

FACE OFF SANJAY TRIPATHY, Executive VP & Head - marketing, HDFC Standard Life

“IPL as a brand will continue to get bigger”

HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company is the associate sponsor of Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Rajasthan Royals. The insurance company came on board in the last season. In an interview with FE's Rahul Sharma, Sanjay Tripathy, executive vice-president and head-marketing of HDFC Standard Life talks about its association with the IPL team, and the impact of the current controversy on the insurance brand. Edited excerpts:

How was IPL 3 for HDFC Standard Life? Are you happy with the way it has panned out?

Our association with Rajasthan Royals for two consecutive years has been aimed at bringing out to the fore our common values - self respect or living life with head held high. The presence of our company logo on the jersey of the players created a positive impact to the huge fan following of the RR team. The matches got huge television coverage and were enjoyed by viewers across the country. We also leveraged meet and greet opportunities with our channel partners and customers. It has been able to meet our expectations and we are happy with the returns.

Do you see any impact of the controversy on the IPL brand and IPL as an advertising/marketing opportunity?

The recent controversy surrounding IPL is more of an administrative/management issue and not necessarily at the game level. Advertis-

ing is the main revenue for IPL and there is no dip in ratings in spite of the controversies. None of the current issues are likely to impact the equity of the IPL brand as such. In my opinion, only two factors can impact Brand IPL and in turn impact involvement and viewership: match fixing and performance. The kind of performances which we have seen this year ranging from the genius of Tendulkar to the grit of Warne and Kumble and the ice cool Dhoni has left the crowd waiting for more. And these factors are the chief contributors and pillars of the IPL brand. This reason, coupled with the increase in teams and matches from next year onwards will make the IPL brand bigger and better.

Do you fear that the negative coverage can have a spillover effect on the brands associating themselves with IPL?

No, I don't think so. However, the

governing council needs to have more due diligence so that the IPL is more transparent and its credibility and reputation remains intact.

Will you associate with IPL in the next season?

The interest is rising, and we expect that the viewership of the upcoming season will also rise. IPL as a brand will

continue to get bigger with the addition of two new teams which will increase the footprint, regional and city loyalties. We would continue with our association with Rajasthan Royals next year if it continues to give us the same value and returns on investment.

