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CASTLE

The Case Journal of Jansons School of Business

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The Case Journal of Jansons School of Business
A Depository of Indian Cases
Volume 6
July - December 2025

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PREFACE

In an increasingly volatile and interconnected world, the challenges of modern business require a new generation of leaders who can navigate complexity with agility, creativity, and foresight.

The changing dynamics of global trade, technological advancements, evolving customer behaviors, and emerging market trends demand a nuanced understanding of business operations, strategy, and innovation.

CASTLE presents an array of real-world cases that reflect these contemporary challenges.

This collection is designed to inspire a deeper understanding of management principles, equip students with the tools to analyze diverse business scenarios, and foster practical decision making skills.

At JSB, we strive to enable future leaders who will not only excel in their respective fields but also lead with integrity, innovation, and a vision that aligns with the ever-evolving business world.

This volume serves as a platform for engaging with complex business problems, providing opportunities to develop strategies that drive sustainable success across industries.

Through this book, we invite you to move beyond traditional theory and delve into the practical applications of management concepts.

The case studies are crafted to challenge your thinking, encourage collaborative problem-solving, and push the boundaries of conventional business strategies.

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Dear Readers,

It is our pleasure to present Volume 6 of CASTLE, a thought-provoking collection of cases that challenge some of the most pressing issues businesses face today.

The world of business has never been more dynamic. With the rapid pace of change in technology, consumer preferences, and market conditions, organizations must stay ahead of the curve. This volume features carefully curated cases that reflect the complexity and interconnectedness of today's business environment. They offer an opportunity for students, professionals, and educators alike to engage with real-world problems and explore strategies for overcoming them.

Our goal with this volume is to provide you with an immersive learning experience that enhances your ability to think critically, act strategically, and lead with purpose. By studying these cases, you will gain invaluable insights into the ways businesses navigate challenges such as digital transformation, sustainability, market competition, and more. These cases are designed to not only deepen your knowledge but also to refine your analytical, strategic, and leadership skills.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the authors and contributors who have brought their expertise and perspectives to this collection. Their work enriches this volume and provides diverse viewpoints on how to approach and solve complex business problems.

At CASTLE, we believe in fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning. The cases in this volume embody these values and serve as a springboard for the next generation of business leaders.

We hope that you will find these case studies as insightful and inspiring as we have. May they serve as a catalyst for your own growth, encouraging you to explore new ideas, challenge assumptions, and develop solutions that will drive the future of business.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing the impact these cases will have on your journey of learning and leadership.

Warm regards,
Dr. Rajesh R
Editor-in-Chief, CASTLE

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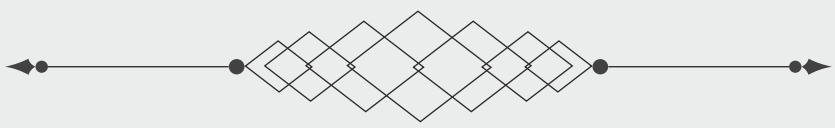
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The Depressed Wage Scenario of Hospital Nurses in Kerala

Dr. Sunil Puliyakot
Professor
Jansons School of Business

The wage scenario for hospital nurses in Kerala, particularly within the private sector, has been a protracted issue marked by stark disparities and a history of industrial action. Despite the state's reputation as a major global source of skilled nursing professionals, many have historically endured working conditions and salaries that were, in some cases, worse than those of unskilled manual laborers.

Historically, private hospitals, which employ the vast majority of the state's around 1.13 lakh nurses, often offered minimal starting salaries. Before significant government intervention, fresh nurses in some smaller facilities received as little as ₹7,000 to ₹10,000 per month, with negligible annual increments, an amount widely considered insufficient for survival given the cost of living. This situation, combined with long hours and a lack of benefits like overtime pay, led to significant distress and frequent, large-scale protests by associations like the United Nurses Association (UNA).

A pivotal development occurred with a Supreme Court directive in 2016, which recommended a minimum basic salary of ₹20,000 for nurses in private hospitals across India. The Kerala government subsequently issued a notification in April 2018, aiming to implement a revised minimum wage structure, with a basic pay of at least ₹20,000 for staff nurses in hospitals with up to 100 beds. However, implementation has faced consistent challenges, with the Kerala High Court later striking down the 2018 notification, leading many hospitals to revert to paying wages based on an outdated 2013 notification.

As of late 2025, the government is actively working on issuing a new draft notification to revise the minimum wages, as previous committee discussions failed to reach a consensus due to the uncooperative stance of some hospital managements. While the public sector offers significantly higher, structured pay scales (e.g., a starting salary of around ₹39,300 with allowances, potentially rising to ₹83,000 with experience), many private sector employees still report receiving net salaries far below the standards, often around ₹15,000 to ₹25,000 monthly, sometimes after compulsory

deductions. This persistent disparity and struggle for fair compensation remains a primary driver behind the high rate of migration of skilled nurses from Kerala to other regions and countries where they can earn substantially more.

The Paradox of Nurse Supply and Demand in Kerala's Private Hospitals

The employment scenario for trained nurses in Kerala's private healthcare sector presents a striking paradox: the state is a globally recognized hub for producing highly skilled nurses, yet the local private hospitals face consistent staff shortages and high attrition rates. This situation stems from a complex interplay of a vast supply of graduates and a demand for labor that is often characterized by exploitative practices, leading to a system that struggles to retain its talent.

The Supply Side: A Hub of Talent

Kerala has a century-long tradition of nursing education and currently boasts nearly 100 nursing colleges, producing approximately 17,000 graduates and diploma holders annually. This robust educational infrastructure ensures a continuous and significant supply of trained professionals entering the job market, many of whom are highly literate and English-proficient, making them attractive to both domestic and international employers. The sheer volume of graduates means that many job seekers have historically been placed in a weak bargaining position.

The Demand Side: The "Push" Factors

The private healthcare sector in Kerala, which employs the vast majority of the state's nurses (around 75,000), consistently reports staff shortages, with some estimates suggesting a 30% shortfall. However, the "demand" in this context is often for inexpensive labor under challenging conditions, rather than a demand for compensated professional work with standard benefits.

Key factors on the demand side include:

Low Wages: Private hospitals have historically offered abysmally low salaries, a primary driver for dissatisfaction.

Poor Working Conditions: Nurses often face heavy workloads, with patient-to-nurse ratios that can reach 20:1, far exceeding recommended standards.

Lack of Benefits and Security: Many positions have been contractual, lacking benefits like provident fund, gratuity, or health coverage, with some hospitals even holding certificates or imposing release bonds.

The Resulting Scenario: Shortage amidst Surpluses

The outcome is a highly skewed market where a "surplus" of available talent coexists with a "shortage" of willing, local employees. Nurses view the local private sector jobs merely as a steppingstone to acquire the mandatory one to two years of clinical experience required for overseas employment. This phenomenon has created a significant "brain drain" from Kerala, as nurses migrate in large numbers to the Middle East, Europe, the UK, and the US for better pay, better nurse-patient ratios, and improved job security.

While global demand for Indian nurses is projected to rise, the persistent disparity between public and private sector wages within Kerala (with public sector basic pay being much higher) exacerbates the local staffing crisis. The scenario highlights a systemic failure to regulate the private health sector and incentivize the retention of the highly capable workforce trained within the state's own institutions.

Discussion Questions

How do you explain the above situation using demand - supply equilibrium model?

How do you mark the shortage of trained nurses experienced by the private sector hospitals in Kerala in a demand - supply diagram?

How does the above scenario affect the healthcare sector in Kerala? Who are the gainers and losers of the above condition?

