

Technology-Driven Digital Storytelling in Brand Marketing: A Case Study of a Five-Star Chocolate Brand

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Abstract—Digital marketing is on the rise. Brands now increasingly rely on digital storytelling to create meaningful connections with consumers. Unlike the traditional advertising and marketing which focuses on direct promotions, digital marketing incorporates narratives, humor, satire and interactive content to enhance user engagement. This has become powerful tools in marketing, helping companies create memorable campaigns that engages audience making them stand out in the market as a unique brand. This study explores the impact of digital marketing in brand marketing through a case study of Cadbury 5 Star, a brand known for its witty and unconventional advertising to establish their brand identity. By analyzing campaigns the research examines how digital marketing and storytelling, influence the brand's perception while maintaining active consumer engagement and recalling brand value. Using qualitative content analysis, the study identifies common themes across these campaigns, highlighting their storytelling techniques, audience reach, and impact on consumer perception. It investigates the role of digital-first strategies and storytelling driven advertising in enhancing audience interaction and making the brand reinstated. Findings suggest that digital storytelling plays a crucial role in modern brand marketing, driving deeper audience engagement and emotional connection. The insights from Cadbury 5 Star's marketing efforts offer valuable lessons for brands looking to harness humor and satire for deeper connections.

Index Terms—Digital storytelling, Cadbury 5 Star, Digital advertising and Digital-first strategy.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern marketing landscape, digital storytelling has become a crucial approach that was transformative to traditional marketing techniques that has helped the

brands reach and connect with the consumers on a deeper and more engaging level. Unlike traditional marketing and advertising which primarily focuses on direct promotion and one way of communication, digital storytelling integrates various elements such as narrative, interactivity and emotional appeal to create a compelling brand experience. By utilizing digital landscapes like social media, video content, influencer collaboration and interactive campaigns, brands craft stories that can potentially make a connect with their audience fostering both brand loyalty and recall.

Digital storytelling in brand marketing leverages various elements such as humor, relatability, gamification and societal relevance to capture the attention of audience in an era that is being dominated by short attention spans and digital distractions. As part of this evolution, many companies have adopted a digital-first strategy, where digital platforms are prioritized over traditional media. This strategy allows for agile, targeted, and data-informed campaign execution. According to Smilansky (2009), the success of modern marketing depends not just on brand exposure, but on delivering immersive and emotionally resonant experiences that consumers remember and share.

The companies and brands began focusing on the digital-first strategy where brands prioritize marketing and advertising in digital platforms over traditional media. This has essentially become a way in creating impactful campaigns that reach mass global audience. Such engagement and approach not only enhance brand visibility but also encourages active consumer participation, making marketing more memorable and engaging for audience and consumers.

Cadbury's 5 Star is a brand that uses the digital storytelling in their campaigns. This brand focuses on digital storytelling and digital-first strategy. This study is intended to explore how digital storytelling is going to impact the reach and other aspects of marketing through analyzing the ad campaigns of Cadbury's 5 Star. Over the years, Cadbury 5 Star has redefined brand communication by crafting humorous, relatable, and trend-driven narratives, reinforcing its identity as a brand that embraces a carefree and fun-loving attitude. Their campaigns showcase how the brand effectively leverages digital storytelling and digital-first strategy to enhance audience engagement. By analyzing the ad campaigns through a qualitative analysis, the study aims to prove how brands can effectively implement these strategies to build strong consumer relationships by using the ad campaigns of Cadbury's 5 Star.

II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the digital age, the development of what we call brand communication has made digital storytelling an essential tool for marketers. We are no longer simply creating advertising; we are creating brand experiences through narrative, emotion, interaction, and personalization. This literature review combines classic marketing theories with contemporary brand approaches in order to investigate how story is communicated to engage consumers, particularly Cadbury 5 Star.

Digital Storytelling and Online Marketing Communication:

Owen and Humphrey (2011) point out that online marketing communication has gone beyond mass marketing to personalized, network-oriented content distribution. Their work indicates how digital platforms allow brands to communicate with consumers in real-time and allow consumers to be transformed from passive spectators to active participants. This directly links to the approach taken by Cadbury 5 Star's, where digital-first campaigns such as #DoNothing and #MakeAiMediocreAgain utilized social media platforms to create a two-way story where consumers would interact and create content about the brand's identity.

