

News monitored for: Royal Enfield

# “THE MARKETING PLAN IS OUR MOTORCYCLES”

The customers should struggle to figure out whether they should keep the bikes in the drawing room or ride them  
**Rudratej Singh**  
President,  
Royal Enfield



RE's Rudratej Singh on how he plans to turn the bike into a vehicle for marketing and storytelling

**R**udratej Singh, President, Royal Enfield joined the world's oldest motorcycle company (in continuous production) three years ago. This was after a longish stint of 18 years at Unilever, which has given him clear and often contrarian views on the new-age marketing playbook. Some of it can be counter-intuitive. For instance, launching the limited edition Pegasus motorcycles with the belief: "We are creating a thousand story-telling vehicles with Classic 500 Pegasus." Or the stance of staying away from quintessential auto-marketing tactics which is mostly around "a highly involved consumer and highly transactional companies on the other side." "Brand Equity met him on the sidelines of the limited edition unveiling. Excerpts

BY AMIT BAPNA | MUMBAI

**Limited edition launch of a history-laden brand**

With Pegasus, we are creating a thousand story-telling vehicles. Pegasus is inspired by the legendary Flying Flea motorcycle manufactured at Royal Enfield's facility in the UK during World War 2. Conceived as a tribute to Royal Enfield's military heritage, the recent UK launch even saw the Pegasus Regiment para-troopers being air-dropped. The idea is to bring that story which cuts across

the world and talks about a time and emotion, where the brand was at the heart of doing something fundamental, and reinforce its relevance even today.

**A work of engineering or a piece of history?**

Royal Enfield (RE) in India is an established brand, but it is early days in the other 50 markets where we are present. There we could well be a shirt or a bike. Also, it was important to bring out the attributes of RE brand - pedigree, resilience, ruggedness - which are still what make us

relevant. Those are not known, either in India, or in any part of the world. Of course, we will sell the bikes but we will make sure that people who buy them feel and truly believe they are buying a piece of history. They should struggle to figure out whether they should keep them in the drawing room or ride them.

**The tales the bikes can tell**

The marketing plan is our motorcycles. They will create their own layers of storytelling. We have 2.5 million people

who follow us on our website and the launch event was broadcast to our entire community. We try to make sure evocative stories are seen from the bike owner's side rather than from the company's side.

**The Royal Enfield Playbook**

The industry believes in product-led growth. We have said while we will do innovations, it will be around the brand. We don't need to get on the hedonistic treadmill of product innovations.

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THE LEGENDARY FLYING FLEA MOTORCYCLE DEPLOYED DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR



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In a world of planned obsolescence, Royal Enfield is trying to establish purposeful longevity. So, whether it is a 1968 model or 1968 story or a 1945 story, we will prove that motorcycle and that story are still relevant. I do not want to make the customer feel the next year that there is something better we have launched than what he bought from us. Mobile companies do that every six months, automotive companies do it every four or five years.

**Marketer's 'Mann ki baat'**

The changes in marketing and agency structures is a reflection of what has already happened over a decade and a half back, from the consumer point of view. There has been a resistance to change from the client. It is just easier to aggregate people and think they'll behave in the same way. The system collapsed because the return on marketing investment became very obviously negative, and with the macro factors of business getting impacted at the same time, it was an obvious reaction from the client - "I don't have the money and I am not

# The marketing plan...



Rudratej Singh at the Classic 500 Pegasus launch event

seeing any returns. Let me pull out."

**New age 'auto' marketing**

The automotive industry today is made of a highly involved consumer and highly transactional companies. We are trying to stay away from that nar-

rative. I had said three years ago, we'd rather become the world's best CRM company than become the world's best marketing company. And I come from a company where at that time—the stated objective was to be the world's best marketing company. Because I come from

a background of 18 years of trying to be the world's best marketer, I'm convinced that in Royal Enfield we want to be the best CRM company. Primarily because of the futility of what I have seen for 18



**THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY TODAY IS MADE OF A HIGHLY INVOLVED CONSUMER AND HIGHLY TRANSACTIONAL COMPANIES**

years. I think, going forward, the concept of CRM which currently is level-9 in the order of importance, will become level-1. CRM is currently under-leveraged and clunky and transactional. That'll change.

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