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Exclusive | Don't romanticizehumanize: Nine marketers on reimagining Mother's Day campaigns



















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NINE MARKETERS ON REIMAGINING MOTHER'S DAY CAMPAIGNS



AMBIKA SHARMA



PANDIT







BATOLA



SIDDHANT

JAIN

MENON

MAYANK **GABA**

In an exclusive MediaBrief deep dive, Akash Agrawalla, Co-Founder, ZOFF Foods; Ambika Sharma, Founder and Chief Strategist, Pulp Strategy; Chandan Bagwe, Founder/Director, C Com Digital; Mayank Gaba, Creative Director - Copy, SW Network; Revathi Batola, Associate Director, The Small Bigldea; Sanju Menon, Chief Operating Officer, Wondrlab Network; Siddhant Jain, Partner at Three Fourth Solutions; Vaibhav Pandit, Founder & Creative Director - ADbhooot; and Yasin Hamidani, Director, Media Care Brand Solutions, share how they're crafting Mother's Day campaigns that are more real, more relevant, and more resonant than ever before.

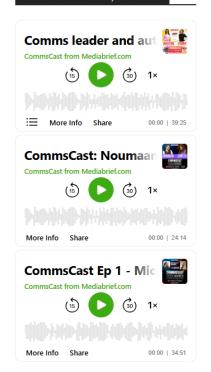
From myth-breaking to meaning-making, they outline how audiences are moving beyond clichés—embracing campaigns rooted in

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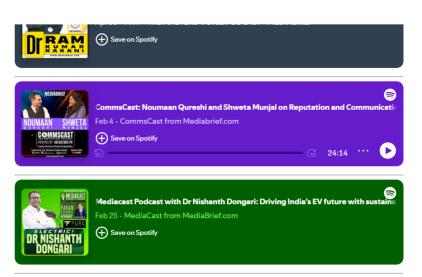


authenticity, emotional nuance, and inclusive storytelling that reflects the diverse realities of motherhood today. Read on.

n recent years, brands have evolved their approach to Mother's Day—moving away from idealized portrayals and surface-level sentimentality toward more grounded, emotionally resonant narratives. For **Chandan Bagwe, Founder & Director of C Com Digital**, the shift is as strategic as it is cultural. He notes, "There's a discernible shift from idealised, often one-dimensional portrayals of motherhood to more inclusive, realistic, and diverse representations.

"Brands increasingly acknowledge the multifaceted nature of motherhood, celebrating single mothers, working mothers, adoptive mothers, grandmothers, mother figures, and even those with complex relationships with the concept. We're seeing less of the 'perfect mom in a pristine kitchen' and more authentic snippets of life."

This change, he notes, is largely driven by evolving societal norms and heightened consumer expectations for authenticity and relatability. He adds, "Modern audiences, particularly younger generations, are savvier and more critical of tokenism. They demand that brands reflect real-life experiences."



Furthermore, the rise of social media has given a platform to diverse voices, compelling brands to listen and adapt their messaging to resonate with a broader spectrum of experiences.

Bagwe continues, "Our work with varied B2C clients, from fashion e-commerce like Kalki Fashion and Globus Fashion to social campaigns like PainfulPeriods.in, has shown us the power of tailoring messages to specific audience segments and their lived realities."



There's more to celebrate—and more to respect

Ambika Sharma, Founder and Chief Strategist at Pulp Strategy, believes Mother's Day messaging needs to keep pace with culture. She explains, "I understand the impulse to lean into nostalgia and warmth, but I also believe we're doing modern mothers a disservice by portraying them solely through a lens of sacrifice or sentimentality. There's more to



Speaking on the shift in brands' approach, she says, "I think it's overdue. There's a slow but meaningful shift toward portraying mothers as individuals with agency, ambition, and complexity, not just caregivers."

Sharma adds, "We're seeing more brands move beyond the 'supermom' stereotype and toward stories of strength, discipline, and identity outside of motherhood. That shift is being driven by changing cultural narratives, especially as younger audiences reject performative emotion and demand authenticity. It's also reflective of who's in the room—more women creatives, more diverse marketers, and teams willing to challenge the brief."

Vaibhav Pandit, Founder & Creative Director – ADbhooot, says, "There has been a noticeable shift. Brands are moving away from the idealised, one-dimensional portrayal of mothers; once confined to the kitchen or as eternal caregivers, to more authentic, diverse, and layered narratives. Today's campaigns are embracing real stories: working moms, single mothers, LGBTQ+ parenting, and even role reversals where children care for aging parents."