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The Rise and Fall of the Unit Trust of India (UTI)

Dr. Sunil Puliyakot
Professor
Jansons School of Business

The Unit Trust of India (UTI) holds a significant place in India's financial history, established in 1963 by an Act of Parliament as the nation's first mutual fund. Its primary objective was to mobilize the savings of middle and low-income groups and channel them into the capital markets for the country's industrial growth. UTI launched its flagship scheme, the Unit Scheme 1964 (US-64), which became immensely popular, attracting over 20 million investors at its peak and operating as a monopoly in the mutual fund industry for over two decades until 1987.

For years, the government-backed institution was considered a symbol of safety and an assured return investment avenue, operating outside the purview of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) regulations that were introduced for other mutual funds in 1993. However, this period of dominance was followed by a dramatic downfall that culminated in a major crisis in 2001, shattering public trust and necessitating a government bailout and subsequent restructuring.

Reasons for Failure

The failure of UTI, specifically the collapse of the US-64 scheme, was a result of a combination of internal mismanagement, a lack of transparency, regulatory failures, and external market volatility.

Shift to Risky Investments: The scheme, initially designed as an income fund primarily focused on debt instruments, gradually increased its exposure to volatile equity markets in the late 1980s and 1990s in search of higher returns. By the late 1990s, the equity component reached as high as 65%, a significant deviation from its original mandate.

Poor Fund Management and Lack of Transparency: UTI fund managers made reckless investment decisions, including heavy investments in a few volatile stocks and even in companies that no longer existed. Crucially, unlike other mutual funds, UTI did not disclose the Net Asset Value (NAV) of US-64, only announcing arbitrary sale and repurchase prices. This masked the scheme's true financial health and allowed management to pay dividends out of reserves, further eroding the fund's capital base.

Political Influence and Collusion: The institution was susceptible to political pressure, with allegations of being forced to invest in underperforming Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) stocks during the government's disinvestment programs and in scrips favored by influential brokers (such as those in the Ketan Parekh scam).

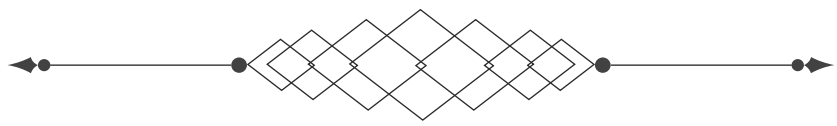
Regulatory Failures: The fact that the flagship US-64 scheme remained outside SEBI's regulatory ambit for years created a significant oversight gap. The existing weak internal controls and the "persistent and pervasive" failure of key regulators allowed mismanagement to persist without timely intervention.

Liquidity Crisis: By the late 1990s, redemptions began to exceed sales, leading to depleting funds and a liquidity crisis. The situation peaked in July 2001 when UTI abruptly froze the sale and repurchase of US-64 units for six months, trapping millions of investors and causing widespread public outrage and a crisis of confidence in the Indian financial system.

In response to the crisis, the government provided a massive bailout and the UTI Act of 1963 was repealed in February 2003. The entity was bifurcated into the Specified Undertaking of the Unit Trust of India (SUUTI), which managed the problematic assured-return schemes, and UTI Mutual Fund, a SEBI-regulated entity that operates like any other modern Asset Management Company (AMC) today.

Discussion question

As a portfolio manager in a mutual fund, what lessons can you learn from the failure of UTI and what safeguards will you adopt in your own fund to avoid such risks?



Process Improvement and Quality Control at Nova Plastics Ltd

Dr. S. Thirupparkadal Nambi
Professor
Jansons School of Business

Nova Plastics Ltd. is a mid-sized Indian manufacturing enterprise located in Hosur, Tamil Nadu, an industrial hub known for its concentration of plastic and packaging units. The company manufactures high-grade plastic containers that are supplied to major Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) and pharmaceutical companies across India. These clients demand strict adherence to quality standards, as even minor deviations in product specifications can disrupt downstream packaging operations and regulatory compliance.

One of Nova Plastics' key products is a 1-litre food-grade plastic container, produced in large daily batches using automated moulding machines. Given the scale of production and the sensitivity of customer requirements, maintaining consistency in product weight is critical. Even small variations in weight can lead to overfilling or underfilling during packaging, increased material costs, and rejection of consignments by institutional buyers.

In recent months, the company has received multiple complaints regarding excessive variation in container weight across different production batches. These complaints have raised concerns within management about process stability and quality control effectiveness. Initial internal reviews suggest that the observed variability may be linked to inconsistent machine calibration, fluctuations in raw material quality, and variations in machine downtime during production runs.

To investigate the issue in a systematic and data-driven manner, the Quality Control (QC) department undertook a focused study of the production process. Operational data were collected from 12 randomly selected production days, capturing key process and output variables. Each day's observation is considered independent, and the study period did not coincide with any major changes in machinery, production methods, workforce, or raw material suppliers. As a result, the collected data are assumed to reflect normal operating conditions

Management wants to understand the statistical relationship between process variables and production performance in order to reduce defects and improve output consistency.

Day	Average Weight (grams)	Machine Downtime (minutes)	Defective Units (%)	Output (units)
1	100.8	18	2.5	4800
2	101.2	20	2.8	4700
3	99.6	25	3.6	4550
4	100.1	22	3.2	4600
5	101.5	15	2.1	4900
6	102.0	12	1.8	5100
7	99.2	28	4.0	4400
8	100.5	21	3.0	4650
9	101.8	14	2.0	5000
10	102.3	10	1.5	5200
11	100.0	24	3.4	4550
12	99.5	26	3.8	4450

The ultimate objective is to gain statistical insights that can support informed managerial decisions aimed at improving process consistency, reducing defects, and enhancing overall production efficiency.

Discussion Questions:

- Which operational factors are most strongly associated with defective output?
- Does machine downtime significantly influence production output?
- Can simple statistical analysis support better quality control decisions?

Teaching Notes

Learning Outcomes:

After completing this case, students should be able to

- Apply descriptive statistics in an operations context
- Use correlation to examine relationships between variables
- Perform and interpret simple linear regression
- Translate statistical findings into quality improvement decisions

Abstract:

Set in an Indian manufacturing environment, the case focuses on Nova Plastics Ltd., a firm experiencing variability in product quality, specifically in the weight of its plastic containers. The situation reflects a common managerial challenge where operational inefficiencies and quality deviations must be understood and addressed using statistical reasoning rather than intuition alone.

The case provides a structured dataset collected from multiple production days and encourages students to apply **descriptive statistics** to assess process variability, identify unusual patterns, and summarize key production characteristics. Through measures such as averages and dispersion, students gain an initial understanding of stability and inconsistency in manufacturing processes. Visual tools and summary measures help students recognize why variability, not just average performance, is critical in quality management.

The next stage of the case introduces **correlation analysis** to examine the relationships between operational variables such as machine downtime, defect rates, and production output. Students learn to

distinguish between mere association and managerial relevance, and to interpret correlation coefficients in a business context without overemphasis on mathematical complexity. This stage reinforces the idea that statistical relationships must be translated into meaningful operational insights.

The case then progresses to **simple linear regression,** enabling students to quantify the impact of a key process variable on production performance. Rather than focusing on advanced statistical diagnostics, the emphasis is placed on understanding the regression coefficient, direction of influence, and practical implications for managerial decision-making. Students are encouraged to use the regression model for basic prediction and to assess how improvements in operational factors could influence output levels. By the end of the case, students are expected to appreciate how fundamental statistical tools can support quality improvement initiatives and enable data-driven decisions in real-world manufacturing settings.

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Integrated Case Study: Marketing Analytics for Promotion Budget Allocation

Dr. S. Thirupparkadal Nambi
Professor
Jansons School of Business

Prime Serve India Pvt. Ltd., is a service firm periodically offers a specialized service product that is available only for one month at a time. Each offering is independent, occurs randomly during the year, and shows no seasonal or cyclical pattern. Because of this, traditional time-series forecasting is not feasible, making data-driven analytics essential for planning promotion budgets.

