



Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Hyderabad



Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune

Guest Lecture Report

Mr. Saroj Mohanty

Associate Vice President – Marketing, Sonalika Tractors (International Tractors Limited)

Topic:- “Opportunities for Agri Durables in Rural Markets”

November 29, 2020

INTRODUCTION

On November 29, 2020 guest lecture on “Opportunities for Agri Durables in Rural Markets: A Marketing Perspective” was delivered by Mr. Saroj Mohanty, under Rural Marketing course to share his knowledge and understanding of how his organization Sonalika Tractors tackled various challenges in Covid-19 times, their responses to these challenges through influencer marketing and digital transformation and how they secured top rank in the industry during tough times. Our Guest also walked us through the case study discussion on real issues companies face.



Guest Lecture
For Marketing Students of 2019-21 batch by

Mr. Saroj Mohanty
AVP Marketing
Sonalika Tractors (International Tractors Limited)

Topic
**Opportunities for Agri Durables in Rural Markets:
A Marketing Perspective**

Date & Time
29th November 2020
05:00 PM to 6:30 PM

Platform
Microsoft Teams

Mr. Saroj Mohanty is currently working as the Associate Vice president - Marketing at Sonalika Tractors (International Tractors Limited). Mr. Mohanty comes with a vast industry experience spanning over two decades in domains like rural marketing, digital, trade & channel management, market intelligence, consumer & business research, new product launch, marketing, creative development, corporate communications and sales. He has contributed extensively in result oriented & performance-driven strategy through execution excellence across leading Indian and global brands in durables, FMCG, automobile, information services & agri/farm mechanization sectors. He has also been associated with leading brands like LG, Goodyear, Valvoline Cummins, etc. On a personal note, Mr. Mohanty believes in Henry Ford's philosophy - "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty, anyone who keeps learning stays young". His vision is to continue to be a passionate leader and emerge as a business entrepreneur.

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Poster for the Guest Lecture

GUEST PROFILE

Mr. Saroj Mohanty is currently working as the Associate Vice president - Marketing at Sonalika Tractors (International Tractors Limited). Mr. Mohanty comes with a vast industry experience spanning over two decades in domains like rural marketing, digital, trade & channel management, market intelligence, consumer & business research, new product launch, marketing, creative development, corporate communications, and sales. He has contributed extensively in result oriented & performance-driven strategy through execution excellence across leading Indian and global brands in durables, FMCG, automobile, information services & Agri/farm mechanization sectors. He has also been associated with leading brands like LG, Goodyear, Valvoline Cummins, etc. On a personal note, Mr. Mohanty believes in Henry Ford's philosophy - “Anyone who stops

learning is old, whether, at twenty or eighty, anyone who keeps learning stays young". His vision is to continue to be a passionate leader and emerge as a business entrepreneur.

DETAILS OF THE GUEST LECTURE

Guest lecture by Mr. Mohanty on "Opportunities for Agri Durables in Rural Markets: A Marketing Perspective" started at 5:00 PM on 29th November 2020 and it was covered in three parts.

The first part was how his company Sonalika tractors which is a blend of rural and urban market and stands 6th globally and 3rd in India for tractor brand, which has been able to combat the Covid-19 challenge like sudden lockdown in the country, business and lives of many came to standstill and market turned volatile to which they responded by aligning the strategy with the action, working on strengthening bond with the channel partners, quickly adapting to the situation with digital transformation, leading the technology benchmark, communicating with the market to customizing Agri solutions, regional technology solutions which resulted in 26% growth, increase in market share and securing 1st position in domestic growth which is thrice the industry domestic growth, and how were their winnings pre continuing they also came up with the very interesting concept of 3 x 2 heavy duty mechanic services to make their customers the top priority. Pillars of the Covid-19 initiatives by Sonalika which helped them emerge stronger was:-

1. People First. Always: Instead of deducting salaries pay them more to keep them motivated
2. Standing with you all the time: Which was for channel partners and all the farmers
3. People First. Warranty Extended: Extended dealers warranty without any condition
4. Standing Strong with the nation: Which was more of a CSR activity to give back to the society
5. Dedicated to the Nation: Advanced Ventilators were provided

The second part was about influencer marketing, how strong word of mouth plays an important role in rural marketing, broke the myth of how people confuse influencer marketing with multi-level marketing and network marketing. As consumers' demand is based on 3 I's Inspire, Influence and Impact. He also shared a few stats about influencer marketing

- 90% of consumers trust peer recommendations
- Users generated content is 50% more trusted
- Consumers are 70% more likely to make a purchase based on referrals