Psychological Dimensions of Promotion Strategies:

Kazmi (2015), a psychological perspective on consumer reactions to promotional strategies. Today's consumers are very responsive to messages that emphasize either the value-based proposition, or social connection, made through clever uses of humor and novelty. The campaigns by Cadbury 5 Star tap into this insight through the humorous, anti-mainstream messaging (e.g., "Destroy Valentines Day") that matches the voice of youth sentiment, and, by extension, meme-like commentary on social media.

Experiential and Emotional Marketing Strategies:

Smilansky (2009) highlights that experiential marketing is important for establishing long-lasting impressions of brands. This can be seen with campaigns such as "Nothing University" where Cadbury 5 Star constructed an immersive digital ecosystem that enabled the story to go beyond a product, e.g., establishing instant coffee as part of a lifestyle.

Strategic Integration and brand engagement of Digital Platforms:

Owen and Humphrey's (2011) research emphasizes the value of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), suggesting that coherent messaging across touchpoints grow the effectiveness of brand storytelling. Digital-first tactics from Cadbury 5 Star — time-zone hacks, memes, and digital skits led by influencers — are telling examples of IMC working effectively to create brand coherence and maintain audience reach.

Consumer Response and Loyalty:

Meo et al. (2014) state that promotional tools such as free samples, price reductions, and buy-one-get-one services are likely to have an important effect on consumer behaviour, loyalty and purchase intention. Even though Cadbury 5 Star does not make extensive use of price-based promotion, the cadence and humorous content of its content-led promotions encourage repeat purchases as consumers are motivated to remain emotionally connected to the brand through its humour and brand persona.

Communication and Promotion in Marketing Strategy:

Gherasim et al. (2012) discuss the framework of promotional communication as a system used to inform, draw in, and retain customers. Within this system, content viral, humor, and interactive storytelling have been proven to be more effective than traditional advertising models, especially among younger audiences. The campaign design of Cadbury 5 Star – which often features humorous videos, influencers' storytelling, and fictional institutions – showcases this promotional blueprint directly.

Humor and Satirical storytelling:

Humor and satire in advertising are powerful tools for capturing attention and fostering emotional connection. Research shows humor boosts ad recall and brand liking (Eisend, 2009), while satire adds depth by critiquing social norms through irony or parody (Beard, 2005). When aligned with audience culture, satire enhances engagement and brand differentiation. However, misalignment can lead to confusion or backlash (Lyttle, 2001). For brands like 5 Star, humor and satire enable a distinctive voice that critiques societal expectations while entertaining, making their messaging both memorable and meaningful.

III THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To understand how campaign enhance brand engagement using digital storytelling
- To know the effectiveness of Cadbury 5 Star's digital-first marketing strategies

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to investigate how digital storytelling plays a role in Cadbury 5 Star's brand interest, engagement, and reach using a qualitative exploratory case study design. This type of research design facilitates an exploration of rich, contextual and situational understanding of narrative-based advertising—its impact on consumer's attitude towards a brand and behaviors related to that brand. Qualitative methodologies in particular uniquely fit to help interpret the affective and symbolic and thematic metrics engaged when storytelling in advertisements - metrics that aren't easily quantified, but are key to

understanding the current branding and communication landscape.

In total, six digital advertising campaigns were selected and analyzed to find how storytelling - through humor, satire, and relatability - can increase brand engagement, memory and social media presence. To develop an enhanced understanding of these aspects, the research employed observation. The observations were focused on story-related elements, tone, audience responses in online platforms like social media and the campaign structure to discover how audiences think about the emotional and thematic attributes of the storytelling. Observation methods provided a detailed conception of how digital storytelling shapes brand positioning and marketing results. The campaigns were selected based on the use of storytelling and narrative aspects, strong levels of user interaction and audience engagement and fit with brand identity and digital-first strategy. The themes presented were identified through a content analysis of the advertisements, in which each campaign was dissected by categories.

V. VARIABLES

Independent Variables:

Tagline (Do Nothing): Acts as the core identity of 5 Star's campaigns. This gives shape to the voice and story-telling in each ad while evoking a fun, relaxed perspective for the brand, particularly when compared to more traditional messaging.

Digital Storytelling: The methodology for conveying the brand's message through narrative, satire, interactivity, and relevance. It dictates the level of creativity and effectiveness with which campaigns connecting with audiences across digital media.