Promotion funds are allocated before or during the month, and all sales recorded are attributable solely to that month's promotion effort. There is no spillover effect from one month to another.

Prime Serve uses four promotional media: - Radio commercials - Newspaper advertisements - Television commercials - Point-of-Sale (POS) advertising cards. Monthly data on sales revenue and promotion expenditure (in thousands) have been collected for a random sample of past campaigns.

Monthly Sales and Promotion Expenditure

Month	Sales	Radio	Newspaper	TV	POS
1	420	40	25	120	15
2	450	50	30	140	20
3	470	55	28	150	18
4	500	60	35	170	22
5	520	65	40	180	25
6	540	70	45	200	30
7	560	75	42	210	28
8	590	80	50	230	35
9	610	85	55	240	38
10	630	90	60	260	40
11	650	95	58	270	42
12	680	100	65	300	45

The management's core question is:

Given a fixed promotion budget of ₹3,50,000 for the next campaign, how should funds be allocated across promotional media to maximize expected product sales?

Discussion Questions:

To answer this, the firm adopts a three-stage Business Analytics approach: Descriptive, Predictive, and Prescriptive Analytics.

i. Before deciding how to allocate the next campaign's budget, the firm needs to identify which promotional variables appear most influential in driving sales.

ii. Management requires a statistically valid model to predict sales incorporating most influential variables and support budget allocation decisions.

iii. What is the forecasted product sales if the firm invests ₹70,000 in radio commercials and ₹2,50,000 in TV commercials?

iv. To determine the optimal allocation of the promotion budget between Radio and TV advertising using an optimization model.

v. Given a total promotion budget of ₹3,50,000, management must decide how much to allocate to Radio and TV commercials while satisfying operational constraints.

Teaching Notes

Learning Objectives

After completing this case, students should be able to: Apply descriptive statistics and data visualization Perform correlation and regression analysis for prediction Interpret regression results for managerial decisions Formulate and solve a linear programming model for optimization

Teaching Plan

Session 1: Descriptive Analytics - summary statistics, charts, initial insights.
Session 2: Predictive Analytics - correlation, regression modeling, forecasting.
Session 3: Prescriptive Analytics - LP formulation and optimization using Solver.

Abstract

This case demonstrates the end-to-end application of Business Analytics through Descriptive, Predictive, and Prescriptive Analytics in a marketing decision-making context. Students analyze promotional expenditure data to determine optimal budget allocation. Descriptive analysis typically reveals stronger relationships between Sales and Radio/TV advertising compared to Newspaper and POS ads. Predictive modeling generally identifies Radio and TV as statistically significant predictors with higher explanatory power. Prescriptive analytics illustrates how regression equations can be used as objective functions under real-world constraints.

Prescriptive Model Outline

Decision Variables:
R = Radio advertising spend
T = TV advertising spend

Objective Function:
Maximize Sales $Z = 275.69R + 48.34T$

Constraints:

$R + T \leq 350$
$R \geq 15$
$T \geq 75$
$T \geq 2R$

After completing all three stages, students will be able to apply descriptive analytics to explore business data, build and interpret predictive models using regression techniques, translate predictive insights into prescriptive decisions using optimization and in effect understand how analytics supports marketing planning and budget allocation.

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The Slow Unravelling of Big Bazaar: A Story of Channel Ambition, Misalignment, and Collapse

Dr. M. Balathandayuthapani
Professor
Jansons School of Business

Big Bazaar, launched in 2001 by Kishore Biyani under the Future Group, revolutionized organized retail in India by introducing a hypermarket model that appealed to price-sensitive middle-class consumers. The chain's tagline "Is se sasta aur accha kahin nahi" captured its value-driven ethos, offering groceries, apparel, electronics, and household goods under one roof at competitive prices. From its first three stores in Kolkata, Bangalore, and Hyderabad, Big Bazaar expanded rapidly to over 290 stores by 2014 across more than 100 cities, achieving annual revenues exceeding ₹9,000 crores by that period. This growth mirrored India's retail sector evolution, where organized retail penetration rose from 7% to 11% over five years leading to 2020, driven by urbanization and rising incomes.

At its peak, Big Bazaar commanded a significant share of the hypermarket segment, with 244 million annual footfalls and operations spanning 15.90 million sq. ft. across 1,350 stores in 400 cities by March 2020. Future Retail Limited (FRL), its parent, reported consolidated revenues of ₹20,118 crores in FY2020, underscoring the scale. However, this dominance eroded due to overexpansion, operational inefficiencies, e-commerce disruption, and the COVID-19 shock, culminating in Reliance Retail's takeover of over 200 stores in 2022 and FRL's path to liquidation. This case examines these dynamics, drawing on financial data, strategic missteps, and market shifts to highlight retail sustainability challenges.

Founding and Growth:

Kishore Biyani, often called India's "Retail King," founded Big Bazaar in 2001 after building Pantaloons in the apparel space during the 1990s. The hypermarket concept mimicked traditional Indian bazaars but in a modern, organized format, targeting tier-1 and emerging tier-2 cities. Initial stores opened within 22 days in three metros, followed by expansion to Nagpur in 2003, marking entry into smaller markets. By 2006, Big Bazaar introduced "Sabse Sasta Din," a Republic Day sale that became a national shopping phenomenon, boosting footfalls and brand loyalty.

Revenue growth was explosive: from modest beginnings, the chain crossed 100 stores by 2008 one of the fastest global hypermarket expansions and hit ₹9,000 crores by 2014 through economies of scale and bulk sourcing. Private labels like "Tata Star" and loyalty programs such as Big Bazaar Profit Club, launched in 2013, enhanced margins and repeat visits. By 2015, futuristic formats like Big Bazaar GEN NXT in Mumbai signalled innovation, while partnerships like Oxigen Services in 2016 expanded franchising via Big Bazaar Direct. Future Group's diversification into formats like fbb (94 stores), Foodhall (9 stores), and small-format outlets (956) created a Pan-India footprint of 1,511 stores by 2018, generating over ₹20,000 crores annually.

This phase showcased Big Bazaar's mastery of Indian consumer psychology, blending affordability with experiential shopping. Festivals like Diwali drove mega sales, turning stores into family destinations and cementing market leadership.

Aggressive Expansion Strategy

Big Bazaar's growth hinged on rapid store proliferation, from 1 in 2001 to 290+ by 2014 (including Hypercity), and plans for 300 by 2021 via 16 new openings in tier-2 cities. This targeted emerging consumption in smaller towns, less affected by pandemics, covering nearly all states. By FY2020, FRL operated 290 Big Bazaar/Hypercity stores amid 15.90 million sq. ft. of space. The strategy leveraged high volumes in thin-margin hypermarkets, with bulk procurement eliminating middlemen for cost advantages.

However, long-term mall leases with escalating rents created fixed-cost burdens, especially in unprofitable locations. Debt fuelled this: Future Group's listed entities rose from ₹10,951 crores (March 2019) to ₹12,778 crores (September 2019), reaching ₹17,000 crores by FY21 with a debt-to-equity ratio of 9.1x. Acquisitions like Easyday, Nilgiris, and Hypercity, plus stake sales (e.g., 49% in Future Coupons to Amazon for ₹1,500 crores in 2019), aimed to deleverage but left ₹6,000 crore debt. By 2018, 10 million sq. ft. hosted 244 million footfalls, but single-digit margins strained sustainability. Management prioritized "more stores, more cities" over profitability, ignoring tier-2 demand uncertainties.

Operational Challenges

Supply chain frailties plagued Big Bazaar as expansion outpaced backend capabilities. Automated replenishment from central distribution centers and local vendors struggled with forecasting, causing stock-outs of essentials like flour while excess inventory gathered dust. Inventory models like Economic Order Quantity (EOQ) aimed to balance holding costs and demand, categorizing it as deterministic or stochastic, but lead-time variances led to shrinkage and defective stock issues.

