



With the importance attached to finishing and decorating exterior and interior walls ever increasing in today's versatile home market and its determined promotion by Birla White, the entire market has been given a new momentum. In fact, so successful has been this effort that the brand commands 50% of national sales and 100% share of all worthwhile innovation that has ever happened to craft modern day architectural elegance. A critical component in wall finishes, today, Birla White is not just a powerful brand in India but also the brand of choice in 26 countries across all six continents.

Market

It is now passé to build just a house or an office building. The need to make the structure visually pleasing has taken centre-stage. The awakening of the artist within people has caused the market for the conventional use of white cement to decline and be replaced by its more creative avatar as a white canvas for crafting surface finishes. With the first stirrings of this change, Birla White, closely monitoring the new age customer, in the backdrop of its social fabric, spotted the shift. Ascertaining trends that the market would follow, it developed and launched a slew of innovative, white cement-based surface finishing products.

Birla White is by far the largest white cement brand in India and the seventh largest in the world. From a single commodity premium product it has emerged to become a multi-speciality product organisation for decorative and construction applications, commanding a dominant market leadership. Thanks to intense market research and continuous innovations, one in every two bags of white cement sold bears the legend of Birla White (Source: market estimates).

The brand operates pan-India and boasts a wide distribution network. Its twin plants – one each at Kharia Khangar in the Jodhpur district and Katni in Madhya Pradesh – serve a large network of customers, ensuring high levels of service and product availability.

Achievements

Birla White dons the mantle of a leader of change in the construction industry. Its success in this market is a tribute to its dedication and the fine craft of marketing persuasion. The influence Birla White has brought to bear on the market resulted in escalating consumer demand and actually necessitated the company to embark upon a capacity expansion programme. The company has kept its technology advantage by enhancing capacity with top-of-the-line equipment, high-speed packing machines, process automation and world-class research and development facilities. No wonder then that Birla White became the first white cement company in India to receive the CE (Communauté Européenne) certification – a coveted seal



stamped only on those products which meet the safety, health and environmental standards set by the European Union. The company was conferred The Economic Times and Frost and Sullivan IMEA Award – 2014 as a Gold Brand. It also won the Seal of Gold Award for Product Excellence.

History

For years white cement was a peripheral, low-priority product. The arrival of Birla White injected new life in this dormant industry, pushing the entire segment forward. Birla White positioned itself as the whitest cement in what was virtually an industrial beauty contest, where whiteness of the cement was a gauge of its superiority. It grew and developed the market and quickly built for itself a rock-solid reputation for quality and innovation, going on to becoming a best-seller. While several elements played a key role in its success the one that under layered everything was the company's uncanny ability to read the pulse of the market and keep pace with the changing times. It innovated tirelessly. The launch of white cement-based putty was a watershed moment. The product found ready acceptance in homes and in the industrial sector, giving white cement a new direction and consumers, great finish to walls.

Product

But Birla White is an impatient, restless company. Tinkering with the market, understanding the consumer and nudging both towards innovation is in its genetic make-up. So it did what it is best at: it developed a whole new niche within construction – one that owns the properties of whiteness and exquisite surface finish. The range of unique stand-alone products that Birla White has introduced includes wallcare putty, Levelplast and Textura. Between them, they facilitate care for walls and enhance interior appeal. Birla White Wallcare Putty is a pre-paint base coat. XtraHydroPhobic polymers in the putty increase water resistance and thus help reduce flaking of paint. Birla White Levelplast, just as the name indicates, covers up wall frailties and undulations caused by uneven application of cement.

In extending its franchise, Birla White has also introduced a number of products which allow a consumer to make a personal style statement. Textura is one such product. It is a cement-based wall finish that adds a distinctive character to walls. Its exhaustive range of textures, designs and colour patterns have made it a favourite in international markets. Glass Fibre Reinforced Concrete (GRC) is quite simply merchandise that's not only pioneered a whole new market, it has also become a global best-seller. This lightweight, mouldable finishing material can be crafted for all kinds of architectural applications.

Many projects in India have used Birla White GRC with stunning results. These include The Leela Palace in Bengaluru, Hotel ITC Sonar Bangla in Kolkata, Manipal University in Jaipur and the

Nareli Temple in Rajasthan. To serve the customer better, Birla White has embarked on a journey to expand its existing product portfolio, to move from a product based to a solution based mind-set. Through various customer listening initiatives Birla White is in a continuous mode of sensing the pulse of the customer, aiming to delight with relevant solutions and experiences.