Pandit adds, "Societal evolution and audience fatigue are the factors of this change. Indian audiences, especially Gen Z and millennials, are no longer swayed by emotional clichés. They value honesty and inclusivity. Add to that, the social media ecosystem has empowered consumers to challenge stereotypes in real-time. So, brands are adapting, not just to stay relevant but to build genuine equity."



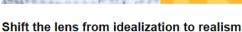
EXCLUSIVE

Mother's Day comes pre-loaded with emotion, but if you rely solely on that, the work risks feeling predictable.

The key is to look beyond the occasion and into the context—what does motherhood mean today? How is it evolving? What roles is it expanding into? The emotion is still there, but it's earned, not engineered.

Vaibhav Pandit

Founder & Creative Director - ADbhooot



For Yasin Hamidani, Director at Media Care Brand Solutions, realism is the new resonance. He says, "By shifting the lens from idealization to realism. Today's audience connects more with the truth of motherhood—its resilience, imperfections, and quiet strength. Saying something new means showing mothers not as flawless figures, but as multidimensional humans—workers, dreamers, caretakers—balancing it all with dignity."

Hamidani adds, "Yes, there's a clear move away from sentimental clichés toward inclusive, authentic storytelling. The shift is driven by younger, value-conscious audiences who prefer realness over romancing. Brands are now recognizing diverse mother figures—single moms, working mothers, LGBTQ+ parents—and highlighting support, not just celebration."

Revathi Batola, Associate Director at TheSmallBigIdea, says audiences are craving a broader, more truthful depiction, adding that the myth of the endlessly giving mom is fading. She elaborates, "For so long, the narrative felt almost like a carefully curated myth—the perpetually serene, endlessly giving mother. But what we're seeing now is much more than just that. We're finally acknowledging the full spectrum of what it means to nurture."

"We're seeing the strength, the fierce dedication, the immense love—but more importantly, the profound impact of individuals who care like mothers, in ways that defy traditional definitions."

Speaking about what's driving this change, **Batola** says, "First, audiences today are more attuned to authenticity and representation; and second, social media has made it impossible to ignore the richness and diversity of real-life stories."





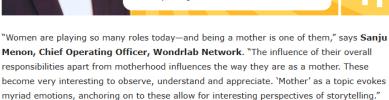


Make it personal. Find a story from your life, close to your heart— understand why it makes your eyes well up every time you narrate it, why it fills you with the desire to buy a ticket home to your mother.

Say that piece in an authentic and simple way, and it will travel.

Sanju Menon

Chief Operating Officer - Wondrlab Network



Menon, however, doesn't see any radical shift, saying, "There isn't much of a shift happening—however, there is a lot of sameness that's out there. Motherhood as a struggle, mothers as multi-taskers, mothers as power centres—all of these narratives are being played out in different ways.

"The feeling is so universal and instinctive—if one delves a little deeper, there are many interesting untapped facets of this beautiful relationship that can be celebrated," adds **Menon**.

Brands are slowly widening the lens

Siddhant Jain, Partner at Three Fourth Solutions, believes the shift from idealizing motherhood to portraying it more realistically has been a good thing. He says, "Today's audiences are smart, socially aware, and craving authenticity. So whether it's single moms, working moms, LGBTQ+ families, or even mother figures who aren't biologically related, brands are slowly widening the lens. Social media and Gen Z's influence have pushed us to reflect the world as it is, not how it used to be shown."

Akash Agrawalla, Co-Founder, ZOFF Foods, concurs with Jain. He says, "Earlier, it was all glossy visuals and idealized motherhood. Today, brands are embracing real, diverse stories of working moms, single moms, and mother figures. Audiences want authenticity, especially younger ones who connect more with lived experiences than polished portrayals."

Sharing how for Mother's Day: How do we say something new, Mayank Gaba, Creative Director – Copy – SocioWash, says, "You have to learn from the benchmarks of the world. At the end of the day, there are only a number of limited insights and observations that can help you come up with an idea. What actually matters is the treatment you use to bring that idea to life."

He adds, "Learn how leading brands have celebrated Mother's Day in the past, take note of their treatments, and formulate the execution of your idea accordingly."



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Try not to make the brand or its services the hero of the idea. You're working on something based on a specific topic.

Make sure you are using mothers and the insights related to them to lead the entire narrative. The brand can be there as a shadow, but it can't steal the limelight by taking over the message.

Mayank Gaba

Creative Director (Copy) - SW Network

On the shift in how brands are approaching Mother's Day, **Gaba** says, "One word—Audience." He explains, "Most of the brands these days are speaking to an even younger set of audience, and in order to be relevant, they have to shift their perception according to what the new-gen audience wants to see. Also, this rule applies to everything they do, not just Mother's Day."