Warehouses strained, trucks delayed, and store managers lacked training amid overburdened staff. By FY2021, operational income fell to ₹6,426.81 crores from ₹20,152.43 crore (-68% YoY), reflecting inefficiencies. Frontline complaints about underinvestment in logistics drowned in expansion targets, degrading service. High shrinkage from poor floor management compounded losses, with 20 stores closing due to high rents and low demand.

Metric	FY2020	FY2021	Change
Revenue (₹ crore)	20,152	6,427	-68%
Net Profit/Loss (₹ crore)	33.84 (profit)	-3,180	Reversal
Debt/Equity Ratio	2.96x	18.44x	+523%
Interest Coverage	Positive	-0.25x	Negative

Rise of E-Commerce Competition:

E-commerce disrupted Big Bazaar's model as Flipkart (acquired by Walmart) and Amazon offered doorstep delivery, vast assortments, and pricing transparency, capturing youth. Reliance Retail and DMart countered with efficient supply chains and cost controls, eroding Big Bazaar's edge. Online sales hit 15% of some stores' totals, but Big Bazaar's late digital pivot Future Pay, Big Bazaar GENIE app in 2020 lacked integration with 85% physical revenue streams.

Clunky tech and weak fulfilment failed against JioMart's kirana integration. Competitors like DMart's steady expansion outpaced Big Bazaar's overreach, while Amazon's 2019 investment in Future Coupons fuelled disputes.

Covid-19 and financial distress:

The 2020 pandemic crushed physical retail: lockdowns halted footfalls (85% of revenue), freezing inventory while rents and salaries persisted. FY2021 revenues plunged 69% to ₹6,261 crore standalone, with consolidated at ₹6,304 crores. Losses mounted: ₹54,724 crores after-tax in one year. Stores deteriorated, vendors unpaid, morale plummeted. Cash flows tightened, leases terminated, prompting 2020's ₹24,713 crore asset sale to Reliance Retail including Big Bazaar for debt reduction. Amazon's legal block via Singapore arbitration delayed it.

Reliance Takeover and Liquidation:

Lease defaults led Reliance to assume 200+ stores in February 2022, rebranding them (e.g., Smart Bazaars), absorbing staff, and supplying via JioMart. Signages changed overnight, shocking employees and customers. FRL's crisis deepened: FY2023 losses at ₹33,503 crores (improved from ₹44,976 crores prior), with expected credit losses on receivables. By 2023, liquidation loomed amid ₹17,000+ crore debt. Biyani's personal ₹2,000 crore debt factored into stalled $3bn Reliance deal.

Key Lessons and Analysis:

Big Bazaar's saga underscores profitability over unchecked growth: unprofitable locations and debt eroded viability. Supply chains must scale with stores; Omni channel integration is vital against e-commerce. Competitors like DMart succeeded via efficiency.

Discussion Questions:

1.Analyse the reasons for the failure of Big Bazaar's channel strategy.

2.Explain how Big Bazaar could have balanced expansion with operational sustainability.

3.Supply chain was inherently flawed, or failed due to scale mismanagement – Critically analyse

4.Deduce the reasons for the failure of Big Bazaar from becoming a strong omnichannel retailer.

5.Compare Big Bazaar's channel model with that of DMart or Reliance Retail highlight the differences

Teaching Notes

Case Synopsis

This case narrates the rise and fall of Big Bazaar, focusing on how channel management failures over-expansion, under-developed supply chains, slow digital adoption, and high fixed costs led to the retailer's collapse. It encourages students to analyse distribution strategy holistically and understand how channel design, execution, and financial discipline must align.

Key Learning Objectives

1. To illustrate how channel expansion must be supported by backend capabilities.
2. To demonstrate the importance of supply-chain efficiency in modern retail.
3. To explore the impact of technological change on traditional distribution channels.
4. To reflect on cost structures, fixed cost risks, and channel profitability.
5. To analyse real-world consequences of misalignment between strategy and execution.

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Red Bull's Stratos Project – Publicity, Public Relations & Event Marketing at its best

Dr. M. Balathandayuthapani
Professor
Jansons School of Business

On October 14, 2012, Austrian skydiver Felix Baumgartner achieved a historic feat by ascending to the edge of the stratosphere and leaping from nearly 24 miles (39 km) above the Earth. During his free fall, Baumgartner broke the sound barrier without engine power, reaching supersonic speed. This remarkable event, known as the Red Bull Stratos project, was sponsored not by a government space agency but by Red Bull, a global energy drink company. The mission was simultaneously a landmark in human scientific achievement and a revolutionary example of integrated marketing communication.

This case study explores the conception, execution, and outcomes of Red Bull Stratos, illustrating how it pushed the limits of marketing innovation while reinforcing Red Bull's brand identity through extreme adventure and cutting-edge digital engagement.

Background and Brand Philosophy

Red Bull has established itself as more than just an energy drink brand. Since its inception, the company has positioned itself as a lifestyle brand linked with energy, adrenaline, and daring adventure. Red Bull's marketing strategy has long eschewed traditional advertising in favor of experiential marketing, sponsoring extreme sports, and producing captivating content.

The Stratos project exemplified this approach, aligning with Red Bull's core brand values of pushing human limits and daring exploration. It was conceived to break records, inspire globally, and contribute to scientific knowledge in aerospace medicine and high-altitude exploration.

Felix Baumgartner, an experienced BASE jumper and skydiver, was selected as the mission's central figure due to his exemplary record and fearless spirit, embodying Red Bull's promise of "giving wings" in the most literal sense.

The Campaign Strategy:

Digital Platforms as the Core

Red Bull chose YouTube as the primary platform for dissemination. The event was live-streamed with unprecedented reach, drawing over 8 million concurrent viewers worldwide, breaking record after record in live streaming history for branded content. On the day of the jump, Red Bull's YouTube channel grew significantly by adding approximately 87,800 new subscribers, eventually surpassing 10.5 million total subscribers.

The live broadcast harnessed the power of real-time content consumption, delivering suspense and excitement directly to audiences globally. This innovative focus on digital broadcasting was a keystone in the campaign's success.

Social Media Amplification:

Social media channels played pivotal complementary roles, each serving specific purposes:

Facebook: Red Bull created a dedicated Stratos page that attracted nearly 900,000 interactions on the day of the jump alone. One strategic post garnered 460,000 likes, 18,000 comments, and 44,000 shares within hours, amplifying organic reach and engagement. The page nurtured community by sharing teasers, behind-the-scenes content, and post-jump highlights.

Twitter: The official Stratos handle featured the slogan "Mission to the Edge of Space," emphasizing exploration and science over mere product promotion. Hashtags like #livejump and #stratos generated over 20,000 mentions in just two days, helping fuel a global conversation around the event.

These platforms together allowed Red Bull to create a dynamic and interactive audience experience, transforming viewers into participants' eager to follow and share the unfolding story.

Traditional Media Integration

Beyond digital, over 40 TV networks and 130 digital media outlets covered the event live, expanding the reach into traditional broadcast channels. The story was supported by documentaries, interviews with Baumgartner, and scientific discussions, which helped sustain public interest beyond the initial jump.

This blend of traditional and new media coverage maximized visibility while lending credibility and narrative depth to the campaign.

Content Beyond the Event

The storytelling extended well beyond the jump. Red Bull produced documentaries on the months-long preparation, interactive web features tracing technical insights and safety measures, and Stratos museum exhibits that allowed fans to explore the mission's historic context.

This continuous content creation kept the audience engaged long after the live event, ensuring the campaign remained relevant and inspirational over time.

Marketing Outcomes

The Red Bull Stratos campaign was a breakthrough in brand building and digital marketing:

The brand reinforced its image as daring, adventurous, and innovative.

