

Press Release

## Sudhanshu Vats is new chairman as ASCI celebrates 40-year milestone

- *MullenLowe Global's S Subramanyeswar is vice-chairman and industry veteran Paritosh Joshi is honorary treasurer*
- *Announces several initiatives to mark its 40th year*

**Mumbai, Date:** Sudhanshu Vats, Managing Director of Pidilite Industries Ltd, was named the new chairman of the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) at its 39<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting (AGM). With ASCI, India's self-regulatory body for advertising, completing 40 years in October, the appointment comes in a milestone year.

S Subramanyeswar, of MullenLowe Global, was named vice-chairman. Paritosh Joshi, Principal at Provocateur Advisory and industry veteran, was named honorary treasurer.

Vats said: "ASCI's role has never been more important. As advertising evolves with new technologies and formats, our responsibility is to ensure it is executed with integrity – centered around the product promise, respectful of the community and mindful of consumers. In an environment where trust is easily shaken, self-regulation provides both guidance to the industry and assurance to the public. I look forward to working closely with advertisers, agencies, platforms and consumers to uphold high standards, encourage responsible creativity, and strengthen confidence in advertising. At the heart of this effort is a simple principle — always keep the consumer's interest front and centre."

Partha Sinha, the outgoing chairman, added: "My term as chairman may be ending, but ASCI's journey is continuing with vigour. It is a comma in a sentence that keeps unfolding. Over the past years, we have moved from being a watchdog to becoming an enabler of responsible communication — not just policing, but partnering. We have stepped firmly into the digital arena, because responsibility cannot lag behind technology. And we have begun to expand ASCI's footprint, reminding ourselves that consumer trust is not an ambition that works in pockets but is a pan-India language. I leave the chair with the comfort that the story continues — and with deep gratitude to my colleagues on the Board and the Secretariat, who ensured that this journey was one of shared purpose and collective strength."

To mark its 40th year, ASCI also announced key initiatives it will take up over the next year:

- Launch of a children's advertising and media literacy program that will train over a million school students. The 'AdWise' program will empower students with awareness to identify, question and evaluate advertising messages, thus reducing their vulnerability to misleading and harmful ads
- Undertaking ethnographic research amongst Gen Alpha to help develop a framework for responsible advertising to the new generation of kids growing up with technology and screens
- Expansion of its footprint in Bengaluru and Delhi

- Launch of a comprehensive resource for advertising codes and laws in India, in partnership with leading law firm Khaitan & Co.
- Launch of a podcast series in collaboration with The Logical Indian and Marketing Minds
- Launch of a visual asset for ASCI members that can be used in their communication and websites to signal their commitment to responsible advertising in India.

Founded in 1985, ASCI began as a voluntary initiative by the advertising industry to build a culture of responsibility and consumer protection. What started as a code of conduct soon gained the recognition of policymakers and regulators. Its framework was adopted by the Cable TV Act, Doordarshan, All India Radio and some key regulators. Over the years, ASCI has partnered with the Ministries of Health, Consumer Affairs, Education, AYUSH and others in its initiatives.

The recommendations of ASCI's Consumer Complaints Committee have a compliance rate, at an extraordinary level for a voluntary framework, that shows its acceptance and standing in the industry. In FY 2024-25, the compliance rate for print and TV was 98% and 97% respectively, while it was 81% for digital.

ASCI's role has also found mention in multiple Supreme Court cases, further underscoring the acceptance of its importance in consumer protection.

In recent years, the launch of the ASCI Academy has expanded the organisation's mandate from compliance to proactive education, thought leadership and innovation. Alongside, its whitepapers and research reports on a variety of modern challenges – from dark patterns and the use of artificial intelligence to the depiction of masculinity in advertising as well as trust in digital influencers – have led industry thought and evolution. For these efforts, ASCI bagged two coveted global awards. It has also pioneered guidelines on influencer conduct, dark patterns, cryptocurrency, green claims and gender stereotyping in advertising.

Today, ASCI's role is as much about shaping the future of ethical advertising as it is about adjudicating complaints and reviewing advertisements.

To that end, its Master Classes with leading marketers and agencies, as well as Faculty Development Programmes in the country's leading media and advertising colleges, play a vital role. Its Advisory service ensures that advertisers can check compliance with the code at the pre-production stage instead of having to make expensive changes after the advertisement's release in case of violations.

ASCI also intends to strengthen its global partnerships and knowledge exchange with peer bodies worldwide while investing in research, innovation and frameworks that respond to the realities of digital-first advertising.

For more information, visit <https://www.ascionline.in/>

## About the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)

The ASCI, established in 1985, is committed to the cause of self-regulation in advertising, ensuring the protection of consumer interests. ASCI seeks to ensure that advertisements conform to its Code for Self-Regulation, which requires advertisements to be legal, decent, honest, and truthful and not hazardous or harmful while observing fairness in competition. ASCI looks into complaints across all media, such as Print, TV, Radio, hoardings, SMS, Emailers, Internet/website, product packaging, brochures, promotional material, point of sale material, etc. ASCI has collaboratively worked with various government bodies, including the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the Ministry of AYUSH, and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB). In August 2023, the ASCI Academy, a flagship program of ASCI, was launched to build the capacity of all stakeholders to create responsible and progressive advertising. ASCI Academy aims to raise standards of advertising content through training, education, outreach, and research on the preventive aspects of advertising self-regulation.

The Advertising Standards Council of India	Avian WE
<b>Manisha Kapoor   CEO &amp; SG, ASCI</b> <a href="mailto:manisha@ascionline.in">manisha@ascionline.in</a>	<b>Suman Das Sarma   M: +91 98200 51946</b> <a href="mailto:sumans@avianwe.com">sumans@avianwe.com</a>
<b>Ashraf Engineer   M: +91 98204 16510</b> <a href="mailto:ashraf@ascionline.in">ashraf@ascionline.in</a>	<b>Annyesha Bakly   M: +91 8861210977</b> <a href="mailto:annyeshab@avianwe.com">annyeshab@avianwe.com</a>