Dependent Variables:

Brand Engagement: Refers to how viewers engage with and respond to 5 Star campaigns, including likes, shares, comments, and general buzz, especially on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and other social media platforms.

Humor and Satirical storytelling: Evaluates the efficacy of using humor and irony in marketing initiatives. It affects how memorable the brand is, and how audiences feel engaged with the brand's message.

Tagline (Do Nothing)

The phrase "Eat 5 Star, Do Nothing" is not merely a tagline; it's a subversive cultural tale. It acts as an act of rebellion against hyper-productivity, aspiration, and the obsession with achievement. The tagline doesn't sell the product; it invites audiences into a brand philosophy—a practice of ironic idleness and resistance to hustle culture. It acts as the guiding light for every campaign: Tone, visuals, and narrative logic are organized around and through it.

Case 1 – Do Nothing Campaign

This campaign was the genesis of the tagline's power. "Eat 5 Star, Do Nothing" was not a clever saying; it became the narrative's whole emotional and visual language. Characters were depicted earning rewards for inactivity: lying in traffic, zoning out during sporting events, or doing nothing at all and going viral for it as well. The tagline was embedded into the narrative tone—each of the vignettes extended the tagline's worldview that there was honor in idleness, comedy in laziness, and irony in gaining notoriety through inaction. This absurdist reinforcing of the tagline rendered it sticky, transferable, and unforgettable.

Case 2 – Nothing University

This campaign took the tagline and raised it to institutional status. "Eat 5 Star, Do Nothing" now had academic legitimacy through the fictive "Nothing University," where doing nothing was not only condoned but also learned. All courses—"Advanced Chilling," "Master of Mediocrity," etc.—were a satirical extension of the tagline. In this instance, it was not only repeated, it was learned. Students were not engaging university to engage their knowledge, rather they were engaging in inactivity so reflective of the tagline (leans into activity) as the tagline celebrated stepping into inactivity. This institution legitimized what was once a jest, which further entrenched the slogan into a sustained and elaborate cultural parody.

Case 3 – Erase Valentine's Day

In this instance, the tagline changed from individual apathy to collective activism. Rather than uplifting love, the campaign elevated apathy. "Eat 5 Star, Do Nothing" was something like a protest "chant" against the performative rituals associated with Valentine's Day. The characters weren't angry, they just didn't feel

like engaging. The tagline operated as a social attitude—don't battle love, just chill out and eat chocolate. It reversed the emotive signifiers of incompleteness to register emotional apathy. Instead of responding to heartbreak and societal pressure, the apathy was conjured with a smirk of retreating into oneself. It wasn't nihilism—it was satire, with chocolate as companion, not cure.

Case 4 – Make AI Mediocre Again

This campaign looked at the digital implication of the tagline. "Do Nothing" wasn't just meant for humans, it was applied to machines as well. The 5 Star AI was fantastically inept, retaining the essence of the tagline itself. It is not that technology is not functional; it has become a proponent of doing nothing: sending sleepy emails, suggesting naps, misinterpreting commands. This was the tagline as product philosophy: even the technology under this brand must strive to do less. The brilliance of the tagline was that it was applied to transition from humans doing idle to technology being lazy, a bold comic critique of technology obsession.

Case 5 – Squid Game

The tagline in this parody took aim at survival competition itself. The stressful, intense, hyper-competitive premise of Squid Game was inverted by 5 Star's tranquil absurdity. The challenges involved standing still or gazing vacantly, all comporting to the spirit of the tagline in each game. Each time a game's basic premise of "Eat 5 Star, Do Nothing" was visualized, players non-competitively won because of the lack of exertion. The tagline provided a premise for the game; each task in succession was designed to satirically comply with it. The parody mocked a social obsession with competition, even as it embedded the tagline as a survival tactic in a world that had gone mad with ambition.

Case 6 – Destroy Valentine's Day

A more daring sibling to "Erase," this campaign used the tagline as a weapon. In this instance, "Do Nothing" communicated emotional numbness and can also be invoked to justify indifference that manifests as revolt. People who no longer cared were not burning roses out of rage and protest. The tagline surfaced as a symbol for indifference by removing contrived emotional attachment using indifference, aversive slogans, and parody protests to build canon. The chocolate bar

became the official snack of the rebels—instead of pitchforks, armed with passive aggressive poetry and deadened stares. The tagline signaled a way out of emotional labor—why feel when you can still do nothing and eat chocolate?

