Indian Management

Teaching Cases: A Compendium

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Mr. Shailesh Sargade

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Preface

In the dynamic landscape of business management, the need for insightful analysis and strategic thinking has never been more pronounced. It is with great pleasure and anticipation that we introduce this volume of case studies, a compilation that traverses diverse fields and sectors, presenting a rich tapestry of real-world scenarios and managerial challenges.

The contemporary business environment is characterized by unprecedented complexity, influenced by factors ranging from technological disruptions and globalization to societal shifts and environmental concerns. In response to these challenges, organizations must continually evolve their strategies, operations, and management approaches to thrive in an ever-changing landscape. The case studies presented in this book span diverse fields and sectors, offering readers a comprehensive exploration of the nuanced decisions and strategic maneuvers that define successful business management. As editors, we were particularly drawn to case studies that not only highlight triumphs but also delve into situations where organizations faced formidable obstacles. The richness of these narratives lies not only in the solutions implemented but also in the journey of decision-making and adaptation. From the boardrooms of multinational corporations to the entrepreneurial spirit driving small enterprises, each case study provides valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between theory and practice in the realm of business management.

The case studies presented in this volume are authored by participants who were actively engaged in a 5-day online Faculty Development Program focused on the art of writing and teaching cases. During the program, case narrators shared their authentic real-life scenarios with the participants, providing valuable insights and guidance for crafting compelling cases. Drawing inspiration from these narratives and considering the diverse array of fields covered, participants meticulously developed their own cases. The result is a collection that reflects the richness of real-world experiences and the collaborative effort of individuals dedicated to enhancing the practice of case writing and teaching across various disciplines.

This book takes readers on a journey across various sectors, including but not limited to finance, healthcare, technology, and manufacturing. The selected case studies delve into strategic management, organizational behaviour, marketing, and financial decision-making, offering a holistic view of the multifaceted challenges faced by leaders in different domains. The inclusion of such diverse scenarios not only enriches the academic discourse but also provides readers with a reservoir of practical knowledge that can be applied across industries.

We sincerely thank everyone who has made a substantial contribution to the creation of this edition. Our sincere gratitude goes out to the case study writers, whose insightful contributions have substantially improved the publication's breadth and richness. Their unwavering commitment to scholarly work and their willingness to share their expertise are truly commendable. We also express our sincere acknowledgment to the trustees of the Mumbai Educational Trust for their consistent support and guidance throughout the journey of bringing this volume to fruition. Their inspirational leadership has been instrumental in bringing this publication's concept to life. The MET Institute of Management's distinguished faculty members receive special distinction. Their deep knowledge, perceptive comments, and unceasing support have been crucial in shaping the material and upholding its excellent standard. Their unwavering commitment to education and research has proven to be an invaluable asset. Finally, we extend our appreciation to the publishers, for recognizing the significance of this volume and demonstrating professional dedication in bringing it to completion. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed, directly or indirectly, and who has demonstrated an unrelenting commitment to expanding knowledge in the subject. This book stands as a testament to the collective efforts and dedication of a community devoted to the pursuit of excellence in education and research.

Dr. Swati Lodha
Dr. Nirmala Joshi
Dr. Farida Virani
Mr. Shailesh Sargade

Editors Profile:

Dr. Swati Lodha
www.drswatilodha.com

Dr. Swati Lodha is the Director of MET Institute of Management, Mumbai.

Extensive research in different fields like leadership, motivation, entrepreneurship and personal excellence have led to writing of books like Beyond the Blue (2021), “Who Is Revathi Roy?” (2019), Amazon # 1 Bestseller books titled “54 Reasons Why Parents Suck and Phew!” (2018) and "Don't Raise Your Children, Raise Yourself" (2016) and other Bestselling Books like "Why Women are What They Are" (2004) and "Come On! Get Set Go" (2002)

Her latest book ‘360 Degree Excel at Anything & Everything’ (2022) encourages everyone to excel in all the roles of a person, professional, partner, parent and perennial at every age.

A Doctorate in Women Entrepreneurship, she has written many case studies and research papers published in various journals.

Apart from being an author- social entrepreneur- corporate trainer, she has been Director, Jodhpur Institute of Management, Dean, Faculty of Management, JNU and Director, AIMSR, Mumbai. She was appointed as Chief Incubation Officer at MDI, Gurgaon.

She founded her first venture SWASH Pvt. Ltd 24 years ago, which offers Training Courses to Youth, Professionals & Women.

She initiated the launching of first circular lab at MET Institute of Management, Mumbai

Editors Profile:

Dr. Nirmala Joshi

Dr. Nirmala Joshi is a highly accomplished academician and researcher in the field of finance. Her academic achievements, including earning a gold medal in both B.Com. and M.Com. from J.N. Vyas University (previously known as University of Jodhpur), as well as placing among the top 25 students in the Rajasthan Board at both SSC and HSC levels, showcase her exceptional dedication and excellence in her studies. In 1995, she achieved another significant milestone by earning her PhD, becoming the youngest recipient of a doctorate in Rajasthan. Her research prowess is evident from the numerous research papers she has authored, which have been published in reputable national and international research journals. Dr. Nirmala Joshi has held important academic positions, including serving as the Dean of the MMS program at Don Bosco Institute of Technology. Currently, she is heading the research cell and MET SEVA at the MET Institute of Management. As an approved PhD guide, she has successfully guided nine candidates to obtain their PhD degrees, and she continues to mentor others who are working on their research projects. Dr. Nirmala Joshi is actively involved in social projects that aim to empower women and generate income for disadvantaged rural and tribal communities in Mumbai and Nashik. Her diverse interests cover various subjects, ranging from core finance to broader issues like climate change, poverty eradication, women empowerment, and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, she has been appointed as an Advisor in the International Youth Fellowship (IYF), where she promotes mind education to bring about positive societal change by focusing on cultivating a positive and right mind set. Overall, Dr. Nirmala Joshi's remarkable achievements, extensive research work, and dedication to social causes make her a prominent figure in the academic and social realms, inspiring positive change and development in society.

Editors Profile:

Dr. Farida Virani

Dr. Farida Virani stands tall as a distinguished academic and researcher with a formidable expertise in Human Resource Management (HRM) and Behavioral Sciences. Her leadership journey, spanning over two and a half decades, encompasses both corporate and academic realms. Dr. Virani holds a PhD in Management, a Master's in Human Resources Management, and prestigious Post-Graduate certifications in Training & Development, Management of Education, and Mental Health. As a Government-certified POSH trainer (Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplaces), a CEDR – UK Certified Mediator, and a Certified Mediation Trainer for the International Conciliation and Arbitration Board for the Aga Khan Foundation, Dr. Virani brings a wealth of expertise to the table. Currently, she spearheads the Incubation Center at MET, Mumbai. Recipient of various accolades, her most recent honor is the 'Teaching-Training Quality Excellence Award' jointly presented by the Indian Quality Assurance Council (IQAC) and the Indian Society for Training and Development (ISTD) in 2021. Dr. Virani has been instrumental in elevating the education of over 5000 students and professionals in the realms of HR and Behavioral Sciences. An accomplished author, she has contributed to numerous research papers, journal articles, book chapters, newspaper publications, and working papers. Virani has played a pivotal role as a mentor and guide for numerous postgraduate and PhD dissertations. Her latest publication, "The Art and Science of Effective Mediation – ADR," is highly sought after in both academic and corporate circles. Dr. Virani's profound passion for storytelling, coupled with her deep insights into Behavioral Sciences and HRM, instills a fresh wave of personal empowerment and life mastery. Her influence translates into individuals performing at their best, teams achieving outstanding results, and organizations attaining an unbeatable edge.

Editors Profile:

Mr. Shailesh Sargade

Mr. Shailesh Sargade is currently dedicated to advancing his academic pursuits, undertaking a Ph.D. in Business Policy and Administration at the prestigious University of Mumbai. His educational journey includes the successful completion of a Master of Commerce in Management, a Master of Management Studies in Marketing, and certifications in State Eligibility Test (SET) and National Eligibility Test (NET) in Management.

Mr. Sargade boasts a remarkable achievement with a design patent for his innovative work on the Smart IoT Food Quality Monitoring System. His expertise extends beyond academic pursuits, as he has actively guided students at the District Level for the "AVISHKAR" project, showcasing his commitment to fostering learning beyond traditional boundaries.

His scholarly contributions are noteworthy, having presented research papers at various national and international conferences. This reflects his dedication to staying at the forefront of knowledge in his field and contributing meaningfully to the academic discourse.

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Abstract

The case study revolves around Sonali's journey as she navigates the complex intersection of her personal and professional life. Sonali's transition to Klien Pharmaceuticals to lead the "Diversity & Inclusion" initiative is marked by both professional success and interpersonal friction with her boss, Alok. This case highlights the challenges and opportunities faced by Sonali as a woman in the workplace, shedding light on the evolving role of women in contemporary India. The study also emphasizes the pivotal role of mentors and advocates, such as Shruti and Kavita, in Sonali's career progression. It demonstrates how mentorship and advocacy can significantly benefit individuals in their professional journeys, providing guidance and opportunities for growth. Furthermore, the case study offers insights into how organizations and leaders can foster diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Sonali's initiative and Klien Pharmaceuticals' recognition as a 'Great Place to Work' serve as examples of the benefits of prioritizing diversity and inclusion.

The narrative concludes with a moment of reflection for Sonali, leaving open the question of her next steps in addressing the complexities in her personal and professional life. It prompts readers to contemplate how Sonali may navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Keywords: Mentoring, Diversity & Inclusion, Career Progression for Women, Decision Making.

Introduction

Sonali feels flustered beyond measure. It is so much so sudden that she is unable to feel its reality. The last six months had been really busy – mentally and physically. She was soaring high, weaving dreams for the future in the evening and now here she was – staring at the distant Mumbai Skyline, alone while Manuj was asleep.

Sonali and Manuj got married a year and a half and moved from Delhi to Mumbai six months back. Born and brought up in Mumbai, Sonali finished her management program from TISS and worked with a start-up for two years in Delhi before she came back to Mumbai. The work was demanding and fun because it was an all-woman team who had created a job portal for women with a complete shop for preparing their resumes, refining their personalities for interviews, creating the best fit between the female candidate and the hiring company. Sonali was the fourth hire of the start-up, Star She in October 2014 and they were 400 people strong by October 2016. The experience of handpicking talent, setting up the practices. for a growing company was a huge challenge and Sonali rose to the occasion each time the company needed her. Shruti Saran, Founder, *Star She* depended on Sonali and they would work relentlessly to make it easier for girls and women to get the right jobs. They trained their teams to groom these aspirants and organizations kept coming back to them for their recruiting needs.

Sonali set up the HR Function with a strong L and D team and a Grooming cell, for women within this short span. It was a great run professionally while a lot happened in her personal life too. After finishing her MBA from TISS, her parents wanted her to get married immediately. They set up meetings with some boys and their families. Sonali agreed and met a few of them but nothing worked out. She met Shruti through a TISS Professor and Shruti coaxed her to move to Delhi to work with her on *Star She*. Sonali convinced her parents to let her go and work in Delhi for a year promising them to get married if they found a suitable match. She came to Delhi in October 2014 and the parents continued with their search for a suitable boy. They met Manuj's family in Mumbai through a common friend and came to know that he was working with a law firm in Delhi after finishing his Chartered Accountancy. The parents of Sonali and Manuj orchestrated their meeting in Delhi.

Sonali liked Manuj as they met briefly a few times. Since she was completely occupied by her work at *Star She*, she talked to Manuj about her work and Manuj would regale her with his experiences in Delhi. Since they both were from Mumbai, they had much in common to enhance their likability in the first few meetings. As both the families were more than keen to close the marriage deal, Sonali succumbed and they got married. In this professional & personal whirlwind, Sonali and Manuj started their new life in Delhi by renting a new place. Sonali was getting busier with the unprecedented growth of the company but she would work from home on weekends to spend time with Manuj. Within six months, Manuj started having a tough time with his boss and he resigned immediately. Sonali tried talking to him but he was reluctant to share his work pressure with her and he joined another law firm after serving his notice period.

Within one and a half years, *Star She* had a formidable online & offline presence and their growth trajectory was promising. Manuj was frequently discussing some issues with his father and told Sonali over the weekend that his father wants him to join the family business of manufacturing steel utensils. This was news to Sonali. She never knew that Manuj wanted to get into the family business and move back to Mumbai. Manuj admitted that he had not thought about it earlier but now he was not enjoying his work in Delhi. Also, the family business was going from strength to strength and needed Manuj. 'I will earn five times what I am making now. We will be close to families. It makes sense," he replied.

"What about my work?"

"Oh! You could get another job or join us", reasoned Manuj.
Sonali was not ready but the families were convinced about it and felt that it had to happen in a year or two. Shruti was anxious for a few days but she did not want Sonali to get disturbed in her family life. She set up a transition plan of three months for Sonali to handhold two other colleagues for a smooth handover. Coming to Mumbai was a big change. She moved in with Manuj's parents and his younger brother who had already joined the family business. The end of 2016 was near and she was settling in the new household. She felt the meaning of marriage sinking in. She was making efforts to please the elders, to adapt to the family culture which meant changing her lifestyle, changing the way she communicated with Manuj. Manuj was grappling with understanding business where the younger brother had already worked for three years. After the New Year, Sonali shared her wish to start working again with Manuj.

Manuj told her to discuss it with his mother and they had a huge argument. Shruti introduced her to Kavita, her senior at IIM Calcutta who was looking for someone to start a "Diversity & Inclusion" initiative at the pharmaceutical company she was working at. Sonali met Kavita and liked her instantly. Kavita, in her early forties, had been with Klein Pharmaceuticals since they started operations in India. Kavita was VP – HR and Sonali was expected to report to Head (L & D), Alok Rastogi. Sonali broke the news at home and realized that her mother-in-law was not very pleased with this piece of information. She showed her anger by venting in front of other family members in Sonali's absence and then conveyed it to Sonali by not talking to her.

Sonali joined the organization where Kavita introduced her to Alok and briefed him about her wish to start a "Diversity & Inclusion" vertical. Alok heard about her wish for the first time and was surprised to have Sonali as heading that vertical which never existed before. Sonali was warm, easy-going, and friendly as she had worked with a woman's organization before. She got engrossed in her work very quickly and rolled out a few plans and campaigns within a week. She would discuss all her plans with Kavita and send them to Alok. When she took the first plan to Alok, he said, "Go ahead if you have already discussed it with Kavita". Alok said that more with dislike and anger but Sonali found it alright. She would cc all her emails to Alok and write them to Kavita who was very happy with Sonali's pace.

The whole vertical being Kavita's dream, she cleared all the needed budgets and Sonali found some happiness in the professional space. Sonali brought in the 'Great Place to Work' initiative and worked hard to send an application from Klien Pharmaceuticals. Today, Klien Pharmaceuticals. Had organized a dinner for making it to the Top 100 list of 'Great Places to Work'. It was a dinner for the Senior Professionals who had been with the company for a long and had worked to make it a great place to work. Alok was surprised when he saw Sonali entering with Kavita. Kavita introduced her to other heads and CEO as well who all congratulated her for her 'diversity & inclusion' initiative which added to their success. Alok was visibly upset. Though he had never hampered Sonali's way and appreciated her work, he could not control and went straight to her.

"Were you invited here, Sonali?"
Sonali was surprised and nodded in yes. "I am your boss and you never inform me about anything. You merely compiled the data for the 'Great Place to work' campaign and not created it. Who gives you a right to hog the limelight here?"

Alok stopped when he saw Kavita coming to their side.
"Did you congratulate your protégé, Alok?"
"I just did".
'Sonali, Mr. Kapoor, our CEO wants you to look at spreading the 'diversity & inclusion' strategies to other locations. We have a meeting with him at 11:00 tomorrow'

'How about handing over the L & D Department to her, Kavita?' Alok blurted out.
Kavita looked at Alok for a second and took a deep breath.

“Let's meet at 10:00 am, then”, she said and left with a smile.

Manuj came to pick her up. She came out with Kavita and Mr. Kapoor, CEO of Klien Pharmaceuticals. “You are a lucky man. We are so proud to have an employee like her”, said Mr. Kapoor, and waved to Manuj. “Is the job so important to you that you are giving a hard time to my mother? Can’t you take up something that takes less time and you can spend more time with her?” asked Manuj.

The skyline is the same but the sky is changing colour.
Sonali has been standing there for hours. She is thinking about addressing the elephant in the room. She goes for a quick shower.

Discussion/Assignment Questions

1. Sonali's transition into Klien Pharmaceuticals was marked by both success and friction with Alok, her new boss. What do you think were the underlying issues in her relationship with Alok, and how did they get resolved?
2. The role of women in the workplace and in family dynamics is a recurring theme in the case study. How did Sonali's experiences reflect the evolving role of women in contemporary India?
3. What role did mentors and advocates like Shruti and Kavita play in Sonali's career progression? How can mentorship and advocacy benefit individuals in their professional journeys?
4. What can organizations and leaders learn from the case study regarding fostering diversity and inclusion in the workplace and managing talent within the company?
5. The case study ends with a moment of reflection for Sonali. What do you think her next steps will be, and how can she address the issues in her personal and professional life?

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PHARMARACK: STREAMLINING OPERATIONS IN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Mr. Ketan, working as a pharmaceutical distributor, was well aware of the immense potential of the Indian pharmaceutical industry, which stood at a staggering 185,000 crore rupees and was growing at a CAGR of 10.7%. Ketan found himself in a discussion with Mayuresh, a trusted chemist who owned a

popular pharmacy in town. He couldn't help but notice a troubling trend. It seemed that Mayuresh was not forwarding the schemes and offers provided by the manufacturing units and distributors to chemists. This realization hit Ketan suddenly and made him realize how it could affect the entire supply chain. The issues surrounding the scheme forwarding process began to surface in their discussion. Ketan understood that effective order tracking was crucial in ensuring the smooth flow of schemes, but there seemed to be a lack of proper tracking mechanisms. Without a reliable system in place, it became difficult for Mayuresh to keep track of orders and deliver the promised schemes to chemists in a timely manner. Another challenge that emerged was telephonic order tracking. Ketan discovered that relying solely on phone communication led to miscommunication and inconsistencies. The lack of a streamlined process hindered the seamless transmission of scheme-related information between Mayuresh and the distributor.

Keywords: Pharmaceutical Industry, Supply Chain Management, Distribution Network, Technological Innovation, Digital Transformation

Introduction

Ketan learned that the manual generation of invoices was causing significant delays and potential errors. In the fast-paced pharmaceutical industry, time was of the essence. Retailers, Chemists expected quick and accurate invoice generation. The existing manual system was not meeting these expectations, leading to frustration among all parties involved. Furthermore, the lack of uniformity in different ERP systems used by manufacturers and distributors added another layer of complexity. The compatibility issues between systems made it challenging to integrate and synchronize scheme-related data effectively. This resulted in a disjointed flow of information, leaving Mayuresh unable to forward the schemes to his customers seamlessly.

As Ketan absorbed the depth of these issues, he couldn't help but feel torn. On one hand, he understood the importance of the schemes in adding value to the pharmaceutical supply chain and ensuring proper profits for all stakeholders. On the other hand, he empathized with Mayuresh, recognizing the practical challenges he faced in forwarding the schemes due to the existing hurdles.

The discussion weighed heavily on Ketan's mind. He knew that something needed to be done to address the situation and bridge the gap between the manufacturing units, distributors, and chemists. It was clear that a comprehensive solution was required—one that encompassed efficient order tracking, reliable telephonic order tracking, automated invoice generation, and ensured uniformity in different ERP systems.

Introduction of Indian Pharma Sector:

With over 1000 players in the market, Indian companies dominate by contributing nearly 85% of the industry's total value. The distribution chain comprises approximately 30,000 distributors, where 50% of them account for 50% of the market's distribution. The industry caters to a vast network of over 8 lakh retailers, ensuring the widespread availability of pharmaceutical products across the nation. In terms of healthcare facilities, India boasts approximately 70,000 public and private hospitals, collectively offering close to 1.8 million beds for patient care. Notably, the majority, about 75%, of these hospitals are privately owned.

To support the healthcare infrastructure, India boasts over 1.2 million registered doctors associated with the Indian Medical Council. However, the doctor-to-patient ratio currently stands at 1:834, falling short of the WHO norm of 1:1000. With such a dynamic landscape and significant contributions to the healthcare ecosystem, the Indian Pharma Industry plays a vital role in ensuring the well-being of millions of people across the country.

Digitization has facilitated data-driven decision-making, allowing pharmaceutical companies to gain valuable insights into consumer behaviour, market trends, and real-time demand. This empowers them to optimize their operations, improve supply chain management, and reduce wastage while ensuring timely delivery of medicines. Moreover, the rise of telemedicine and virtual consultations has complemented the online pharmacy ecosystem, enabling patients to seek medical advice and prescriptions from the comfort of their homes.

In a noteworthy development, DigiHealth, a prominent player in the industry, has made significant strides in expanding its presence and capabilities. This digital healthcare company has successfully acquired both Pharmarack, a B2B platform operating under the Indian Pharmaceutical Association, and the reputable market research firm AWACS. The strategic move aims to leverage the strengths of each entity to foster better IT infrastructure and digital solutions within the pharmaceutical sector. With these acquisitions, DigiHealth is poised to revolutionize the industry, driving supply chain digitization, and offering enhanced services to cater to the evolving needs of the market. The integration of AWACS into the DigiHealth ecosystem promises to bring forth innovative advancements that will positively impact the entire pharmaceutical landscape. The merged entity is now known as Pharmarack.

