conjure up. Recall is the goal of every campaign with its ultimate objective being the consumer to buy the product. Every campaign makes a pitch, a pitch to sell a product. The consumer is making a pitch as well, a pitch not to buy. It's a battle with only two outcomes, either the consumers bought your pitch or you bought theirs. The latter has been winning hands down lately with advertising failing to excite the consumers enough to buy the product.

A popular media in outdoor advertising is billboards. It is also the most misunderstood medium. Marketers are led to believe that billboards are cost effective compared to



any other media since thousands of people would see it everyday. This only holds good if your billboard is actually 'seen' and then remembered by the consumers that matter. Outdoor billboards are not given as much

attention to detail as needed and if given careful attention, it could end up saving millions of rupees and reach out more effectively to the audience.

A billboard is not a television. Television commercials are capable of showing a range of emotions through an effective story using audio and video. Billboards on the other hand, are best at conveying an image targeted at the subconscious, instilling an awareness of a brand. Sadly, most billboards designed today are based on the television commercial of the brand on air. It is impossible for a static medium like a billboard to convey the entire message of a 10 second TV spot. While on the move, the communication has to be visual and not textual. When was the last time you saw someone stop their car to jot down the phone number on a billboard and then carry on driving?

Though nearly 95% of the spend on an outdoor billboard campaign goes towards the media space rentals and only 5-10% towards the creative design and print production, it is surprising that no attention is paid at all to the creative design and print quality of the billboards. Its like serving

tasteless food on the finest silverware, the silverware may be expensive but it does not change the fact that the food is still bad. The idea is to ensure consumers remember the great food and not the silverware it's served on. If advertisers spend more time to achieve the goal of what the consumer would recall rather than where and how many times they will see it, the results would be dramatic and the savings unimaginable. Smart advertisers know that billboards help develop brand awareness, and they select a specialist billboard design and production agency to deliver the job. They buy lesser media space and use the savings to invest into a great design and well produced billboard which would leave a lasting impression on the consumer.

A great creative idea knows no boundaries. If an idea is good, it will succeed anywhere and if it isn't, well, it won't. A great idea needs to be backed by a determination to carry it forward through different languages, mediums and spaces. And for that to happen, you don't just have to be innovative, you need to have innovative vision or like I would like to call it, Innovision.



* All pictures depict Mukesh Manik's vision of billboard innovation



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