

Entertainment Publicist Interview Publicist: MR. Harshit Mhatre



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Story By Team Liongaze Media

Harshit Mhatre, the Publicist at **Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd.** Handled Marathi cluster including Zee Yuva, Zee Talkies, and Zee Marathi, currently focuses on Zee Yuva as well as promoted 100 + Marathi Movies in an earlier job. We caught up with the super cool person for an exclusive interview on the current Movie Industry—status in Maharashtra,

Please tell us about yourself. How did you end up in such an offbeat, unconventional, and cool career?

I was a Banker, worked with ICICI & RBS (Previously Known as ABN AMRO). 9 to 5 job schedule & working with a set of people did not interest me. I was bored with my routine job. I wanted some excitement in my career, so I decided to join Sales. I worked with Infomedia 18, G. S. MEdia, Ankit Advertising, 21vi Sadi in different types of sales jobs. Interacted with thousands of people then Moved to marketing and after that PR. My work journey is fascinating. But I learned many things from these different industries. Last ten years, I am in the Entertainment PR field, and I love my job.

So what does it mean to be an Entertainment publicist?

To put it in the simplest terms, I get artists and Movies or TV shows and TV Channel to feature in the various forms of media: print, online, and electronic. I am a storyteller for my company, and I aim to get them out there.

It all looks easy when you handle variously known artists but some days that involve 16 hours of back-breaking work which is extremely tough.

It is challenging though. It keeps me going every day. During these ten years at Entertainment Industry, even when I have worked months without weekends, there hasn't been a single day when I have woken up and gone, "Ugh, office again." Honestly, for me, it is a case of doing what I love and loving what I do.

What did you study?

I did my BA first then I did Advertising and PR diploma from Welingkar Institute and post-graduation from the National Institute of Event Management.

Tell us about your journey.

Entering in Entertainment Industry was a fluke. I started my career as a banker, then came in sales, events in that period one of my friends from the entertainment industry requested to work for his upcoming movie. He was looking for Infilm branding. I tried but then understood for the regional film it's too severe at that time still I tried and connected with all media buying agency and manage two brands on board. In that process, I got attracted to this industry. And the rest is history. Under Media One, I promoted around 109 Movies. After that, I joined Zee entertainment and promoted approximately 38 GEC Shows.

How does the job role of a PR professional in Entertainment differs from that of other verticals?

When it comes to Entertainment – you need to be a little more passionate because your audience is

mostly made of loyal fans of actors or shows or Movies and you need to respect that. Also, there is a shortage of quality content in Entertainment, and that's where you need publicists to come in to channel it in the right direction.

What are the challenges involved when working in this field?

You need to have a lot of patience to be a publicist because ultimately, that's the only deciding factor when it comes to planning and execution. Communication is key, but good content is always essential. Finding interesting stories than competition only can help you to connect with your Media.

What are the necessary skills that one should have when looking to enter the PR realm of Entertainment?

Passion. Apart from that, we need to understand it's not all about the glamour, and there are unending hours of desk work behind it. So while Sports PR may have a lot more scope for fieldwork, there is an ample amount of desk work as well. The only perk involved is that you get to work with celebrities.

Could you describe your experience of working in this corona period?

The coronavirus has transformed the way we live, love, work, and do business. The way you conduct your public relations both externally and internally as a company during this time is important for your reputation. As a reputable brand, you can't just continue business as usual. We're living in a pandemic, and everything you ever did before should be handled differently now, including your PR and marketing efforts. Brands are made up of human beings, and as such, we must act responsibly and compassionately. Now that the coronavirus has changed the world, you must change your messaging. Whenever communicating externally, need to think carefully about the words and language we are using. People are panicking about their jobs, their kids, their parents, and their health. So irrespective of our feelings, our messaging needs to be tailored to such concerns

What is the status of the current Movie Industry?

As one of the largest cinema hubs in the world, the Indian film industry is renowned for its glitz, vibrancy, and drama. The city of Mumbai, previously called Bombay, is especially relevant in this context as the birthplace and namesake of "Bollywood", the multi-million-dollar film industry in India. And while Hindi language Bollywood cinema rules the roost when it comes to net worth, there are many other film hubs across the country differentiated by regional languages including Tollywood (Telugu films), Marathi cinema, Bhojpuri cinema, and Bengali cinema to name a just few.

India's film industry, purveyor of song-and-dance spectacles to millions, will take at least two years to recover financially from the coronavirus pandemic, which is threatening big-ticket projects, putting at risk tens of thousands of jobs. Regional movie conditions will go worst, in such condition producers will have to beg people to come to cinema halls. But OTT will be benefited for sure.

What is the source of job satisfaction that comes your way being in this vertical, which is so demanding and fast-paced at times?

I love to travel and have been traveling during Movie promotion. When I count the stories I have done against the boarding passes I have; the satisfaction cannot be put into words. I always loved writing, acting, and direction but because of specific reasons, I could not pursue it as a career, and doing what I do takes me closest to that love. I don't mind the hours or the travel because of the passion for my work

surpasses it all.

***What is the way forward in this industry? In terms of, opportunities of growth or any area that needs more professional requirements, etc.?**

We need to understand the need for specialized PR skills for Entertainment . Unless we understand that, we cannot position actors in a manner akin to FMCG goods using the same techniques- thus developing professionals with these niche skills should be the roadmap for this industry.*

Your advice to students?

Finally, if you are thinking of becoming a publicist, forget the glamour involved — that is a tiny part of my job. Envision a future for your client, believe you can get there, and be prepared to give it you're all. At times, go beyond the “all”. Remember a story well told is always a memory embossed.

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