Distribution Chain of Pharma Industry:

In this typical supply chain, goods are manufactured in their manufacturing units, and from there, they are sent to a warehouse, which is commonly referred to as the Carrying and Forwarding Agent (CNFA). The CNFA plays a crucial role in the process by ensuring that the right quantities of medicines are readily available for distribution from the warehouse. Once the goods reach the CNFA warehouse, they are distributed to various distributors, with each city typically having one or two main distributors, while larger cities like Mumbai may have five to six distributors. These distributors, operating within specific territories, ensure efficient and localized distribution to retailers in those areas. ultimately reaching end consumers effectively and in a well-organized manner. The entire distribution network has been optimized to address any gaps, ensuring that stocks are not left unsold or unutilized for more than 15 days. Distributors act as conduits of discount schemes and promotional offers initiated by pharmaceutical companies, passing on these benefits to retailers. This collaboration helps incentivize retailers and bolsters the accessibility of medicines to end consumers while enhancing the overall distribution network's efficiency.

Within this network, medical representatives play pivotal role. These professionals bridge the gap between distributors and pharmaceutical companies, offering invaluable insights into distributor behaviour. Their frontline interaction equips them to understand how distributors operate, providing companies with crucial feedback on market trends and demands. As companies strive for a comprehensive understanding of the distribution process, they were keen on monitoring the movement of goods and their frequency. Tracking this data allows companies to optimize their production schedules, ensuring that they align with the pace of distribution, ultimately reducing inefficiencies and meeting market demands more effectively.

Ms. Sheetal Sapale, Business Analyst and Vice President of Commercial Operations at Pharmarack, recognized the immense potential inherent in the pharmaceutical industry. Pharmarack’s mission was clear: to revolutionize the pharmaceutical supply chain and create substantial value for all. The Covid pandemic underscored the necessity for the pharmaceutical sector to embrace technological advancements. This prompted a strategic shift, fostering an industry-wide push towards technological integration and innovation. Under Ms. Sapale’s guidance, Pharmarack navigated this transformative phase, leveraging technology to enhance the efficiency of pharmaceutical supply chains.

However, the road to success was fraught with challenges. Pharmarack encountered stiff competition from established industry players. One of the most significant challenges Ms. Sheetal faced was the need to reach a broader spectrum of distributors and chemists. While the potential of Pharmarack's B2B solutions was immense, reaching out to the maximum number of stakeholders was essential.

Pharmarack made efforts to ensure that their B2B solution, an App was user-friendly and accessible to distributors and chemists of all backgrounds. They invested in intuitive interfaces and provided extensive customer support to guide users through the platform's functionalities. Ms. Sheetal also recognized the importance of customization. Different distributors and chemists had unique requirements and Pharmarack tailored its solutions to suit these specific needs. To ensure the seamless flow of schemes and offers, Sheetal spearheaded the implementation of a real-time order tracking system.

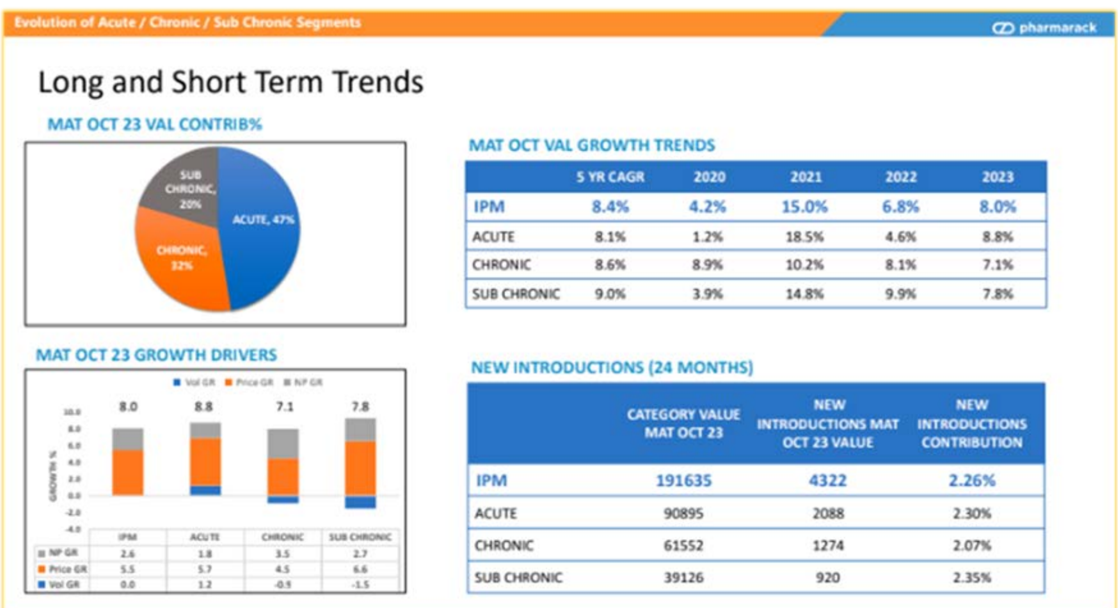
Pharmarack App simplified how orders were made and managed. This app had a dashboard where stockists, MRs, retailers, and distributors could find all the info they needed. It was easy for everyone to use. Lots of people started using this App because it made their work easier. This showed that Pharmarack's plan to change how medicines are distributed was working.

To tackle the compatibility issues arising from different ERP systems, Pharmarack took the lead in seamlessly integrating these systems. This eliminated manual data entry, ensuring data accuracy across the supply chain. The result was a unified and synchronized system for all stakeholders. With introduction of an automated invoice generation, distributors and chemists could swiftly create precise and professional invoices with just a few clicks. This efficiency not only saved time but also reduced the likelihood of errors. They also provided robust customer support, tailoring solutions to meet specific needs. This approach expanded the platform's user base and fostered trust among stakeholders. Distributors and chemists who were initially sceptical became advocates for the platform. They experienced first-hand the tangible benefits of Pharmarack's solutions. This led to widespread adoption and acceptance across the pharmaceutical industry.

Navigating the Ever-Changing Landscape:
Pharmarack identified a critical insight within their database: 60% of their data could be extrapolated to reach 100%. They have set a goal to improve this process, aiming to increase the extrapolation of data to 70%. This step would enhance the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their information, making it more reliable for decision-making. Their analysis revealed a significant trend. The top 100 cities accounted for 70% of their sales. Leveraging this insight, Pharmarack strategized to introduce new features specifically tailored for metropolitan cities. This focused initiative aimed to cater to the unique demands and dynamics of these urban centers, further optimizing their services and bolstering their presence in key market segments. The rapid evolution of technologies demanded that Pharmarack stays at the forefront of innovation. While their current solutions had addressed immediate issues, keeping up with emerging trends such as block chain, AI and IoT was essential to maintain their competitive edge. The pharmaceutical industry is

continuously expanding. New players entered the market and the sheer volume of distributors, chemists, and pharmaceutical companies continued to grow. This presented the challenge of scaling up their solutions to cater to an even larger and more diverse audience. The pharmaceutical supply chain was becoming increasingly complex, with additional layers of logistics, regulatory requirements, and environmental considerations. Handling this complexity was crucial to maintain the efficiency and reliability of the supply chain.

Leveraging databases from various stakeholders, Pharmarack crafts monthly Pharma reports offering comprehensive healthcare segment-based insights. These reports meticulously analyse diverse data sets, delineating trends and performance metrics across varied healthcare segments. Through this detailed analysis, Pharmarack presents invaluable information on pharmaceutical sales, distribution, and market dynamics within each distinct healthcare segment. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the industry landscape, empowering stakeholders with actionable insights crucial for informed decision-making and strategic planning.



	IPM	ACUTE	CHRONIC	SUB CHRONIC
NP GR	2.6	1.8	3.5	2.7
Price GR	5.5	5.7	4.5	6.6
Vol GR	0.0	1.2	-0.9	-1.5

	5 YR CAGR	2020	2021	2022	2023
IPM	8.4%	4.2%	15.0%	6.8%	8.0%
ACUTE	8.1%	1.2%	18.5%	4.6%	8.8%
CHRONIC	8.6%	8.9%	10.2%	8.1%	7.1%
SUB CHRONIC	9.0%	3.9%	14.8%	9.9%	7.8%

	CATEGORY VALUE MAT OCT 23	NEW INTRODUCTIONS MAT OCT 23 VALUE	NEW INTRODUCTIONS CONTRIBUTION
IPM	191635	4322	2.26%
ACUTE	90895	2088	2.30%
CHRONIC	61552	1274	2.07%
SUB CHRONIC	39126	920	2.35%

Figure: Trend Analysis on the basis of integrated Pharmarack Database
(Source: www.pharmarack.com)

These reports play a pivotal role for all stakeholders involved in the healthcare ecosystem. Pharmaceutical companies, offer vital market intelligence, aiding in refining marketing strategies and optimizing product distribution based on segmented demand. Wholesalers and distributors benefit from insights into product movement, enabling streamlined inventory management. Healthcare providers gain a clearer understanding of medication preferences and regional healthcare needs, enhancing patient care. Regulators can utilize this data to monitor market trends and ensure compliance. Ultimately, these reports empower stakeholders with timely, data-driven insights crucial for informed decision-making, efficiency, and improved healthcare outcomes.

Ms. Sheetal and her team recognized that the journey ahead would not be without its challenges. However, they remained determined to find innovative solutions that would not only address the futuristic transformations but also strengthen their position as leaders in the pharmaceutical supply chain industry.

Discussion/Assignment Questions

1. Identify the obstacles and inadequacies of the conventional pharmaceutical supply chain.

2. Analyse the features and benefits of digitization in addressing these challenges.

3. Evaluate the potential impact of Technological innovation on the pharmaceutical industry.

4. Critically analyse the challenges and strategic concerns of implementing Pharmarack.

5. As Pharmarack was the first mover in the B2B solution category, devise a framework to maintain its competitive advantages in the long run.

6. Formulate recommendations for the pharma companies that want to undertake digital transformation initiatives.

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ROLE OF MEDICAL REPRESENTATIVES (MR) IN THE AGE OF AI

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Abstract
In the year 1985, when mullets were in fashion and neon colours were all the rage, John D'mello Dindanwala, now 61 years old, a retired Medical Representative (MR), entered the healthcare scene armed with a briefcase full of miracles in pill form. Little did he know that his journey would be a wild roller coaster through the ever-changing landscape of healthcare communication, and the way life threw a curveball called Technology! In his mid-40s, he was struggling and apathetic to upskill for utilizing technology in his daily work. Building personal relationships and establishing trust became more challenging in a virtual environment, sifting through vast amounts of data to find relevant and reliable information.

This case aims at understanding how, effective communication ensures tailor made marketing communications to address the target groups specific concerns. This exercise will help drive positive outcomes for the consumers, the professionals, and the brand. So put on your retro shades, and be prepared

to travel back in time.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Communication Strategies, Sales and Promotions, Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Industry, Medical Representative

Introduction

John was cruising through life, armed with his briefcase, brochures and a repertoire of persuasive pitches. It was another sunny day when John strutted into the hospital, ready to educate the doctors. But as John walked through the door, he stepped into a modern hospital and is instantly stunned by the futuristic technology around him. He spotted something that made his eyes bulge and his jaw drop – stumbles upon high-tech marvels like desktops, laptops, Electronic Health Records (EHR), Telemedicine and Video Conferencing. He couldn't help but laugh at his own surprise and he calls himself "Mr. Gadget," experiencing first-hand the shock and delight of encountering advanced communication technology in the healthcare world.

He navigated through the hospital's technological wonders, John realized that he was in a new era where his once routine visits feel like a captivating adventure into the future. John’s encountered highlights how these digital tools have transformed the healthcare industry. Let’s buckle up & dive into a time when technology and healthcare got together like peanut butter and jelly.

To begin health-tech adventure, we have Telemedicine. John walked into Dr. No-Nonsense's chamber, eager to show off the telemedicine wonders. He set up the video call with a patient, but wait – where's the camera? It was like a game of hide-and-seek with technology. After a frantic search, John finally found it, alas it was capturing his forehead instead of his face. Dr. No-Nonsense frowned "you're interrupting my precious time" glare, and John found himself in a virtual hide-and-seek with embarrassment. Imagine patients in the middle of nowhere suddenly whipping out their smartphones like secret agents and having virtual doctor visits through video calls. It's like FaceTime with your doctor, and trust me, this wasn't just a call; it was a full-on medical rendezvous!

The saga of Electronic Health Records (EHRs)! Gone are the days of flipping through paper records like you're solving a mystery. Hospitals and clinics decide to go digital, turning patient info into digital jigsaw puzzles. Now, doctors can communicate with each other solving medical puzzles. When He was all giddy with my tablet loaded with electronic health records. Johntap and swipe, trying to show off the fancy patient records, but he accidentally set off the "dancing emoticons" feature instead. The doctor gives me a look like I've just summoned aliens from the fifth dimension. Note to self: learn to control tablet emotions.

Shedding some light on the Health Information Exchange (HIE) party! Different healthcare peeps are passing around patient data like a hot potato, but in a secure, encrypted way. Say goodbye to unnecessary tests and procedures because everyone's on the same page now. It's like a synchronized swimming routine, but with medical data!

As John left each doctor's office, he with his hilarious blend of determination and technological mishaps. Buttons get pushed, apps go rogue, and cameras capture my most unflattering angles. Yet, he trudge on, armed with the spirit of a bumbling tech crusader, bringing laughter and bewildering tech fails to every medical encounter.

As John adjusted to this new normal, he discovered a silver lining amidst the chaos. But as he was feeling all geared up in 10 years, all of a sudden his life took a different route of turmoil - dreaded news that swept the nation like wildfire. 24th March, 2020, the Government of India ordered a nationwide lockdown. Panic ensued, with people rushing to stock up on groceries and hoarding hand sanitizers like they were magical elixirs. And poor John, caught in the eye of this storm, felt his world crumble like a soggy biscuit. No more vibrant doctor visits, no livelier interactions – it was as if someone had hit the mute button on John's career. His trusty briefcase now gathered dust in a corner, while he sat at home, twiddling his thumbs and pondering the absurdity of it all. Zoom calls and virtual meetings became his new reality, as he struggled to adapt to this brave new world of pixelated faces and awkward internet lags.

But John, being the resilient soul that he was, refused to be defeated. With a twinkle in his eye and a virtual backdrop of a tropical beach, he transformed his video calls into a comedy show. Each sales pitch became a performance, complete with props and funny hats, desperately trying to inject some laughter into these uncertain times. And let's not forget the countless mishaps – microphone muting menaces, accidental cat cameos, and the ever-present struggle of finding the perfect camera angle that didn't showcase his double chin.

He witnessed the resilience and camaraderie of healthcare professionals, who tirelessly fought on the frontlines. He marveled at the scientific advancements and the race for a vaccine that could bring an end to this absurdity. And most importantly, he realized the importance of human connection, even if it came in the form of pixelated smiles and virtual high-fives.

So there he sat, John Ibrahim, the medical representative with a heart full of humor and a determination to bring joy even in the darkest of times, interacting with the doctors through video call – that provides face-to-face yet remote interactions, followed by messaging and phone calls. He couldn't help but feel a twinge of nostalgia for human connection transcending virtual barriers, and establishing effective communication extending beyond physical contact.

In the end, John's journey through the lockdown taught him that while the absence of physical touch may be felt, the power of effective communication and genuine connection can bridge the gaps and nurture relationships, regardless of the medium. Hence this case aims at analysing how effective communication ensures that your message is understood by the target audience, tailor-made for marketing communications to effectively address the target groups specific concerns and preferences by understanding their behaviour. This exercise will help drive positive outcomes for the consumers, the professionals, and the brand.

Challenges

The healthcare sector is adopting technological advancements like lightning-fast. Embracing the latest technologies at various levels like the Internet of Medical Things (IoMT), AI, predictive analysis for improved patient care. Many of the pharma companies are also opting for health apps, software and communication technologies to connect as well as reshape their interactions. The promotion of medicines to their trial patients and healthcare professionals. AI's data-driven insights are tailoring treatment plans, ensuring precision in patient care decisions. Additionally, AI-driven catboats provide instant access to drug information.

Furthermore, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are emerging tools. They offer immersive training experiences, enabling healthcare professionals to understand medicines' effects more intuitively. These technologies foster a comprehensive understanding of pharmaceutical products, aiding in better communication between medical representatives and healthcare experts. As the synergy of AI, VR, AR, Government Digital Health Initiatives and Health Tech Start-ups evolving and rolling out solutions, the healthcare industry's landscape is experiencing a remarkable transformation in medicine interaction and promotion. Medical representatives must skilfully blend their expertise with these technological tools to facilitate meaningful interactions and effectively convey the value of brands, ensuring that personalized insights and benefits resonate with healthcare professionals.

Bold Heart, Unbreakable Spirit: Navigating Life's Risks with Strength

In the dynamic world of pharmaceutical sales and marketing - effective communication and engagement with healthcare professionals play a pivotal role in achieving success. This case study delves into the journey of John, a seasoned 61-year-old medical representative in India, as he adeptly adapts to emerging technological advancements and employs advanced communication techniques to elevate his strategies for engaging with medical professionals and other stakeholders. Notably, he makes a significant shift from traditional offline methods to the realm of videos and digital platforms.

As the nation grappled with the smart gadgets & facing far-reaching impact of the pandemic, traditional face-to-face interactions between medical representatives and healthcare professionals became scarce. This ushered in an era defined by virtual interactions, including webinars, online conferences, and remote meetings. While initially hesitant about this transition, John recognized the imperative to embrace the digital landscape. Armed with a laptop and a dependable internet connection, he embarked on a journey of transformation.

This journey was characterized by John's realization that becoming an influential voice in his field could secure his relevance amid these rapid changes. This shift in perspective spurred him to curate insightful content such as articles, infographics, and research papers centered around medical advancements.

With a strategic evolution in his social media presence, John tactfully positioned himself within the digital domain. He actively participated in specialized forums tailored to healthcare professionals, where he shared his curated materials and contributed thoughtful insights to the ongoing discussions. His commitment to offering accurate and timely information garnered the attention of his peers, gradually establishing him as a trusted source of knowledge.

During the pandemic, the MRs were barred from entering major hospitals or even meeting the doctors personally, as they could spread the infection during their peripatetic juggling between the hospitals. Furthermore, the thinning of prescriptions and defunct product detailing sessions; lead to insufficient knowledge. The once considered traditional way of marketing medicines, changed rapidly due to Covid, the pharmaceutical companies were obligated to adopt digital transformation by focusing on e-learning programmes for healthcare professionals and doctors offering services to tackle the pandemic situation.

Despite his extensive 35-year background in medical sales, John confronted novel challenges stemming from the pandemic's disruptions. The resulting paradigm shift necessitated the adoption of remote communication tools and digital platforms. Overcoming initial reservations, John harnessed these technological changes to his advantage by capitalizing on the evolving digital landscape. He positioned himself as an influencer within his field. John's approach involved an adequate knowledge of digital platforms, fostering a reputation for disseminating invaluable insights regarding medical breakthroughs and treatment methodologies. Through these endeavours, he solidified his status as an opinion leader who adeptly utilized digital resources to facilitate meaningful interactions and information dissemination.

Al-Driven Transformation

Al is poised to revolutionize various aspects of patient care and streamline administrative processes across healthcare organizations. This transformation extends to communication, where Al has already made significant strides. With advancements in Natural Language Processing and Machine Learning, Al has drastically improved the way people interact and communicate.

One major area of Al-driven communication was the rise of virtual assistants like Siri, Alexa, and Google Assistant. These voice-activated tools enable users to access information, send messages, make calls, and perform tasks without physical interaction, enhancing convenience and efficiency. Chabot's, another AI application, offers real-time support and assistance, improved customer experiences, and reduced response times for businesses. Language translation tools powered by AL; break down language barriers, facilitating global communication. Moreover, AI analyses communication styles and behaviours, enabling businesses to personalize their interactions, leading to increased engagement and customer satisfaction.

Additionally, Al plays a crucial role in data enrichment, enhancing organizations' understanding of prospects and customers by integrating third-party data sources. Al-driven conversation intelligence tools analyse sales calls to extract valuable insights, aiding in identifying areas for improvement. Sales e and enablement, such as responding to RFPs benefits from Al's streamlining Marle ave capabilities, making the process more efficient. Al also aids in pipeline management and forecasting, reducing inaccuracies in sales predictions. Furthermore, Al-driven insights help sales representatives understand customer needs and enable personalized and automated interactions, ultimately enhancing the sales engagement process.

Path forward

During his expedition, the medical representative acquired fresh knowledge and adapted himself to the latest technologies, subsequently imparting his valuable insights 'The **Panchmantra** of Healthcare Communication' to the aspiring medical representatives.

1) Doctors are Humans too! - Recognizes the humanity of medical professionals, highlighting their emotions and vulnerabilities
2) Create H2H-Human To Human Connect! - Emphasizes building genuine connections between individuals, transcending professional roles
3) Start Conversations! - Encourages initiating dialogues to foster understanding and exchange of ideas
4) KISS - Keep It Simple, Sensitive! - Advocates for clear and empathetic communication, avoiding unnecessary complexity
5) Suggest, Don't Preach! - Advises offering recommendations respectfully rather than imposing viewpoints onto others

<u>John's successful implementation of his communication and promotional strategies can be broken down into the following steps:</u>

Embracing Technology:

John recognized the importance of digital communication tools such as social media, webinars, online portals, one-on-one video calls, and virtual conferences. He familiarized himself with these platforms and began actively participating in relevant online forums and discussions.

