

Insider speak

M*ixed Feelings* is an interesting book about the world of advertising written by an insider but without the hype that often accompanies the subject. It is the story of a man who was a flight purser but opted to enter the world of advertising not knowing what lay before him. For a man brought up on the values of the Aurobindo Ashram, the crass reality of the advertising world was another continent. Yet Ram Sehgal rose from his humble position to head Contract Advertising and make the agency a success.

We romp round the advertising world with Ram Sehgal as he takes his first steps and learns the ropes in this high pressure business. And when he comes on to the international arena, it is the observer's eyes that tell their own tale. For readers here is a wealth of information on how to deal with your foreign principals. Whatever the merits of globalisation, there is a clash of culture. We come across the bossy American, the stiff upper lip British, the snooty French, the nodding Koreans and the clannish Japanese. Here is international communications at its best.

Ram also talks about his own contemporaries. Among the many luminaries that he talks about include: Frank Simoes – great copywriter; R.K. Swamy; Gerson da Cunha – was always courteous and acknowledged one's presence, even in a crowded lift; Sylvie da Cunha – great sense of humour; Alyque Padamsee – brought a lot of creativity and energy in the Lever brands; Bal Mundkar – the king of advertising in the late 1960s and '70s, Subhas Ghosal and others. He also talks about some of the bosses. Ram asks an interesting question: Should advertising people marry. I will not tell you what he says. For that you must read the book and sure will benefit from it.

Advertising can be exciting but do we take it seriously as we do journalism. Now here we have Dilip Awasthi telling students of journalism how to make the grade as special correspondents. Hence the book is aptly subtitled, 'A handbook for reporters'. We have often heard the phrase 'a nose for news'. But Awasthi thinks otherwise and tells the reader that a journalist should use his observation and common sense rather than his nose for news. And then goes on to describe the basic news elements. According to him a news story should have proximity – local value; it

should have timeliness – fresh happening; the PCI factor i.e. prominence, consequence and importance; drama, conflict and human interest; humour surprise and novelty; progress, money and health. And as if that is not enough, he gives you the ten commandments of good reporting. Credibility, balance and fairness, objectivity, attribution, news point, brevity, relevance, clarity, human touch and sharp observation.

Having got you started, Awasthi helps you structure your news stories and also help you with the art of interviewing. Not only must you have the confidence of the subject but also one must be a good listener. Politeness helps and one should not hesitate to interrupt but one must keep eye contact. Writing the story is another art altogether.

Awasthi also get into high-tech reporting and provides a ready reckoner for various skills as well as a host of better words and expression in case you have begun repeating yourself.

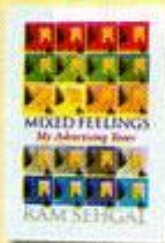
Vilanilam goes much further – beyond advertising and journalism to mass communication. And he restricts his subject study to India. His is a sociological perspective on mass communication. After giving the reader an overview of the society and its interaction with communication, Vilanilam gets into the early years of the print media in India. It naturally had the European connection but soon the first newspaper came in 1780. It was in English and edited and published by James Hicky, an

ex-employee of the East India Company and was called Hicky's Gazette. Soon other papers followed and also in the Indian languages viz. Assamese, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, etc.

This was followed by the national and international news agencies. The author also looks at Gandhian journalism and compares it with the journalism of the 21st century especially the new journalism, which is redefining itself at every turn.

The audio visual media has now taken centre stage and after the initial thrust by the radio, television the new buzz word is convergence. It will be interesting to see how the changing technology in the field of communication will retain its human face.

• SANTAN ROBRIGUES



MIXED FEELINGS—MY ADVERTISING YEARS

By Ram Sehgal
Published by
Tata McGraw-Hill
Pages: 192



THE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

By Dilip Awasthi
Published by Viva Books
Price: Rs295
Pages: 190



MASS COMMUNICATION IN INDIA

By J.V. Vilanilam
Published by Sage Publications
Price: Rs250.00
Pages: 223