Social media was dominated by Stratos discussions, with 54% of online conversation on Twitter, 26% on Facebook, 14% on video platforms, and 6% on blogs.

The event set records in digital engagement and live streaming viewership.

The campaign boosted Red Bull's digital footprint, expanding its subscriber base and social media followers significantly, contributing to long-term brand equity.

The campaign demonstrated that a well-executed experience, shared through the right platforms, can resonate far more deeply than traditional advertising.

Scientific and Cultural Contributions

Red Bull Stratos was more than marketing; it was an exploration mission that contributed valuable scientific data. The project advanced understanding in aerospace medicine, high-altitude parachute design, and pressure suit technology, offering insights useful for future space travel and emergency bailouts.

Baumgartner rose to global celebrity, and the campaign elevated Red Bull from a commercial brand to a cultural phenomenon blending entertainment, adventure, and scientific discovery. It blurred the lines between advertising and genuine exploration, inspiring a new wave of human ambition.

Risks and Challenges

The mission carried significant risks:

Human risk: A fatal accident would have resulted in profound reputational damage.

Financial cost: The project reportedly cost tens of millions of dollars, with uncertain direct return on investment in sales.

Credibility: The mission had to appear authentic as a scientific endeavor rather than a marketing stunt, to preserve brand integrity.

Despite these challenges, Red Bull's meticulous planning and strong alignment between mission goals and brand values helped mitigate risks and deliver a historic success.

Lessons for Integrated Marketing Communication

The Red Bull Stratos campaign offers invaluable insights into integrated marketing communication:

1. Content is King: Creating awe-inspiring, bold content inspired global participation and engagement.
2. Platform Strategy: Choosing YouTube for massive reach, Facebook for community building, and Twitter for immediacy ensured each platform played to its strengths.
3. Brand Alignment: The project embodied Red Bull's brand promise of pushing limits and energizing the adventurous spirit.
4. Community Engagement: Interactive storytelling and hashtags turned viewers into active participants, amplifying impact.
5. Beyond Traditional Advertising: Creating memorable experiences can be more effective than conventional ads for communicating brand values.

Conclusion

Red Bull Stratos is a landmark case in experiential marketing that set new standards in digital engagement, brand storytelling, and integrated communication. By combining scientific innovation with breathtaking human achievement and leveraging digital platforms masterfully, Red Bull transcended product promotion to become a global cultural phenomenon.

The campaign's success underscores the importance of daring vision, authentic alignment with brand values, and innovative use of media channels in contemporary marketing. The Stratos mission proved that the sky is no longer the limit-not just in human exploration, but in how brands connect emotionally and memorably with audiences worldwide.

This case study captures the essence and detailed aspects of the Red Bull Stratos campaign, covering its strategic execution, marketing outcomes, and broader significance in marketing and science

Discussion Questions

1. Was Red Bull Stratos primarily a marketing stunt, or did it genuinely advance science? Can it be both?
2. How did Red Bull successfully integrate digital, social, and traditional media into a cohesive IMC campaign?

3. What risks did Red Bull face brand, financial, and ethical and how were they managed?
4. Could another brand outside of energy drinks replicate such a campaign, or was Stratos unique to Red Bull's DNA?
5. What lessons from Stratos can modern marketers apply in an era dominated by digital platforms and content marketing?

Teaching Notes

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the role of integrated marketing communication in large-scale brand campaigns.
- To examine how non-traditional advertising can build stronger engagement.
- To explore how risk-taking and brand alignment shape campaign success.
- To discuss the blurring boundaries between marketing, science, and entertainment.

Theoretical Frameworks for Analysis:

- IMC Framework: Multi-channel orchestration for consistent messaging.
- AIDA Model: Attention → Interest → Desire → Action.
- Brand Equity Theory: Experiences that strengthen associations and emotional connections.

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From Automation to Autonomy: An MIS Case on AI-Driven Decision Systems

Dr. Devi Premnath
Professor
Jansons School of Business

Case Narrative

Arjun Malhotra, 38, is the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of Vistara Retail Solutions Pvt. Ltd., a fast-growing omnichannel retail company headquartered in Bengaluru. With over 200 stores across India and a rapidly expanding e-commerce presence, Vistara serves value-conscious yet digitally savvy consumers.

The Context

Over the past five years, Vistara Retail Solutions has invested heavily in digital transformation. Its Management Information Systems (MIS) integrate ERP, CRM, and data analytics platforms to support pricing, inventory planning, customer engagement, and vendor management. However, rising competition from AI-native startups and global platforms has exposed limitations in Vistara's rule-based and dashboard-centric MIS.

Customer complaints have increased, forecasting errors persist, and marketing teams struggle to personalise communication at scale. Despite having access to vast volumes of structured and unstructured data, emails, chat transcripts, product reviews, and call-centre logs, much of this information remains underutilised.

During a quarterly board meeting, Arjun is asked a direct question:
"Can Artificial Intelligence move our MIS from reporting what happened to deciding what should happen next?"

The AI Opportunity

Arjun proposes a two-layer AI integration into Vistara's MIS architecture.

First, the deployment of Natural Language Processing (NLP) systems to analyse customer interactions across channels. NLP models could automatically extract sentiment, intent, and recurring issues from customer reviews, chatbot conversations, and service emails. This would allow managers to move beyond static reports toward real-time, language-driven insights.

Second, Arjun suggests piloting Agentic AI systems, autonomous software agents capable of perceiving data, setting goals, and executing actions with minimal human intervention. For example, an agentic AI could monitor inventory levels, predict demand spikes using NLP-derived customer signals, negotiate replenishment orders with vendors, and adjust promotional strategies dynamically.

While the promise is compelling, senior managers express concerns. Marketing fears loss of creative control. Operations worry about over-automation. Compliance teams raise questions about explainability and accountability.

The Dilemma

Arjun must decide:

- How much decision autonomy should AI systems be granted within MIS?
- Can agentic AI coexist with human managerial judgment?
- How can trust, transparency, and governance be built into AI-enabled MIS?

The success of Vistara's next phase of growth may depend on whether AI remains a decision-support tool or evolves into a decision-making partner.

Teaching Note

Case Positioning

This case examines the evolution of MIS from traditional reporting systems to AI-enabled, autonomous decision systems, focusing on NLP and Agentic AI applications in business.

Learning Objectives

After analysing the case, students should be able to:

1. Understand how NLP enhances MIS by converting unstructured data into managerial insight.
2. Explain the role of Agentic AI in autonomous business decision-making.
3. Evaluate the trade-offs between automation, autonomy, and managerial control.
4. Design governance mechanisms for AI-enabled MIS.

Discussion Questions

1. How does NLP change the nature of information available to managers?
2. In what ways does Agentic AI go beyond traditional decision-support systems?
3. What risks arise when AI systems are allowed to act autonomously?
4. Should AI in MIS be advisory or agentic in nature?
5. How can organisations ensure accountability in AI-driven decisions?

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When Health meets Habit: Understanding Snack Choices in Urban India

Dr. Devi Premnath
Professor
Jansons School of Business

Case Narrative

Ananya Mehra, 34, is a marketing manager working with a multinational firm in Bengaluru. Living in a dual-income household, Ananya represents India's growing urban middle class, digitally connected, health-aware, yet emotionally anchored to cultural food habits.

The Situation

It is 6:30 pm on a weekday. After back-to-back virtual meetings, Ananya walks into her kitchen looking for a quick snack. She opens her pantry and pauses.

On the left shelf lies a familiar packet of aloo bhujia, a snack she has grown up eating during evening tea at her parents' home. On the right shelf are protein bars, neatly stacked, purchased after her fitness trainer recommended "clean snacking."

Ananya is not particularly hungry. She is tired, mildly stressed, and looking for comfort.