Digital Storytelling

Through digital storytelling, 5 Star was able to animate its tagline into a living universe. Across formats—memes, reels, AR filters, fake university websites, AI tools, and even mock protest applications—5 Star created a place where humor, participation, and narrative could intersect. Instead of simply amplifying messages, 5 Star allowed people to co-create, spoof, react, and replicate. It was serialized storytelling, community-driven, and meme-ready! Let's look at how this played out through the six campaigns.

Case 1 – Do Nothing Campaign

The Do Nothing campaign was the epitome of digital storytelling. Characters doing something bizarrely lazy became viral through short films on YouTube, Instagram reels, and Twitter threads. Each section was created with the idea that they might become GIFs or memes, ensuring that the storytelling experience was something more than just watching—this was about sharing. One digital moment that stands out was the “Do Nothing Day,” which was streaming a man doing nothing for hours—this ironic performance received thousands of views. This was more than just storytelling—it was performance art brought into the digital age. Viewers even engaged through showing how little they did that day to participate in digital contests and earn prizes for being lazy.

Case 2 – Nothing University

The campaign was virtually an online metaverse. A fake university, complete with its own website, application process, and downloadable “degrees” was created. Everything that happened during the campaign lived exclusively online. TikTok influencers pretended to “graduate” from the university, and Instagram bios began to include “Alumni of Nothing University.” Users created fake resumes, LinkedIn certificates, and memes, all in a way that expanded the absurdist satire of the brand. The linear storytelling structure mimicked the digital bureaucracies of real life—online classes, online tutorials, and testimonial videos—all produced with precise absurdity. Through

this campaign, 5 Star did not tell a story; they created a parodic reality for users to occupy and engage with.

Case 3 – Erase Valentine’s Day

In this case, digital storytelling relied upon movement-building. An instance of which involved an online false political protest in which netizens could sign up for digital protests for an Anti-Valentine Party. Social media exploded with WhatsApp stickers, Instagram story templates, parody petitions, and ironic e-cards. The storytelling wasn't linear, it was participatory. People could “erase” love from their feed using 5star's custom tools. Even the launch video was put together like a news satire, then circulated on Reddit and Twitter like a meme. The campaign then felt less like an ad, and more like a witty digital festival—very timely and yet timeless.

Case 4 – Make AI Mediocre Again

The campaign existed entirely in the digital space and featured an interactive satirical AI bot. Its users could chat with the bot, which would provide hilariously incorrect advice, lazy replies, or garbled replies. Each conversation was meant to go viral—similar to the energy of failed chatbots and humorous Reddit threads. 5 Star also launched parody productivity tools, like “Mediocre Reminders” and “Chill Schedulers,” which had deliberate glitches, resulting in a delightfully stupid experience. Each glitch and each directive was planned as part of the satire. It was not only a storytelling experience, it was role play with the audience as characters in a dysfunctional digital sitcom.

Case 5 – Squid Game

This was a bold use of digital execution. The campaign was launched as a mini video series, and each spoof game went viral as a reel. One of the “games” merely featured contestants sitting still and listening to music in the background. The parody took off because it was remixed digitally: fans started to make their own low-effort “Squid Game” games using 5 Star's audio and templates. The story grew through memes, fan edits, reaction videos, and parody commentary. Digital storytelling not only allowed 5 Star to spoof the content; it also gave the audience an opportunity to remix and reframe it through their own creativity. This was not just a parody; this was culture hacking.

Case 6 – Destroy Valentine’s Day

This campaign was a digital revolution. Twitter was filled with ironic hashtags such as #DownWithCupid, #BurnTheBouquet, and others. 5 Star initiated digital Valentine’s “Breakup cards” sporting humorous messages (e.g., “You complete me... like a hole in the head”) each with the goal of generating art cards. In addition, a microsite allowed users to destroy virtual roses with the use of fun animations. The brand also invited users to submit anti-love poetry via Instagram stories and offered parody competitions using live streaming. All the stories were converging in one digital movement that was silly, snarky, and therapeutic. It was not a campaign to be viewed, it was a campaign to be engaged and to be present on the web.