Move beyond the tearjerker formula, keep it real

Mother's Day comes with an inherent emotional resonance, making it a powerful moment for storytelling. But for brands, the challenge lies in striking the right balance—retaining the heartfelt sentiment while finding a fresh, original creative angle that stands out amidst a sea of similar messages.

Ambika Sharma advises, "You move beyond the tearjerker formula. Emotion doesn't have to be soft, it can be powerful. I believe in spotlighting mothers not just as nurturers, but as CEOs of their households, officers of the army, firefighters and mountaineers—women who battle invisible labour, who teach resilience by example."

She adds, "Instead of focusing on the 'thank you,' we can show the why behind that gratitude. Real stories, real stakes—those are the angles that still move people, without falling into cliché."

"It strikes me that the most powerful stories about motherhood often lie in those quiet, unacknowledged spaces," says **Revathi Batola**. "It's in the sheer effort of the invisible work, self-doubt, everyday victories that often pass without fanfare. When we delve into these deeply personal and truthful aspects, the emotional connection with the reader becomes effortless. There's no need to force feeling; it simply is."

Akash Agrawalla too acknowledges the power of quiet moments. "We try to focus on the little, unsaid moments—like the things moms do without ever being thanked. It keeps the emotion intact, without being over-the-top. Real, raw moments strike deeper than grand expressions when told with honesty."



EXCLUSIVE

Most moms are simply doing their best—and that's enough. Showing their flaws, resilience, and honesty makes the story more powerful and genuine.

We try not to sanitize that journey. The occasional chaos, the imperfections, the moments of self-doubt—they're all part of the story.

Akash Agrawalla Co-Founder - ZOFF Foods



Best ideas come from real conversations with real people

Sanju Menon believes, "Everyone has a different story to tell about their own mothers, or about being a mother. Each story is unique. Unpacking that personal emotion with the right form of delivery can be truly magical." He advises, "If you make it just a bit more personal, you'll uncover a goldmine of ideas waiting to be discovered."

Siddhant Jain supports this notion of keeping it real. He says, "You start by listening, not by creating. Some of the best ideas we've had came from genuine conversations with real people—whether it's team members, friends, or even our own mothers. Once you tap into stories that feel raw and authentic, the creativity flows effortlessly. The emotion doesn't get lost; it simply becomes layered."

Specificity is the secret sauce

Chandan Bagwe highlights, "The key is to move beyond generic sentimentality and connect with specific, relatable human truths. Instead of merely stating 'Moms are great,' a fresh angle might delve into the unique sacrifices, the unspoken lessons, the everyday heroism, or even the humorous realities of motherhood. Storytelling is where the magic happens."

He elaborates, "At C Com Digital, leveraging our expertise in 'Advanced AI First – Digital Marketing' and 'Conversational Marketing,' we champion the exploration of micro-stories and personalised narratives. Perhaps it's focusing on a specific memory, a shared hobby, or the unique ways a mother's support has shaped an individual."

For example, he shares, "A campaign for a client like Manna Foods could delve into the

generational passing down of recipes and the deep emotional connection tied to food, rather than offering a generic 'treat your mom' message."

Yasin Hamidani echoes the sentiment, believing that specificity is indeed the secret sauce. "The key lies in honing in on the specific. Instead of blanket statements about motherhood, zoom in on the micro-moments: late-night meals, work calls during school pickups, unspoken sacrifices. These moments make the emotion feel earned, not contrived. You don't need to amplify sentiment—you just need to observe it differently."



EXCLUSIVE

You stand out by being grounded. Real stories, minimal staging, and letting the mother's voice lead often outperform overproduced campaigns.

Instead of scripted tributes, invite unscripted perspectives—letters, voice notes, even honest confessions. The most powerful content is often what feels heard, not just shown.

Yasin Hamidani

Director - Media Care Brand Solutions



How to craft a standout Mother's Day campaign

In a cluttered landscape where brands often risk sounding repetitive or overly sentimental, crafting a standout Mother's Day message requires a delicate balance. On this, **Revathi Batola** says, "Sometimes the boldest move is simplicity: a single story, well told. Other times, it's about reimagining the narrative entirely—why not celebrate moms for their ambition, their creativity, their flaws, not just their care? The mold breaks itself when you move from 'let's do a Mother's Day campaign' to 'let's say something meaningful.'"

Siddhant Jain too advocates for the power of simplicity, saying, "The best campaigns are often the simplest. A piece that focuses on all the things moms don't get to do on Mother's Day because they're still being moms will really strike a chord. It isn't about fancy scripts or visuals; it's about truth. If you can unearth a detail that feels so specific yet so relatable, you don't need glitter or gimmicks."

