

**Host**

Metros across the country have resumed service. We speak to Anindita Sinha, Head Corporate Communications L&T, Hyderabad Metro Rail. She shares Hyderabad metro's communication strategy during and post lockdown.

Basically, we just wanted to understand that certainly operationally from a communication standpoint, there are many things that we need to do even you know, with either with general public or our internal stakeholders or anybody else for that matter, right, I just wanted to understand what kind of process you had what kind of challenges you had, how did you guys you know, work around it.

**Anindita**

You know, the major, all the crisis started increasing the you know, the number of cases went continuously went high that is where now we become little what to say I won't say under is the term but we are we will quite upset and how to run the business. You know metro was shut for how many days. So, you know, other first month loss was the X amount. So, you know, now, two months after lockdown all this news came coming, but people understood, we had nothing new to say, what then we realize is we have to go more on online because social media has to be really active. And what we have to do, what we have to try to do is we have to keep our followers and commuters who were you know, in touch with us on social media, they have to be kept engaged. So, we started with different campaigns, you know, we went back, you know, then and now, how Metro was, you know, Metro started when the project started. In fact, we went on to the areas, you know, that suppose a location, it was completely vacant at that part of time and then the via that came, you know, the line came. So those were the confirmation transformative campaigns we started doing, we started doing some quiz. Did you know, all just, you know, feel good factor, just, you know, keeping up the engagement, we try to do a lot of engagement.

**Host**

Did you also feel the need for increasing social listening?

**Anindita**

Our commuters okay, they are very Hyderabadi it's very state wide, okay, it's not of the national importance, that's the follower, they are more you know, local. In fact, we also tried earlier to see how we can get people naturally as our followers, but honestly speaking it did not really work out. And then because we, we had tried different strategies where we saw that you know, they are not liking local content. Okay, because this is a place in southern India, I'm sure you know, they are too much into Tollywood you know films

**Host-**I'm completely familiar with Hyderabad.

**Anindiata**

Exactly. So we try to engage through those sort of campaigns, those sort of creative, those sort of posts where because we tried earlier, we saw that people like local news more, local you know, city based information, city based glamor, city based you know, activities more, so we completely then change our, this I'm talking about much before lock down. So here now we try to do all those activities where we can keep our people engaged, like once also through email you know, we have a huge database about around 3500 email ids with us. We had a brand ambassador's campaign. So, for that, we got many email ids the database is with us. So, we use that you know, so database so

those emails we kept on sending messages, bulk mails, of course, MD's messages, MD's videos and MD's static messages saying that we are there, you know, we are missing use or you know, the missing you factor, and the you know, those acts, we hop on more that we are ready we are missing you okay do you remember your travel. Ok, tell us about some incident or share as your earlier photos, you know, so that way we can get them more and more, you know, engaged so that we don't lose followers. And we could see that initially it wasn't that bigger number than slowly we saw things improve and you know, people started you know the engagement started, people started responding, people commented, people shared. And typically, another thing we have a we have realized this year, or maybe mostly in Facebook, you know videos sell more, okay, more than the static posts, and real time faces, you know, real time like, you know, our we have a, you know, huge a team of Lady Loco pilots. Okay, so we, you know, project, we used to show how women empowerment, we believe in it, women equality, because, you know, all and all the loco pilots, most of them are lady, the girls, young girls. And in fact, the inaugural train where honourable Prime Minister told that was also driven by leading loco pilots. So, across angle, we've got the, you know, we like silence of the rail that was one and we showed all the trains which were kept on the shed, or some upkeep going on, or, you know, those were very interesting photos train, graphically wearing masks. This sort of, you know, campaigns we kept on doing. Yes, of course, we, the anchor was digital medium for us.

#### **Host**

We'll be taking a short break, we'll be back with more interesting inputs from Anindita. Stay tuned.

Welcome back, we're talking to Anindita Sinha of L&T Hyderabad, Metro Rail. What about concerns about safety? How did you address that?

#### **Anindita**

We are getting more engagement, interaction so accordingly we used to so there was a science behind it. So, it was I would say you know, the communication was a blend of art and science, creativity and strategy.

#### **Host**

Absolutely, absolutely.

#### **Anindita**

Yeah. So, yes. So, you know, the new normal with real image as I said, and each and every see you know, the how the train markings are done. And trust me these all activities were being done during the lockdown. And it was a huge activity. We have you know, 69.2 kilometres of stretch, okay. So, and so, all the you know, like first date, you know, 230 trains operate, all the train, the marking had to be there, the station floor marking had to be there, the lift marking that to be there, the signages and do's and don'ts had to be there, then your thermal camera your you know, your what to say? Sanitizers tanks had to be installed. So, it was huge activity, you know, back-end work, I would say, but the hats off to the team, you know, the operations team, they did a fabulous job. And that is how we started the metros. So, now what we are posting is we are more and more and more and more we are talking we are sharing, of course, MD's video always as a message team welcoming all the commuters to radio also, we did it all the promotion, yeah, radio, also Radio City, we partner that how, you know, one should travel what MD is asking that we have trust in us and travel with Metro. And, you know, really, Radio FM we had tied up for the in-train announcements. The do's and don'ts. The QR code was installed inside the train and this T-Savari app which I said other than

the Arogya Setu app, which is from the government it is our is our own app. So, you had to keep you know just to for the QR tracking, you need to scan it inside the train. So, this this has already started with do's and don'ts and of course what else the radio Yes, I have already said

### **Host**

One challenge most companies had during lockdown was keeping their employee's motivation and morale high. What did you do?