Content Curation:

Understanding that content is crucial in establishing credibility, John curated and shared informative content related to pharmaceuticals, medical advancements, and healthcare trends. This content-sharing practice elevated his status as an opinion leader among his peers.

Engaging with Peers:
John fostered interactions with fellow medical representatives, doctors, and healthcare professionals by participating in online discussions, providing insights and videos, and sharing his experiences.

<u>John's approach yielded several positive outcomes:</u>

Enhanced Reputation:
His active engagement and sharing of valuable insights garnered respect and recognition from his peers, positioning him as a knowledgeable and reliable source of information.

Increased Influence:
John's engagement led to a network of professionals who valued his expertise. This network, in turn, extended the reach of his communication efforts to promote medical solutions.

Improved Sales Performance:
John’s enhanced credibility translated into improved rapport with healthcare professionals. This positively impacted his sales performance as he effectively communicated the benefits of his products.

John's situation exemplifies the adaptability required in the pharmaceutical industry by embracing technological advancements and leveraging his existing communication and sales tactics, he successfully navigated the changing landscape and established himself as a respected opinion leader. His journey underscores the importance of continuous learning and flexibility in a rapidly evolving field.

As John's credibility grew, so did his circle of influence. Other medical representatives began seeking his insights, and doctors started engaging with his posts. John took this opportunity to engage in direct conversations, addressing queries and sharing personal anecdotes that resonated with his audience. He was no longer just a medical representative; he had become a conduit for valuable information.

The culmination of John's efforts was reflected in his sales figures. His enhanced credibility translated into meaningful relationships with healthcare professionals. Doctors trusted his recommendations, and medical representatives sought his guidance. The ripple effect of his influence had transcended the virtual realm, shaping his real-world interactions. As the pharmaceutical industry continues to evolve, John's approach can serve as a blueprint for other professionals seeking to adapt and thrive in the changing landscape.

In summary, the case of John illustrates a remarkable journey of adaptation, innovation, and strategic communication in the realm of pharmaceutical sales. His transition from conventional methodologies to cutting-edge digital platforms underscores the significance of embracing change. By effectively navigating these transitions, John fortified his position as a respected voice within the medical community, employing his expertise to foster meaningful interactions and contribute to advancements in medical understanding.

John discovered the power of empathy, expressing genuine care, the sincerity of his words, the strength of his knowledge, the authenticity of his interactions and active listening during this time to the doctors; to their concerns, fears, and triumphs. This shift in focus allowed him to truly understand their needs and tailor his approach to provide the support and information they required.

This is a multimedia case study. Please provide students with the following activities to enhance their skills:

1) Listening Quiz to be taken at the starting of the case study: Dr. Guffey's Listening Quiz: How good are you at listening? This interactive quiz enables you to quickly compare your own listening behaviour’s with behaviour’s normally thought to be associated with exceptionally good listening skills. (Dr. Guffey's Listening Quiz, n.d.)
https://www.cengage.com/resource_uploads/static_resources/0324223048/7346/listen_quiz.html

2) Ogilvy Health and Wellness master session, Dr. Tarminder S Parmar to be viewed after reading the case – Lesson for Next Gen Leaders. In this video Dr.

Parmar explained how the generation will learn from the wisdom through ages with the help of the 2 traits the youngsters can benefit and take advantage of to excel their professional skills. (Oglivy - Making Health Matter, n.d.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vE8OQKBr4yw

Discussion/Assignment Questions

1) List down the challenges faced by the medical representative and suggest strategies to overcome them.

2) Could you elucidate the Two-Step Flow Theory of Communication by using this particular case as an illustrative example?

3) Explain the four stages of the AIDA model in a healthcare context, provide examples of strategies capturing the attention and interest of healthcare stakeholders, and discuss key factors and campaigns influencing their progression through the 'Desire' and 'Action' stages?

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CATEGORY BUILDING OF EPIGAMIA

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Abstract

Mr. Divyesh Panchal, Co-founder & CEO, D2P Consultancy on an early Monday morning came across an interesting article in the newspaper which said that the Indian yogurt industry was estimated to grow at a CAGR of 23.56%. This article made him nostalgic and he began reminiscing about the past. He very well knew how the yogurt industry worked and how the Indian consumer's reacted to new product innovation. He had come a long way from

joining the young and dynamic team at Epigamia and finally becoming their Head of Product Strategy & Insights. To his consultancy firm which now catered to companies like Epigamia and various other F&B brands. He owed his consultancy skills to the learnings under the mentorship of Mr. Rohan Mirchandani, curator of Epigamia.

Mr. Divyesh was thinking about Epigamia, the brand that introduced greek yogurt to the Indian audience, a product so innovative that it made experts believe that the Indian market was not ready for it. The thoughts running through his mind made him wonder, was the brand correct in moving from the original niche market segment to the mass market?

Keywords: Category development, Food industry, Greek yogurt, Innovation, Product Development, New Product Development

Introduction

Mr. Rohan Mirchandani, launched Drums Food International in 2015, which owned Epigamia. The Epigamia leadership team included Director and Co-Founder Uday Thakker, COO Rahul Jain, and CEO Rohan Mirchandani. The curators' love of food and their desire to produce something genuinely unique were the origins of the Epigamia story. Mr. Mirchandani came up with the concept to introduce greek yogurt to the Indian market based on his first-time experience with greek yogurt at Chobani in New York.

In the dynamic and volatile food business, where flavour and health sometimes conflict, Epigamia had risen as a ground-breaking brand that addressed this age-old conundrum. Epigamia, had managed to carve a space for itself in the fiercely competitive market while also completely redefining how one views yogurt., The founders embodied the customer values by providing a healthy protein-rich, tasty greek yogurt which was made available at the right temperature at the various outlets in metros and tier-one cities. Mr. Mirchandani created a team of experts with some young minds like Diyesh Panchal as his product manager. One of the primary task that Panchal encountered was the inherent conflict between taste and health. Yogurt, known for its probiotic properties and numerous health benefits, was often perceived as a bland and unexciting food item. This presented a significant challenge—how could Epigamia create a product that not only satisfied the health-conscious consumers but also delighted their taste buds. The answer laid in the careful balance of flavours, textures, and nutritional profiles. Epigamia set out to create a yogurt experience that was not only nourishing but also indulgent, offering a range of delectable flavours and options that would appeal to a wider audience.

With so many well-established firms in the yogurt business such as Amul, Mother Dairy, Nestle, Cocoberry, Red Mango and Yogurberry, it was daunting. Epigamia needed to find a way to set itself out from the competition and draw in customers who had a lot of options. Therefore, they came up with the idea of introducing Greek yogurt instead of yogurt. The difference between greek yogurt and the normal yogurt was that the former being a protein rich dairy product had a thicker consistency which was derived after straining its whey. This required careful planning, creative marketing, and a profound comprehension of customer preferences.

Epigamia used a multifaceted strategy to combat the growth stigma. Infusing conventional yogurt with intriguing flavours and textures, they concentrated on product differentiation through their distinctive fusion of Indian and Greek cultures. This gave them the opportunity to portray themselves as a company that catered to a variety of tastes while offering something distinctive. Epigamia also made significant investments in branding and marketing, utilizing influencer partnerships and social media channels to raise awareness and generate buzz. Customers responded favourably to its visually appealing packaging and imaginative storytelling, making Epigamia a desirable and aspirational brand.

The growth of Epigamia was further propelled by its commitment to quality and transparency. In an era where consumers are increasingly conscious of the ingredients they consume, Epigamia positioned itself as a trustworthy and reliable source of high-quality yogurt. By eliminating preservatives, artificial flavours, and adulterated ingredients from their products, they aimed to instill confidence in their consumer base. Epigamia also emphasized the use of locally-sourced, fresh ingredients, supporting local farmers and contributing to the sustainability of the communities in which they operated.

The constant pursuit of innovation by Epigamia was a crucial additional factor in the company's expansion. The business founded the Drums Food Innovation Centre, a centre for innovation and experimentation where creative people came up with new tastes, textures, and product variations. From product development to packaging design, Epigamia's activities were infused with an innovative culture.

FY	**Revenue in INR Crores**
FY17	22
FY18	52.8
FY19	87.8
FY20	110

Company Background

The company provides a range of products Greek yogurt, flavoured curd, smoothies, cream cheese, artisanal curds and a plant-based range including coconut milk-based yogurt and almond-based drinks.

Drums International Pvt Ltd initially entered into the traditional dairy industry in India with the aim to revolutionize the traditional dairy industry in India. The company started with Hokey Pokey ice cream. They targeted the young generation under 25 years of age. Cold storage was the biggest obstacle in selling ice cream. The company created their own ice cream parlours to take on cold storage challenge. The ice cream was sold at a premium price to offset cost of setting up ice cream parlours. The Indian consumers for ice creams unlike foreign consumers consumed ice cream only in summer making it a seasonal product. Also, the premium pricing was another obstacle that needed to be addressed. A brainstorming session of the product manager Panchal with his team derived the solution of introduction of FMCG ice cream tubs. Rohan was not particularly happy with the sales figures and wanted his business to expand. But the big question was how. The NRI decided to replicate the concept of eating yogurt in the traditional curd-eating country. Greek yogurt was launched under the brand name of Epigamia. The company's primary goal was to provide value to its product-based strategy. While the other rivals like Amul, Nestle and Mother Dairy concentrated on conventional dairy strategy, Epigamia was a proponent of value-added dairy products. A healthy food product with localized flavours like mango, banana, raspberry, honey, catered to the new-age Indian consumer. No added flavours or preservatives and the concept of natural goodness of fruit pulp resonated with the healthy caption. Thus, the labels were clean. The product was based on two pillars of food industry- taste and health. Since the concept was new, it was more of a category building in yogurt products. The brand personification was sophisticated, bold, aspirational, relevant, and serious product with the potency of flavour. The brand architecture was umbrella branding or as the product manager called it ‘Fluid’ so that other product categories could be later on added to the existing line of Greek yogurt. The brand name Epigamia was chosen as they wanted a foreign sounding name to the product. The company eventually added eight to nine categories including smoothies, spreads, plant plant-based/vegan yogurt. The innovation in the category was adding new flavours each time. The Indian pallet liked their mangoes to be sweet so extra sugar had to be added to the Alphonso mango yogurt. The Indian consumer had to be educated that the product was loaded with proteins, funkier than a traditional curd. Also, the curd was dependent on a dish to make it a complete meal. But the yogurt was a standalone snack packed with nutrients. Yogurt smoothies were a take on the traditional lassi which the Indian consumers were used to.

Challenges

Taking into consideration that the product was without preservatives which reduced the shelf life to 15 days along with cold storage chain issues and distributor's apprehension of stocking a product that required a temperature control of 4-8 degrees.

The company also launched spreads made from desi ghee in 2018 with Deepika Padukone as the brand ambassador. However, the product was a misfit as the consumer could not identify the brand category of the product. It was neither seen as a Jam nor a spread similar to Nutella. As a result, it was withdrawn from the market. The idea was to launch new products quickly in the market, get a feel of their response and if unfavourable they were quickly withdrawn. This gave the company opportunity to test new products rapidly. The product strategy was to enter into volume driven products like curd, mistidoi but with a twist like lactose free curd variants. Plant based diary like almond milk, coconut milk and almond yogurt were aimed to appeal to the vegan segment of the consumer base. Coconut yogurt had to be withdrawn from the market due to its low acceptability. A futuristic product was savory yogurt not liked by the consumers and had to be discontinued. Snack pack which was launched in 2016, the consumer was given the option of adding Carnola to the yogurt to add to the crunchiness. Even the traditional panner had issues with shelf life and had to be withdrawn. Working with dairy products having no preservatives was no mean task in a tropical country like India. The operational and supply chain issues with cold storage added to the woes.

As the growth curve was getting stagnant, the company decided to enter volume-driven products like milk shakes/smoothies which were launched in 2017 in tetra packs and were reasonably priced at Rs 35. It had a shelf life of nine months and the sales soared to sixty thousand stores. The good taste, natural flavours, and high protein content made it a winning product. The company also decided to distribute the product in two-tier cities and e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and big basket.

Segmentation of Epigamia

In the segmentation of Epigamia, they geographically targeted the metros and the tier 1 cities. Demographically their prospects fell in the age group of 27-35 years of age. Being a premium brand, they catered to the higher income groups. Epigamia catered to the health conscious who preferred natural products, or those who prioritized convenience and were looking for ready to eat snack options. Epigamia concentrated on consumers that were frequent yogurt consumers, those looking for lactose-free options, or individuals interested in exploring new flavours and varieties.

Epigamia tried to position itself as a premium-priced high quality healthy snack which had quality ingredients, natural flavours and absence of preservatives. A brand that represents sophistication, which is aspirational and relevant. The company sold its products through both offline stores and online platforms. It had launched its direct-to-consumer (D2C) platform as the pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital platforms in the country. Since the product had limited shelf life and it had to be kept at a regulated temperature throughout, distribution became a real task. Their supply chain team worked with the logistics company who provided refrigerated trucks for efficient and timely distribution. Epigamia owned several warehouses where these products were stored and finally distributed. They also ventured into supplying refrigerators to the Mom & Pop stores to facilitate storage and sales.

Rohan Mirchandani, Co-Founder and CEO, Drums Food International, which owns Epigamia, told BusinessLine that the contribution of the online channel to total sales increased to nearly 30 percent from just about 3-4 percent prior to the pandemic. “While we continue to focus on an omni-channel strategy, we will leverage on our D2C platform to add new consumers and gain consumer feedback for new products,” he added. What is omni-channel?

Presence across touch points

Epigamia had a presence across 15,000 touchpoints in 30 cities at the end of 2020. Mirchandani said the company plans to ramp up the offline presence of the brand to over 35,000 cities in 50 cities in the next two years. “While we will focus on deepening our presence in the existing cities where we have a presence, we are also looking to expand our presence to new cities,” he added.

The way forward

Through the analysis of challenges, strategies, and outcomes, it becomes evident that Epigamia successfully established itself as a category leader in the yogurt market by redefining traditional perceptions and leveraging innovative approaches.

Epigamia faced significant challenges when entering the mass dairy market, requiring careful consideration of whether to focus on the mass market or continue targeting the niche yogurt market segment. By adopting a dual strategy of catering to both segments, Epigamia effectively capitalized on the growing demand for healthy and convenient food options.

Differentiation played a crucial role in Epigamia's success. The brand positioned itself as a premium, health-focused yogurt option by emphasizing quality, natural ingredients, and unique flavour combinations. Through consistent messaging and strategic partnerships, Epigamia successfully distinguished itself from competitors and resonated with health-conscious consumers.

Innovation served as a key driver for Epigamia's growth and expansion. he company continuously developed new products and flavour variations, keeping pace with changing consumer preferences. This focus on innovation allowed Epigamia to stay relevant and maintain a competitive edge in the market.

The segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies employed by Epigamia were well-aligned with its target audience. By understanding consumer needs and preferences, the company effectively tailored its marketing efforts to reach the desired market segments. Epigamia's comprehensive marketing and distribution strategies, coupled with strong branding, enabled it to penetrate the market and gain widespread recognition.

Despite challenges associated with product shelf life and temperature control, Epigamia overcame these hurdles by implementing effective distribution strategies and investing in suitable packaging and logistics solutions. By ensuring product freshness and availability, the company established trust and loyalty among consumers.

In conclusion, Epigamia's success can be attributed to its ability to build a distinct category within the food industry. Through strategic brand positioning, innovation, and effective marketing, the company has carved a niche for itself in the competitive yogurt market. Epigamia's journey serves as an inspiration for aspiring entrepreneurs and provides valuable lessons on how to navigate challenges, leverage differentiation, and drive growth in the ever-evolving food industry.

Discussion/Assignment Questions

1. List down the problems faced by Epigamia and suggest changes to overcome it.

2. Discuss and evaluate the Product Strategy of Epigamia and suggest some strategies for the future.

3. If you are appointed as a product manager, suggest the new product development strategies in the dairy business.

4. Compare and state how is the business model of Epigamia different from its competitors.

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INNOSERV SOLUTION PVT LTD: CREATING ECOSYSTEM FOR EXPANDING A DIGITAL MARKETING BUSINESS

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Abstract
In 2013, Mr. Rahul started his digital marketing firm in Pune. His approach to marketing involved creating an ecosystem that brought together like-minded individuals, forming committees and platforms for collaboration. This collaborative environment allowed for the formation of unique service brands tailored to serve specific verticals such as academia, healthcare, real estate, and sales and marketing professionals. Today, Mr. Rahul serves as the Managing Director of InnoServ, a group of companies comprising four niche agencies - InnoServ Digital, CoBuzz, FMA Digital and communities in Academia (ASMA), Kalzoom Advisors, Healthcare (ADMH), HR (DigitalHR) and Global Entrepreneurs, Sales & Marketers community (SMX Network). Each of these verticals had embarked on its own journey, functioning as a

separate enterprise. With his firm's success in the domestic market, Mr. Rahul now aims to expand and establish a strong presence in international markets. This expansion will involve penetrating domestic markets and developing a global footprint for his digital marketing services.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Agency, Business Ecosystem, Collaborative Marketing, Competitive Advantage Matrix

Introduction

Mr. Rahul Jain, Managing Director, InnoServ Group of Companies ended his speech by saying **"I always believed in one simple thought process. If something cannot be done. DO IT, because if you don't do it, it won't exist".**

Mr. Rahul found himself in an epoch-making moment standing before the brightest minds at one of the prestigious MBA Institutes in the country. By the end of the speech the students from the gathering had many questions to ask but two out of them named Aditi and Jay, semester 4 students, who had already started a digital marketing firm named "SIMBA Digital Marketing Services". Aditi said "We are focusing on creating viral content for our clients which would lead to growth in their businesses. I excel in utilizing Instagram tools, content writing and establishing partnerships with local influencers while Jay possesses expertise in digital analytical tools and social listening. Both of us have made the decision - not to accept final placement offers, opting instead to pursue our passion in expanding our digital marketing firm. We have decided to focus on serving small-scale clients, recognizing the potential in this market segment. We have aimed to provide tailor-made digital marketing solutions to help small businesses in order to establish their online presence and drive their growth".

During the conversation with these youngsters, Mr. Rahul's mind wandered back to the time when he first entered the field of digital marketing. It was during his tenure as the Director of Sales & Marketing at Delphi Computech in Pune, Mr. Rahul believed that the organization had the potential to establish its own digital marketing department. However, the senior management held a different perspective, stating that digital services were not a significant revenue-generating concept for large firms like theirs. He realized that he had to take the plunge and pave his own path in the realm of digital marketing. This moment marked a turning point in his career, where he embraced the opportunities and challenges that lay ahead, determined to make a mark in the industry.

Innoserv Solutions Pvt. Ltd

Mr. Rahul, came from a business family and started a company even before completing his graduation from Indore at the age of 19. After his graduation, he got a job between 2001 and 2004, then established two more companies. Those projects were doomed after that it took nine years of intrapreneurship before he started Innoserv Solutions Pvt. Ltd. with his co-founders Mr. Nimil Tiwari and Mr. Ritesh Dhrangdharia in 2013. It was from his very dear friends who invested small capital which worked as the initial seed. They are currently profitable and growing at the moment, but this certainly hasn't been the case throughout the journey. At the onset of this business, they had their own share of problems. They started with a minimal capital and the first year of the start-up was a difficult one, not to mention the delays in payment and employee salaries. Gradually the company grew and so did they.

In the very initial days, the team took on the task of preparing a comprehensive report on the sectoral growth of digital marketing in the country. They diligently researched and analysed various data sources to present accurate and insightful results to address the challenges they were facing. The report revealed that the digital marketing sector had been experiencing a rapid growth over the past few years in India. In 2012, the numbers of internet users in India were 17.6 million and increasing at a rate of 31%. Mobile internet users grew by 111% in 2012, and during 2013 the growth was 63%. As per the report by IAMAI, India registered a YoY of 28% in 2012 and YoY growth of 39% in the number of internet users in 2013. Number of digital marketing +500 agencies/firms operating in India. The adoption of digital channels and technologies by businesses has significantly increased, indicating a growing recognition of the importance of digital marketing in driving brand awareness, customer engagement, and business growth. Mr. Rahul and Mr. Nimil's proactive approach, backed by solid research and data, enabled them to navigate the challenges in the digital marketing landscape. Although they didn't initially offer highly differentiated services, Mr. Rahul and his founding team possessed a unique foresight that distinguished them in the industry.

Mr. Rahul said, "Little did he know that starting a digital firm in those days was no easy task, as it is today. His path would be riddled with challenges, testing his resilience and determination. The first challenge he encountered was the lack of understanding among potential clients about the power of digital marketing, particularly in the context of branding. Many of them viewed digital marketing solely as a means to achieve rapid growth in terms of top-line revenue. They failed to grasp the long-term benefits and potential of building a strong brand presence through digital channels.