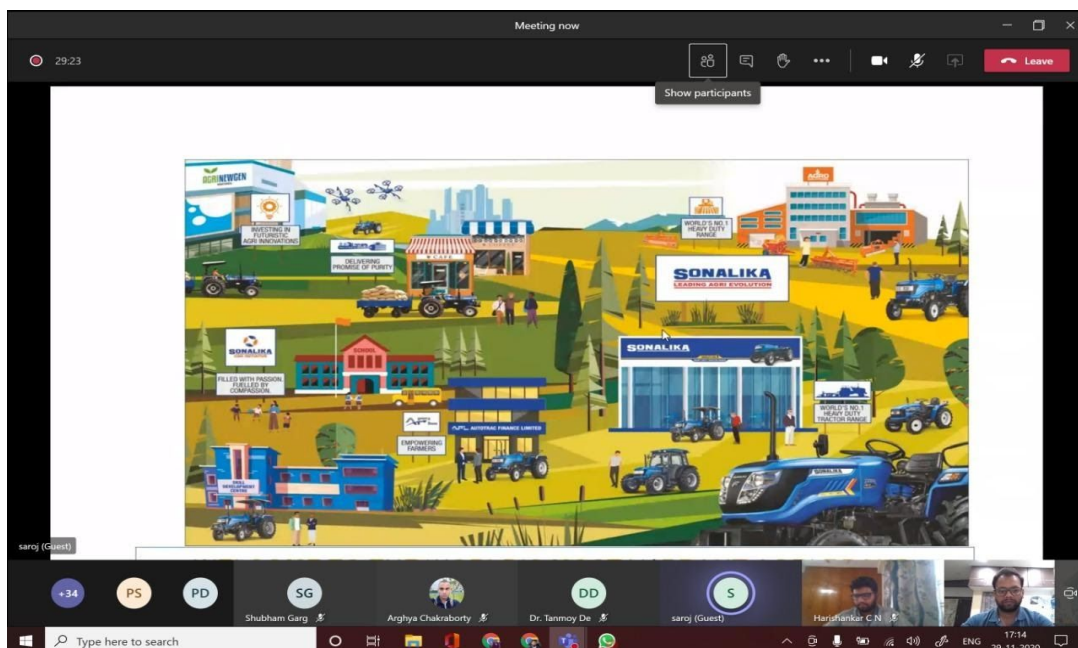
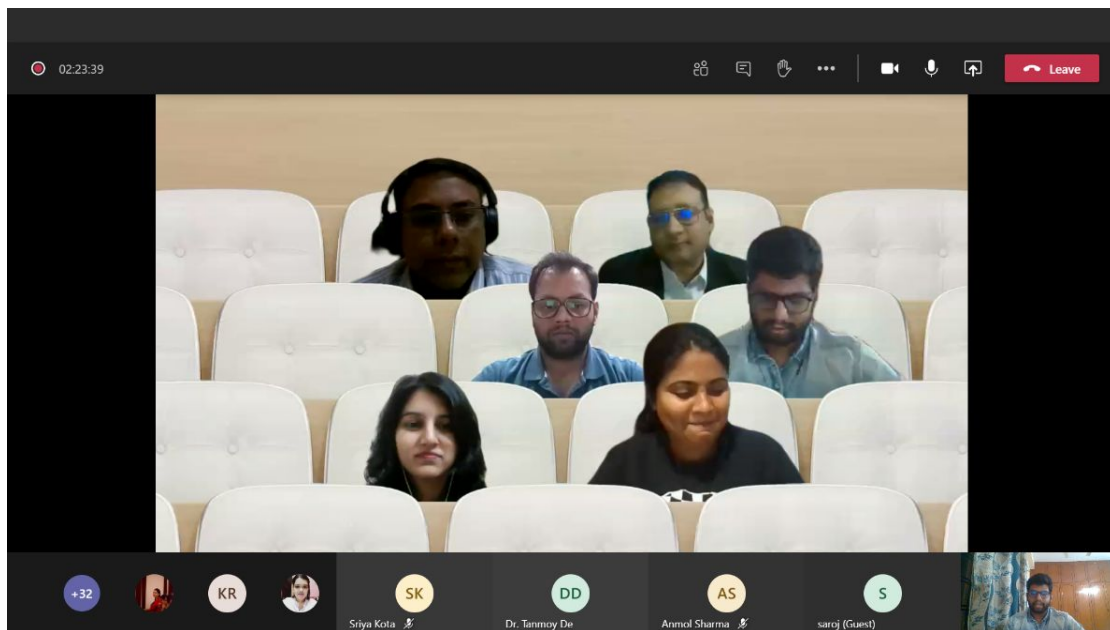
Apart from these challenges faced in this are identifying the right influencers, Finding the right engagement tactics, Measuring the performance of the campaigns, Keeping track of influencers activity and to tackle these one should Define the target group, Discover the influence, Monitor the influencers, Take action to build relationships and trust to engage them.

The third part was about digitalization in which it's said Brand Advocacy is an important driver of brand consideration and choice in the age of the social web. He further explained the importance of

digital media, how digital campaign works in stages of Setting Objectives, Conceptualizing, Execution and Measuring, what happens when key success factors are not aligned with the brand personality, target audience and integrated. Common mistakes made by companies such as chasing Facebook fans.

Lastly, we discussed the case study on what to do when your website is not performing, for which the recommended solutions given were optimizing the UI and search presence, Educate and Engage users on Social channels, discussed further credibility and digital marketing ecosystem.

Captures from Guest Lecture



Conclusion

In conclusion, it was a very insightful and engaging session. It was a great session as we got an opportunity to understand how important & it is to adapt to challenging situations and still win the market. We also understood how to make the digital era work in our favour. Another vital learning we received from Mr. Mohanty was that it is about being updated in the market to make the most out of it and word of mouth is very crucial for rural marketing.