Brand Engagement

In the ever-changing world of digital marketing, brand engagement has developed beyond likes and clicks — it’s significantly about emotional connection, user agency, and cultural contextualization. Cadbury 5 Star’s advertisement approach signifies a major shift in this regard. In the last few years, the brand has delivered a range of disruptive campaigns that not only attract attention to the brand, but also invite consumer engagement, thereby influencing the way audiences are encouraged to index and relay the brand. Each of the six campaigns — Do Nothing, Nothing University, Erase Valentine’s Day, Make AI Mediocre Again, Squid Game and Destroy Valentine’s Day campaign patterns and demonstrate a distinct aspect of engagement and association - while mapping a dichotomy between humor, irony and cultural observation through the brand’s humor associated with hopelessness, an ethos of laziness, and contrarian spirit.

Case 1: Do Nothing Campaign

The “Do Nothing” campaign paved the way for 5 Star’s transformation into a voice representing absurdity and anti-hustle rebellion. It turned “doing nothing” into a badge of honor. Rather than encouraging people to do something, it encouraged them to avoid action altogether in a dramatic departure from a traditional brand’s calls-to-action. The campaign prompted users to post everything from memes and reels about procrastination to lifestyle hacks about skipping class or work — absurd “do nothing” life hacks. What made

this campaign exceptional was that the brand kept things restrained — it wouldn’t over-sell. Instead the brand provided space for its audience to inject their own creativity. User-generated content (UGC) came alive, particularly by young adults and students who could relate to the anti-productivity messaging. The campaign also created hashtag movements to platform in content on Instagram and Twitter, like #DoNothingLegend, to encourage users to some of their laziest moments with a 5 Star in hand. By celebrating the ordinary, it provided the ability for users to participate with low-barrier, while also feeling part of something larger — an inside joke — to enhance emotion to the brand.

Case 2: Nothing University

Building upon this idea, “Nothing University” explored the immersive side of brand engagement. This fictional university, where laziness was both embraced and encouraged academically, was a showcase of content gamification. The audience had options to “enroll,” download fake diplomas, attend fake lectures, and share funny LinkedIn stories about their “Nothing University” education. Somehow the campaign turned mindless scrolling into real participation; there were opportunities for audiences to role-play and share their own satire. Then the campaign escaped platform silos by hijacking professional platforms such as LinkedIn - a space dedicated to hyper-productivity - all while using 5 Star’s trademark irony. Users updated their job titles, updated resume materials for things like “Dean of Doing Nothing,” and created fan pages to celebrate their “professors” of inactivity. This type of engagement went beyond humor and moved into social identity play, where audiences aligned their identity to the brand’s ideology of defiance. This layered engagement (visual, textual, performative) made this one of the most successful campaigns in regards to an audience staying engaged.

Case 3: Erase Valentine’s Day

The “Erase Valentine’s Day” campaign provided a strong emotional shift. While humor was still at the forefront, the brand also tapped into a very real feeling of isolation that many feel on romantic holidays. By creating a space for singles and those who are worn out by over-the-top romanticized consumerism, the campaign created a community of revolt. Social media

was full of memes, videos, and protest parodies where users pretended to “burn” love letters or guise protest with 5 Star bars as a form of comfort. Importantly, the campaign did not poke fun at love; it simply validated the feelings of those that were not in a commercialized love bubble. There was high engagement because it was tapping into real emotion — a broken heart, isolation, irritation — and transform that into laughter. It was not engagement for engagement's sake, but engagement that served as some healing, and that is where it stood out. The campaign turned 5 Star into a supportive friend, ally, a comrade; someone who stays by you when the world is feeling pink.

Case 4: Make AI Mediocre Again

Building on the technological satire genre, the Make AI Mediocre Again campaign engaged a more niche, but notably active audience - the critically engaged digital natives - the techies, the coders, the developers, the AI critiques. While the general masses all laughed together about how wonderful AI is, 5 Star shared a hysterically mediocre chatbot, and user-generated content that showed where AI failed in the boring week, such as picking a nap instead of dealing with customer's requests, or generating lazy responses. This nuanced and counterintuitive messaging permeated the digital core feels of the digital natives who were exhausted from experiencing hyper-efficiency. A few Reddit and LinkedIn users shared their own lazy AI experiences, often using memes from the campaign as templates. The humor had layers of intellect - observations of absurd technology exceeding human behavior, not just outright ridiculous slapstick. The staged content was less of a superficial gimmick, and more focused on: with engagement being deeper and more discourse driven. The 5 Star campaign did more than just create a narrative, it initiated conversations, among communities of peers that do not traditionally glorify being lazy.