### **Anindita**

Now you have a mix of employees who take it as a holiday, you know, we had to bring them out from a holiday mood also people who were really depressed with this scenario around so we started engaging with them like suppose each HOD like I kept regular you know, con call or you know, virtual meetings with the team members giving them some tasks and setting timelines, you know that we have to do this, we had created very interesting, different interesting graphical posts, we keep them engaging what you're doing at home, send us your photos, and we will send to all users on mail. So you know these sort of activities we did and another very beautiful thing, our organization did is connecting with each and every employee, almost, yes, all organization, of course, but we have our partner organizations also. So connected with all of them, to find out how they are from the humane angle, see the human angle was very important at this time. So find out and who ever required any medical health, any COVID test, any hospitalization, then insurance, you know, I mean, I really we are one of the very fortunate organization, they really worked on it that how to get a COVID covered, of course, that many insurance company also we're coming up with different schemes. So to give an additional cover, so the employee for me, of course, I believe that employees are best brand ambassadors for a company, you know, it works more than a celebrity I think so and that is a we wanted them to be with us. We all wanted it to be together. You know, there's been sociological, there's a term called collective effervescence all on the same page, speaking same language. So that was something we really hop on, I talked about engagement I said, we kept them engaged, then is webinar webinars Of course, I know now it becomes too taxing at time, but that time webinars happened senior management not only from a Hyderabad L&T Metro Rail Hyderabad, but our Chairman L&T Group, Chairman Mr. SN Subramanian, even our Chairman A M Naik so they all came on zoom connecting it all, you know, L&T as a all.

### **Host**

Cool. Thanks a lot. This was very nice talking to you. Stay tuned next, we'll be talking to Ashwani Singla, Founding Managing Partner of Astrum on the new advertising code.

Recently, the Government of India released a draft advertising code. The code says celebrity endorsers should now endorse based on either adequate information or should have experienced a product or service they're endorsing. What does this mean? We spoke to Ashwani Singla Founding Managing Partner Astron. And this is what he had to say.

A lot of people these days are into influencer marketing into celebrity endorsements across all kinds of platforms, both traditional and new media. So how do you see this development panning out?

### **Ashwani**

Look, if a person has a following and people tend to believe or follow a person, then any product or service that they endorse must come with the necessary checks and balances for the endorser.

Okay. I think the fact that an endorser has taken to endorse a product, making other people believe

that he is either a user or a buyer or, or a customer of that product, then I think it's only fair to expect the fact that they would have confidence in the product for the buyer or the service.

**Host**

That's true. But there is also I mean, if you look at it that way, there is a moral and ethical dilemma on the part of the endorser as well, right. I mean, this is something that's been there for probably decades.

**Ashwani**

See there are several issues involved. And it's not as simple that we can oversimplify to say should a endorser be responsible for products? What happens if the person that has endorsed a product is good, but in times it fails? That's a reality product, a reality project that is endorsed by our celebrity, the product was good, but over a period of time the project faces a financial difficulty and it fails should the endorser be responsible for that? So I think that's where I'm coming to that it's not is over. It's not a simple question of okay, so should I should endorser be held accountable to the extent possible, because you cannot control every element and variable in business? Neither can an endorser know, the great details of every intensity of a product or a service to being absolute confidence to say, look, I understand it, and therefore I'm telling you to go by it.

**Host.**

I understand but one question I had was that you know, we are also you know, from a country where you a lot of people are from non-urban markets. And therefore, sometimes the awareness and the education on these particular aspects can be low, and they tend to eventually can become gullible consumers. So, do you think some statute of this nature is also like oh, you know, counterbalance to protect them?

**Ashwani**

I Think Look, I don't know. The that's why I said I cannot comment on the statute because I haven't read it to be fully educated on it, to give you an informed opinion, but I certainly feel that there has to be some responsibility laid on to the claims supported by an endorser. They have to be responsible, right, because they are selling something and it can be misleading or false. I can't comment on the statute because I haven't seen it or read it. But I certainly believe that every influencer every endorser has that responsibility to ensure that due diligence is done. You and I, for example, even the consulting business will not take a client unless we do our due diligence on the veracity of the client, right ultimately, it's our reputation on the line current. So, I think due diligence is a necessary part of any exercise if we're trying to advocate for something or market something. It can't be false, misleading or misrepresented. There are times where advertising is made for very false products or, or things which are misrepresented and there has to be due penalty for it.

**Host**

Cool understood and thanks for your time.