

Pied Piper of Reliance Mobile - the Hrithik look

There's a new Pied Piper in town. Long curly locks, face covered behind a beard, a flute on his lips, he is here to eradicate 'telecom irritants' that niggle the phone user.

Meet Hrithik Roshan, the brand ambassador of telecom operator Reliance Mobile, who in a television ad is seen playing the flute and enticing a pack of digitally created mice -- the irritants -- leap off a cliff, much like the fictional flautist.

'The television commercial is inspired by the famous tale of the Pied Piper of Hamelin,' said Sanjay Behl, head of branding and communications at Reliance Communications that owns Reliance Mobile.

'In the ad, our brand ambassador Hrithik helps eradicate telecom irritants like STD, conditions, vouchers, no roaming,' Behl told IANS in an email interview.

Reliance Mobile signed up Hrithik earlier this year as its brand ambassador and, according to media estimates, the deal is worth Rs.5 crore (Rs. 50 million.)

The first campaign was launched in March, followed by another during the Indian Premier League matches. The latest is the third round of the campaign, and Behl said it was created just after a week's planning and took Abraham Cherian of production house MAD Entertainment two days to can it.

'The commercial was created within a tight deadline, with just about a week's planning,' he said.

Simply Reliance, the new tariff plan from Reliance Mobile ads, is said to be a Rs.100-crore campaign. Sunil Manchanda has produced the new ad.

The actor, who is currently busy shooting for Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Guzaarish', grew his hair for the movie role that took him six months.

'Hrithik's look as the Pied Piper had to be achieved around his current hairstyle that he is sporting for 'Guzaarish'. Considering his long hair, the team's inspiration for his costume came from rock band Jethro Tull's front man Ian Anderson's look.'

Behl said it was decided that while the fairytale character had to come through in the ad, it was also important to weave in contemporary elements.

'Roshan was made to wear a velvet blue tailcoat, but over jeans and boots, quite a diversion from the original Pied Piper's queer long coat from heel to head, which was half of yellow and half of red. We chose blue as the colour, as it is also the dominant Reliance Mobile colour,' said Behl.

Designer Surily Goel has styled Hrithik's remixed costume. 'A set was built at Film City, which had a nondescript, yesteryears' small town feel to it and was made to look like a typical shopping street in a hill station. The shoot took two days.'

Said D. Ramakrishna, director of Cartwheel Creatives, the agency that handled the campaign:

'Shoot with the actor took about two days while post-production of the commercial took us two-three weeks.'

Ramakrishna said actor-dancer Prabhudeva choreographed for the ad at Hrithik's behest. The two teamed up five years after the movie 'Lakshya'.

'Hrithik had recommended him and it was nice of him that he did it for us at short notice,' he said.

Apart from Hrithik's look and dance moves, the music used in the commercial is catchy. The flute track was composed by music director Sameer Uddin, who tweaked the Reliance signature tune to be in sync with the theme.

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