Twitter Thread by Ramki



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Bill Bernbach, the most quotable of all the advertising Gods, once said, "It's not a principle till it costs you money.' It is only as an entrepreneur (I wish there was a less ostentatious word for this), that I fully understood the genius of that simple sentence. +

Every now and again, you meet a moral dilemma. They are the most troubling kind. Unlike the 'sambar daalke ya alag?' variety of dilemma. I'm talking about business opportunities that come with the faint, or not so faint, whiff of blackness in the lentils. +

We live in a grayscale world. Viewed through multi-hued glasses. A world where doctored and engineered have unflattering meanings. Forget about squeaky clean, nobody even seems to be scratchy clean. Even hallowed seems like a typo for hollowed. +

Shouldn't we take briefs at face value? After all, we are communicators, not investigators. Shouldn't we take shelter behind caveat emptor? Pass on the legal responsibility to the client and the rest to the customer? +

We are sloganeers and image makers, aren't we? Paid for our cleverness. Not for our, what's that word, scruples? That word is always a bit elusive. +

The customer knows that's not a brand of playing cards. And that mouth freshener from a tin doesn't help seal billion dollar deals. And that applying a facial cream will not solve racial problems. Nor will not applying it, for that matter. +

So, do we draw a line? Or let those others above and below us in the chain do that. And quickly pass the parcel before the music stops. +

It's all about the music isn't it? The jingle of money. And if there are any false notes in there, you just hope that nobody notices. All that matters is that when your head hits the pillow every night, those false notes don't sing a cacophonous lullaby that keeps you awake. +

How ironic is it that Bernbach, who was jewish, is best known for his work for the Beetle? A car that was the brainchild of Adolf Hitler. Did he have sleepless nights deciding whether or not to work on the brand? I have no idea.

ANTHE.