He found himself in a highly competitive market, where numerous small digital marketing firms were offering their services at significantly lower prices. It became increasingly difficult for him to convince potential clients that quality and expertise came at a price, and that sustainable growth required a strategic and comprehensive approach. Despite the prevailing challenges, his team refused to compromise on the quality of their work. They believed in investing their time, effort, and expertise into each client's account, striving to deliver exceptional results. However, this dedication came with its own set of difficulties. The low fees charged by clients often meant that the return on investment for the team's efforts was not commensurate. Hence providing low-cost services was never an option for InnoServ Digital. Through sheer determination, Mr. Rahul continued to persevere. He refused to succumb to the pressure of offering subpar services or compromising on the value his firm provided. Instead, he focused on showcasing the long-term benefits, emphasizing the importance of strategy, and cultivating strong client relationships built on trust and transparency

Due to these challenges and concerns about paying salaries is not uncommon for business owners, including those running digital marketing firms. Financial uncertainties, client fluctuations or unexpected circumstances can put strain on a company's cash flow.

Narrowing down the market for competitive advantage

With more than a year of experience the company had established a strong client base and process for client services was not streamlined. Now he was able to bring together a dedicated team based in Pune and overall the operational efficiency had improved. The founding team recognized that staying stagnant was not an option if they wanted to remain competitive and expand their impact in the digital marketing industry. Instead of catering to clients from various industries and verticals, Mr. Rahul envisioned a more focused approach by targeting academic Institutes. This decision was not made in haste but based on several compelling reasons. With past experience, the team had recognized the immense potential and untapped market in the academic sector. Educational institutions, such as colleges and universities, were increasingly recognizing the importance of digital marketing in reaching their target audience and achieving their goals. By focusing on a specific vertical, they could potentially achieve economies of scale in terms of their service offerings. As they gain more clients within the academic sector, they can standardize and refine their processes, resulting in operational efficiencies and cost savings. By narrowing down his business to target this specific vertical, they saw an opportunity to become a specialist in providing tailored digital marketing solutions to academic institutes. Mr. Rahul's decision was further validated by positive feedback and interest expressed by some academic institutes that he had worked with in the past. After making the strategic decision to focus on targeting academic institutes, the business development team started meeting with various institute authorities, directors, trustees and Marketing heads. They were determined to convince these educational institutions of the value of digital marketing and the benefits of outsourcing it to their firm.

However, they soon realized that not many institutes were open to the idea and were hesitant to entertain their proposals. Undeterred by the initial setbacks, Mr. Rahul and Mr. Nimil shifted their approach. They decided to start working with comparatively smaller establishments that had never even considered digital marketing, let alone outsourcing it. These institutions were eager to explore new avenues to enhance their online presence and reach their target audience more effectively. By targeting comparatively smaller institutions that had not previously considered digital marketing who were eager to enhance their online presence and reach their target audience effectively but lacked the resources and expertise to do so in-house. InnoServ showcased case studies and success stories of clients who had achieved significant brand growth and business success through their strategic digital marketing campaigns. By highlighting these success stories and the long-term benefits of digital marketing, the team had positioned the firm as a value-driven solution provider, emphasizing the return on investment and cost-effectiveness of their services. They tirelessly conducted workshops, seminars, and one-on-one consultations, sharing case studies and success stories that demonstrated the transformative power of a well-executed digital branding strategy. Through these efforts, they aimed to shift the perspective of their clients and help them recognize the immense value that digital marketing could bring to their brands.

In over a few months itself, Innoserv digital became known as the go-to digital marketing agency for educational institutions, gaining a strong reputation for their expertise and successful campaigns. Mr. Rahul's deep understanding of the academic sector allowed him to deliver exceptional results, helping his clients increase their online visibility, attract prospective students, and build strong brand identities.

Creating a Collaborative Ecosystem

In the last 2 years, Innoserv’s uniqueness and expertise was relatively unknown compared to some of the more established players in the market. This was where the core team sat together and devised a 2-year clever marketing strategy and the execution team presented the tactical plan for the same. The team knew that reaching out to premier educational institutes required more than just traditional sales methods. The business development team recognized the importance of harnessing the power of creating a platform of best academic institutes who were either implementing digital marketing or passionate to introduce the same in their organization. They realized they needed an annual research report that would resonate with the decision-makers in these Institutions.

In 2014, the idea of Adoption of Social Media in Academia (ASMA) platform was born. It was a system to understand the needs, best social media practice implemented and rank the most outstanding digitally active academic Institutes of the county. To address this need, he established ASMA aimed to be the harbinger of change, providing valuable insights, anticipating future trends, and offering a transformative social media framework that academia could adopt to keep pace with the changing times. Through the ASMA framework, it provided educational institutions with a roadmap for success in the digital age. It empowered them to leverage social media effectively, enabling them to enhance their visibility, engage with stakeholders, and achieve their academic and operational goals. ASMA's framework impact reverberated throughout the academic landscape. Institutions that embraced its principles experienced exponential growth in their online presence, attracting prospective students, forging industry partnerships, and solidifying their reputation as leaders in their respective domains (Exhibit 2).

The report aims to demonstrate the integration of social media in academic settings, focusing on its adoption in various business schools across the country. The research involved the participation of business schools with diverse characteristics, and it provides valuable insights into the topic. The report covered several key aspects, including the best practices followed by institutions, a comprehensive analysis of survey results to assess the relative position of your institute compared to others, articles discussing social media adoption, and valuable recommendations to assist institutes in formulating a sound social media strategy and understanding its underlying rationale.

Weightage was assigned to each criterion, and the final rankings were published. The top-performing institutions were not only acknowledged for their achievements but also invited to an esteemed ASMA award function. This event served as a platform for celebrating their dedication and success in harnessing the power of social media to drive their institutional objectives (Exhibit: 2 & 3)

Building Industry Wise Expertise

Mr. Rahul said “Despite the success of ASMA, we have actively pursued the development of various initiatives within our organization. It's important to acknowledge that not all of these initiatives have been successful. I recall the projects I initiated early on, only to eventually wind them down as time went on. Some of these initiatives were experimental in nature, carried out within the organization, and required a significant commitment of resources.”

By leveraging their expertise and experience, Innoserv digital aimed to increase their market share within the academic sector. To improve focused brand awareness by 2016 he started a subsidiary named FMA Digital under the umbrella of the InnoServ group of companies. Their expertise lay in offering digital consulting services to universities, institutions, colleges, schools, and Edutech companies. By 2018 FMA Digital gained the trust of over 70 prestigious universities, institutions, and colleges across India. These esteemed institutions relied on FMA Digital for their education marketing, branding, lead generation, and return on investment (ROI) needs.

However, by 2019 Mr. Rahul's ambitions extended beyond just digital transformation. Under the InnoServ Group umbrella, another prominent brand emerged- InnoServ Digital. This flagship brand specialized in 360-degree digital marketing consulting for the automobile, healthcare, real estate, and small and medium-sized business (SMB) sectors. The InnoServ Digital team comprised passionate and creative digital marketers with extensive vertical experience. They empowered customers with data-driven consulting capabilities, helping them achieve significant changes in their online business return on investment (ROI). InnoServ Digital excelled in performance marketing and boasted an array of creative capabilities. Each of these verticals had embarked on its own journey, functioning as a separate enterprise. While this structure may appear complex from an external perspective, a closer look reveals the unique paths that each vertical is taking. It is truly a remarkable construct that, upon deeper examination, showcases the intricacies of how these entities operate and thrive. All the verticals within our organization are interconnected, working collaboratively to support and enhance one another. They come together as a cohesive group, leveraging their strengths and synergies to achieve common goals. The integration and cooperation between these verticals are instrumental in driving our overall success and growth.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which struck in 2020, unexpectedly provided an opportunity for Mr. Rahul. Due to the pandemic, he conducted around 1500 conferences across India, which significantly boosted his company's visibility and market presence. Consequently, it became easier for him to attract investors for his expansion plans. As Mr. Rahul emphasized that the pandemic helped them to consistently invest in communities, fostered innovation, and prioritized building competence to meet future needs while considering the interests of stakeholders and shareholders. The return on investment is visible in the organization, which has become highly scalable. They now have four well-established agencies within our group, alongside the development of a robust learning and training platform. This achievement brings great satisfaction as it signifies the emergence of a strong second line of leadership. With the dedication and contributions of team members, the company has propelled forward towards further success. Each brand served a unique purpose, leaving an impact on the investors. Their focus lies in building a strong business strategy while ensuring effective management of operations by their teams. They are extremely fortunate to have two highly experienced industry veterans on their advisory board: Gopalakrishna Ramachandra and Dr. Ganesh Natarajan (GR). Both individuals are well-known and respected figures in their respective fields, with a significant presence and influence in the industry. Their expertise and celebrity status bring invaluable insights and guidance to our organization, contributing to our overall growth and success.

Presently, Mr Rahul is not involved in the day-to-day operational aspects of the company. They have achieved a high client retention rate, and our communities now have an outreach of around 250,000 people. Their projected turnover for this year is expected to reach approximately 19 crores in the year 2023. Currently, their primary focus is on expanding internationally, exploring merger and acquisition opportunities, establishing a consulting roadmap, developing products and platforms, further growing communities, and unlocking greater valuation for the organization. By 2023, InnoServ Group of companies became synonymous with delivering impactful outcomes for their clients' businesses. Through their focused vertical brands, namely InnoServ Digital, CoBuzz, and FMA Digital, they made their mark in various sectors such as automobiles, education, healthcare, real estate, and corporate services (Exhibits 3 and 4).

Staying relevant in the realm of digital automation is crucial for a digital marketing company to maintain its competitive edge and continue delivering value to clients. As technology rapidly advances, automation plays an increasingly significant role in streamlining processes, enhancing efficiency, and driving results. Stay abreast of the latest digital automation tools and technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, chatbots, and marketing automation platforms. Continuously explore how these advancements can be integrated into your operations and client campaigns to optimize performance and achieve better results.

In the pursuit of career growth and skill enhancement for working professionals worldwide, Mr. Rahul introduced iSkillBox. This one-stop-shop provided upskilling and cross-skilling opportunities, enabling individuals to unleash their untapped potential and grow at their desired pace. iSkillBox offered a custom-built AI engine for knowledge assessment, combined with years of corporate training experience, allowing professionals to climb the corporate ladder of their choice. Mr. Rahul is highly passionate about iSkillBox, a new project focused on providing skill development and training services. However, he faced a dilemma regarding the allocation of resources for this venture. Mr. Rahul had realized that in order to fuel the growth of his company, he needed external funding. However, he encountered challenges while seeking investors, as they expressed a preference for product-based companies over service-based ones. They also raised concerns about slim margins and unattractive return on investment (ROI). This created a dilemma for Mr. Rahul, as he had to find a way to secure funding despite the investor bias against service companies.

As Mr. Rahul contemplated expanding his company , on one hand, he wanted to leverage InnoServ success on a global scale, targeting markets in countries like Singapore, Dubai, and Australia. On the other hand, he needed to ensure that he expands his business in the Indian market, where the company had already gained recognition. Mr. Rahul had to find a way to balance these two objectives and determine the critical factors for successful execution in the global market while retaining local relevance. Mr. Rahul and his team had to assess the benefits and costs associated with global expansion.

In the current year, they have embarked on a journey of expansion through strategic acquisitions. They recently acquired one company (Kalzoom Advisors) and are actively seeking two more agencies to join the group. The team aims to position themselves as a leading consortium of agencies that offers comprehensive digital marketing services. Their ultimate goal is to create a company that is resilient and capable of delivering exceptional results in the digital marketing landscape. Mr. Rahul, as he questioned whether he was on the right track.

Discussion/Assignment Questions

1) What specific hurdles and roadblocks are faced by Mr. Rahul Jain when starting a digital marketing firm from the year 2013 to 2016?

2) How did InnoServ group effectively expand their digital marketing service in India through industry best practices?

3) How has Innoserv group leveraged the Competitive Advantage Matrix in analysing and developing their marketing strategy?

4) What were the strategies implemented to create ecosystem for accepting digital marketing in the B2B space?

5) Can you provide a strategic roadmap for expanding a business over the next two years, taking into account the current scenario for Innoserv Group of Companies?

Exhibit 1: Services of any Digital Marketing Firm

Some common services provided by any digital marketing firms include Search Engine Optimization (SEO): Optimizing a website to rank higher in search engine results pages, increasing organic (non-paid) traffic.

- Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising: Creating and managing paid advertising campaigns on search engines and social media platforms, where advertisers pay a fee each time their ad is clicked.
- Social Media Marketing: Developing and implementing marketing strategies on various social media platforms to engage with the target audience, increase brand visibility, and drive website traffic.
- Web Design and Development: Creating visually appealing and user-friendly websites optimized for search engines and conversions.
- Content Marketing: Creating and distributing valuable and relevant content (such as blog posts, articles, videos, and infographics) to attract and retain a specific audience and drive profitable customer action.
- Email Marketing: Designing and executing email campaigns to nurture leads, promote products or services, and maintain customer relationships.
- Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO): Analyzing website traffic and user behavior to optimize the website's design, layout, and content to improve conversion rates and maximize the number of visitors who take desired actions.
- Online Reputation Management: Monitoring and managing a brand's online reputation by responding to customer reviews, addressing negative feedback, and promoting positive sentiment.
- Analytics and Reporting: Utilizing tools and technologies to track and analyze marketing campaigns' performance, providing insights and recommendations for improvement.

- Video Marketing: Developing and promoting video content across platforms like YouTube, social media, and websites to increase brand awareness and engagement.

Exhibit 2 : Timeline of InnoServ Group of companies

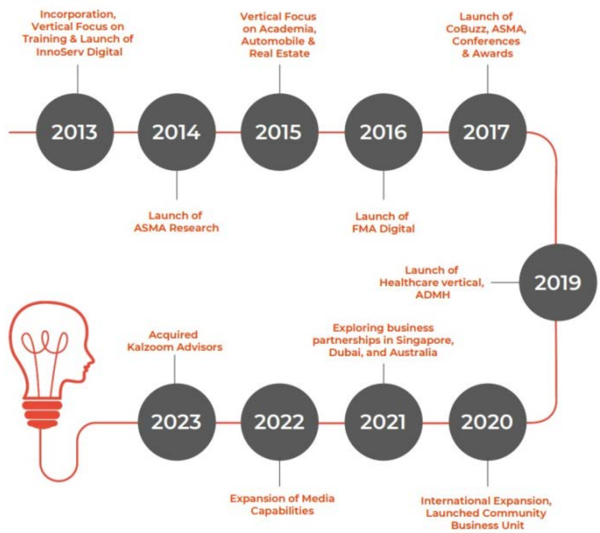

Exhibit 3 : Various Initiatives of InnoServ Group

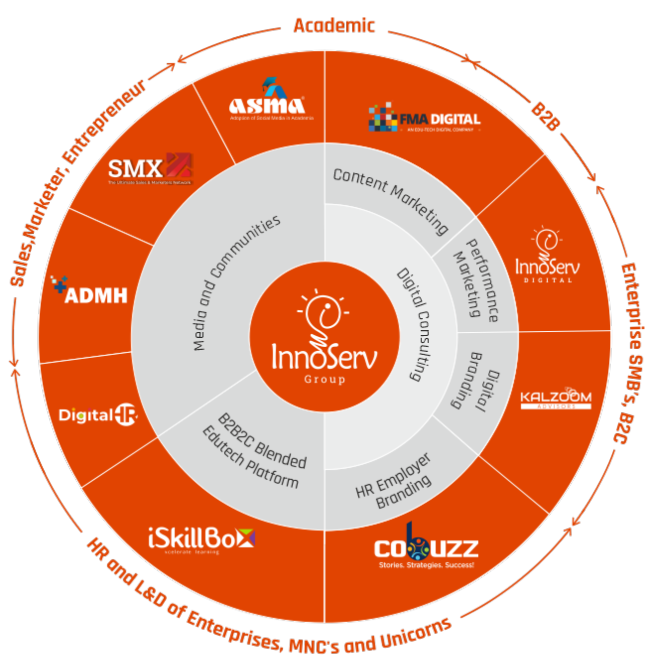

Exhibit 4: Business Verticals

Business Verticals of Innoserv Group	
Innoserv Digital	InnoServ Digital is the flagship brand of InnoServ Group and is known as the leading 360 Degree Digital Marketing Consulting Company in Automobile, Healthcare, Real Estate and SMB Vertical that helps build brands that outlives and outshines.
FMA Digital-	Find My Admission Edutech Pvt. Ltd. Popularly known as FMA Digital is 100% subsidiary of InnoServ Group and is one of the leading name in the Academic fraternity offering Digital Consulting services to Universities, Institutions, Colleges, Schools and Edutech companies.
Cobuzz-	CoBuzz is a highly specialised division of InnoServ Group which offer Creative Employer Branding and Story Telling Services to Corporates for effective engagement with its internal and external stakeholders. Waves of ideas, intention, vision and innovation form the bedrock of every brand. We at Cobuzz make sure that these waves never abate. For us, your brand isn't just a business entity daubed with a name and a logo; brands are meticulously built with a pronounced personality, an unshakable voice and countless stories to tell.
Iskillbox	For all working professionals pushing for career growth and skill enhancement, throughout the world, iSkillBox is the one stop shop for all their upskill and cross skilling needs, so they can truly fulfil their untapped potential and grow at pace, with the help of our custom built AI Engine for Knowledge Assessment and years of corporate training experience, that allow them to scale the corporate ladders of their choice.

DigitalRX-	DigitalRX is another speciality division of InnoServ Group which focuses on healthcare industry. It offersbranding, marketing and content services to Hospitals, Clinics, Speciality Chains, Doctors and Pharma Companies. The team at DigitalRX is a combination of marketing specialist, digital experts, technology experts and communication specialist with domain knowledge and experience of healthcare industry.
InnoServ Solutions	InnoServ Solutions is one of the diversified unit of InnoServ Group offering corporate learning solutions to more than 100+ bluechipRead
Communities	
ASMA (Adoption of Social Media in Academia)	Adoption of Social Media in Academia (ASMA) is an online platform which helps higher education institutes and universities harness the power of digital and social media for growth. ASMA aims to be the harbinger of change in helping unearth the latest insights, anticipating the future based on current trends, providing a transformative social media framework – which can be adopted by academia to keep pace with the changing times. ASMA has the following verticals: ASMA Portal | ASMA TV | Events, Conferences & Seminars | ASMA Awards and Listings | Reports and Publications | MDPs & FDPs | Digital Audits | ASMA Activation.

ADMH (Adoption of Digital Marketing in Healthcare)	ADMH (Adoption of Digital Marketing in Healthcare) is aimed at empowering healthcare marketers through knowledge, case studies, conferences and various other initiatives. It is a community initiative that helps the healthcare and wellness industry harness the power of digital and social media for growth.
Digital HR	DigitalHR intends to emerge as the ultimate platform for HR Professionals to learn how to leverage the Power of Digital for transforming the HR practices. The advent of the digital world accelerates the transition of new employee practices as well as new process optimization opportunities.Digital HR is the community around digital transformation of HR services and processes brought by InnoServ Group. Through this, we are helping the HR professionals learn, understand and use digital technologies to drive business objectives in HR. Among its many applications, one most important focus area that we have identified at DigitalHR is Digital Employer Branding as it has tremendous impact on the entire value chain.
SMX Network	The SMX Network will emerge as one of the unique platforms for the enablement of the sales and marketing professionals. Many digital interventions are changing the way sales and marketing professionals performing their roles. SMX Network will focus on helping the community learn, engage, network and recognise the upcoming trends and tools so that they can attain the edge and remain future success ready.

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EMPOWERING GIRLS AND WOMEN THROUGH PROJECT KASHVI: A CASE STUDY IN TRIBAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

This case study examines the journey and impact of Project Kashvi, an initiative launched by the Thapar Group's philanthropic arm, aimed at providing education to school dropout girls and women in tribal areas. Led by Nitasha Thapar, the great-granddaughter of Lala Karam Chand Thapar, the project seeks to overcome the barriers of early marriages and lack of formal education faced by girls and women in Ranchi, Jharkhand. This case study explores the outcomes of Project Kashvi in terms of lives impacted and

challenges faced shedding light on its transformative efforts to empower and uplift marginalized communities. After a successful pilot, the major question is how to proceed ahead with scaling of the project to a larger level.

Keywords: Project Kashvi, Women Empowerment, Tribal Education, CSR, Social Impact Project

Introduction

Led by Nitasha, the great-granddaughter of Lala Karam Chand Thapar, Project Kashvi a CSR initiative of the KCT Group Trust, was established in 2021 with the goal of empowering women by providing education to school dropout girls and women in the tribal areas of Ranchi.

The primary objective of Kashvi is to empower female students by enabling them to complete their secondary school education and acquire essential life skills including communication skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, time management, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship skills, among others for personal and professional growth through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).

The tribal communities in Jharkhand often face challenges such as early marriages and limited access to education, perpetuating a cycle of illiteracy and limited opportunities for women. Recognizing these issues, Nitasha partnered with a local NGO and NIOS to address the educational needs of girls and women in the region. Collaborative working with another NGO had some operational challenges therefore, realizing the need for greater impact and quality, Project Kashvi formed its own dedicated team to lead the initiative.

By partnering with NIOS, Kashvi offers a flexible and accessible education platform that allows girls and women who have dropped out of school to continue their education. NIOS provides a comprehensive curriculum and examination system designed for distance learning, which allows students to study at their own pace and convenience. This flexibility is particularly important for individuals who may have personal or family responsibilities that make it difficult for them to attend regular schools.