This moment of hesitation is not unique to Ananya. Across urban India, consumers increasingly stock both traditional snacks and modern health alternatives, switching between them depending on mood, context, and self-image. While protein bars symbolise discipline, health, and aspiration, bhujia evokes nostalgia, indulgence, and emotional satisfaction.

The Market Context

India's snacking market has expanded rapidly, driven by urbanisation, changing lifestyles, and rising disposable incomes. Traditional snack brands continue to enjoy strong penetration due to affordability, taste, and cultural familiarity. Simultaneously, health-focused snack brands offering protein bars, baked snacks, and low-calorie options are gaining traction among younger, fitness-oriented consumers. Marketing communication plays a critical role in shaping perceptions. Traditional snack brands emphasise taste, family bonding, and authenticity, while modern snack brands highlight nutritional benefits, portion control, and guilt-free indulgence. Social media influencers, gym culture, and wellness narratives further reinforce the appeal of health snacks.

Despite awareness of nutrition and health risks, consumers like Ananya do not consistently choose the "healthier" option. Instead, snacking decisions are often driven by emotional states, habitual behaviour, situational cues, and identity expression rather than rational evaluation.

The Dilemma

As Ananya reaches for the bhujia, telling herself it is "just for today," she reflects on her choice. Is this a failure of self-control, or a predictable behavioural response shaped by context and emotion?

For marketers, the dilemma is even more complex:

How can brands design products and messages that align with how consumers actually behave, rather than how they claim they want to behave?

TEACHING NOTE

Case Positioning

This case is designed to explore behavioural marketing and consumer decision-making in the context of India's evolving snacking market. It highlights the coexistence of traditional and modern consumption patterns.

Learning Objectives

After discussing this case, students should be able to:

1. Understand the role of emotion, habit, and context in consumer decision-making.
2. Analyse hybrid consumption behaviour in emerging markets.
3. Apply behavioural theories to real-world marketing situations.
4. Develop marketing strategies aligned with actual consumer behaviour, not idealised rational models.

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Johnson's Baby: The Challenge of Consumer Reassurance in India

Dr. Sridevi K B
Professor
Jansons School of Business

Johnson's Baby is a long-established and widely recognised infant care brand in India, traditionally associated with safety, trust, and gentleness. Over the decades, the brand has built strong emotional equity among Indian families and has been perceived as a default choice for baby care products. However, the Indian baby care market has undergone a significant transformation in recent years. Increased competition from domestic and international brands, growing awareness of ingredients, and heightened access to online information have altered how expectant and new mothers evaluate baby care products.

A critical shift in consumer behaviour has been observed among Indian mothers, particularly those in urban and semi-urban markets. Pregnancy and early motherhood have become information-intensive phases, with mothers actively seeking reassurance regarding product safety, ingredient transparency, and brand credibility. Rather than relying solely on legacy reputation, consumers increasingly expect brands to continuously reaffirm their claims through relevant, timely, and relatable communication. This change has posed a challenge for established brands like Johnson's Baby, which historically relied on long-term trust rather than frequent reassurance.

The core problem faced by Johnson's Baby lies in maintaining and reinforcing trust at the consideration stage, rather than creating awareness. While brand recognition remained high, the decision-making process of expectant mothers had become more cautious and evaluative. This was particularly evident among first-time mothers, who tend to rely heavily on peer reviews, digital content, healthcare advice, and culturally familiar communication before finalising product choices. The challenge was further intensified by India's linguistic and cultural diversity, which made uniform messaging less effective across regions.

Another dimension of the problem was the changing media consumption pattern of the target audience. Expectant mothers increasingly spend time on mobile devices, engaging with applications related to health, entertainment, and lifestyle. Traditional mass media channels were no longer sufficient to reach this audience at critical moments of decision-making. At the same time, the digital ecosystem had

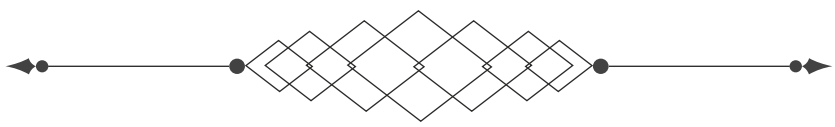
become highly cluttered, making it difficult for even well-established brands to ensure message attention and retention.

Additionally, the baby care category is highly sensitive, as it involves issues of infant health and safety. Any ambiguity or lack of clarity in communication can negatively influence brand perception. Johnson's Baby, therefore, faced the challenge of communicating reassurance without appearing defensive, promotional, or repetitive. The problem was not merely one of communication reach, but of credibility, relevance, and emotional resonance in a competitive and information-rich environment.

From a managerial standpoint, this case highlights the strategic dilemma of how a legacy brand can sustain relevance and trust in a digitally fragmented market where consumers demand personalisation, cultural familiarity, and continuous reassurance. It also raises broader questions about how brands operating in trust-based categories should adapt their communication approaches in response to evolving consumer expectations and technological shifts.

Questions for discussion

1. Analyse how legacy brands like Johnson's Baby balance their historical brand equity with the evolving need for continuous reassurance among digitally empowered consumers.
2. In trust-sensitive product categories, to what extent should brands adapt their communication strategies to linguistic and cultural diversity without diluting a unified brand identity?
3. Appraise how digital marketing has to consider the changes in consumer information-seeking behaviour during critical life stages (such as pregnancy).



Walking the Talk at Edge Consulting

Dr. J.J.Savithri
Professor
Jansons School of Business

Edge Consulting, a sustainability advisory firm based in Bengaluru, had built its brand on environmental responsibility. The company encouraged employees to "live green" — from paperless operations to carpooling incentives. For years, the workforce took pride in the firm's eco-conscious image.

When Ananya Rao, a young marketing associate, joined the company, she was eager to contribute to its mission. She admired the leadership's commitment to environmental ethics until she noticed certain contradictions.

During her second month, Ananya was assigned to assist the senior marketing manager, Vikram, in organising a client event. She was surprised to see large-scale printing of brochures, single-use plastic bottles at the venue, and overseas flight arrangements for minor meetings. When she asked about the inconsistency with the company's sustainability message, Vikram brushed it off:

"Clients expect premium arrangements. We can't risk losing business over small things."

Ananya began feeling uneasy. Her personal belief in sustainable practices clashed with what she was required to do.

Ananya started experiencing stress and reduced enthusiasm. She hesitated to promote Edge's "Go Green" campaigns, feeling inauthentic. Her attitude toward work and leadership began shifting negatively. She even considered quitting, rationalising that the organisation's actions contradicted its values.

However, the turning point came when the HR department initiated an Employee Voice Forum, inviting staff to discuss value-practice gaps. Ananya shared her concerns respectfully. To her surprise, several colleagues echoed similar feelings.

The leadership took the feedback seriously. They acknowledged the inconsistency and introduced a new "Green Alignment Program." Event guidelines were redesigned to minimise waste, and carbon

credits were purchased for business travel. Vikram, who initially dismissed Ananya's concerns, personally thanked her for highlighting the issue and encouraged her to lead the next eco-campaign.

Ananya's attitude began to realign-her beliefs and actions were once again in harmony. Her motivation, commitment, and trust in leadership were restored.

Edge's renewed efforts not only enhanced its sustainability credentials but also improved employee satisfaction. The case highlighted how unresolved cognitive dissonance can erode employee attitudes and how transparent, value-consistent practices can rebuild them.

As Ananya later reflected:

"When what we do matches what we believe, work feels meaningful again."

Discussion Questions

1. How does the case illustrate cognitive dissonance theory in shaping employee attitudes, commitment, and turnover intentions?
2. From a leadership perspective, how should managers balance client expectations and revenue pressures with organisational values and ethical consistency?
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Employee Voice Forum as a strategic HR intervention for managing value–practice misalignment.
4. What systems, controls, or metrics should sustainability-oriented firms implement to ensure alignment between espoused values and operational decisions?