Underscoring the importance of truth in the messaging, **Sanju Menon** says, "The message isn't a branded greeting card—it should be something that aligns with the brand's voice, staying true to the brand's tonality while also addressing the honesty of the topic it seeks to own. Breaking the mold shouldn't be the objective—focusing on being true to who you are is."

"One effective approach is facilitating and amplifying user-generated content where real people share their genuine stories and tributes," says **Chandan Bagwe**. "This inherently brings authenticity. Another way is to offer genuine value—perhaps by creating content that helps people connect with their mothers meaningfully, provides solutions to challenges mothers face (as with our client Alpha Coach, focusing on fitness and well-being), or supports causes that are relevant to mothers."

In a similar vein, **Yasin Hamidani** adds, "You stand out by being grounded. Real stories, minimal staging, and letting the mother's voice lead often outperform overproduced campaigns. Instead of scripted tributes, invite unscripted perspectives—letters, voice notes, even honest confessions. The most powerful content is often what feels heard, not just shown."



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Mother's Day messaging needs to keep pace with culture.

I understand the impulse to lean into nostalgia and warmth, but I also believe we're doing modern mothers a disservice by portraying them solely through a lens of sacrifice or sentimentality. There's more to celebrate—and more to respect.

Ambika Sharma



Ambika Sharma backs the idea of "giving her back her voice." She explains, "You break the mold by resisting the urge to wrap everything in pastels and piano music. Respect the role, but celebrate the woman. One of our most powerful campaigns simply asked people about the source of their strength. A huge number of responses centered on their moms—no script, no gloss. It stood out because it was raw, unfiltered, and honest. And that's something audiences remember."

Akash Agrawalla advises steering away from clichés and focusing on role reversals—like a son making chai for his mom. "It's simple, relatable, and heartfelt. Being real, not dramatic, makes the message cut through. You don't need to be dramatic or edgy—just be real. That, in itself, cuts through the noise," he adds.

On the other hand, **Mayank Gaba** doesn't think "there's anything wrong with being gimmicky as long as you're respecting the credibility of the topic."

He adds, "Not every Mother's Day ad has to be sappy in nature; it all depends on the tone of the brand you're working with. You cannot expect Johnson & Johnson to start behaving like Zomato all of a sudden. While the former's tone allows for more emotional narratives, the latter is known for producing quirkier pieces."

Sharing his two cents, **Gaba** says, "Try not to sound too obvious or linear in your idea. Leave room for the audience to ponder, let them think and react. Add a layer of freshness through the use of humor, satire, a sentimental backdrop, or data-backed statistics."

Avoid the 'Supermom'. Most moms are just doing their best—and that's enough

In developing Mother's Day content, it's crucial to steer clear of familiar narrative traps and clichés. One of the most prevalent, according to these marketers, is the "supermom" trope.

Siddhant Jain identifies the "supermom" trap as a major pitfall, explaining, "It places moms on a pedestal that no human can realistically live up to. We also avoid overly sentimental montages unless there's a true story anchoring them. If the message feels like it could belong to any brand, it probably won't work for ours."

Revathi Batola shares this sentiment, noting, "It's so easy to fall into the trap of creating this untouchable 'supermom' image. But when we do that, we risk making real mothers feel even more isolated. We also need to avoid anything that feels performative. If it's not rooted in genuine insight or backed by real community engagement, it shows."



Akash Agrawalla, too, is firmly in the "avoid" camp when it comes to the "supermom" or self-sacrificing tropes. He says, "Most moms are simply doing their best—and that's enough. Showing their flaws, resilience, and honesty makes the story more powerful and genuine. We try not to sanitize that journey. The occasional chaos, the imperfections, the moments of self-doubt—they're all part of the story."

Yasin Hamidani adds, "Portraying moms as flawless superhumans or reducing them to homemakers is an outdated and alienating trope. Instead, we need to focus on their complexities as human beings."

He also points out another common mistake: centering the child's perspective while

sidelining the mother's own identity. "Modern storytelling honors her autonomy—her struggles, aspirations, and space outside the maternal role," he says.

Ambika Sharma concurs, stating, "Absolutely. I avoid the 'selfless angel' trap. That narrative might seem noble, but it reinforces the idea that motherhood means erasing yourself. We need to show mothers as decision-makers, disciplinarians, leaders—not just emotional safety nets. It's time to update the archetype."

