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With the fifth Indian Premier League (IPL) season right round the corner, at least two of the participating teams have started taking guard. Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Chennai Super Kings have kicked off their marketing campaigns with gusto. KKR's marketing blitz, dubbed 'New Dawn. New Knights', started with the introduction of a new logo in Mumbai recently. The logo, created by Lambie-Nairn, a global

branding agency and part of WPP Group, stays with the traditional team colours of purple and gold. KKR is ensuring that the logo stares at you from every touch point, from the screen to merchandising.

The new look has been rolled out across a wide range of applications including the team kit, the online social media and merchandising. "We are working hard to add value to our sponsors, grow our fan base and build a profitable business," says Venky Mysore, CEO, KKR. He says there are two

reasons that prompted these changes. "First, the problem with the older logo was that when we tried applying it to different platforms it became really difficult. We have addressed that with our new logo," he explains.

"The second reason is more strategic," Mysore continues. "We want to enter newer fields as new opportunities present themselves. There are sports categories other than cricket that are very exciting. The younger generation is not necessarily cricket oriented. We should

be able to create a portfolio of franchises as we go forward. So we need something we can build and own as a mother brand."

The management is looking at KKR more as a sports entertainment business than just a cricket business. "We wanted to retain the existing heraldic imagery and the purple and gold colours as these features differentiate the team from competitors and ensure it is instantly recognisable," adds Sophie Lutman, creative director at Lambie-Nairn.

For its part, India Cements-owned Chennai Super Kings (CSK), the most successful IPL team, is also carrying out a slew of marketing initiatives to grab audience attention. The whole initiative is focused on communicating the positioning stance of "fearless entertainers" to cricket lovers. CSK will launch a Yellow Card, a low-priced entry card with all the attendant benefits — preference on tickets, merchandise and so on for its members — for the Kings Club



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members. (The Kings Club is Super Kings' official club membership programme, designed to build on the popularity of the team and offer its fans an opportunity to be part of an exclusive community closely associated with the team.)

"Inside the stadium, we would like to make the viewing experience more pleasurable for the fan and

run mobile-based contests. In short, we are looking at revamping the whole approach from street to seat," says Rakesh Singh, joint president (marketing), India Cements. CSK will also launch a Band Hunt with a regional TV partner to identify local music bands to perform at the CSK home ground during all the eight games.

CSK is using television, print, online as well as out of home-to get the message across. The marketing budget this year is up 10 per cent from last year. ▲