The Kashvi team led by Ms. Nitasha Thapar and Mr. Tarun Mapara with the help of Ms Soma Sinha in CDs impacted hundreds of women with a stronger sense of identity, agency, and professional competence. Life Skill Education (LSE) is vital to help women. The WHO defines life skills as "the ability for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life." Therefore, the curriculum blends academics with skills that equip learners for a better life. And that had helped to achieve better results of the project in the challenging areas of Ranchi and Kolkata. The pilot project started in 2017 with enrolments of 71 students for the first batch which increased to 610 registrations in the second Batch of 2021.

Company Background

The KCT Group is one of India's oldest conglomerates started by Lala Karam Chand Thapar during the pre-independence era with diversified business interests starting from coal business and then expanding the portfolio to mining and NBFC.

Every individual desires a life beyond the basics of food, shelter and clothing. They desire progress. This is the fundamental philosophy that drives the initiatives of KCT Group CSR, the social responsibility division of the KCT Group. Synergies across its units combined with effective turnaround management has resulted in the accelerated growth of its companies, and contributed to the overall success of the Group. By adopting, adapting and innovating new technologies, the Group has stayed relevant and ahead of competition. For over 75 years, KCT Group CSR has been committed to community progress by enabling access to opportunity, education and healthcare and promoting environmental sustainability. CSR isn't a programme. It's what we do every day. It's what we believe will create impactful change and contribute to building a world that nourishes and enriches every living being. (https://www.csr.kctgroup.com/)

Project Kashvi - *Where everyone shines*

At a Learning centre in Ranchi, Nitasha observed the diverse range of emotions on the faces of girls and women who were determined to learn and establish themselves as educated individuals in society. Despite facing numerous challenges, these learners exhibited a firm resolve to overcome obstacles and pursue education through Kashvi's board certification program. She was amazed to see the diverse participants at the centre from the age group of 15 years to 73 years.

Jharkhand, being a tribal belt, presents unique challenges, but it also offers relatively better freedom for females in making decisions regarding relationships and marriages. However, the lack of proper education has been a significant hindrance for girls in the region. Many girls enter into relationships at a young age and get married between 15 and 16 years old. Consequently, their studies are often discontinued to fulfill family responsibilities and care for their children at a very tender age.

Tarun and Nitasha were shocked to discover the low literacy rate, particularly among women, in the state of Jharkhand, despite various government initiatives aimed at improving education over the years. Nitasha saw this as an opportunity to serve a higher purpose and considered her involvement with Kashvi as a means of serving God through the empowerment of women seeking knowledge. The meaning of the name Kashvi is "rising, beautiful, blooming". The KCT team wanted to see the meaning of the name, the nature and personality of the individual who joined and groomed them.

The preliminary survey by the team revealed that most women were living with a sense of shame or guilt due to absence of matric / board certificates. In that area 10th grade pass was considered as an educated one and below this is called “anpad” or illiterate. That stigma impacted the confidence and shine of their faces. So Tarun suggested to start centres to help such women to clear and get board certification from the NIOS- National Institute for Open Schools where they need not to go through the full time schooling to appear for board exams in one year rather they can take exams with fewer subjects at a time.

Starting The Journey

To effectively implement the program, the team conducted research in villages to understand the needs and preferences of the students. Based on the collected data, centres were opened with one NGO for facilitating smooth starting of the project in the initial phase. The centres started and operated from 8 am to 4 pm, expecting all students to spend their time there at different times on the basis of their availability. This strategy attracted more participation because of the flexibility.

The core team consists of a permanent teacher and other floating teachers who cater to various programs created to work with local NGO to impart education for NIOS curriculum. Additional programs such as gender literacy, financial freedom were also introduced by the Kashvi team but the special focus was on the 10th grade curriculum.

In the first Batch, 70 students registered in 2 Community Development (CD) blocks of Ranchi who lacked basic learning skills and did not even know a single word of the English language. Despite this challenge, the teacher worked diligently, providing counselling, writing assistance, and other forms of support to help these students progress academically which resulted in the great success of the efforts. In the Second Batch project area increased to 5 CD Blocks covering 23 KCs and an astounding registration of 610 students.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
No of CDs covered	5	5	5
No of KCs covered	23	9	17
Students Registrations	610	360	810

The Kashvi Ideology

Project Kashvi initially partnered with an NGO to gain insights and work towards improving the education system in tribal areas. The project conducted extensive research to understand the specific challenges faced by the target communities and identify their educational needs. Based on the research findings, Project Kashvi developed tailored educational programs focusing on counselling, writing assistance, gender literacy, and financial freedom. The project established learning centres within government schools or panchayats to provide accessible and conducive learning environments for the students. A team of dedicated teachers, both permanent and floating, was assembled to provide support, guidance, and personalized attention to the students.

Success stories

Project has not only witnessed the increasing number of registration but also witnessed the impact of efforts on smiling faces of women. It's truly inspiring to hear about women aged 50+ who have taken the initiative to remove the stigma of being uneducated and pursue their studies later in life.

One specific example stands out, where a participant Pramila Devi started studying after a gap of 58 years at the age of 73 years and successfully cleared her 10th-grade exams with a score of 63%. The support she received from her entire family played a vital role in her educational journey.

An extraordinary case occurred when a woman gave birth just six days before her exams. Despite this, she expressed her determination to take the exams with her six-day-old baby. This decision surprised the centre and the teachers, showcasing her incredible dedication and commitment to her education.

In terms of overall results, while the national passing percentage for NIOS (National Institute of Open Schooling) in Jharkhand ranges from 30% to 40%, the specific KCT (presumably referring to a particular educational institution) achieved an impressive result with a passing percentage of 78%.

These stories highlight the resilience and determination of individuals, especially women, who have taken the bold step to pursue education despite various challenges. Their efforts serve as an inspiration and a reminder that it is never too late to seek knowledge and personal growth.

It's remarkable that almost 1/10th of Jharkhand students are from Kashvi, which can be attributed to the efforts of the Kashvi team of teachers. Their dedication and commitment to education have had a significant impact on the community. It's heartening to hear that children are actively engaging with their mothers about their homework, indicating the positive influence of education in the households.

Teachers and counsellors are so engrossed and attached to people in their project area that they were aware about incidents happening with their students and they could help them out in the time of stress or problem. In one case the student in Ranchi who was almost on the verge of being a victim of human trafficking. However, it is inspiring to know that the teachers were able to intervene and save the student from such a terrible fate.

Additionally, it's worth mentioning that some young mothers who got married early may have had to discontinue their education. However, their determination to complete their education is commendable. It's encouraging to know that they have come to the centre with their children, seeking an opportunity to continue their studies.

Kashvi Key Initiatives

The project team started different programs for different girls based on their preferences. Young girls having cleared the 10^{th} board would be eligible to join as nurse assistants and kick-start their career in the healthcare industry under the General Nursing Program (GNP). Various collaborations were signed to maximize the impact of the project with specified programs. A collaboration was done with the Pan Alumni Reach for India (PARFI) for the Culinary Training including job placement of the interested participants. Through PARFI, Kashvi provides culinary training to participants helping participants secure employment in hotels, restaurants, and catering services in the industry. Kashvi's partnership with the Anudip Foundation offered opportunities to develop essential computer literacy and IT skills to participants. The Deen Dayal Institute helped Kashvi participants with training in cutting, sewing, and digital skills to acquire valuable vocational skills in the field of fashion and administration.

Kashvi had partnered with Sheroes – "Women's Will Program" to offer participants the knowledge and skills required to start and manage their own small businesses. Kashvi has established two community centres, serving as platforms for women from the community to form thirty self-help groups. Through shared experiences and collaborative efforts, women can uplift each other, leading to personal growth and positive change within the community.

The program team was equally concerned about the health and nutrition education programs, so they conducted various programs by Sahiyas (community health workers), local doctors, and community facilitators to provide crucial information on nutrition, hygiene, reproductive health, and overall well-being, empowering participants to make informed choices for themselves and their families.

To accommodate the needs of older and working women, a hybrid model that combines digital and onsite classes is developed which would be helpful to all women with various responsibilities and commitments to access education conveniently, balancing their personal and professional lives while pursuing their education.

Building on the success of its onsite program in Jharkhand, Kashvi is expanding its reach to Kolkata. Three centres in Goragacha, Tangra, and Bodbethbagan have been opened, providing more women with access to education and empowerment.

These outcomes highlight the transformative impact of the Kashvi Onsite Program in empowering women, breaking barriers, and creating opportunities for personal growth, employment, entrepreneurship, and community development at the same time increasing pressure on the resources.

The Kashvi Team was excited as they were chosen to prepare an Alternate School Education Curriculum for the Jharkhand Education Department. The BEOs (Block Education Officers) had given a list of school dropout girls and women in their respective blocks to enroll in the Kashvi Onsite/Digital Program. JEPC (Jharkhand Education Project Council) and Jharkhand Educational Department have granted Kashvi access to the Village Community Centre (Samudaya Bhavan) to operate the Kashvi Centres. Community Workers, Sahiyas and Anganwadi Sevikas have enrolled in Kashvi as learners to complete their Secondary Education. Due to the success of the Program Community Leaders have requested a similar program for school dropout boys. A pilot has been initiated with 100 learners for both onsite and online classes. Higher Education: 80% of our learners in the program will complete their Secondary school through NIOS. The Kashvi Team is supporting participants who wish to study further and is identifying schools they can enroll in.

Kashvi has started Vocational Training with the formal board certification and it had a significant impact on the number of girls joining the workforce and expecting the impact on the marriage age too. The vocational training programs aim to make women job-ready and are forming partnerships with vocational training institutes to ensure that graduates receive real-world training and employment. It has partnered with vocational training institutes and NGOs such as - Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society, Jharkhand Khadi and Village Industries Board, and Vikas Bharti, familiar names in the social sector of the state.

Challenges

Overall, Tarun and Nitasha were happy with the success of the work done by the team but they were worried about the increasing aspirations and expectations of the government as well as the people of the state. The successful implementation of the pilot project and the transformative impact on the lives of women have created a jubilant atmosphere among the people around the area and the team members involved. The program's positive outcomes, community recognition, increased aspirations, and expanding opportunities all contribute to the sense of celebration and excitement surrounding the Kashvi Onsite Program. So far the project has been financially fully supported by the KCT group and there have been no problems with funding in the future at the present level of operations.

The announcement of the qualifications for Anganwadi workers, (approx. 37000 in Jharkhand State only) where a significant proportion now require board certification, has had an impact on the student enrolment ratio in Kashvi. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has further affected regular students, leading them to view Kashvi as a ray of hope for their education. Kashvi was initiated in 2017 and has been running for the past six years, with three batches of students completing the program and the fourth in progress. The exams are conducted twice a year, with two papers in July/August and the remaining papers in January/October. This approach allows students to focus on a few papers at a time, reducing the burden and improving their chances of success. The KCT group, with its capacity to support 1,500 students without any problem, is considering expansion to accommodate higher registration numbers. However, for this expansion, Kashvi requires financial support.

Kashvi started livelihood programs in collaboration with the state's skill development initiatives. This highlights the potential for future integration of skill training programs into their educational efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the program registration and expansion plans. Many students faced difficulties in accessing education during this time and developed fears or anxieties about returning to school. Nitasha and Tarun were worried about students' learning during the Lockdown phase, hence, online sessions were started. KCT invested in the development of its own LMS to deliver sessions effectively and keep track of the learning curve. It helped to reach out to students from different locations and reduce the operational cost. Looking at the success stories and feedback, the Kashvi team wanted to expand in other areas of Jharkhand and Kolkata.

Rural areas of Jharkhand lack proper infrastructure, including schools, transportation, and basic facilities. This poses a dilemma in terms of how to establish or improve infrastructure to make education more accessible for girls, especially in remote areas. In contrast to that, in urban areas of Kolkata the participants were primarily migrants dealing with them was altogether a different ball game. Lots of discussions happened on the opening of new centres and their locations. The target was to double the registrations but how? Should we go for institutional funding for providing infrastructure support or look at the Govt to work with their set up?

Kashvi team had faced some financial constraints in their educational initiatives. To overcome these challenges, they had approached various sources for funding, including CSR funding centres and donations. They have also implemented a working Learning Management System (LMS) to streamline their operations.

In terms of financial commitments, the team managed to sustain their efforts without a steady flow of funds. This showcases their dedication and resilience in continuing their work despite financial limitations.

It is worth mentioning that the materials used in Kolkata are exclusively in Hindi. This suggests that the educational resources and curriculum are tailored to meet the needs of the local community.

The Kashvi team followed an asset-light model, with an approximate expense of Rs 850 per student for a 14-15-month program. This indicated their focus on providing cost-effective education while maximizing impact. The team was not very keen on crowdfunding.

Nitasha and Tarun, members of the Kashvi team, explored various options for arranging funds. They considered donations, crowdfunding, or collaborating with other corporations, all while ensuring that the quality of the program is not compromised. Currently, the team spends Rs. 850/- per student, excluding the NIOS registration fees, which are borne by the candidates. Soma suggests charging some amount from students to cover the operational costs, while Nitasha aims to bring down the cost to Rs. 500/- per student to make it more sustainable and scalable.

The team at Kashvi had a burning desire to reach more people with the same enthusiasm and dedication. However, this desire puts pressure on the human and financial resources of the project. Finding a balance between expanding their reach and managing resources becomes a challenge for the team.

They need to carefully evaluate their options for financial support and consider the long-term sustainability of the program. They must ensure that any changes in cost or funding do not compromise the quality of education provided by Kashvi. Balancing the team's passion for expansion with practical considerations is crucial in order to effectively navigate the challenges and continue making a positive impact on the lives of students in need.

Political issues and the presence of Naxalite activities posed operational challenges, which were addressed through community engagement, transparency, and trust-building. Some individuals, particularly males, resisted the project's efforts, but through open communication and clear objectives, Project Kashvi was able to overcome resistance and change societal perceptions.

At present, the team's primary focus is on education rather than skill training but there is growing demand for skill training to help them ready for jobs in industry. Normal sessions could be done online but skill training would not be effective in some cases. While the online model is cost-effective, the success rate is currently low. However, since the students are from the vicinity of the centres, it may be more convenient for them to access the onsite resources.

There is no promotion or advertising for the program, which could be a constraint in reaching a wider audience. To address this, you may want to explore promotional strategies to increase awareness and attract more students.

They have 35 teachers involved in the program, and it's crucial to establish a reporting mechanism and feedback system to monitor progress and address any challenges that arise. Additionally, finding ways to engage and motivate the teachers will contribute to the overall effectiveness of the program.

The Future Road Map

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives involving NGOs and companies have played a role in supporting the Kashvi program.

Collaboration between NGOs and companies can bring valuable resources and support to education initiatives, further enhancing their impact.

Operating in an area affected by Naxalite activities poses significant challenges. However, it's worth noting that working with tribal communities has its advantages. Tribal people tend to be honest and trusting when there is openness and clarity in the relationship. Despite some resistance from males and comments from people, the team has persevered in their efforts to provide education to the community.

Political issues pose some constraints on the program's operations, but despite these challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic an increase in enrolment was witnessed in Kolkata and Ranchi. This highlights the importance of continuing educational initiatives even in difficult times.

Overall, the efforts to provide education and support to students through this hybrid model are commendable. By addressing the constraints and exploring strategies for improvement, team Kashvi can enhance the program's effectiveness and impact on the students' lives.

Project Kashvi is not just about education; it's about empowerment, breaking barriers, and making dreams come true. The incredible efforts of Nitasha, the Kashvi team, and the resilient students show us the true power of education and the unwavering spirit of individuals determined to shine. So let's join hands and be a part of this inspiring movement where everyone shines, one empowered woman at a time.

The successful implementation of the pilot project and the positive outcomes achieved by the initial batches have created a sense of jubilation among the people around the area and the team members involved. Here are some of the expectations and reactions that contribute to the jubilant atmosphere:

The local community recognizes the impact of the Kashvi Onsite Program and acknowledges the efforts made by the team. They appreciate the opportunities provided to women in their area and express their support for the initiative.

The success of the program has generated excitement and enthusiasm within the community.

At the same time, the program has raised aspirations and instilled hope among the women in the community. Seeing their peers succeed and achieve personal and professional growth through Kashvi, others are inspired to enroll in the program and pursue their own goals. The expectation of a brighter future has added to the overall jubilant atmosphere.

The team members involved in the program implementation are jubilant and proud of the outcomes achieved. They witness first-hand the positive changes in the lives of the learners and feel a sense of accomplishment. Their hard work and dedication have paid off, leading to a jubilant and motivated team atmosphere.

With the expansion of the program to Kolkata and the opening of new centres, there is a growing expectation of even more women benefiting from the program. The prospect of reaching a larger audience and providing education, skill development, and empowerment to a greater number of women amplifies the jubilation among team members and the community.

As word spreads about the success of the program, positive feedback and testimonials from program participants further contribute to the jubilant atmosphere. Learners share their personal stories of growth, success, and newfound confidence, inspiring others and fuelling the overall sense of celebration and optimism. Overall, the successful implementation of the pilot project and the transformative impact on the lives of women have created a jubilant atmosphere among the people around the area and the team members involved. The program's positive outcomes, community recognition, increased aspirations, and expanding opportunities all contribute to the sense of celebration and excitement surrounding the Kashvi Onsite Program.

Discussion / Assignment Questions

1) If this program is to be scaled to a greater level, what would be the ideal revenue model? Should the fees be borne by the students or

external funding from Governments or NGOs should be sought? What are the pros and cons of external funding?

2) What are the biggest challenges likely to be faced when the program is scaled beyond existing states?

3) Should the project focus on a hybrid model or pivot towards an offline training program only? Discuss the implications of each scenario and what would benefit the company in the long run?

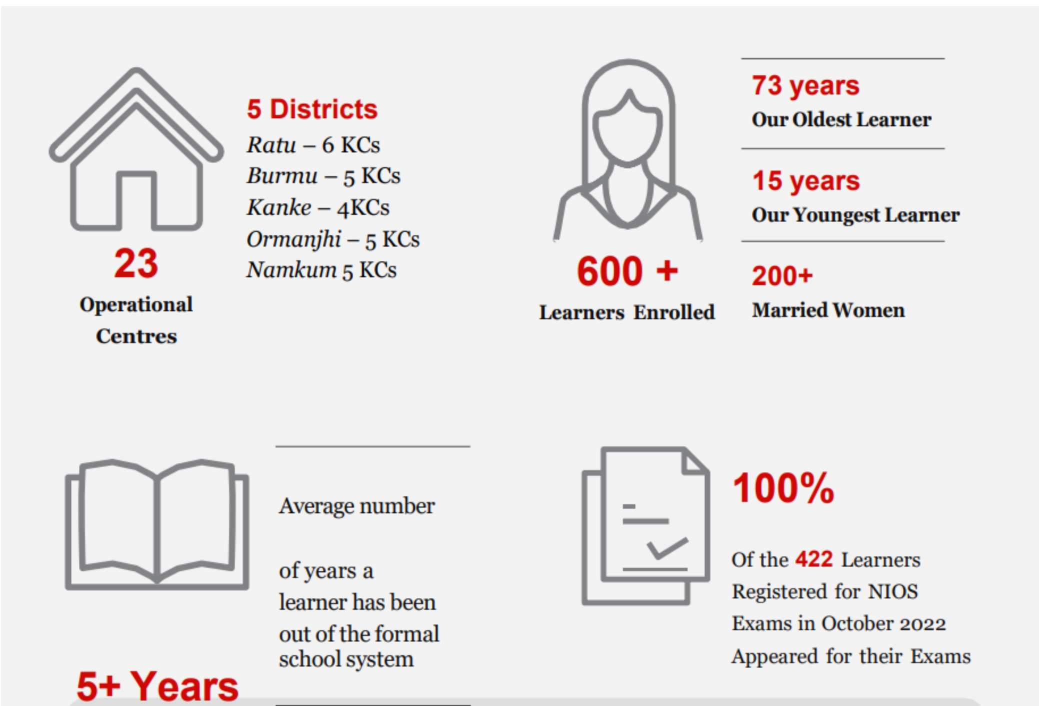
Appendix – Additional Information for reference(Exhibits)

***Phase 1 (Pilot Project):* 2017 – 2018**

Area	**2 CD blocks in Ranchi district, Jharkhand**
Total Kashvi Centers	**2**
Kashvi Centers per Block	***Mandar* – 1 Kashvi Center** 17 kms from Ranchi ***Chanho* – 1 Kashvi Center** 37 kms from Ranchi
No. of Learners:	**70 Learners**
Successfully completed Foundation Course (=Grade V)	**63 (90%)**
Successfully completed Bridge Course (=Grade VIII)	**56 (80%)**
Appeared for NIOS Secondary Exam	**47 (65%)**
Passed NIOS Secondary Exam	**28 (60%)**
Pursuing Intermediate through Government College	**12**
Pursuing vocational training	**8**

Phase 2: **February 2021 – October 2022**

Total Number of Centers Fully Operational from 1st March 2021	**23**
Number of girls enrolled	**610**
Number of students who cleared their Foundation Exam	**525**
Number of students who have appeared for Bridge Exam	**510**
Number of girls registered for NIOS exams	**422**
Number of girls enrolled in vocational training programs	**8**
Number of Students who will appear for 2 NIOS papers in April'22	**270**
Number of Community Centres opened on 15th December 2021	**2**
Students enrolled in digital literacy program conducted by Anudip Foundation	**610**



100% of Learners Appearing for NIOS Exams in October 2022 have Passed their TMAs (Practical) exams

2
Community Centres

7
Vocational Training Partnerships

387
Learners enrolled in Vocational Training Programs

Batch 3: April 2022– October 2023

Total Number of Centers Fully Operational from 1st April, 2022	**9**
Number of girls enrolled	**360**
Number of girls registered for NIOS exams	**168**
Number of students who cleared their Foundation Exam	**256**
Number of students who have appeared for Bridge Exam	**219**
Students enrolled in digital literacy program conducted by Anudip Foundation	**Yet to start**


45
1
Across India, 39.4% of girls aged 15-18 years drop out of school and college
(Report by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights)


KASHVI

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TRANSFORMING SANDHAN BANK: STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING GROWTH & INNOVATION

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Abstract

Sandhan Bank Limited was a private sector scheduled commercial bank in India. It was amongst the new-generation banks that received the scheduled commercial bank license from the bank regulator, the Reserve Bank of India.