Case 5: Squid Game

The "Squid Game" was possibly the most daring in form, where 5 Star creatively mimicked Netflix's hyper-violent dystopian program with absurd, ultra-passive, challenges — "don't move," "don't speak," "don't respond." The familiar visuals and pop-cultural currency of the ambiguous show instantly made the campaign resonate. Fans generated own versions of the lazy games, tagged friends to compete, and posted

videos entailing the theme on TikTok and Instagram. The differentiator here was the nuanced fluency with memes, with each frame, theme, costume, and quote slated for viral propagation. The engagement was not just digital, as costume replicas appeared in various locations and students participated in buzz-generating gameplay competitions in the real world. This is a prime example of the 5 Star brand's ability to engage with — and pivot — a mainstream cultural moment, and broaden brand engagement beyond reach, to experience.

Case 6: Destroy Valentine's Day

The last campaign, “Destroy Valentine's Day,” became a louder, more rebellious sequel to “Erase Valentine's Day.” If the first campaign was a whisper of discontent, this one became a scream of it. For the second campaign, we leaned into more theatrical posters, and megaphone rants, and reused visual tropes of burning hearts and welcomed audience outrage — not against love, but against performative love and exclusion. Engagement was multi-dimensional: there were filters that allowed for burning hearts to be added to profile photos, satirical break-up letters turned to reels, and the tone felt more dramatic and cinematic. The emotional core remained — providing laughter for the brokenhearted — but also became visual and action-oriented. Users were no longer just reposting; they were role-playing as revolutionaries. 5 Star created a micro-movement combining aesthetic rebellion and communal identity.

In-brief, the six campaigns from 5 Star show a multi-dimensional approach toward brand engagement. These campaigns provide everything from passive content co-creation to immersive parody, emotional connection to cultural satire, and ultimately, operationalize different engagement modes for different audience segments. The brand, in effect, blurred the line between consumer and contributor, inviting audience participation and co-ownership of the brand. What unified these campaigns was their functionality to articulate the brand's essence — a celebration of slowness, irony, and anti-perfectionism curated in formats that are highly shareable, personally relevant, and socially relatable. Consequently, 5 Star has moved beyond a product brand to a cultural trope of ironic engagement that posits that sometimes, doing nothing is in fact the most incredible thing one can do with their chocolate bar.

Humor and Satirical Storytelling

In advertising, humor is much more than simply a conduit of laughter—it operates at psychological and cultural levers that can fundamentally change the way in which consumers view a specified brand. Satirical storytelling, a higher-order form of humor, critiques the current social trends and norms using exaggeration, irony, and wit. Cadbury 5 Star delicately manipulated the dual elements of humor and satire throughout its campaigns, to cut through the noise and clutter of the confectionary market while also engaging in and creating an emotional subculture around the idea of "doing nothing." Each of the six campaigns strategically weaponized humorous storytelling and satirical elements to mock convention, shave stereotypes, and inspire playful retaliation—all while positioning 5 Star to be more than simply chocolate, but arguably a comic philosopher of contemporary living.

Case 1: Do Nothing Campaign

The essence of the campaign, "Do Nothing," established 5 Star's original narrative strategy: Flip the prevalent productivity culture on its head. The humor was situational and character driven and throughout various ads, and micro-videos, the characters — typically lazy, semi-conscious beings — became famous and celebrated for absurdities, not in spite of their lack of action, but due to it. The satire mirrored our present-day hustle culture in a reflection with a distance. As the world eulogized entrepreneurs, goal-makers, and life-hackers, 5 Star reversed the narrative to celebrate a man that accomplished nothing — but made him a hero. The humor worked because it presented an extreme version of a value that is deeply rooted in our subconscious to prioritize and glorify constant self-improvement. This made sense for an exhausted over-stimulated generation. The exaggerated tone and absurd story lines (a man going viral and celebrated for doing nothing, and sitting in traffic) invited and connected with the audience to view the absurdity, to laugh at their own anxieties, and to see 5 Star's brand as an escape.