Teaching Notes

Synopsis

The case of Edge Consulting examines how inconsistencies between an organisation's espoused sustainability values and its actual business practices can create cognitive dissonance among employees. Set in a sustainability advisory firm in Bengaluru, the case follows Ananya Rao, a young marketing associate, whose personal and professional beliefs come into conflict when she observes environmentally unsustainable practices during client events. Her experience highlights the psychological strain, declining motivation, and ethical discomfort caused by a misalignment between values and practice.

The case further explores the role of leadership responses, employee voice mechanisms, and HR interventions in addressing such misalignment. The introduction of an Employee Voice Forum and a subsequent "Green Alignment Program" demonstrates how transparent dialogue and corrective action can restore trust, commitment, and positive employee attitudes. The case is well-suited to discussions on organisational behaviour, ethics, sustainability, and strategic HRM.

Keywords: Cognitive Dissonance, Employee Attitudes, Organisational Values, Employee Voice

Target Learning Group

The target learning groups for the case suggested are MBA students (HRM, OB, Business Ethics, Sustainability Management)

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives of the case are as follows

1. Understand the concept of cognitive dissonance and its relevance in organisational settings.
2. Examine how value-practice misalignment influences employee attitudes, motivation, and retention.
3. Analyse leadership and managerial responses to ethical concerns raised by employees.
4. Evaluate the role of employee voice and HR systems in resolving ethical and cultural conflicts.
5. Appreciate the strategic importance of aligning sustainability claims with operational practices.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the case discussion, students will be able to:

- Apply cognitive dissonance theory to explain changes in employee behaviour and attitudes.
- Critically assess the impact of organisational hypocrisy on trust and employer branding.
- Propose HR and leadership interventions to address ethical inconsistencies.
- Recognise the importance of psychological safety in encouraging ethical voice.
- Develop practical insights into managing sustainability as a lived organisational value rather than a symbolic statement.

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Speaking Up for Patient Safety

Dr. J.J.Savithri
Professor
Jansons School of Business

Background

Sanjeevani Multispecialty Hospital, a 500-bed tertiary care hospital in Chennai, is known for its clinical excellence and high patient inflow. Like many hospitals, it operates under intense pressure-long shifts, hierarchical decision-making, and critical, time-sensitive situations.

Dr. Meera Nair, a senior resident in internal medicine, had been working at Sanjeevani for two years. She was competent, dedicated, and deeply committed to patient safety. However, the hospital culture strongly reflected hierarchy-consultants' decisions were rarely questioned, and junior doctors and nurses were expected to comply without debate.

The Incident

One evening during a particularly hectic shift, Dr. Meera noticed that a patient in the ICU had been prescribed a medication dosage that appeared unusually high for the patient's age and renal condition. The prescription had been written by Dr. Rajiv Menon, a highly respected senior consultant known for his authoritative style.

Meera felt uneasy. She double-checked the patient records and treatment protocol. Her clinical judgment suggested that the dosage could lead to serious complications. However, past experiences made her hesitant—junior doctors who questioned senior consultants were often labelled as "difficult" or "not team players."

The ICU nurse, Anita, shared Meera's concern but quietly remarked, "Better not say anything. You know how Dr. Rajiv reacts."

Meera now faced a dilemma:

Remain silent, follow orders, and avoid conflict, or

Speak up assertively to ensure patient safety, risking professional backlash.

Assertive Action

After careful thought, Meera decided to act assertively rather than aggressively or passively. She approached Dr. Rajiv privately and said:

"Sir, I may be mistaken, but I reviewed Mr. Kumar's labs and renal function. Based on the protocol, I'm concerned the current dosage may be too high. Could we please recheck it together?"

Initially, Dr. Rajiv appeared irritated. However, upon reviewing the data, he realised that the dosage indeed needed adjustment. He corrected the prescription without further comment.

The patient stabilised over the next 24 hours, avoiding a potential adverse drug event.

Aftermath

While the immediate issue was resolved, Meera felt anxious about possible long-term consequences. Surprisingly, a few days later, Dr. Rajiv acknowledged her during a department meeting:

"Dr. Meera's attention to detail prevented a serious complication. We must encourage such professional communication."

This incident sparked internal discussions within the hospital. The HR department, in collaboration with the medical board, initiated workshops on assertive communication, psychological safety, and speaking up for patient safety.

Gradually, nurses and junior doctors felt more confident expressing concerns respectfully. The hospital reported a decline in medication errors and an improvement in teamwork and morale.

Meera reflected later:

"Assertiveness isn't about challenging authority—it's about protecting patients while respecting people."

Discussion Questions

1. Identify the behavioural styles (passive, aggressive, assertive) displayed by the characters in the case.
2. What organisational and cultural factors in Sanjeevani Hospital discouraged assertive behaviour?
3. How did Meera's assertive communication differ from confrontation or aggression?
4. What risks do healthcare professionals face when they choose to speak up in hierarchical organisations?
5. How can hospital leadership and HR institutionalise assertive behaviour without undermining authority?

Teaching Notes

Synopsis

This case examines the importance of assertive behaviour in the healthcare sector, particularly in high-risk, hierarchical environments. It highlights how respectful, evidence-based communication can improve patient safety, decision-making, and team dynamics. The case illustrates the fine balance between authority and openness, and how assertiveness differs from aggression or passivity.

Keywords: Assertive Behaviour, Patient Safety, Healthcare Leadership, Psychological Safety, Communication Styles, Organisational Culture

Target Learning Group

MBA students (HRM, OB, Healthcare Management)

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives are as follows:

1. Understand assertive behaviour and distinguish it from passive and aggressive styles.
2. Analyse the role of hierarchy and culture in shaping communication behaviour.

3. Examine the link between assertiveness and patient safety outcomes.
4. Evaluate leadership and HR interventions that promote psychological safety.
5. Apply assertive communication principles to high-stakes organisational settings.

Learning Outcomes

After completing the case discussion, learners will be able to:

- Diagnose communication barriers in healthcare organisations.
- Demonstrate how assertive behaviour supports ethical and safe decision-making.
- Recommend organisational practices that encourage speaking up.
- Appreciate the strategic role of HR in fostering a safety-oriented culture.
- Transfer assertiveness concepts to other high-reliability industries.

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Aavin Milk Finding the Right Balance Between Growth and Sustainability

Dr. Arul Senthil B
Associate Professor
Jansons School of Business

Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation is promoting a well-known brand, namely Aavin Milk, in Tamil Nadu, which has been a household name in the state for many decades. The intention to promote Aavin was to ensure that people get milk at fair prices compared with many private brands. It does this through a strong cooperative network that includes farmers, district unions, and the state federation.

Aavin has added more products to its portfolio over the years. Now, apart from milk, it has curd, butter, ghee, ice cream, flavored milks, and sweets. Each state has a regional brand. In Karnataka, Nandhi, as a brand, dominates the market. In Tamil Nadu, Aavin has a strong brand, but it is facing more competition from private companies like Amul, Hatsun (Arun Ice Cream), Milky Mist, and new regional brands that focus on high-quality products, attractive packaging, and aggressive marketing.

Difficulties with strategy

In recent times, Aavin has had a hard time because of rising procurement costs, old processing infrastructure in some areas, and a lack of digital presence. Even now, Aavin has to deal with the bureaucratic rules that are common in public-sector cooperatives, which restrict the autonomy. On the other side, private competitors have spent a lot of money on technology, cold-chain logistics, and branding.