Recent Developments

One of the most neglected parts of India's consumer-facing interface is packaging. While all over the world, packaging is an important marketing mix and an essential advertising tool that not only represents but also shapes the brand identity, it lags behind in India.

Birla White Wallcare Putty, pre-paint basecoat, operates inside the confines of this very same inertia. The problem compounded by the fact that it also operates in a fragmented, low consumer involvement category. Birla White decided that the packaging for wallcare putty had to be completely revamped if its market were to grow. The new pack that it developed is distinctive, innovative, vibrant and differentiated – endorsing the principle that design should be visible intelligence. The new Birla White Wallcare Putty pack features a clutter-breaking design that's a first-of-its-kind in the cement and cement materials category. The new bag is of superior quality material, glossy and owing to closely interwoven nano perforations is dust-proof. The look is fresh, premium and contemporary.

The unique design with six-colour printing makes it hard to imitate and thus helps reduce the problem of spurious packaging and isolates me-too products that are sometimes available in select markets. The creative design elements of the new pack were conceptualised keeping the product category in mind. The pure white canvas offered by wallcare putty forms the base. The colourful petals indicate the true tone of colours on the white basecoat and the colours used represent the eco-friendly aspect of the putty.



Promotion

The new brand campaign around perfection underlines the brand thought *Kaam Perfect Hoga*, moving from a functional to an emotional route and an outcome of a three-phase ethnographic qualitative consumer research across major markets. The Neuro Research on the ad excelled on effective measurement. The result was that the impact on customer conversion rate increased by 5% with the sales volume up by 10% during the campaign.

With digital rapidly becoming a primary medium of communication, the brand's digital content was realised. Several social media campaigns were strategically aligned with the brand's proposition, using campaigns such as *#Issepehle*, *#UnsungHero* and *#KaamPerfectHoga*. Birla White's new website is customer centric in its approach. The website relates to end-consumer needs and has



Brand Values

Birla White has always been the ultimate modern consumer brand that stands for reliability, compromise-free quality, innovation and responsibility.

The brand has constantly reinvented itself to keep in sync with changing consumer attitudes and needs. Thanks to its commitment to continuous research and development, the brand's focus on innovation has been consistent. With this focus at the heart of its manufacturing and marketing policies, Birla White has always offered the consumer innovative building solutions. These have not only challenged the limitations of traditional thinking but, in a very agreeable way, nudged forward the evolution of the industry.

a dedicated individual home builder section designed on the findings of a qualitative ethnographic study. The site has a case study section which talks about various successful initiatives the business has taken in the past and many more such sections which intend to educate and help the consumer. The website is a one-of-its-kind in its category, unique and effective. In a short time period, the website has crossed 64,000 impressions and reached a CTR of 10.43%. The sheer strength of content is driving traffic to the site resulting in phenomenal organic growth. An IRCTC campaign during Chhath in Bihar and Jharkhand in October 2017 reached out to 123 lac people! Birla White expanded its presence on Facebook and Twitter with 257k likes and 2300 followers respectively.

A space no company in this area can neglect is the influence architects and civil engineers exert on buying patterns. To strengthen this bond, various contact programmes have been initiated by Birla White. The Yuvaratna Award, in its fourteenth year, is an industry first helping connect young aspiring architecture students and practicing professionals through a design challenge competition. The competition nudges the creativity in each mind. It's a platform where people get to exhibit their artistic bent and put on display their home-grown ingenuity.

In fact, this year Birla White has launched an extension of *Birla White Yuvaratna*, *YuvaratnaNXT*. Students from identified institutes across India are called upon to collaborate with their teams and mentors to co-create a masterpiece using Birla White products.

Things you didn't know about Birla White

- ◆ Birla White conducts a training programme to enhance skills of applicators under its Vikas Training Program
- ◆ Breaking convention, Birla White became the first company in India to introduce white cement in convenient small packs
- ◆ Birla White is the first eco-friendly white cement in India
- ◆ Birla White's customers are served through a large network of over 2400 stockists and 47,000 retailers
- ◆ Birla White Wallcare Putty now comes with a special technology – Xtra Hydrophobic Polymers – that enhance its water-resistant properties