

Madison's Story Can Be Likened To Patanjali Taking On Unilever : Anita Bose, COO

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In a recent development, Madison Media Plus has appointed Anita Bose as Chief Operating Officer. She will also be heading the Delhi office of the agency. Bose will be closely working with Vikram Sakhuja, Group CEO, Media and OOH, Madison and Sam Balsara, Founder, Chairman and Managing Director, Madison World.

She is an old hand at the media industry with over two decades of experience behind her. In the past, she has been associated with several media and advertising agencies such as McCann Erickson, Contract Advertising, Mindshare, FCB-Interface, MEC, Vivaki Exchange- Starcom MediaVest. Bose spent a large part of her career at the Group M agencies. Moreover, she has also worked on several big accounts such as LG, Samsung, Aircel, Whirlpool and NIIT.

She has been on a sabbatical for last one year and was consulting for a few clients.

Bose joins Madison at an interesting time as the agency has been on an account-winning spree. Despite losing a couple of big businesses Mondelez and Airtel, the agency is high on spirits.

We speak to Bose to understand what prompted her to join Madison and how she will take her role.

Q. To begin with, what was the thought behind getting into Madison?

Over the years, I have always seen Madison Media as one of the top contenders in any of the big/small media pitches in the market. However, I used to wonder, how did an Indian company manage to grow so large and stand up. The feeling is like Patanjali growing up so big and willing to take on Unilever. It creates a curiosity among the people to find out what goes on inside. So there was always a curiosity to get into Madison and understand more about it. In past, I had an opportunity to come to Madison, but I chose otherwise but this time, I took the opportunity. Most other agencies have international affiliation; however, Madison continued in its way and always emerged strong.

Q. So, when this opportunity came your way, what were the discussions you had with Vikram and Sam?

People stay at Madison for long tenures. For example, Basabdatta Chowdhury, erstwhile, CEO, Platinum Media, served for nearly 16 years at the agency before making a move. There may be many others also who have spent same duration at the agency.

However, in today's age, it is extremely difficult to find people who stick for long tenures. So when Vikram and Sam started talking to me, they clearly mentioned about Chowdhury's legacy and stability at Madison. It is not easy to fill Chowdhuri's position because she was there in it for a long time but both urged towards bringing stability to the business especially after the Airtel business exited.

Madison has a long list of clients with some biggies such as Snapdeal and others. Many a times, situations can really become chaotic so they wanted someone really experienced for it. Since, I have the experience of working across some of the bigger clients such as Samsung, LG, I kind of fitted in the position well.

Moreover, Sam and Vikram wanted a fresh perspective to the position. They were looking for someone who has never been at Madison and can give a hard look to the systems and process to make it better and efficient. They wanted someone who has been out of the system for a while.

Q. So, what are your roles and responsibilities?

At present my role and responsibility is to understand the system, team, work culture and how the business functions at Madison. However, the most important task that Sam and Vikram have assigned me is to ensure that the best practices are inculcated in the system so that the business can be run effectively. My job is to stabilize the business and the result of new efficient systems would clearly reflect in the client delivery.

One of my immediate priorities is to project Madison's services not only in the traditional form of media but as a 360 degree offering, which includes our variety of services across OOH, Digital, Rural, Creative and many others. We want to bring them all our services together and be the full service agency. Madison has a sharp focus on Digital, which is growing very fast.

Q. What are your targets for the first year?

Getting new businesses and clients is definitely a part of my role. But, at present, no targets have been set for me. But the key focus will be on improving the 360 degree offering and streamlining the processes.

Q. As you have mentioned that Madison is entirely a home grown brand. So, what according to you, is the difference between GroupM and Madison?

One key difference is that Madison is very client focused. In other agencies, they have their own internal targets and people there have the whole focus on completing their targets, which has very pertinent in the agencies now a days. So, that is something which takes you away from the core business.

Q. What are your plans for Madison's Delhi office?

It is one of the top players in the Delhi market. We have some of the top clients in this region. Though it is too early for me to start devising plans and strategy for the Delhi office, I am meeting the clients and team.

Q. And, finally, what learnings from your past would you like to implement here?

See, it is important to understand that media landscape changes very swiftly. And the professionals associated with the industry have to be updated and adjustable to it. For example, a few years ago there was a huge buzz about mobile phones, then came e-commerce, and now its e-wallets. In years, to follow the buzz will change to something else. In my career, I have seen this buzz changing right from the dotcoms to telcos, ecommerce and to several other categories. Moreover, there will always be new platforms emerging, which will attract the audiences creating newer opportunities.