

# Ceat looks to hook them young

The company launches an employer branding campaign to woo millennial talent, uses humour to pitch itself as a workplace with a difference

**SAMREEN AHMAD**  
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How do traditional organisations reach out to young workers and keep them coming for more? With some humour, a new sensibility and some amount of plainspeak is how Ceat Tyres believes it can do that. With an ongoing digital campaign called #thingsthathappenatwork that satirizes a typical Indian office environment, the company is pitching itself as one that thinks differently on equality of opportunities, on ideas and ownership and such other issues. Not only is the company keen to spin a different story for the young employee, it is reaching out via a medium that holds their attention the most.

“With content consumption trends moving rapidly towards the digital medium, we wanted to create awareness through this platform helping us to express the work culture at Ceat. The campaign, which adds a dash of satire aims at achieving that objective targeting a larger set of younger audience,” said Anant Goenka, managing director, Ceat. Over the past few years, several companies have used the digital route to reach potential recruits and new employees. Hotstar launched its #QuitInStyle series early this year asking techies to get out of their humdrum existences for a more exciting job. Previously IDFC Bank had launched a campaign that asked for a resume in a tweet and it now runs #ExtraordinaryPeople where it showcases employee talent outside of the workplace, be it as trekkers or singers and so on. Sun Pharma has a YouTube series on leadership aimed at young recruits where it highlights company culture.

Increasingly companies are realizing that be it Gen Z (all born after 1995-96) or the millennial (post 1981 to 1996) the view on the workplace is changing. But surveys and focus group reports throw up a fuzzy picture and companies are scrambling to get the communication right.

According to a recent survey by Deloitte, India’s millennials constitute 34 per cent of the country’s population, ahead of markets such as Brazil, China,



The ongoing campaign takes a satirical look at some of the abominable behaviour on display in some routine office situations

## ON THE YOUTH TRACK

Company	Campaign	The focus area
IDFC Bank	#ExtraOrdinary People	Showcasing employees who go the extra mile for their passion
Hotstar	#QuitInStyle	Asking techies to get out of their routine existences to do a more exciting job
Sun Pharma	#WeareSun	Promoting work culture through insights from leaders
Axis Bank	#TheAxisWay	Engaging in dialogues for inspiration from each other
Ceat Tyres	#Thingsthat happenatwork	Humorous look at workplace behaviour

US and UK. This puts India, the report says, in the driver’s seat, when it comes to understanding this demographic. Also this group in India is better educated and more connected to the world than their predecessors and account for 71 per cent of total household income, especially, in the 25-35 age-group.

Companies are speaking in multiple tongues—speaking of everything from cool offices to flexible work hours to social media savvy, to transparency. It is important to present a clear picture of the present day instead of promising a great future, says brand strategist Harish Bijoor. According to the Deloitte report, the need to discover oneself is stronger in this age-group, pushing them to jump from one place to another quickly and take up new challenges. But that does not mean they are unwilling to stay if the environment is right. The millennials, who form almost a third

of our workforce, are willing to take risks and seek challenging work, but an unethical workplace is unacceptable.

“The older generation was always tempted about the great future they could have in a particular company. Younger employees are more concerned about how their working conditions are now,” said Bijoor.

Ceat’s campaign talks about flexible working hours, maternity and paternity leaves that bring balance to work and personal life. It also promises part-time employment until the child is a year old. It was just good HR policy says the company; with an attrition rate of 10 per cent, the tyre-maker has a re-hire policy for those who want to come back.

Ceat Ventures is another attempt to hook the young as it invites business ideas from employees and if found viable, takes them to fruition. “In our company, employees are free to

apply for open positions without seeking approval from anyone. We also have associations with premier institutes such as Harvard and the Indian School of Business. Our tie-up with a reputed University for the general MBA programme is quite popular with the young who choose to join us after their graduation. And, in this segment, we provide strong financial support to the employees by funding the entire cost of education,” said Milind Apte, chief human resource officer, Ceat.

Indian companies are trying hard but still have a long way to go. “You have a Google at your disposal today. If Indian companies do not talk of great workplaces, they will lag behind. There are some Indian companies which have reinvented themselves. The work culture, the work stations, the accent of the canteens and play spaces are calculated very carefully now,” said Bijoor.

The human resources teams in the several companies are also active on social media. “Even IT behemoths like Infosys and Cognizant are active on platforms such as Instagram where they post a lot of workplace related activities. Hence, employees can get feedback on potential employers. These social media platforms have both sides of the story: Of what people are saying about you and what you are telling about yourself,” said Karthik Srinivasan, national lead (social) at Ogilvy. In an increasingly open world, communication is the key to keeping talent, companies say.