Sandhan Bank received the license on 31 May 1995. Historically, Sandhan Bank's origin in Maharashtra, India was the outcome of the merger between two major corporate banks. This changed to Sandhan Bank upon the grant of the scheduled bank license by the Reserve Bank of India in May 1995.

This case study delves into the transformative growth strategies of Sandhan Bank, a mid-sized bank in India. As the banking industry underwent rapid transformation driven by technological advancements, shifting customer expectations, and regulatory changes, Sandhan Bank explored strategies to become bigger, stronger, and smarter. This case study discusses the challenges faced by a mid-sized bank and strategies to transform the bank to its next orbitof growth.

Keywords: Transformative Leadership, Innovation, Banking, Change Management, Growth Strategies.

Introduction

In late 2014, the Managing Director & CEO made the announcement, "Let's work on achieving targets at all business unit levels. Let us increase our branches from 136 to 400 in the next 2 years. Let us bring on new ideas and new business models and make our Bank as Number1 Bank in SME Space in India. Let us not forget the power of Innovation, Partnership, and doing things with a greater degree of excellence & compliance. It is a tough target to sustain banking the way we do, so let us find new ways to do Banking for the next 20+ year vision. We will fund better projects which will accelerate Sandhan Bank 's growth ahead of others". He also pointed out a few key trends in the banking Industry. The first one was that technologies such as AI, blockchain, and cloud were drastically changing the front, middle, and back-office operations of banks and financial Institutions. The second one was technological innovation which was not just central to delivering a wide range of products and services, but also gave rise to new business models. The third one was the expanding financial services ecosystem including regulators, fintech firms, and big techs. The fourth was capturing and integrating data to deliver convenient banking.

The Employees felt it was not possible to achieve the targets set by the

Managing Director & CEO. They looked anxious and worried thinking about How to become a bigger, stronger, and smarter bank, faster. The dilemma lied in how to sustain the bank's current profitable operations while implementing strategies to transform it to the next orbit of growth.

The Journey from 1930

Sandhan Bank was established in Mumbai, India in 1930. In 1995, the bank underwent a strategic repositioning, transforming itself from a development financial institution to a commercial bank. In 2006, Sandhan Bank received a license from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a scheduled commercial bank. In 2008, the bank completed its initial public offering (IPO) and got listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

In 2013, RBI launched its Payment Vision directing the Banks and financial institutions to embrace the technology faster. The National Payment Corporation of India had also launched Repay cards. Unified payment Interface was emerging as a game changer in the payment ecosystem. It also led to the emergence of a new set of financial entities like Fintech, payment banks, and small Finance Banks. Many Banks, including small and mid-sized banks, were implementing new business models. Banks were tightening their architecture with more channels. Banks were asked to be on IMPS, Rupay, and other convenient products. Data utilization by customers was increasing with the adoption of smartphones and the Internet.

The Present

Sandhan Bank is managed by a dynamic Top Management team. They are known for their rich international banking experience. They want to follow the best practices in terms of Innovation, leadership, Employee engagement & Customer Experience.

Sandhan Bank is known for its focus on serving the needs of SMEs. It offers specialized products and services tailored to meet the requirements of small businesses, including working capital loans, trade finance, and cash management solutions. But Architecture and Infrastructure enhancements have not been updated for the last 10+ Years. Bank is sitting on old Legacy systems e.g.; Core banking and Lending systems are older versions. The technical Architecture of the Bank is very rigid and does not allow for adding more applications or features for customers. Sandhan can deliver 30-40 Functional features per year while their competitors can deliver 80+ Features. Bank does not have Enterprise Service Bus or API banking like the new Edge Tools. Bank is to build a strategy around Big Data, AI Adoption, or Fintech Collaboration. Aadhaar's use has increased in the Banking space, and Sandhan Bank is yet to adopt this. The competitors are doing a lot of Digital Transformation in all areas to automate operations.

It has a good set of employees loyal for years and have great domain knowledge. But they have a traditional outlook towards the progress of digital banking. Bank has a human resources and Training department which is known for its best practices. Bank has a good attitude toward customer experience. It has a good contact center Team. It aims to build long-term relationships with its customers by offering customized financial solutions and ensuring a smooth banking experience. But the Channel experience for Customers is not great as the Bank does not have Internet Banking or Mobile Banking Applications.

The company aims to foster long-term relationships with its customers by tailoring financial solutions to their individual needs. The bank strives to ensure a seamless and hassle-free banking experience for its customers. The company has a strong focus on customer experience and places importance on providing excellent service. Bank has made consistent profits and is prudent in terms of capital adequacy ratio and provisions for non-performing assets for the period from 2018 to 2022.

A few important financial information is given below for the respective period

Financials of Sandhan Bank

Financial Data of Sandhan Bank Ltd				**(Amount in Rs. Crores)**		
Sr. No.	**Particulars**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
1	**Interest Earned**	645.21	459.4	536.26	716.97	916.1
2	**Interest Expended**	447.95	317.42	347.12	489.27	631.69
3	**Net Profit for the Year**	-88.1	-78.45	-35.37	26.36	78.02
4	**Deposits**	4647	4784	5,610.17	6,335.56	8363.84
5	**Loans & Advances**	3274	3459	4281.69	5284.42	6586.09
6	**Number of Branches**	80.00	80.00	80.00	84.00	94.00
7	**Number of Employees**	750	867	912	1112	1478
8	**Capital Adequacy Ratios**	12.69	1312	13.25	15.41	13.61
9	**Gross NPA**	292.23	279.67	263.57	241.8	214.98
10	**Gross NPA (%)**	5.00	4.00	6.00	4.00	3.00
11	**Net NPA**	38.24	36.45	41.23	30.24	49.13
12	**Net NPA (%)**	0.63	0.78	0.97	0.57	0.75

Source: Money control and Audited Annual reports – www.moneycontrol.com

The changing landscape of the banking industry in terms of fast-changing technology, regulatory compliance, competition as well as collaborative opportunities from Fintech players are adding their complexities.

"Innovation happens at the intersection of people, process, technology, customers, and the business Ecosystem."

The Board decided to transform the bank to the next level. The top management felt the need to have a transformative leader who can drive people, Automation, Tech Adoption, and new business models within and outside the Bank. They decided to appoint Mr. Alok Kapadia as the Chief Innovation Officer (CINO) to transform the bank. He implemented strategies such as developing and implementing a comprehensive digital transformation strategy that modernizes the bank's technology infrastructure, making it more agile and customer-centric. He also explored partnerships with fintech companies and startups to tap into innovative financial technologies and services. Lastly, he integrated environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into the bank's business strategy and investment decisions.

These strategies cover a range of areas, from technology and partnerships to sustainability, aiming to not only drive innovation but also cater to evolving customer needs and societal demands. By diversifying the bank's approach, Mr. Kapadia can position the institution for growth and relevance in a rapidly changing financial landscape.

Discussion / Assignment Questions

1) What are the strengths and weaknesses of Sandhan Bank?

2) What are the innovative products/services Sandhan bank can introduce?

3) If you were a CINO appointed by Sandhan Bank, what strategies would you suggest andhow would you implement them to transform the bank?

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UNREST AT EMIL

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Abstract
This teaching case study "Unrest at EMIL" revolves around the challenges faced by EMIL, an ABG group company operating in the mining sector in India. EMIL, a leading Mine Developer and Operator (MDO) in the coal mining space, encountered a period of unrest at its Orissa iron ore mines. The company, which had expanded its business into various sectors, faced labor-related issues in its mining division.

The challenges arose from a decline in profit margins, heavy investments in new plants, and a demand for higher incentive earnings from the workforce, led by a local tribal union leader named Mahato. The tribal communities employed as mine workers had concerns about the encroachment on their lands, the impact on their livelihoods, and the disruption of their religious and cultural values. These issues led to frictional relationships between management and unions, creating a climate of fear and uncertainty among the workers, supervisors, and managers.

To address the situation, EMIL's top management decided to recruit an experienced industrial relations (IR) expert, Mr. Mishra, to serve as a change catalyst. Mishra, a seasoned professional with a background in HR and IR, had a track record of managing conflicting situations and working towards common agendas in previous assignments. With his expertise, Mishra aimed to turn around the plant work culture, increase productivity, and foster positive labor relations.

As Mishra shared his experiences with Nikhil, a student interested in HR and IR, he highlighted the complexity of managing HR and IR challenges in the mining sector. He emphasized the importance of understanding mining regulations, labor laws, and compliance requirements specific to the industry. Mishra approached the challenges at EMIL using a systematic approach, considering the organization as an open system and analyzing the interrelated components within it. He also recognized the significance of the external environment and its impact on internal operations and HR systems.

The case study provides insights into the unique challenges faced by the mining sector in India, particularly in managing labor relations, addressing socio-cultural issues, and balancing the interests of stakeholders. It also highlights the role of an experienced IR expert in bringing about positive change and improving the overall work culture and productivity in a mining company.

Key Words: Industrial Relations (IR), Human Resources Management (HR), Change Management, Organizational Development (OD), Mining Sector

Introduction

The mining sector in India presents a myriad of growth opportunities and challenges. India boasts the fifth-highest reserves of iron ore globally, making it highly competitive in the international setup. The country ranks fourth in terms of iron ore production, with significant demand stemming from infrastructure development and the booming residential and commercial building industry. This demand for minerals opens doors for economic growth and employment generation. However, the mining sector also faces various challenges. Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) norms, de-carbonization efforts, geopolitical factors, low productivity, labor shortages, heavy capital investments, logistics, and infrastructure problems are some of the critical issues confronting the industry.

Nikhil, a student of HR with a keen interest in IR was reading some thought-provoking case studies on the mining sector. The mining sector in India poses unique industrial relations (IR) and human resources (HR) challenges. With a history of strong unions and a highly diverse workforce, managing labor relations and fostering harmonious relationships between management and workers is crucial. The sector often grapples with frictional relationships with unions, which can lead to strikes, lockouts, and disruptions in operations. Additionally, the remote locations of mining sites and the presence of tribal communities present socio-cultural challenges in terms of workforce management and engagement. Balancing the interests of stakeholders, promoting safety, and creating a positive work culture amidst these challenges remains a constant endeavour for HR/IR professionals in the mining sector in India.

He came across one stimulating case about EMIL, an ABG group company. Operating since 1950, EMIL has since then expanded its business into coal mining, diamond mining, noble ferro alloys, iron pellets, and renewable energy, and is the leading Mine Developer and Operator (MDO) in the Coal Mining space of the country. During its inception, the company was only dealing with iron ore and manganese mining and this case study refers to unrest in its Orissa iron ore mines in India.

Vision

To be a value-adding Global Natural Resource Company cherished by our customers and the communities in which we work.

Values

In 2003, with the appointment of a new Managing Director, EMIL had planned to increase its production to meet the demands of the government's augmented focus on infrastructural development continues with increased construction of roads, railways, airports, etc. Around the same time, the company suffered a decline in profit margins, a heavy investment was made in another plant and allied machinery on another site, and at the same time, the union under the leadership of a local hot-headed, highly influential young tribal Mahato raised a banner of revolt to press for a steep hike in incentive earnings. Tribal communities such as Santal, Munda, and Ho were mostly employed as mine workers. In India's tribal population, the local workers in mines generally have an easy outlook to work, heavily into alcohol addiction and non-cooperative attitudes towards mining companies. They had the perception that the mining companies had encroached upon their lands, adversely impacted their livelihoods, and were also messing with their religious rituals and cultural values.

In view of the ever-intensifying competition and the changing concept of productivity, which was based on a number of parameters rather than just labor output the management proposed to base the incentive scheme on a set of parameters The union objected to any unilateral change. The main issue in the current dispute began with a go-slow agitation with concerns regarding the revision of production targets. Rumors were floating that the union will intensify the agitation with tool-down, picketing slogan shouting, reporting for work at random times and even to gherao the supervisors. There was a climate of fear and uncertainty among the workers, the supervisors and even the managers. A Board Meeting was called to take cognizance of the situation. The Managing Director and the Top Management were informed of the unfolding crisis. In the meeting, various options were deliberated with their pros and cons;

1. Can additional contractual workers be brought from other places to replace the existing tribal workforce?

2. Initiate strict disciplinary actions against the troublemakers and if need be terminate their jobs.

3. Recruit an IR expert with a good track record with the hope that a required change could be initiated.

4. Close the mining division as the low productivity and people issues were creating a negative both on the balance sheets as well as the reputation and image of the company.

After careful consideration, it was decided that an IR expert with an exceptional track record and experience should be recruited to be a change catalyst and turn around the plant work culture and increase productivity. As Nikhil continued reading he was pleasantly surprised to read about Mr. Mishra, his neighbour being referred to as the IR expert hired to do the job. Mishraji was a seasoned IR professional with a degree in HR and IR. He had a solid 50 years of experience behind him out of which 25 award-winning years were devoted to the IR in the FMCG, chemical processing, and aluminium industries. He had handled seven settlements independently and managed conflicting situations with multiple unions on the site to come to a common agenda. He had a quiet but confident demeanour about him. He knew his subject well, managed all his stakeholders with maturity, and balanced workmen, unions, and management with ease. Nikhil was extremely excited and immediately called Mr. Mishra to seek his appointment for more details, especially from the IR expert leading the turnaround.

The Story / Challenge

The doorbell sounded. A veteran in the field of industrial relations and employee relations, Mishra Ji, was watering the plants. After Nikhil was comfortably seated, Mishra ji asked Nikhil why he was keen to discuss people management challenges in mining. Nikhil responded, "Sir, my HR Prof Dr. Virani always tells me that while HR in the services sector is very sophisticated, plant HR and IR is where the real learning happens." Mishra ji had not received any queries about the mining industry and the related IR challenges and he was enthusiastic to tell his story. He told the youngster to wait while he went to the kitchen to make tea for both of them, while sipping the hot tea he began turning the pages of his life recalling his days at the Aditya Birla Group's(ABG) Mining Division and was posted at Orissa, their iron ore mines. He wiped his spectacles and began; "Nikhil when I joined the ABG group's mining company in about 2003 things were not the same as today. The group has now become a leading 'Developer and Operator' in the industry. is now amongst the largest iron ore mining companies in the non-captive private sector and India's largest producer of noble ferro alloys. EMIL holds a leading position in the Indian mining industry for its superior mining techniques, world-class facilities, new generation mining equipment and technology, and scale and flexibility of its operations and systems". Mishraji said with a gleam of pride in his voice; Nikhil "India is home to the fifth-highest reserves of iron ore in the world. The easy availability of a low-cost labor force and the presence of abundant iron ore reserves make India competitive in the global setup. The iron and steel industry in India is among the most important industries in the country. India ranks fourth globally in terms of iron ore production. Production of iron from FY22 in India stood at 204.48 million tons (mt). Orissa, where I was placed, is the largest iron-producing state in India. The rise in infrastructure development is a driver of demand and supply and hence the demand for iron and steel will continue, given the strong growth expectations for the residential and commercial building industry." As a business student, Nikhil mentally made a note to explore and get an overview of the mining sector especially iron ore, including supply and demand dynamics of major global and Indian companies, and investing options.

As Mishraji continued, he smiled as he recollected his interview with the Managing Director of the mining division and asked Nikhil a probing question; "Nikhil with your knowledge in HR what do you think are the competencies required for this position"? Nikhil replied; "knowledge about mining labor laws, familiarity with HR software, analyse HR metrics and data to identify trends" Mishra Ji laughed and said; "Nikhil remember we are discussing plant HR for the mining sector, and that too in 2003, apart from understanding mining regulations, labor laws, and industry-specific compliance requirements, this position required a person who had handled IR issues, had worked out settlements with the unions, had managed strikes and lockouts and had some experience in handling accidents and fatalities while effectively coordinating various activities pertaining to stakeholders like local landowners, villagers, the police, NGO's and also the management. Problem-solving, adaptability, resilience, and negotiation skills to manage labor relations were of critical importance. Nikhil nodded while making notes.

Mishraji went on to say, "Nikhil it is very important to gather some market intelligence about the sector, the company, and the stakeholders before we begin any new job. While I researched I came across many news reports related to mining from Orissa. The local tribal population vociferously expressed its concern over what was happening to their forests and flora and fauna near the mining sites. There was a fear that rivers and streams would dry out due to mining and water for irrigation would not be available. In Niyamgiri, tribals were protesting to prevent mining saying the hill was their local deity. Many private players were guilty of violating forest and environmental laws. Unfortunately, to suppress their movement, the Government had sometimes taken a series of repressive measures, including lathi-charge, teargas, gunfire, and random arrest of local people involved in the movement. On the other hand, reports also mentioned some positive impacts such as employment generation better health care and education facilities, and community development projects"

"When I joined, I was provided with an apartment and a company car. However, my family did not join immediately as my two children were well-settled in their schools and did not want any change. This gave me an opportunity to completely concentrate on the tasks at hand. When I took up this assignment, I was not prepared for the magnitude of the tasks involved. Falling back on my education in HR and Certifications in IR combined with years of experience, I set upon a systematic plan of understanding the issues from an Open System Model, with an assumption that all components within an organization were interrelated and that a change in one component will almost definitely have an effect on other parts. Additionally, I realized that considering the external environment is important as it affects decisions and changes internal operations such as HR systems, processes, etc". Nikhil tried to jog his class interactions to retrieve any information about the Open System Model and promised himself to read more about it.

Almost an hour into the conversation, Mishraji asked Nikhil if he would stay for lunch. Nikhil found the complete conversation extremely engaging and did not want to lose the opportunity to learn from an experienced practitioner and agreed. Mishraji instructed his cook that a guest would join in for lunch and humorously added to keep it a light lunch so that it did not induce lethargy or reduce their ability to focus. There was a growing camaraderie between the two of them. Nikhil, "Tribal communities such as Santal, Munda, and Ho are mostly employed as mine workers. I had the pleasure of attending the Bhupla (Santhal wedding) of our young union leader Mahato and still remember I was served Mutton (Merrom Jill) along with their village head as a mark of respect"

 

Mishraji quickly went back into reminiscing about the first few days at the mining site. With glazed eyes looking into the past, he said in about five days on the job he witnessed a terrible fight among the workers who had gathered to collect their wages which were paid in cash. Many of them came drunk and the fight got a little out of hand and one person was grievously injured and had to be taken to the hospital. I was told this was a regular feature. At least 2-3 days after wages were distributed we had thin worker attendance as they were on an alcohol-drinking spree. The plant supervisors had a hard time going to their hamlets to get them back to work. Nikhil, the diagnostic phase which happened with the key plant personnel and managers along with close observations and discussions with some informal opinion makers from the workers, threw up some interesting facts. Mishraji continued, "I tried to create three broad categories of the challenges which fell in these three sets;

- Organization: The plant output was low, frictional relationships with strong unions, competition from small private players
- Groups and Teams: Socio-cultural issues of the tribal workers, violence among groups, no work ethics
- Individuals: Addiction and vices, illiteracy, group think no self-determination

Nikhil was listening carefully and was quite impressed at how Mishraji connected his diagnostic OD lessons to practical HR and IR. Mishraji continued, "As HR professionals we have a choice to either use a carrot or stick to ensure the organization's goals are achieved. However, through my experience of so many years, I have concluded to initiate a change in organizational behaviour a positive empathetic ecosystem is essential. There is a famous quote from Dale Carnegie, "When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but creatures of emotion." There lies the key to professionalized IR management, as emotions are always complementary, supplementary, and reciprocated.

Lunch was served and Mishraji and Nikhil ate in a comfortable silence. Mishraji looking back into the past and Nikhil was trying to analyse and evaluate the information received since morning. Post lunch they sat in the breezy veranda. Mishraji began, "I was determined to change the work culture in the organization. With deep discussion and buy-in from the functional heads, I embarked upon the task. I was aware that the journey was challenging. It's easy to change work processes, or train people on technology but changing the attitudes, mind-sets, and habits of employees is the most difficult, you must be well aware of this fact from your OB sessions. Since there was not enough communication with the union before, the first step I took was to take the union leader Mahato into confidence. He was young hot-headed, but also had a strong hold over the workers. In fact, rumours were floating around that he had planned to ambush my car because he had assumed that I would be a threat to his growing clout.

Nikhil, I was always of the opinion that, "the role of trade union leaders starts at the place where the managerial caucus and executors create a gap, either intentionally or ignorantly. This gap creates a vacuum, or energy level difference, which by virtue of its existence, gives space to others to get in and take advantage. If the management does not leave space between togetherness and keeps a balance between productivity and profit sharing, discipline and appreciation, the trade union leadership becomes a part of the management intent". He further explained, "Under the Fifth Schedule, Section 2(ra), it was imperative to prevent any unfair labor practices that could exploit or discriminate against the tribal workers. This included issues related to wages, working conditions, health and safety, and overall well-being. Any violation of these provisions could lead to legal consequences, damage the company's reputation, and disrupt the harmony within the organization."