Mayank Gaba agrees, noting that he personally avoids overused topics and talking points. He stresses the importance of research, saying, "I always emphasize watching the benchmarks set in previous years. By learning from their shortcomings and drawing inspiration from them, we can come up with ideas that meet the brand's expectations while offering a fresher perspective."

Beyond the clichés

Vaibhav Pandit highlights another key consideration, saying, "Mother's Day comes preloaded with emotion, but if you rely solely on that, the work risks feeling predictable. The key is to look beyond the occasion and into the context—what does motherhood mean today? How is it evolving? What roles is it expanding into? The emotion is still there, but it's earned, not engineered."

Sanju Menon shares a valuable insight, warning against blending the narratives of Women's Day and Mother's Day. "There's a thin line between content created for Women's Day and Mother's Day. I've seen a lot of content that focuses heavily on women, but the 'mother' angle feels like a forced fit," he says. "There are so many beautiful aspects of motherhood that one can weave something truly interesting around."

Chandan Bagwe, too, finds the "supermom" trope tired and played out. He points out additional traps to avoid, saying, "Over-reliance on material gifts as the sole expression of love can overshadow the emotional core. While gifts are a part of the celebration, focusing exclusively on commercialism isn't the way to go."

He also warns against "One-Size-Fits-All Messaging," explaining that ignoring the diversity of mother figures and family structures leads to missed opportunities. "Excessive sentimentality is another no-go," **Chandan** continues. "Content that is overly saccharine or tear-jerking without a genuine story feels manipulative."

Planning your campaign? Here's some advice

To conclude this deep dive, we asked these marketers to share one piece of advice for younger professionals planning their first Mother's Day campaign. Here's what they had to say. "Listen more than you prescribe," advises **Chandan Bagwe**. "Don't assume you know what Mother's Day means to everyone in your audience. Conduct thorough research, engage with diverse communities, and seek out real stories."

Yasin Hamidani echoes Bagwe's advice, reiterating, "Start with listening. Don't build a narrative based on assumptions—build it from real voices. Whether it's user stories, customer interviews, or creator collaborations, the richest ideas come from truth. Let empathy drive your brief, and trust that subtle, honest storytelling will outlast flashier scripts."

Ambika Sharma and Revathi Batola both stress the importance of grounding campaigns in real stories. **Sharma** says, "Don't write from the outside in. Talk to real mothers. Listen first. Don't romanticize, humanize. And remember, this isn't just a day to celebrate love; it's a chance to reflect the truth of motherhood with the dignity and depth it deserves."

Batola adds, "Before you open a brief, open a conversation. Read their posts, listen to their podcasts, ask real questions. When you ground your campaign in real voices, not assumptions, your work becomes more than a marketing message—it becomes a tribute that actually connects."

Akash Agrawalla and Siddhant Jain both emphasize the importance of direct interaction with mothers. **Agrawalla** shares, "Talk to real moms. Don't start with a brief or a brainstorm—start with a conversation. Sit with them, ask about their day, their memories, the hard parts, and the funny parts. You'll be surprised by how many beautiful, textured stories emerge just from listening. Once you connect to that emotional truth, your campaign won't need to work so hard. Sincerity will carry it forward."



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You start by listening, not by creating. Some of the best ideas we've had came from genuine conversations with real people—whether it's team members, friends, or even our own mothers.

Once you tap into stories that feel raw and authentic, the creativity flows effortlessly. The emotion doesn't get lost; it simply becomes layered.

Siddhant Jain

Partner - Three Fourth Solutions

Jain advises, "Don't overthink the message, just think deeply about the audience. Talk to your mom, your friend's mom, or someone who's like a mom to you. That'll give you more insight than any mood board. Mother's Day isn't about creating a tearjerker; it's about creating connection."

Vaibhav Pandit adds, "Don't start with the sentiment; start with real insights. Mother's Day already carries emotions, so the job isn't to add more sugar, it's to find a truth that deserves the emotion. Emotion should be the outcome, not the brief. Resist the urge to go big. Sometimes, the smallest, quietest moments leave the deepest mark."

Sanju Menon's advice is simple: "Don't romanticize—humanize. Make it personal. Find a story from your life, close to your heart-understand why it makes your eyes well up every time you narrate it, why it fills you with the desire to buy a ticket home to your mother. Say that piece in an authentic and simple way, and it will travel."

Finally, Mayank Gaba suggests flipping the traditional approach: "Try not to make the brand or its services the hero of the idea. You're working on something based on a specific topic. Make sure you are using mothers and the insights related to them to lead the entire narrative. The brand can be there as a shadow, but it can't steal the limelight by taking over the message."



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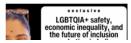
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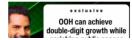
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