

# Communications at new frontiers

Bangladesh Brand Forum in association with Cannes Lions launches today the Communication Summit 2011 at Westin Dhaka. Global and local advertising professionals will come up with insightful lectures on effective communications strategies, marketing dynamics and brand evolution at the summit. Star Business sits with Allein G Moore, a founder of Creative Circle Singapore, and Manfred Abraham, head of Brand Strategy of Interbrand Global, UK, in exclusive interviews. Both Moore and Abraham are now in Dhaka to attend the summit. We also bring out a write-up by Nirvik Singh, chairman and CEO of Grey Asia Pacific, on this occasion.

## Create bigger, better brands

Branding expert sees potential of local companies

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

**B**ANGLADESHI companies should try to create brands that are globally recognised and also cater to the country's rising middle class population with a growing buying habit, a top expert said yesterday.

"I see a huge potential for Bangladeshi companies to establish a number of brands," said Manfred Abraham, head of Brand Strategy of Interbrand Global, UK, one of the world's largest brand consultancy firm. Manfred is a leading practitioner in



Manfred Abraham

brand strategy in the UK, having extensive international experience with some of the world's leading businesses and across sectors. He is an excellent and engaging presenter, and he shares learning and insights from world's leading brands to nurture innovative business thinking to maximise returns.

He is now in Dhaka to attend a daylong summit on the importance of communications in business today. Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF), in collaboration with The City Bank, is organising the "Communication Summit 2011" at Westin Dhaka.

Manfred said this kind of a summit is important, as it gives scope to industry people to share their knowledge and forge bonds. It will also give an idea on how to create and manage a brand.

He said branding helps a company establish a strong presence in the market and reach more customers. "It actually manages the value of the company substantially. It ensures the long-term growth."

The 40-year-old Austrian is aware of companies' reluctance to pay much attention to branding. "Branding is such a straight-forward way of building a successful business. We have seen in the past that many companies cared very little about branding."

"For example, when they realised the value of packaging their products well they paid attention because it allowed them to charge more money. That is just one area. All global companies around the world have strong focus on their branding," he said.

The Bangladeshi companies who have so far paid little attention to this area should try and look into the possibility of creating a brand. At first, Bangladeshi companies need to identify what they need to stand for," he told The Daily Star in an interview.

He said branding helps a company grow both internally and externally.

He said branding allows companies to charge a premium. "If you do not have a brand, it will be tough for you to realise a premium. It also gives the company loyalty among customers, what the world's top brands such as Coca-Cola, Apple or Intel enjoys today."

Manfred said perhaps it has been a missed opportunity for Bangladesh to not have a strong brand. "If you look at India, you will find that they have established a number of brands in the last few years. They are investing heavily to brand their companies."

"Bangladeshi companies have the potential to do the same. They should not wait any longer. You can see the differentiation between a brand and non-brand company."

He said with the rise of technology, media and the mobile phone, Bangladeshi companies can reach customers more easily, even if the country does not have the traditional channel of branding products. Why doesn't Bangladesh have any global brand? I do not see any reason."

The Interbrand official also said communication and marketing play an important role in building a strong brand. "They are actually an integral part of branding. They help change perception."