Slowly but surely I began to build a cordial relationship with Mahato and gain his trust. Focussing upon his future aspirations of being a political leader I emphasized to him the need to work with the management for the betterment of his tribe and employees to set a precedence and evidence of his leadership abilities. Nikhil smiled as he recollected his OB lessons in motivation where he had learned that personal aspirations are a powerful motivator for goal-directed behaviour. I initiated a series of negotiations with the union representatives and eventually, we managed to work out a settlement agreement for the next three years. The proposed settlement involved a moderate increase in wages and benefits, coupled with performance-based incentives tied to productivity improvements. Mishraji emphasized the importance of finding a balance between the workers' demands and the company's financial viability. That was my first achievement and I was praised by the Board and Top Management.

Mishraji continued "Through him and his team, we started to implement changes like opening bank accounts for all the workers jointly with their spouses so that all the money was not squandered away on gambling and alcohol. Street plays were organized and workforce issues were showcased like absenteeism, lack of discipline, issues with alcohol, the meaning of work, and the importance of effective work culture. The consequences of such behaviour were also made clear to them.

Disciplinary action was initiated for absenteeism and deviance in conduct. Productive workers were recognized and rewarded to encourage others. Some contractors who supplied labour were also counselled to have continuous communication with the employees about the importance of work ethics and disciplinary norms. Slowly there was a turnaround and supervisors stopped going to call them to come to the work.

“Nikhil once this was set in place the other wellfare strategies we put in place were in accordance with the philosophy, vision, and mission of our company. We provided the infrastructure for schools and healthcare facilities including teachers, doctors, and nurses. The services were at a subsidized cost and the employees felt cared and a sense of belongingness was created. This stemmed attrition of our trained workers who were poached by smaller private mining companies. We also roped in some local NGOs and the village Sarpanch’s to help us with skill development and alternate livelihood and a source of income for the female members of the village as a CSR activity”

Mishraji drifted into silence with a smile of satisfaction on his face. Nikhil, “To sum up, I must add these last thoughts before you leave. All parties must understand that industrial growth is a must for the economic growth and well-being of society. Effective HRM/IR improves the company's bottom line with the knowledge of how human capital affects organizational success. Leaders with expertise in IR/HR strategic management must participate in corporate decision-making. Employers have an obligation to provide safe working conditions. Workplace safety and risk management specialists from the HR area manage compliance and training for these important aspects of the business.

“I still cannot come to terms with the fact that HR was referred to as a support function! Of course, things have changed now. Any short-sighted approach in IR handling can derail the growth and provide long-lasting advantages to the competitors. IR handling is not a mechanical but a methodical job. It goes hand in hand with natural emotions, feelings, and ethical boundaries. IR handlers must co-exist with people to build up a pro-productive and friendly environment. When enmity puts a win-lose game into play, friendship is the biggest achiever. Nikhil when I left the company after 7 years the management was once again facing a new challenge, that of implementing automation which was being opposed by the workers.

Mishraji shifted in his chair and Nikhil gathered his notes to leave. He had the most satisfying interview with a practitioner who put a practical perspective on all his theoretical knowledge. They both promised to keep in touch with each other. Nikhil left extremely happy to have found a mentor like Mishraji

Discussion / Assignment Questions

1. Discuss the pros and cons of each of the options discussed during the top management meeting?

2. What are the key challenges faced by HR/IR professionals in the mining sector, particularly in relation to managing labor relations and addressing socio-cultural issues? How do these challenges differ from other industries?

3. In the case study, the union objected to unilateral changes in the incentive scheme. How could the management have effectively communicated and collaborated with the union to address their concerns and achieve a win-win situation? What proactive measures and strategies could have been employed to build trust and reach a mutually beneficial agreement?

4. The presence of tribal communities posed socio-cultural challenges in the mining operations. How can HR/IR professionals effectively engage with these communities and address their concerns regarding land encroachment, livelihood impacts, and cultural values? What community development initiatives can be undertaken to foster positive relationships?

5. Change management played a crucial role in resolving the unrest at EMIL. What are some key principles of change management that the HR/IR expert, Mr. Mishra, could have applied to foster a positive work culture and improve productivity? How can change management

principles be adapted to suit the specific needs and challenges of the mining sector?

6. Reflecting on the case study, which theories concepts models from your OB /HRM class would you recollect and connect to some of the case information, challenges, and results?

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THE JOURNEY OF A BRAND MANAGER

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Abstract
This case study offers a deep dive into the remarkable journey of Neha Singh, a dedicated professional who ascended the corporate ladder to achieve the prestigious position of Brand Manager at ABC Company. The narrative explores the challenges she encountered on her path to this significant promotion and highlights the exceptional abilities and skills she employed to overcome these obstacles. Neha's journey serves as a testament to resilience, determination, and unwavering commitment to personal and professional growth. Through a combination of her innate talents, relentless work ethic,

and strategic thinking, she not only embraced the daunting task of being a Brand Manager but also excelled in it

Keywords: Brand Management, Market Development Strategy, Professional Growth, Work Ethic, Brand Awareness

Introduction

It was a hot summer day in June in Mumbai but it was a special day for Ms. Neha Singh. Neha just got promoted as a Brand Manager at the ABC Company and she was responsible for the launch and successful operations of their new brand Bloom in the Fabric Conditioner category. It was a big day for the 26 –year old, got selected as the Brand Manager. There were a lot of nominations for this position but Neha made it through her dedication, problem solving skills and eye for details. Born and brought up at Kanpur, Neha was a bright child right from her school days. She completed her graduation and enrolled for MBA at IIM-Kolkata. Marketing was her forte and as to everybody's expectation she was selected as a Management Trainee at P&G through campus placements. Being from a small town helped her understand the consumer psyche of a commoner. At P&G, she was exposed to the detergent and fabric products industry and was given an opportunity to foresee marketing strategies for their popular detergent brand. She worked hard and smart, and achieved the targets through her sharp insights. She also had her apprehensions as she thought that her intelligence was not being used to the full potential here, as the P&G brand needed no big marketing activities. But then slowly but gradually she understood that it was not good for her career to be a small fish in a big ocean, rather she preferred to be a big fish in a small pond. That is where her work will be appreciated and be noticed by her superiors, which she was lacking while working with a giant like P&G. All this helped her grow and today she finally fulfilled her dream of being an independent Brand Manager for a company, solely responsible for a product category.

She joined ABC Company and was earlier given the responsibility to revive a declining brand of detergent. She took the challenge and in six months was responsible for the turnaround of the brand. She was given many other challenging opportunities and she excelled in all her assignments, quickly gaining appreciation from her seniors. ABC were now currently into starting a new division of Fabric conditioners, and the management was in a dilemma whether to appoint a new Brand Manager or promote an internal executive. Neha, of course was very good in her early endeavours, but Fabric conditioner industry was a different ball game. Finally, the management took a gamble on Neha and selected her to take over the reins of Bloom as a Brand Manager

The Fabric Conditioner Market in India

The fabric conditioner market was different from the detergent market though. The fabric conditioner market registered a CAGR of 2.5% from 2013 to 2018 and is expected to grow around 4% by 2027. Fabric conditioners were a new segment of product which protect the fibre of clothes and made them look new. Just as a conditioner protects your hair, a fabric conditioner reduces friction during the washing process and helps clothes retain their original shape, reduce colour fading and reduce wear and tear.

In the beginning of fabric conditioners history, market research at that time had shown that though clothes were getting clean, the machines returned scratchy and uncomfortable clothes after the washing cycle. Fabric Conditioner was marketed to fight fibre fatigue by restoring smoothness and springiness to regularly washed clothes.

The idea was to introduce a product on, partly because washing machines were not provided with separate compartments for powder/ liquid and fabric conditioner. Eventually, free samples were given away with new washing machines after producers agreed to install separate compartments for both.

Fabric conditioners work by lightly lubricating the fibres of the fabric, preventing them from getting tangled. This gives extra bulk to textured fabrics, such as towels, and a smooth feel to flat surfaces. Since its launch, Fabric conditioners have been continually developed and enhanced to provide the best possible care for clothes, now both in and out of the washing machine. Everybody used detergent in their day to day lives, but fabric conditioners were in a very nascent stage. Neha knew in her heart that there was a huge market for such fabric conditioners, as the apparels in India are getting costlier day by day, there would be a market for a product which increases longevity of the clothes, but such fabric conditioners are still not popular with the general public who continue to wash clothes conventionally using detergent and soap. Neha needed to identify a market first, then build it and finally establish it as a complementary product to a detergent.

In the corporate realm, the presence of a female executive leader might elicit sentiments of envy, a phenomenon not excluded within the precincts of ABC Company. Preceding her endeavours in navigating the intricacies of external marketing, Neha found herself contending with the intricacies of internal corporate politics. Mr. Mahesh Tripathi was the Finance Manager who always had an issue with female colleagues including Neha. In fact, he was the one who proposed Anil Mehta's name but the senior management thought otherwise. Anil Mehta was a hard-working Sr. Sales Executive working in the detergent product category with several years in the company. But the company management wanted innovative thinking from the leader of this fabric conditioner division to drive the branding process. Neha had to gather all her resources and start working towards her goal.

Marketing strategies for Bloom

ABC Ltd launched fabric conditioner in the market ascertained the modernism of the Indian consumer market by experimenting the various trends of product that was available in market. Being a new product Bloom needed fresh perspective and Neha's prime objective was to create a habit for the target group of using fabric conditioners in their daily work. The company applied various process systems in marketing to make its product penetrate in different parts of the country.

Strategies

a. Initially the company started distributing free samples to consumers through Magazine Sampling. Magazine sampling was the method where the firm distributes small trial packs through magazines and newspapers. Though this method was innovative in reaching the masses, the challenge was that most consumers were not using those free samples or keeping them for later periods. Due to this most consumers hardly used the product. Also Indian consumers are not habitual in using fabric conditioners, so they didn't consider it necessary to try the free sample.

b. Company also invested more time and money on dread drop sampling. They used various educational activities in creating awareness among consumers. Consumers specifically in tier 2 and tier 3 cities were not much aware about such products like fabric conditioners. Also, consumers had the mind-set that these products are just additional work while washing clothes, which will take more time and hard work. So the Company decided to create awareness by giving demonstrations of the product by going door to door and explaining to consumers about the benefits of fabric conditioners.

c. ABC Ltd divided its marketing strategies based on various geographical areas. Lower cost sampling method and previously used techniques were not beneficial for these cities. Consumer demonstration technique was not cost saving for the company but it helped the company to get market share acquisition.

d. Pricing was an important component for consumers, especially in daily products. In developing the habit in consumers, a part of market development strategy, the brand introduced smaller access packs to induce trails for the brand. ABC Ltd launched the sachet pack for RS. 3. The main purpose of this strategy was to cater to consumers who are skeptical about the product, also the money oriented consumers who feel that products like fabric conditioner will only add cost in their daily budget.

e. After many permutations and combinations, Neha found out that Home to home sampling technique was the most efficient one, even though Cost per Contact (CPC) was higher than Cost per acquisition (CPA).

f. Neha also deduced that going deeper than wider was a more profitable strategy. Initially, the company targeted 44 towns for their Home to home sampling methods, but eventually the town numbers were reduced and saturating each town became the priority.

Challenges and Issues

Market development was an important stage of business growth and was characterized by expansion into new markets and acquisition of untapped customer segments. However, this effort is not without some challenges. Neha as the new branding manager of Company ABC faces in its market development efforts and explores strategies for overcoming them.

Neha had two options in front of her – whether to present it to the consumers as a mass product or develop a niche market for the fabric conditioner as there was not much market awareness related to fabric conditioners. As it was still in a nascent stage, Neha had to work hard on creating holistic awareness about the product and continue educating the target group about its benefits. Consumers are still not familiar with the concept of fabric conditioner and that makes Neha's task more difficult. Customer acquisition was an ongoing continuous process and Neha should strive to introduce new acquisition strategies to build Brand Awareness and acquire new consumers. Neha should undertake all these activities with an eye to Cost Per Acquisition (CPA). The return on investment was a basic metric on which the sales and branding process was evaluated.

After the first 6 months of this Home to Home sampling method and undertaking other basic marketing campaigns, the return on investment was not showing favourable numbers. Mahesh seized this opportunity to get even with Neha and during a review meeting, pointed out to the senior management about the costs associated with undertaking all market development activities was increasing, while the overall turnover was not increasing proportionately. Mahesh also insisted that he cannot sanction the budget asked from Neha's division for spending on unaided sampling. The Customer acquisition cost was not justifying the numbers expected. Neha was found wanting in her explanation and the senior management gave her an ultimatum of 6 more months to come out with some new strategy and get the fabric conditioner division back on track. Neha too realized that all the current customer acquisition strategies implemented including magazine sampling, dead drop sampling are not effective enough to achieve the desired business growth. The higher spending on sampling isn’t helping either. Neha wanted to meet and ask Anil for his guidance and help, but at this time she cannot trust anybody, or she doesn't want to trust anybody. Anil is a good man, a good asset in this situation, but a guy who thinks he was robbed of his well-deserved promotion, can hurt more than help. Neha cancelled all her meetings for the day and came to her room, ordered a cup of coffee and shut her eyes to give herself some “Me-time”. What could she do to bring the numbers? What else can she think that her competitors are not currently doing? How can she spend her marketing budgets optimizing the costs and still get her profits? What are the ways to utilize her resources in the best productive manner? These are the thoughts which ran through her mind.

Discussion / Assignment Questions

1) What challenges were faced by the brand Bloom for the acceleration of growth through the market development strategy?

2) How does a market development strategy differ from other growth strategies?

3) How would you identify potential new markets for the fabric conditioner brand?

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BEYOND BOUNDARIES: THE AGA KHAN'S CASE STUDY IN AUTHENTIC TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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Abstract
This ethnographic case study delves into the profound and far-reaching impact of the Aga Khan and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) on improving the quality of life for individuals and communities worldwide. Through visionary leadership, ethical values, and an authentic approach, they have fostered transformative change across diverse domains, transcending geographical boundaries and promoting inclusivity, pluralism, and sustainability.

Purpose: This case study aims to investigate contemporary Authentic Transformational Leadership (ATL) exhibited by The Aga Khan in the context of his contributions to developing a diasporic Muslim community and benefiting countless individuals through social development initiatives. The study focuses on evidence of Authentic Transformational Leadership behaviours, analysing Aga Khan's actions and outcomes through an ATL lens.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Employing an exploratory ethnographic approach, the case study draws from auto-ethnographic accounts, participant observations, digital footprints, interview excerpts, speeches, and document analysis. Ethnography helps interpret cultural information, while exploratory design facilitates the analysis of various data sources.

Limitations and Delimitations

The primary constraint in this case study pertains to the extrapolation of findings. Drawing broad conclusions from a single case study is challenging, and establishing causal relationships can be tenuous. The actions and characteristics of this specific unit of analysis may or may not be indicative of the conduct of other comparable entities or organizations. On the other hand, delimitations are acknowledged restrictions within the study meant to prevent misinterpretation. This case study confines its scope to an examination of The Aga Khan's leadership style, refraining from any exploration of his personal life or spiritual discourses.

Perceived Findings: This case study identifies characteristics of Authentic Transformational Leadership (ALT) to enhance existing knowledge of this leadership style. It showcases how ALT manifests in social and community development, presenting an authentic model of transformational leadership. The study examines The Aga Khan's initiatives in health, education, housing, economic development, and civil society strengthening. It reveals how his leadership aligns with ATL principles, contributing to societal betterment.

Originality/Value: This case study discusses the ATL model in the context of social development, but its leadership characteristics are relevant across all fields and organizations. It challenges readers to reconsider their strategies for community and organizational development, inspiring self-reflection on their roles within this model. Furthermore, the study contributes to re-evaluating perceptions about the Muslim community, fostering a more informed understanding.

Keywords: Authentic Transformational Leadership, The Aga Khan, Social Sector, Community Development

Introduction

Imagine a land where mountain peaks pierce the heavens, amidst the rugged grandeur of the Pamir Mountains, where the air thins and time seems to stretch across the centuries, in the remote villages of Central Asia, where life unfurls at the pace of the seasons, a man known as the Aga Khan has etched a legacy that transcends borders and defies conventional definitions of leadership. In this intriguing case study, we delve into the life and work of a spiritual leader who has donned the robes of a modern-day visionary, philanthropist, and bridge-builder. The Aga Khan, the hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, emerges not as a traditional ruler but as a leader whose realm extends far beyond geographical boundaries. His spiritual authority is a compass guiding millions of Ismailis through the labyrinth of contemporary life. But the Aga Khan is no ordinary spiritual leader; he is a trailblazer in the realm of development. As we journey through this case study, we will unravel how this leader has harnessed the wisdom of the ages and coupled it with cutting-edge innovation to transform the destinies of communities worldwide. From the arid plains of Africa to the bustling markets of South Asia, his influence is a testament to the enduring power of compassion and foresight.

This case study will delve into the multifaceted facets of his leadership - the emphasis on education, healthcare, culture, and economic development - revealing not just the breadth of his influence but also the depth of his commitment to improving lives. Through the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a formidable entity that encompasses a myriad of agencies and institutions, we will explore how one individual's vision can mobilize a global force for positive change.

Yet, the narrative does not stop at organizational successes or accolades. It delves into the intricacies of ethical leadership, the challenges of cultural preservation, and the delicate balance between tradition and progress. This study is not a mere recitation of accomplishments nor a chronicle of one man's life but an exploration of the values, ethics, and principles that underpin a legacy, an exploration of the transformative power of authentic leadership, woven into the intricate tapestry of history and culture. A blend of ancient wisdom and modern innovation, a testament to the enduring power of authenticity, vision, and an unwavering commitment to the betterment of humanity.

Authentic Transformational Leadership

Authentic Transformational Leadership combines the best elements of authenticity and transformational leadership to create a leadership style that is grounded in ethical values, inspires positive change, and builds strong relationships. Authentic Transformational Leadership is about leading with integrity, empathy, and a genuine commitment to personal and collective growth. It goes beyond just achieving organizational goals; it strives to create an environment where individuals feel valued, empowered, and inspired to make a difference.

A table summarizing Bass and Riggio's Transformational Leadership Model, which includes the four components of Transformational Leadership and the fifth is Authenticity

Component	**Description**
Idealized Influence (Charisma)	- Leaders act as role models. - They are admired and trusted by their followers.
Inspirational Motivation	- Leaders inspire and motivate followers. - They provide a compelling vision and set high expectations.
Intellectual Stimulation	- Leaders encourage innovation, creativity, and critical thinking among their followers.
Individualized Consideration	- Leaders show genuine concern for the needs and development of each follower.
Authenticity	- Leaders are genuine and true to themselves. - They are transparent about their values, beliefs, and emotions, and they do not put on a facade to hide their true selves. This transparency builds trust among followers.

Through the case study, the researcher will attempt to examine the personality and work of The Aga Khan in the context of Bass and Riggio's

Transformational Leadership Model, including the added component of Authenticity.

Who is the AgaKhan IV?

The Aga Khan, the current 49th hereditary Imam, is a respected spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community (officially known as the Shi'a Imami Ismaili Muslims). The Ismaili Muslim community consists of approximately 20 million members who dwell in various parts of the world, predominantly in countries such as Central and South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and various parts of Europe and North America. This Ismaili community has unique values of self-reliance, unity, and shared identity through spiritual allegiances to their religious leader (Imam). This community always submits to Shia Imami Ismaili's interpretation of Islam under the able guidance of their Imam. During the spiritual guidance and able leadership of the current Imam, The Aga Khan, the community establishes a well-defined institutional structure to foster the social and economic development of people in various parts of the world.

Evidence of Authentic Transformational Leadership can be observed in the leadership of Aga Khan IV, who serves as the spiritual leader of the Ismaili Muslim community and leads the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). Here are some key quotes and examples that demonstrate his application of Authentic Transformational Leadership principles:

1. **Authenticity and Ethical Values-Driven Leadership**:

"Leadership, for me, is a moral imperative to a great extent. It is about ethics. It is about what kind of life a leader lives. It is about the ethical standards he or she sets." *Source: Speech at the inauguration of the Global Centre for Pluralism, Ottawa, 2017.*

Aga Khan IV's emphasis on ethics and moral imperatives aligns with the core principles of Authentic Transformational Leadership. He sets a high standard for ethical conduct and leads by example, fostering a culture of integrity within the Ismaili community and the broader world. His actions through the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) demonstrate his dedication to

improving the lives of individuals, transcending geographical boundaries, and fostering pluralism and community development. This commitment to faith, devotion, and service exemplifies authentic leadership. Aga Khan IV has consistently proved a deep commitment to the values of pluralism, ethics, and the betterment of humanity throughout his leadership journey. His authenticity and genuine connection with the Ismaili community and the wider world are evident in his speeches, writings, and personal interactions.
In times of crisis, such as natural disasters and conflicts, Aga Khan IV and the AKDN are known for their swift and effective humanitarian response. Their actions reflect a deep sense of responsibility to alleviate suffering and provide aid to those in need. The AKDN emphasizes ethical governance in its operations, setting an example of transparency and accountability. Aga Khan IV's commitment to ethical behaviour is evident in the way AKDN institutions are governed and operated.

