

■ By ONKAR PANDEY

**P**IZZA HUT, THE COUNTRY'S leading pizza brand from the stable of the US-based Yum Restaurants International, has again gone for a repositioning by donning a new look, a new logo and a new tagline, within two years of a similar attempt around the 'Eater-tainment' concept. The new brand avatar is based on the 'Enhanced dine-in' experience in the casual dining segment, as Pizza Hut always felt uncom-

fortable to be compared and pitted against other pizza delivery chains and quick service restaurants. The company is expected to spend around Rs 50 crore on the new repositioning effort which was kicked off in Mumbai and New Delhi mid July. Now it will move onto other cities like Pune, Chandigarh and Bangalore, the IT city where Pizza Hut started off its Indian operations in 1996.

portable to be compared and pitted against other pizza delivery chains and quick service restaurants. The new tagline is 'Stories Happen' to project Pizza Hut as a place where people forge strong friendships and create great memories while sharing good food. Apart from the new logo and tagline, the repositioning also includes an asset upgrading programme that will modernize the look and feel of Pizza Hut with an enhanced décor package over the next three years.

He goes on to add that, "our products are priced in the same range as earlier. We simply have far more new offerings in pastas, flavoured and blended drinks, fried appetisers and a new thin crust pizza."

With this exercise, the company is expecting a big boost to its business and is projecting a growth of 25 per cent in unit sales this year onwards. The first restaurant based on the new theme of 'enhanced dine-in' experience was opened in Juhu in Mumbai,

Confirming the same, Yum! Restaurants India managing director Niren Chaudhary says: "This transition in our strategy signifies an important turning point for Pizza Hut in India. In the Indian market we have



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### Why Again?

Like many industry experts, if you are also asking why this new positioning again by the well established brand, just two years after a similar exercise. Well, the popular Pizza brand claims that the new repositioning will help cement its leadership further in the casual dining space and help it stand apart in the country's highly competi-



Niren Chaudhary - MD, Yum! Restaurants India with actors Lara Dutta and Kunal Kapoor at the launch

and the company plans to take it gradually to smaller markets after careful studies around the new business-model. Pizza Hut says, the latest brand transformation strategy is part of a global re-imaging exercise that has already happened in countries like Hong Kong and England. Yum Brands India chief marketing officer Milind Pant says, "prior to implementing the new concept, we carried out extensive consumer research to test it and customized the décor and food to appeal to local tastes while retaining an international casual dining look and feel."

**How's it Happening?**

That's the big question on everyone

with KFC, Taco Bell, A&W and Long John Silver's and is the world's largest casual dining restaurant chain with over 12,500 restaurants across 91 countries all over the world. In India too, it is present in 35 cities and has a 27 percent market share in the eating-out market receiving over 70,000 foot-falls per day across the country.

**A Leaf from history**

If we take our memories back by few years on Pizza Hut's previous repositioning targeted more towards the affordable dining experience to reach to more consumer wallets in smaller cities after a decade's service to the metro customers. We find eponymous Pizza brand was targeting over 60 SEC

smaller cities like Kanpur, Jodhpur, Vapi, Hubli, Mysore, Visakhapatnam, Indore, Coimbatore, Mangalore, Amritsar, Jalandhar etc. The communication based on the concept of 'Eater-tainment' emphasised on fun and memorable experiences. And the company had changed its tagline from the earlier 'Good times, great treat' to "Treat you just can't beat" sauced around an all-embracing adoption of affordability platform with pizzas starting at Rs 75. The company had also roped in Bollywood funny man Javed Jaffery as a new brand face.

In 2006, when *Pitch* had written about various Yum Brands including Pizza Hut, it had signaled towards the brand ambiguity problem. Many customers coming to the Pizza Hut restaurants were not able to recognise any brand USP. *Pitch* had also talked about the necessity of fine-tuning of

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changing track from affordability to a premium dining experience

lips, and in response Pizza Hut says in every way possible—from menu, to decor design, to the communication strategy, every aspect is being taken care of. The design elements of the new dine-in concept are inspired by the sights and sounds of Parisian café with the restaurants having warmer lighting and have been done in earthy colour tones with signal display for destination seating of groups of different sizes and mood graphics on the walls to pep up customer moods. The menu has been re-jigged to include gastronomical delights with specialty beverages like Florentine Fettucine, Arabiatta Farfalle in the pastas. Blended drinks category has international favourites like Pink Grapefruit Sparkle, Hazelnut and Coffee.

Pizza Hut is one of the flagship brands of Yum! Restaurants Inc. along

B towns with over four lakhs population. The blue-print adopted by the brand then was to make deeper penetration in the metros to capture more of SEC-B customers and along side enter B-class towns. So, it forayed into



## Re-positioning

Pizza Hut plans to spend Rs 50 cr to acquire a premium brand image

■ **Repositioning has a new logo, a new tagline—'Stories Happen' and a new look and feel of decor and a new menu**

■ **A likely shift from previous stance of affordability, the new focus is on enhanced dine-in**

■ **Targeting 25 percent business growth with the new positioning**

the repositioning around 'Eater-tainment' concept. We had also raised concerns over the affordability platform especially when compared with the ubiquitous brand in this category McDonald's—clearly the leader in 'value for money' casual dining segment, an average McDonald's meal costs around Rs 30-40 compared with Pizza Hut's treats at Rs 75.

Will it achieve its set targets this time? Only time will tell. In the meantime, given that Pizza Hut's communication is mostly idea-driven rather than celebrity-driven, it'd be interesting to watch out for the kind of promotional and communication efforts it employs for the new positioning. ■

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