Case 2: Nothing University

As a further elaboration on this satirical story, the 'Nothing University' campaign embraced a spoof format. The campaign built upon the culture of institutional rigidity and obsession with credentials in

education. The idea of a university where "nothing" is taught, using departments like "Lethargy Studies" and "Advanced Chilling," was a direct satire of both elite systems of education and hyperbolic startup culture. The spoof videos referenced real university promotion materials, with earnest professors and inspirational orchestra music, only to have the message confused by phrases such as "sleeping through the lecture" or "failing while doing nothing." Whenever the videos spoofed material, they heightened the humor of the parody, while the meta-satire, referencing both the hustle culture and corporate-speak, was relatable to an audience that often feels burnt out or disenchanted in school and their work. It was important that satirical storytelling exists because of user-generated posts. When the audience created satirical resumes, or LinkedIn updates, from Nothing University, they were adding to the humor of the material and the satire as ways of disseminating it to their social network.

Case 3: Erase Valentine's Day

The "Erase Valentine's Day" campaign added an additional layer of emotional satire, making fun of the commercialization of romantic love in a world where love is sold as bouquets, dinner dates, and Instagram couple goals. Instead, 5 Star presented an alternate reality where singles protested not in bitterness but in cheeky rebellion. The humor was both self-deprecating and observational; singles burned love letters in rituals that resembled celebrations rather than protests. There were fake political speeches, and parody interviews with love-struck youths, and dramatic candlelight marches against Cupid's tyranny in this whimsical comedic universe. What was striking was how comedy and satire expressed represented a group that typically does not have voice when it comes to being single on Valentine's day- and gave them permission to laugh instead of cry. Positioning itself as the "Chocolate of the Loveless," 5 Star used humor to challenge the emotions of the day, making the compelling decision to shift sympathy away from lovers and towards loners, while also parodying both.

Case 4: Make AI Mediocre Again

One of the most nuanced and culturally-savvy campaigns was "Make AI Mediocre Again." In a techno-centric world, where the hype was on optimizing, being productive and being 'digital', 5 Star chose the opposite course of action: a celebration

of mediocrity within machines. The campaign was centered on “lazy AI”, which couldn’t accurately complete simple tasks, spoke with incomplete thoughts or even lost focus mid-sentence. The humor here lies in the algorithmic satire – mocking humanity's blind allegiance to technology by creating a purposefully, ‘dumb’ form of what technology is. In the videos, we see people dependent on the AI, which misreads messages or sarcastically recommends naps instead of meetings. The whole parody depicts real frustrations people are experiencing with tech, all wrapped around an exercise in playful absurdity. What made the satire particularly satirical was the underlying counter-narrative. While other brands were leaning into the futuristic fantasy of AI and tech being perfect, 5 Star created a nostalgic, anti-comfortable narrative of slowness, goofiness and flaws. They were doing more than being funny – they were providing a comic-relief in an era of hyper-efficiency, productivity and technology.

Case 5: Squid Game

Of all the ad parodies, the "Squid Game" was probably the most daring in terms of visual parody and cultural remixing. Taking a global nightmare television show known for its spectacularly improbable violence and identifying a series of hilariously low-effort challenges — like sitting still or simply staring into space — was a high point of absurdist humor. The campaign did not try to create its own world, but rather hijacked an existing cultural moment, and replaced the tension with slackness. The absurd tension of that visual imagery juxtaposed with tasks that evoked tedium gave rise to laugh-out-loud instances. The satire was effective on several levels: by mocking the sensationalism of survival culture, by spoofing toxic competition, and in part based on 5 Star’s general mantra — "just chill." It resonated with viewers since the parody was both easy to identify, but at the same time, jarringly unique. The humor was more than surface commentary; it critiqued contemporary society’s impulse to race everything — even life. In this case, 5 Star’s response was an unapologetic anti-racing.

Case 6: Destroy Valentine’s Day

The sixth campaign, "Destroy Valentine's Day," amplified the vigilant tone of its earlier sibling. Whereas "Erase" was quiet resistance, this was full-

blown parody protest. The humor in this campaign was revolutionary in tone - a mixture of mock-propaganda videos, breakup poetry contests, and digital "fireballs" raining on valentine's gifts. The campaign utilized satirical hyperbole - overly exaggerated reactions to common relationship tropes - to dramatize the loneliness and resentment of the non-romantic demographic. The campaign was particularly effective because of its self-aware tone, the brand didn't pretend to save society but basked in the chaos they were instigating. Full of ironic slogans ("Burn Roses, Not Your Sanity"), the campaign used visual exaggeration to humorously, and still as a parodic contradiction. While most brands would tap dance around personal yet universal subjects such a heartbreak, while 5 Star crashed through the door with chocolate and jokes - providing catharsis through comedy.