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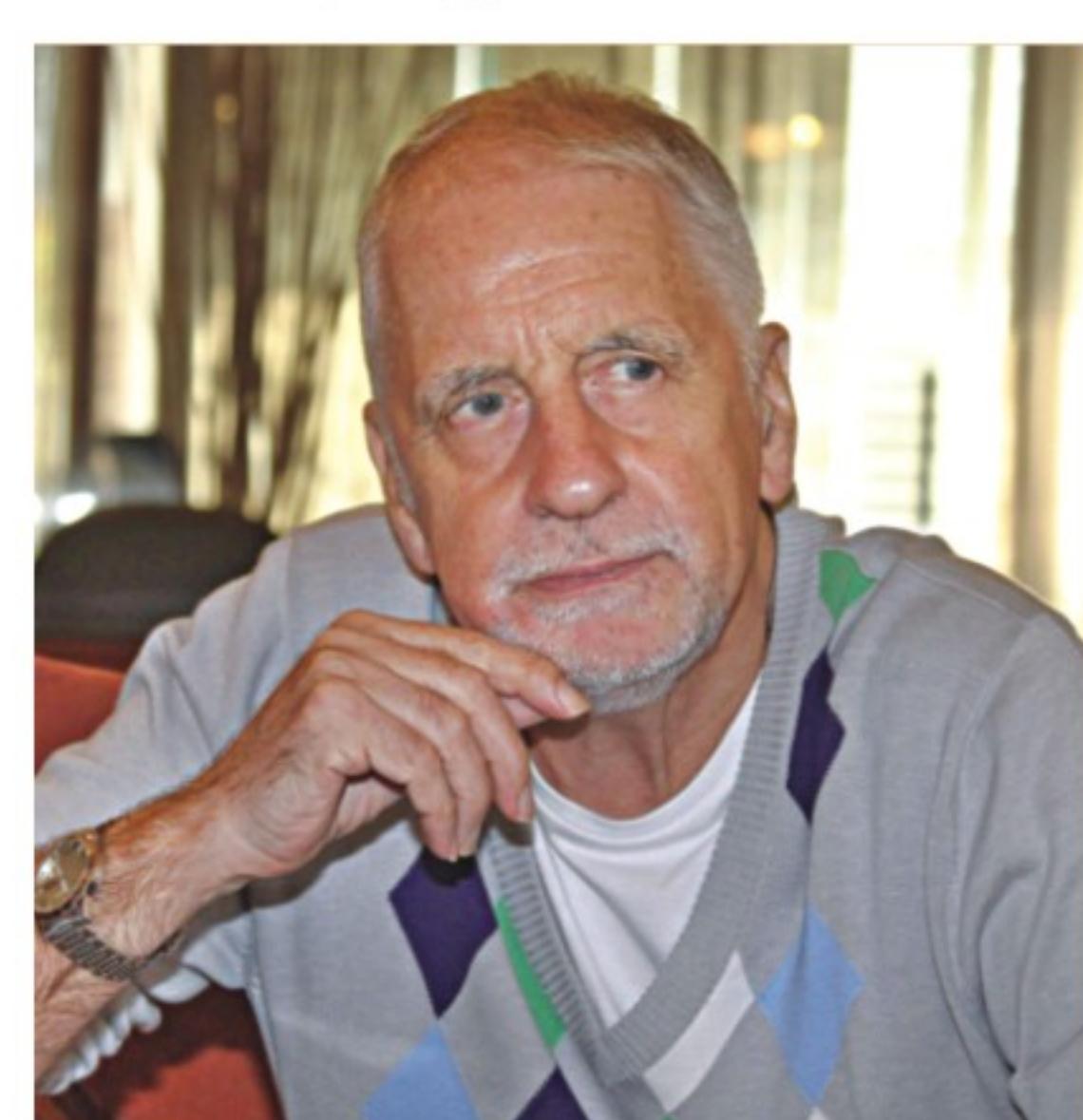
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## Ads change perception

Advertising guru in Singapore tells The Daily Star



Allein G Moore

SUMAN SAHA

**T**HE development of local brands largely depends on spending for advertisement as it will help people change their perception regarding the domestic brands, an expert opined.

The growing middle-class people of Bangladesh will go for branded products with the growing income of those mass people, said Allein G Moore, a founder of Creative Circle Singapore, in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star yesterday.

He is currently in Bangladesh to attend the Communications Summit 2011 to be held today in Westin Dhaka.

Moore, who has over 35 years of experience in the sector, said, "When the income of a country increases, the number of middle-income people will also go up. As a result, they will go for relatively premium products or services."

Considered a guru in the Singapore advertising industry, Moore has helped maintain and develop brands such as UOB, DBS, Nestle, P&G, Mercedes-Benz, Qantas, Australian Tourist Commission and Singapore Tourism.

During his visit, he will also conduct a two-day certified course styled 'The Craft of Copywriting' that will begin on Wednesday at Hotel Lake Castle in Dhaka.

The course will include an overview of copywriting, overcoming writers' block, focusing, developing storyboard, taglines and writing for the new media.

