

SAMEER NAIR

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Brands are products of trust

In the year 2000, *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (KBC) exploded on Indian television screens. KBC's impact was immediate and overpowering; it took Star Plus from a distant third to an absolute No. 1 in a few weeks, a position that Star then held onto for eight consecutive years.

Trust was a key component of KBC's success. The audience believed in the idea, the Q&A, the selection process, that the prize money was real and they believed in Star TV.

How was this trust created? Through Siddharth Basu's impeccable reputation as a quiz master. Through the rigorous fact-checking process. Through the even more rigorous entry mechanism and participant selection process. Through the genuine payment of prize money. Through the real life stories of people who experienced the magic of KBC in a million different ways. And through Amitabh Bachchan and his storied legacy.

At the time of KBC's premiere, Bachchan's film career was in the doldrums. It was also a momentous moment for TV; thus far no established superstar had ever agreed to 'do TV'. Bachchan took the chance and the rest is history. When we were planning the show, we decided to present Bachchan as the friend, philosopher and guide; a kindly, older gentleman who would come into millions of homes every night and regale audiences with knowledge, wit and charm, with his inimitable style and charisma. Our plan succeeded beyond our wildest dreams.

In advertising, and in life, trust is key. Clients would give an arm and a leg and a lot more just to have consumers trust their brands. Brands are products of trust; otherwise they are just nameless, faceless products. The trust that KBC reinforced for Bachchan has since served him and countless brands very well. Bachchan daily urges us to use a variety of products and services, and we do... because we trust him and therefore, the brands he represents.

