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## Context to the nugget

KV Sridhar talks about what separates the great ads and film makers from the rest. He shares his insights from his recently launched book – 30 Second Thrillers where he goes behind the scenes of legendary ads (tag lines such as Wah Taj, Hamara Bajaj, Only Vimal, I love you Rasna) and breaks down the secret sauce behind the ads and the ad film makers.

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** If you really look at the underlying elements behind the success of these adds, what are the three four themes in these adds that stand out, which made them the success that they were?

**KV Sridhar (KV.S):** I think for any advertising to live that long there has to be some magic in them, I think good advertising is like a homoeopathy pill while the outer coating is the entertainment which is sweet and nice and then the medicine is actually hidden inside but you way to have a pill which is the other way so like the allopathy pill we used to have when we were very young, without any of those coating which was so bitter that you want to throw them so that's the secret if you see all the popular work which I have picked up not from advertising agencies from peoples perspective so all these adds have got something which made people connect, whether it is little girl who says I love you Rasna, Rasna cut became a cult for children so that was age of innocence that she is very selfish and instead of giving one glass to doll she actually has that also because on behalf of the doll she has, there is a lot of innocence which is built and you go back to your own childhood or you go back to the observation of your own children of nephews or nieces and then you empathize with that so when you look at advertise which stands at test of time they all have this quality of human nature corner of eye observation a greater human truth which is inside and if you way to say children are innocent they are simple that's a life truth Rasana's truth the product truth is, it's simple you just have to mix it with some water and then serve the product is so simple it was so simplified never any other had as simple as that for people so this is the product truth and this is the life truth they both are matching 100% so you have a great add which talks about both it connects with people and also it charms people.

**DJ:** You have interviewed several add makers that were behind the making of these advertisements, reflecting on some common themes, are there three or four things about them which make these people so distinctive in the work they do?

**KV.S:** So all of them, as I said they are all great story tellers and they have the knack of human observation and then culling out great life insights and then picking the relevant insights for relevant brand because we live with so much of observation and so many insights in your head but picking

the right one for the right brand is the judgement which you make that is what makes an ad great, the relevance is very high it becomes really great, look at all the Fevicol advertising look at the advertising for Pepsi, Nike, so each one of them have this ability to tell a beautiful story and also understand which insight to be used at what time, for what brand. So, that makes them quite different and all of them are obsessive about their craft and then their ideas so once you get an idea never give that up, you have seen Happydent commercial, the length with which they have gone to really make it or the Thumbs up commercials which I did, if you way to cheat not do a bungee jumping actual bungee jumping you would have not had that impact and bungee jumping was not there in India so you have to actually get, I mean it would have been easier to go and then shoot in New Zealand where bungee jumping was born, modern bungee jumping was born, but those days, foreign exchange was a huge problem, either you have to choose an illegal means of going and then shooting there or legal means to getting them to India and then shooting it in India which was more expensive, call them to India and made them do this so at a time when you gets an Idea to execution is when creative people become extremely obsessive about what they do and they take pride in the finished product.

**DJ: And there do you see the clash between commerce and creativity?**

KV.S: There is no, it is to enhance the commerce, the more craft which you put into your work the multiplier effect will become that much more you can have lazy ideas you can spot those ideas but they make no impact to people because the idea is bad the Idea was not brought in to life, as much passion as it should have and if you look at all the advertising, every little detail is been taken care, when you see HDFC which is what I passionately work for so many years till I left every little detail, you will never see a mother serving tea while the father and little girl are talking about what the girl want to become, she wants to become an astronaut, they both are talking you will see the wife sitting behind on a table and then working on a computer, father on a Sunday taking care of the child and then you have the mother who is actually doing her office work on a computer so this is a progressive one because I have a different agenda, I don't want to stereo type a women, therefore I find ways to do it but if you see the brand is consistent now they can't get out of it so they becomes victims of their own image that's where your passion and then your interest will come if you way to remove that self-respect in the context of financial independence there is no brand and then today HDFC life the more they advertise the more HDFC bank does well and their home loans do well not only it impacts that business it also impacting the businesses of the group so which is adding backed quite a lot, so commerce it is just that the more you craft it the better it is, that Cadbury that girl *Kuch khas hai* it is a greatest liberation the amount of money in the stadium putting all those and then getting the cricketers and then doing that entire, it was a very expensive film, but look at the impact of what had happened?, British Airways it was again one of the most expensive films for internet but look at the impact which it has made, the grandmother and the Airhostess. So, there are a lot of times when you craft something, you need to do it in a way, which is convincing and then the more you do the more impact, that's where you make a ten rupees work like hundred, that's where even clients also get the money back, its only short sightedness that "*Chalega kuch bhi chalega saste me karenge.*"

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I love the metaphor that Pops uses – Homoeopathy pill versus allopathy pill. I guess that is the power of stories where people gravitate towards it and then you engage them and leave them with a hard-hitting message whether it is a movie or a CEO addressing his or her team.

The other point he makes about ad-film makers is an interesting one. The fact they have a knack for human observation and have insights in their head and they have the knack of pulling out the right insight in the right context and that judgment is what makes them special. I remember hearing something very similar in the context of the comedian Billy Connolly and his approach to improvisational comedy. That is again another art form that requires a similar set of skills and capabilities

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## End of nugget transcription

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### About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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