Moore, who is also the editor of Ad Asia Singapore, a trade magazine for the advertising, marketing and media industry in this region, sees a huge prospect as the country has achieved much sophistication in the advertising sector.

"In Asia, advertising spending is growing at around two percent in the last couple of years," said Moore. "While in Europe, it saw negative growth on ad spending due to global recession."

Moore says advertising does not create market; rather it is a response to market demand. "It is about selling business. Advertising helps people change their perception through educating them."

The negative perception on local products will minimise as people will develop an awareness of product features and quality, he said.

"Brand is not a product. It is all about perception," said Moore.

"A marketer should not be shy being a sales person. It is an art and so it needs to be harnessed," he added.

The editor of Ad Asia said, "I think Bangladesh is underestimated outside the country. The world media often portrays Bangladesh as a flood-prone, dangerous and poor country. But it is not true. I have changed my perception after observing the country."

He says creativity and effectiveness go together. "People always want fresh products."

So the advertising firms should encourage creativity and welcome new ideas, said Moore.

Moore suggests that the marketers should be updated on the world as it will help them develop strategy effectively.

"The marketer should have a curious mind."

Moore urges the advertising sector people in Bangladesh to take initiatives like brand forum. "We need to highlight the sector. We need to educate marketing directors and brand managers on the importance of the brand."

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## Bangladesh carving its name boldly on the global map

NIRVIK SINGH

**R**IUGHT things are happening in the right direction: I am excited to get the opportunity to meet some of the world renowned communication experts at the Communication Summit, 2011 in Dhaka this week.

The Communication Summit that has been arranged by Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF) will facilitate world class exposure for the local communication professionals. Notably, this summit is an initiative of BBF in association with Cannes Lions, the world's largest advertising festival. The summit will also showcase the best creative work of Cannes Festival 2011. I highly appreciate the intuitive that is going to offer the industry to mature rapidly.

### Evolution of Grey Worldwide:

Though evolution has touched us immensely, we have kept our head high in the water successfully. I think it is only because of the two words, famously effective. Everything that Grey does is judged against those two words. Is this work going to be famous? And will it be effective? Grey has lately made huge strides in the digital world. It puts a great deal of effort in improving creative reputation and on strategic planning.

The business is still essentially about consumer insight and understanding the consumer. There are new challenges in the new world order, but I think being passionate and being curious is and will remain the main thing to remain ahead.

### Facing a grim economy:

Asia came out of the recession faster and better than most people expected. There are some big economies here with very strong domestic consumption. And therefore the advertising industry is experiencing a bounce back.

### Changes that are happening:

Communication professionals are experiencing changes in terms of 'how communication happens and works'. The biggest change is that for the first time, the consumer has a lot of power. Today, one can communicate with con-

sumers in real time, and it's a two-way conversation. It's an opportunity to listen to the consumers. As the consumers seek more knowledge, they go to the internet.

### Bangladesh's advertising industry:

I am quite confident about the local industry. Bangladesh's advertising industry has made huge progress during the last four to five years. A lot of their works are now getting to be truly world class. But the biggest thing I have noticed is a resurgence of strong local sentiment, which is fantastic. Gone are the days when one would just copy an ad from somewhere else.

### On tourism:

We would term our work on Bangla-



Nirvik Singh

desh tourism as just the beginning. Let me refer to the 'Incredible India' campaign. These kinds of campaigns should be carried out consistently.

### In the coming years:

We are already the number one advertising agency in this country. At Adfest last year, we were awarded as number one. Grey Bangladesh has set a very high benchmark, not just for themselves but for everybody else in the Asia Pacific. And of course, Grey Bangladesh wants to evolve continuously, to make it stronger and bigger. But it also needs to get far more into the new media spaces, and that's where the captains of the ship will be taking it to in the near future.

The writer is the chairman and chief executive of Grey Asia Pacific.



The IDLC Group warmly congratulates

## Mr Rubel Aziz

Director & Chairman  
of the IDLC Executive Committee

on being elected as  
Chairman of the Board of Directors of The City Bank Ltd.

