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**Subject:**

Friday, May 15, 2015 9:24 AM  
Learnings week 74 A - ET Most exciting brands list

Dear Friend and Colleague,

The ET list of the top 100 happening brands was released on Wednesday 12 th May 2015. A lot of colleagues pinged me in PepsiCo, asking for my analysis of this list. So this is an additional learning note for the week. Enjoy and please fee to send me your feedback.

Why is this list important? India is a young country and will be a young country for some time. The average age in India in 2020 will be 29, the average age in China and USA in 2020 will be 36, the average age in Europe in 2020 will be 46 and the average age in japan in 2020 will be 49. So, the voice of the youth is critical.

First, it was good to see Slice and Pepsi at No 19 and 20, we really need to translate such equity into higher sales in the marketplace. Well done Slice and Pepsi.

The concept of advertising and happening brands was based on good products supported by wholesale and word of mouth. The town crier was the first innovation and he would stand at wholesale markets and shout out the brand names with their promise. In ancient Rome, the back wall of the house courtyard was used for graffiti where people would write what they wanted about politics and brands. The coffee house an Arab invention took London by storm and brand reputation and crowd sourcing for books was done in Coffee shops for books like Adam smith's Wealth of nations. How the world has turned a full circle in the last 300 years!!

In India , we have moved from products to service to technology experiences. Nielsen tracks 84 FMCG categories in India and a total of 40,000 brands. There are about 500 brands in every category! I analyzed the ET happening list in terms of the categories:

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Technology Brands</b>	<b>Automobile brands</b>	<b>Durables</b>	<b>Apparel, Footwear</b>	<b>Food and beverages</b>	<b>Watches, Shades</b>	<b>Personal care, Soaps, etc.</b>
<b>Top 25</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>26-50</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>51-75</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>76-100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>All 100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>

Lessons from this list:

1. Size of brand, advertising money behind brand, age of brand was clearly not a factor for young consumers. The first personal care brand in the list – Dove came in at No 28 ! Personal care brands tend to spend a lot through the year.
2. Some old brands with some smart work can be revived – e.g. Royal Enfield. Equally some strong brands of the past like Axe are less happening than their Indian counterparts now.
3. High performance, Higher aspiration, Role of design, user interface, sensory appeal define the best in the list..
4. Technology brands dominate the list , they fall into the productivity , deep engagement area.
5. Personality signaling brands like apparel, Shoes, watches etc. are important.
6. Top end premium offerings, be it cars or phones show a distinct aspiration amongst youth. There are ten really premium brands in that happening list.
7. Experiences are important and we see a lot of QSR brands in the list. Surprisingly there is no physical retail brand in the list while e commerce brands are there !
8. The old youth hangout was a college canteen or some adda, the new youth hangout is digital addas, e.g. Facebook what's app et al.
9. What's app and Facebook offer deep engagement through the day and young consumers love them. Here's an interesting stat about Facebook from a last week event : the earthquake in Nepal affected the 28 million citizens in Nepal. 7 million of them posted their location and status on Facebook and that reached 150 million friends!! FMCG marketers have to reorient their thinking on using digital, because that's the place where young people hang out, they are not in front of mediums of the past.
10. Technology brands are intuitive and have deep engagement with consumer passions. How do FMCG brands flow into that digital stream?

All the best, do let me have your views.

Wr,  
Shiv