2. Visionary Leadership:
"I have always believed that in our post-colonial world, the challenges and opportunities that we face demand a new vision of leadership, one that transcends narrow, parochial, and sectarian interests. Leadership that is not satisfied merely to advance the interests of a select group of followers, but is instead determined to serve the common good of the whole community." *Source: Speech at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, 2009.*

In this quote, Aga Khan IV articulates his vision of leadership that transcends narrow interests and serves the common good, reflecting his commitment to visionary leadership focused on the welfare of the broader community. His vision extends far beyond the Ismaili community. He envisions a world where diverse cultures and faiths can coexist peacefully and collaboratively, a vision reflected in the AKDN's work worldwide. He has established numerous institutions within AKDN that are committed to addressing complex global challenges, from poverty reduction to cultural preservation.

Being the founder and chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), His Highness The Aga Khan has committed to social development for the last 60 years (as mentioned in the official website of the Ismaili Muslim community -https://the.ismaili). AKDN is a consortium of private, non - non-governmental agencies, and international as well as non-denominational organizations with the purpose of improving the living conditions of people, creating economic opportunities for people, and managing natural calamities across developing countries. The list of AKDN's main social development agencies is -1) The Aga Khan Health Services, 2) The Aga Khan Education Services, 3) The Aga Khan Academies, 4) The Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance, 5) The Aga Khan Foundation, 6) The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat as well as two universities, 7) The Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture coordinates AKDN's cultural activities, including the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Historic Cities Programme, Aga Khan Music Initiative, Aga Khan Museum, and Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (at Harvard and MIT). Through these various arms, AKDN is committed to developing a unique strategy and plan to ensure a high level of self–sufficiency, and support to enhance the quality of life of people in various developing countries

3. Individualized Consideration:

"The Aga Khan Development Network has contributed to a better quality of life in some of the world's most challenging environments. I believe that this contribution has been successful because it addresses people's aspirations and respects their values." *Source: Speech at the University of California, Berkeley, 2008*.

The AKDN's projects often take into account the unique needs and circumstances of the communities they serve. For example, healthcare programs consider local health challenges and tailor solutions accordingly. Another unique idea that is institutionalized is the concept of Time and Knowledge Nazrana (TKN) which combines two strong Ismaili traditions and values

- Community members are expected to contribute to social development causes undertaken by the AKDN network as an unconditional Nazrana (gift)
- Offer in a professional/intellectual capacity time and knowledge for the AKDN's efforts to develop the underprivileged Ismailis as well as other

communities. Most of the Nazrana offering is towards supporting human development activities and impacting the quality of life for the less privileged.

Over the past years, a large number of volunteers (including the researcher who has been in service for 2 decades) have served with the AKDN institutions in diverse professional fields and sectors: some of these include health care, education, financial services, audit, information technology, human resources management, renewable energy, architecture, engineering, telecommunications, management consulting, media, mediation, arts, and culture. The Time and Knowledge Nazarana (TKN) volunteers create an impact not only to help build capacity but also to achieve best practice standards in AKDN and Jamati institutions. This unique engagement model could be viewed as the 'Professionalization of Volunteering Services'. These experiences have been professionally enriching and described as personally satisfying by the global TKN volunteers

4. Embracing Pluralism, Diversity, and Building Bridges:

"One of the major tasks is to try to find the common threads in this extraordinarily diverse world in which we live and to try to provide opportunities for the common threads to flourish. "*Source: Address at the Aga Khan University Convocation, Karachi, 2018.*

Aga Khan IV's focus on finding common threads and fostering diversity while providing opportunities aligns with the principles of inclusivity and empowerment associated with Authentic Transformational Leadership. He promotes unity in diversity and creates opportunities for growth and development. The quote also highlights the challenges of our time, and through the AKDN, he promotes pluralism, tolerance, and collaboration as antidotes to fragmentation, emphasizing that true leadership seeks the betterment of all, not the pursuit of power for its own sake. The AKDN operates in over 30 countries and has positively impacted the lives of millions of people, transcending geographical boundaries to address global challenges.

Aga Khan IV has been a tireless advocate for the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage. His work includes the meticulous restoration of historical landmarks such as the Al-Azhar Park in Cairo and the restoration of the Humayun's Tomb in Delhi. These projects not only preserve cultural treasures but also create spaces for communities to connect with their history and heritage. Through the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa, Aga Khan IV has actively promoted the values of pluralism and religious tolerance. He envisions a world where diverse cultures and faiths coexist harmoniously. His commitment to pluralism reflects his belief in the importance of mutual respect and understanding.

5. Global Impact and Recognition:

"There is no human society, whether Western or Eastern, in which poverty, illness, homelessness, and social despair do not exist. These are problems that shadow all of us, and they are problems that none of us should be allowed to ignore." *Source: Speech at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, 1996.*

The Aga Khan's leadership has fostered partnerships with governments, international organizations, and philanthropic institutions, amplifying the impact of AKDN's work. AKDN operates over 200 healthcare centers, providing care to millions of people in Asia and Africa. The network has conducted thousands of surgeries, particularly in rural and underserved areas, and has significantly reduced maternal and child mortality rates in several countries. AKDN runs more than 200 schools and educational programs worldwide. Aga Khan University (AKU) is a leading institution with a significant impact on healthcare, education, and research. AKDN has supported over 200,000 entrepreneurs and small businesses through its various economic development programs. Its microfinance initiatives have reached millions of clients, helping them improve their livelihoods. AKDN has been involved in the restoration and preservation of over 350 cultural and historical sites and It has helped revitalize traditional art and craft industries. The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) works with 618,000 farmers. Almost 500,000 people are using rural infrastructure constructed by AKF and partners. Over 97,000 hectares of land are under improved management with AKF's help. The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) helps over 2,400 communities monitor and manage the multiple natural hazards they face and prepare for disasters. The Aga Khan believes that development is sustainable only if the beneficiaries become, in a gradual manner, the masters of the process. This means that initiatives cannot be contemplated exclusively in terms of economics, but rather as an integrated program that encompasses social and cultural dimensions as well.

As part of the commemoration of its 66th Republic Day, India has awarded His Highness the Aga Khan the Padma Vibhushan, one of the country's highest civilian decorations. He has also received numerous global recognitions and awards for his leadership, philanthropy, and contributions to society. Some of the notable recognitions and awards include; The UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the Promotion of the Arts of the Islamic World in 2002 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (United States) in 2002, for his exceptional contributions to humanity, culture, and art. The Honorary Canadian Citizenship in recognition of his role in promoting pluralism, tolerance, and social development. He was also honored as an Honorary Companion of the Order of Canada, one of the country's highest civilian honours, for his outstanding contributions to Canada and the world. The Foreign Member of the French Académie des Beaux-Arts in 2008, recognizing his commitment to architectural and cultural preservation. He has received numerous honorary degrees from universities and institutions around the world, acknowledging his contributions to education, culture, and development. The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has received various philanthropy awards for its extensive work in healthcare, education, poverty alleviation, and cultural preservation.

These global recognitions reflect the profound impact of Aga Khan IV's leadership and the far-reaching influence of the Aga Khan Development Network. They acknowledge his dedication to improving the quality of life for people worldwide, fostering cultural understanding, and actively challenging and countering Islamophobia by promoting pluralism, preserving culture, fostering dialogue, providing education and healthcare, and advocating for the values of compassion and social responsibility. His efforts serve as a powerful example of how individuals and organizations can contribute to changing perceptions toward Muslim communities and building bridges of understanding in a diverse world. His actions and initiatives not only align with his professed values but also have a tangible and positive impact on individuals and communities around the world, reflecting his unwavering commitment to the common good. His emphasis on ethics, empowerment, diversity, civil society, and respecting individual values reflects a leadership style deeply rooted in authenticity and a commitment to positive change.

In summary, Aga Khan IV's leadership and work align well with Bass and Riggio's Transformational Leadership Model, with a strong emphasis on authenticity. He has demonstrated a genuine commitment to his faith, values, and the well-being of his followers. Additionally, his inspirational vision and efforts in education and development have made a significant positive impact on the lives of millions around the world, embodying the principles of transformational leadership.

Discussion/Assignment Questions

1. What does it mean for a leader to be authentic, and why is it important?
2. How does Aga Khan IV's leadership style align with the components of transformational leadership?
3. What are the key features of Aga Khan IV's inspirational vision, and how has it influenced his community and global development?
4. What are the limitations of drawing conclusions from a single case study, and how can we mitigate these limitations?
5. What is your understanding of Islamophobia? Sources contributing to these perceptions? How did this case study influence a change in your perception?

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AVI GLOBAL PLAST PVT LTD: A GREENER FUTURE

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Abstract

AVI Global Plast, a leading Indian manufacturer of PET[1] and PVC[2] sheets, was driven by a legacy of entrepreneurship, sustainable thinking, and innovation. With a vision to become the preferred sustainable packaging partner globally, AVI Global served a diverse clientele across continents, focusing on FMCG, Electronics, Food, and more, achieving an impressive ₹2.6 billion in sales during FY 2022-23. The company's commitment to enhancing food shelf life, protective packaging, and responsible manufacturing aligned with its mission to address plastic waste and carbon impact. AVI Global exemplified its dedication to sustainability and operational efficiency through pioneering initiatives like 100% recycled PET films and safe food packaging,

[1] PET: Polyethylene Terephthalate
[2] PVC: Polyvinyl chloride
TPA: Tonnes per annum

as well as innovative collaborations and investments in solar power and IoT-enabled manufacturing. Their focus on eco-conscious practices, such as planting trees and utilizing urban waste and ocean-bound plastic, showcased their commitment to environmental conservation and circularity. While AVI Global Plast stood as a beacon of sustainability and operational prowess, the challenges they faced underscored the intricate nature of sustainability initiatives within the packaging industry. Overcoming these challenges demanded innovative thinking, strategic pivots, and persistent dedication to their vision of sustainable packaging excellence.

Keywords: Sustainable Packaging, Recycled PET (rPET), PVC Films, Innovation, Diversification

Introduction:

Business Initiatives:

AVI Global Plast is one of India's leading manufacturers of PET sheets, PVC films, and thermoformed packaging solutions, guided by a legacy of over 25 years of entrepreneurship, technology adoption, and sustainable thinking. Its vision is to become the most preferred sustainable packaging partner of choice.

Its rigid package offerings were designed to serve the unique needs of reputed clients across six continents in FMCG, Electronics, Food, Fresh Produce, Garments, Healthcare, Printing, and Box Packaging, with annual sales of ₹2.6 billion in FY 2022-23. AVI Global focused on enriching livelihoods with better food shelf life, protective packaging, and plastics circularity. These continuous efforts resulted in improved operational efficiency, food safety, and product protection. Its mission was to support collective action on plastic waste and carbon impact through responsible manufacturing and consumption.

Having started making collar bands in 1995 by K.P. Bhargava, founder member of AVI Global Plast, the company had a world-class factory spread across 2,20,000 square feet in Daman, Western India, with vertically-integrated capabilities for manufacturing PET and PVC sheets and thermoformed packaging, boasting a total plant capacity of 28,000 TPA. Its offerings were converted using state-of-the-art and automated technologies in line with international standards. At the heart of AVI Global's operations was a talented group of 450 people who understood that packaging was more than just wrapping around a product. AVI Global's Daman factory housed an in-house tooling and mould-making facility with the advantage of accessibility to ports. The factory hosted 18,000 TPA manufacturing facilities for PET films, 10,000 for PVC films, and a high-barrier packaging and custom thermoforming manufacturing facility producing about 150 million units annually.

AVI Global's steady investments in technology ensured that brands delivered the right impression consistently. It was the first Indian company to introduce 100% recycled PET films and safe packaging for food contact. They fostered market-disruptive collaborations to close the loop transparently, with end-to-end traceability of recycled content.

AVI Global used urban waste and ocean-bound plastic in its rPET sheets and thermoformed offerings. They also intended to source waste from hills and sensitive eco-zones and were keen on making them choke-free. They believed this would continue contributing to making a difference in climate change, waste-collecting communities, and the recycling industry.

For AVI Global, packaging was more than wrapping around a product. It was passionate about converting unique business needs and consumer behaviour into bespoke rigid pack solutions that were easy to use, consistent, and sustainable. It had a proprietary waste-to-packaging traceability technology, AVI Trace, to support brand sustainability missions more transparently, ensure a measurable transition toward a circular plastics economy, and protect consumers from greenwashing.

Its side-vented punnets provided enhanced shelf life with optimal air circulation during transit and storage. AVI Global's tamper-evident airtight packaging kept food products intact and untouched before reaching their final destination while giving consumers visible reasons to stay reassured about hygiene and quality.

Environmental Initiatives:
AVI Global drew inspiration and savings from the Sun by using solar power to satisfy its plant's energy requirements. Steps were also underway to grow its Internet-of-Things-enabled manufacturing for greater operational efficiency through automated condition monitoring, and predictive and preventive maintenance.

To improve the ecology at AVI Global's factory, they planted trees which, in 2.5 years, grew into a dense forest. Using Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki's technique of planting three trees per square meter compared to just one in conventional afforestation, they created a self-sustaining forest of 2,500 trees in just 9,000 square feet!

AVI Global was always on hand, curious about exploring new packaging opportunities, supporting sustainable brands, and protecting customer interest as much as their products. They tried to pack more care for products, people, and the planet. AVI Global's sustainability impact till May 2022-23 included the recycling of 238 million PET bottles, 4,773 metric tonnes of industrial waste recycled, CO2 emission savings of 6,109 metric tonnes, and gasoline savings of 5,728 metric tonnes.

The Story / Challenge:
On Dec 31st, 2021, Mr. Sukhdeep Sethi, MD, rose early, intending to spend New Year's Eve with his family. However, his day took a thought-provoking turn when he read the BBC news about the French ban on plastic packaging for fruits and vegetables, effective from New Year's Day. He knew this would impact his company's fruit packaging business.

While stuck in traffic on his way to the office, he emailed Mr. Akhilesh Bhargava, his Joint MD, about the French ban on plastics and ended it with three dots… signalling whether other countries would follow suit. As he pondered the situation, Mr. Bhargava reflected on his company's journey from humble beginnings to where it stood that day.

In 1995, Collar Pack Pvt. Ltd, a leader in sustainable rigid packaging, was established. The company began with shirt packaging accessories and expanded to serve clients in FMCG, Electronics, Food, Fresh Produce, Healthcare, Printing, and Box Packaging, offering tailored packaging solutions across six continents.

From 1995 to 1998, AVI Global Plast faced fierce competition in the packaging industry, particularly for commodity garments. In 2003, Sukhdeep came onboard and focused on the company's strategy and growth. The company, driven by a strong desire to succeed, considered backward integration by venturing into the production of raw material input - PVC films in 1998. This strategic decision paid off as it diversified into consumer goods, food, pharma, printing, and thermoforming industries. This transformation led to significant business growth, both in terms of profit and sales.

Over the years, the company became a pioneer in various packaging offerings, such as PVC films for consumer goods, laminated barrier films for food, PET sheets, high barrier trays, and lidding films to increase the shelf life of sweets, heat-seal punnets mainly for exports, PET sheets, and thermoformed packaging with 100% verified recycled contents, protective discharge sheets, trays for sensitive electronics, airtight leakproof PET hinged containers to increase freshness in products, etc.

AVI Global Plast's focus shifted toward sustainable and environmentally friendly practices as the global market trended in that direction. The company began investing in alternative materials, with PET emerging as the best choice due to its versatility and recyclability. In 2013, they invested in their first PET sheet extrusion line, catering to global demand. Subsequent years saw a series of innovations, including the introduction of IoT for preventive maintenance in 2020, the establishment of a tool room in the same year for in-house mould production, and the installation of a fully automatic thermoforming machine for medical device packaging in 2021. In 2022, AVI Global Plast introduced AVI Trace, a digital traceability platform for tracking recycled PET from waste sources to final packages.

To further their goals, AVI Global Plast expanded production capacity incrementally. In 2008, rigid PVC film production capacity increased to 12,000 MT p.a. Two years later, the PVC sheet production capacity was raised to 15,000 MT p.a. By 2018, PET sheet production grew to 6,000 MT from 3,000 MT p.a. and was further increased to 11,000 MT by 2021.

In 2014, AVI faced the challenge of low EBITA margins due to the commoditized nature of its film business. To overcome this, they began introducing value-added products, including fruit packaging. While this decision took time to stabilize due to their lack of expertise in thermoforming, it proved to be the right choice.

In 2018, the company established a self-sustaining urban forest of 2,500 trees using the Japanese Miyawaki technique. They also invested in solar panels, gradually increasing capacity to save energy.

Fast forward to 2021, when Mr. Sethi arrived at the office, his focus lay on the challenges that the coming year would bring due to evolving regulations and external pressures. Guided by Winston Churchill's who said, "Continuous effort – not strength or intelligence – is the key to unlocking our potential," he and his team then initiated discussions on how to respond to the French ban and align with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mr. Sethi had proposed an 'Economy-Industry-Company Approach' for analysing the situation. Further research had revealed that France's ban on plastic for fruits and vegetables, along with similar actions in other countries, could impact AVI Global's fruit packaging business. The company's analysis had shown that competitors had adopted a multi-material approach to cater to customer preferences and market demands, which had led to discussions on diversifying into paper-based packaging and increasing investments in recyclable packaging for fruits and vegetables.

The Road Ahead:

AVI Global's management had advocated an incremental analysis regarding the diversification into paper-based packaging and the continuation of recyclable packaging. They had also suggested conducting a cost-benefit analysis for building the infrastructure for rPET flakes and paper-based packaging compared to recyclable plastic packaging. Furthermore, the management had decided to provide detailed insights into integrating paper-based and recyclable packaging operations.

The management then initiated research into developing paper-based packaging and establishing in-house recycling infrastructure. They recognized that the constraints for investing in paper-based packaging technologies encompassed capital, human resources, infrastructure, and expertise. It was clear that AVI Global needed to distinguish its offerings in the paper-based packaging market to encourage customers to consider AVI's products.

The management had noted that an INR 15-crore investment was required for paper-based packaging, along with an additional INR 50-crore investment for developing the infrastructure for recyclable packaging. Other working capital provisions had to be made for these alternatives. In addition to the regular cost of capital, they had allocated an additional percentage to account for the risk of potential regulatory bans. The management had pointed out that the market revenue for intermediate waste was negligible, and the rPET flakes business was highly unprofitable. Mr. Akhilesh Bhargava had commented, “We must focus on increasing the demand for PET flakes. The in-house PET recycling infrastructure will be developed solely for AVI's internal consumption, serving as input for recycled packaging. The ideal capacity for effectively operating a recycling plant was 2,000 tonnes per month, but AVI's current flake requirement was 400 tonnes per month.”

Mr. Prahlad Bhargava, Director, cautioned about the learning curve the company had experienced in the past, especially with building people capacity. Anything new had typically taken 2 to 3 years to stabilize. "We had to innovate to shorten this curve," the leadership at operations had to be on their toes from day one.

Mr. Sethi had added, “Plastic tax regulations in key target markets, including Australia, the UK, the EU, the USA, and India, mandated a minimum recycled content. We benefited from a geographical advantage since India's 90% PET recycling rate contributed to more stable prices and availability of recycled PET flakes." Continuing the discussion, Mr. Sethi had stated, "AVI currently held a 40% share in the country's overall grape punnet exports. Other key growth segments included packaging for various berries and cherry tomatoes. We were also the approved supplier to India's leading exporters and eight major European international retail chains for fruit punnets."

Mr. Sukhdeep Sethi had also highlighted that they offered up to 100% recycled PET films and thermoformed offerings, including ocean-bound plastic, which were fully traceable to waste sources for regulatory compliance and ethical manufacturing. All the recycled packaging solutions adhered to international quality and safety standards such as EFSA, REACH, and USFDA to ensure global market access and bolster customer confidence. They maintained a diversified portfolio of ready-to-ship and customized packaging solutions for FMCG, Pharma, Healthcare, Electronics, Food, and Fresh Produce. AVI was India's only thermoformer manufacturing medical device packaging, reducing import dependencies and lead times for healthcare companies in India. Over the past year, AVI had introduced other value-added products such as airtight hinged containers and tamper-evident clamshells[3] for the food industry, both retail and institutional, as well as anti-static or ESD-safe trays to protect sensitive electronic components used in the electronics, healthcare, and automobile industries. They offered a one-stop manufacturing solution: fully integrated in-house processes, from concept consultation to rapid prototyping, sheet manufacturing, mould-making, thermoforming, and testing. The management summarized that it would take two years to become fully accustomed, gaining additional certifications, training, undergoing audits, and adopting new technologies.

Mr. Akhilesh Bhargava and Sukhdeep Sethi had faced the dilemma of diversification and investment, considering the complexities of the packaging industry, regulatory issues, environmental concerns, and market dynamics.

[3] "Clamshells" refer to a type of packaging that consists of two hinged halves that come together to encase and protect the contents.

Their meticulous approach to research, analysis, and teamwork had exemplified their commitment to making impactful decisions that aligned with their business's growth and sustainability go

Discussion / Assignment Questions

1. Appraise the diversification decision of AVI to enter into the paper-based package solutions using economic, social and environmental perspectives.

2. Illustrate environmental and social drivers behind AVI Global's decision to pursue a greener future through paper-based packaging and backward integration for plastic recycling.

3. Develop a plan for AVI Global to implement backward integration for rPET flakes plastic recycling within its supply chain for its internal consumption.

4. Develop a comprehensive strategy for AVI Global to enhance its sustainability practices further. What steps should the company take to continue its journey towards a greener future?

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