Throughout all six campaigns, punctuality in themes of rebellion and tonal irreverence unites 5 Star’s humor and satire story-telling. 5 Star does not merely create laughs, but reflection within laughs. Each campaign presents a parody of contemporary life — whether productivity, schooling, romance, AI, competition, or American norms and gets a laugh with irony and surrealism. 5 Star posits that it is more than merely chocolate but a narrative vehicle that liberates the viewer from seriousness and exposes the absurd through joyfulness. This subtler hue of comedy has helped carve out a distinctive comedic veracity in advertising in the Indian context — not cheap, not slapstick, metered, layered, and humane. In summary, 5 Star’s strategic (and effective) use of humor and satire across its campaigns produces not only consumable content, but a comedic world view. The campaigns are much more short films, or pieces of satire, than they are commercials. To the point, 5 Star's consistent use and engagement in cultural tensions, converting them into laughable realities has made it represent relief, rebellion and identity.

VI. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

Cadbury 5 Star's advertising campaigns demonstrate the transformative power of digital storytelling for contemporary brand marketing. As opposed to the more conventional advertising led by the product itself, the campaigns create immersive, micro-narrative universes that provide what Smilansky (2009) terms "emotionally resonant experiences."

Verbal narratives often involve non-sense humor and satire, giving consumers a more youthful and daring alternative approach to emotional advertising. Campaigns like "Nothing University," "Erase Valentine's Day," and "Make AI Mediocre Again" provide a fictional framing that develops a consistent brand identity of fun-loving idleness typical of youth audiences who enjoy humor and relatability rather than serious discourse.

This method of storytelling reflects the emerging literature on interactive and satirical marketing, which states that humor and satire enhance emotional retention and social sharing of creative content (Jones, 2020). The campaigns are also digitally native, typically launched on Instagram and YouTube, and facilitate engagement by activating user-generated content and meme culture.

Digital storytelling enables brands to engage their audiences on a completed and affective level through identity-relevant multimedia narratives. Escalas (2004) and Woodside et al. (2008) refer to narrative transportation of brand stories to self-concept to explain how storytelling creates longer-lasting brand loyalty.

The participatory element of digital storytelling—where the audience contributes to creating the story of the brand—is at the core of what Jenkins (2006) called "transmedia storytelling." This engagement also builds community, as each platform contributes with its own style and requirements to the story of the brand. Pulizzi (2012) deals with content marketing and connects this to the importance of well-structured and engaging stories told in content across platforms to help build consumer relationships.

Research done by Ashley and Tuten (2015) specific to social media corroborates the intentional use of visual media for effective storytelling on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. These social media platforms help a brand's voice to be expressed through captivating visual and audio storytelling, yielding higher attention and conversions than static ads.

In conclusion, digital storytelling is instrumental in distinguishing advertising communication means in an overcrowded advertising space. As Ryan and Jones (2012) state, addressing credibility by consistently and authentically telling stories can enable advertisers to charge higher prices and promote long-lasting support. Cadbury 5 Star also represents a combination of witty satire, humor, and reaction to a trending discourse (AI

with dexterity in both digital narrative and digital responses, separating the brand in an over-saturated digital advertising space.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study has clearly shown that digital storytelling is key to improving brand engagement, emotional connection, and audience reach globally in a digital marketing narrative. Through a qualitative case study of six individual Cadbury 5 Star campaigns, we found that the brand used humor, satire, and culturally salient narratives to maintain its quirky identity, while still appealing to changing consumer sensibilities. When used carefully, digital storytelling not only humanizes the brand, but it generates participatory engagement through platforms like YouTube and Instagram.

The research also showcased how storytelling enabled Cadbury 5 Star to change its communication focusing on different cultural moments - for example, Valentine's Day or AI trends - all while remaining true to the brand pillar of "doing nothing." By analyzing each campaign, this research validated that digital-first strategies are not just options, but necessities behind modern brand-building. The thematic and content analysis also highlighted the value of consistency, new ideas, and audience engagement for creating a sustainable loyal consumer base. Collectively, this research provides confirmation that storytelling is more than a creative device in modern advertising - it is now a strategic requirement.

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