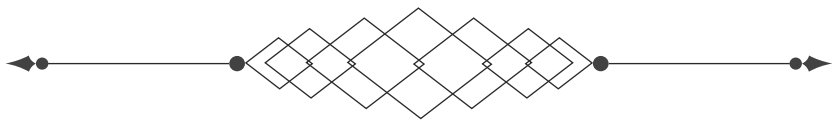
Also, the younger generation is moving towards dairy products like low-fat milk, organic milk, and lactose-free milk and is giving more concentration to protein intake. Therefore, it is important to give importance to innovation and marketing, which are needed to compete with private brands.

Strategic Problem

Aavin's leadership is currently facing a pivotal moment. The challenge for Aavin is to keep the price low, and at the same time, they need to focus on modernizing their operations so that it helps to improve efficiency, helps to strengthen their brand, and develop new products to stay competitive in the rapidly changing dairy industry.

Questions for Discussion

1. Using tools like SWOT or Porter's Five Forces, what is Aavin's current competitive position?
2. How can Aavin meet its social goals while also making sure that its finances and operations are running smoothly?
3. Which growth strategies should Aavin focus on first: entering new markets, making new products, or expanding into new areas?
4. Should Aavin use a more aggressive digital and branding strategy to get younger customers?



Problems with Hiring Talent at Ravi Solutions

Dr. Arul Senthil B
Associate Professor
Jansons School of Business

Ravi Solutions is a Coimbatore-based IT services company, and it employs 800 professionals. The company focuses on moving data to the cloud, analyzing it, and making business solutions that use AI. The company has clients in India and Southeast Asia. Within the short span of two years, the business has grown rapidly because there are more digital transformation projects. To achieve this growth, the company planned to hire more than 100 professionals in the years to come. It includes data scientists, software developers, project managers, and cybersecurity experts. The Talent Acquisition team, which had one TA head and six recruiters, was responsible for this growth.

Problems with finding and hiring talent

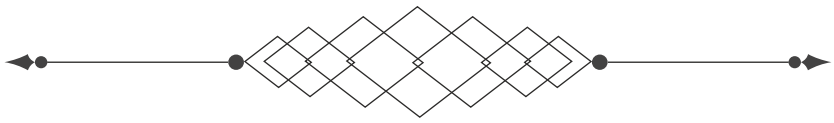
The company has a challenge in terms of hiring people, even though it has a strong, unique brand. Talent Shortage: Big IT companies and global MNCs competed fiercely for niche skills like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and cloud security because there was such a high demand for them. High Offer Dropouts: Almost 35% of chosen candidates turned down offers, saying they could get better pay, more flexible work hours, and faster start dates elsewhere. Long Time to Hire: It took an average of 65 days to hire someone, which caused projects to be delayed and made existing employees work harder. Mismatch in Hiring: Line managers reported that some new hires lacked the necessary skills for their roles, which increased training costs and initially reduced productivity. Limited Success in Hiring on Campus: Campus recruitment led to a lot of people leaving in the first year because their roles didn't match their expectations.

Dilemma in Strategy

The company's leadership team wondered if hiring new employees was in line with its long-term business goals. The hiring team prioritised the fast-paced process and high volume, whereas the business heads were more concerned with the quality of hire and cultural fit. Budget limits made it even harder to match the pay offered by bigger competitors.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the main reasons Ravi is having trouble finding good employees?
2. How can Ravi cut down on the time it takes to hire someone and the number of offers that people turn down?
3. What other ways should Ravi look for talent, like employer branding, internal talent pipelines, gig hiring, and partnerships with colleges?
4. How can metrics like quality of hire, cost per hire, and attrition rate help you make better choices?



DHL - Redesigning Global Supply Chain Operations

Dr. Rajesh R
Assistant Professor
Jansons School of Business

Background

DHL Supply Chain, part of Deutsche Post DHL Group, is one of the world's largest logistics providers, operating in over 220 countries and territories. Facing increasing complexity in global trade, DHL has invested heavily in digital technologies such as IoT, cloud computing, and control tower solutions to enhance visibility, efficiency, and resilience in supply chains.

A notable example is DHL's partnership with a global life sciences company, where DHL implemented a Lead Logistics Partnership model. This included a centralized Control Tower for end-to-end visibility, standardized processes across multiple sites, and improved cost management. Similarly, DHL transformed supply chains for consumer goods companies by integrating IT-enabled visibility and continuous optimization.

Teaching Notes

Target Audience: MBA students in Supply Chain Management or Operations courses.

Purpose: To illustrate how logistics service providers like DHL create value through integration, visibility, and efficiency.

Key Themes:

- Role of 3PL/4PL providers in global supply chains
- Importance of IT-enabled visibility
- Cost reduction through strategic logistics redesign
- Risk mitigation during growth phases

Learning Objectives

Understand the role of control towers in global supply chain management.

Evaluate the benefits of IT-enabled visibility for logistics operations.

Analyze cost reduction strategies in supply chain redesign.

Discuss risk management in rapidly growing global operations.

Assess the value proposition of 3PL partnerships in modern supply chains.

Discussion Questions

1. What challenges did the manufacturer face before partnering with DHL?
2. How did DHL's Global Control Tower solution improve visibility and efficiency?
3. What role does IT integration play in modern supply chain management?
4. Could the manufacturer have achieved similar results without outsourcing to DHL? Why or why not?
5. What risks remain even after DHL's redesign of the supply chain?

Conclusion

DHL's intervention demonstrates how logistics providers can transform global supply chains by combining strategic oversight (control towers) with technology-driven visibility platforms. The case highlights that outsourcing logistics to specialized providers can reduce costs, improve efficiency, and mitigate risks during growth. For students, this case underscores the importance of collaboration, technology, and strategic design in supply chain success.

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Lakshmi Machine Works (LMW) Embedding TQM and Lean Six Sigma in Indian Manufacturing

Dr. Rajesh R
Assistant Professor
Jansons School of Business

Background

Lakshmi Machine Works Limited (LMW), headquartered in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, is one of India's largest textile machinery manufacturers and a significant player in CNC machine tools. Established in 1962, LMW has consistently emphasized quality excellence to compete with global manufacturers. In the late 1990s and 2000s, LMW adopted Total Quality Management (TQM) practices and later integrated Lean Six Sigma methodologies to improve efficiency, reduce waste, and enhance customer satisfaction.

Key initiatives included:

- TQM Journey: Building a culture of continuous improvement, employee involvement, and customer focus.
- Lean Six Sigma Projects: Streamlining assembly processes in the Machine Tool Division, which involved over 1,500 components sourced from 100+ vendors.
- Strategic Growth: Leveraging quality systems to expand into international markets despite rising competition.

Teaching Notes

Target Audience:

MBA students in Operations, Quality Management or Industrial Engineering.

Purpose:

To illustrate how Indian manufacturing firms adopt global quality frameworks to remain competitive.

Key Themes:

- Role of TQM in building organizational culture
- Lean Six Sigma for waste reduction and process efficiency
- Supplier integration and quality assurance
- Competitive positioning in global markets

Learning Objectives

- Understand the principles of TQM and how they are applied in Indian manufacturing.
- Analyze Lean Six Sigma projects for process improvement and waste reduction.
- Evaluate supplier management strategies in complex manufacturing environments.
- Discuss competitive challenges faced by Indian firms in global markets.
- Assess the role of continuous improvement in sustaining long-term growth.

Discussion Questions

1. What were the main drivers for LMW to adopt TQM and Lean Six Sigma practices?
2. How did Lean Six Sigma help LMW's Machine Tool Division manage complexity in assembly operations?
3. What challenges might LMW face in sustaining a culture of continuous improvement?
4. How does supplier integration impact quality outcomes in large-scale manufacturing?
5. In what ways can LMW leverage its quality systems to compete globally against established players?

Conclusion

LMW's case demonstrates how TQM and Lean Six Sigma can be successfully embedded in Indian manufacturing to achieve global competitiveness. By focusing on continuous improvement, waste reduction, and supplier collaboration, LMW improved efficiency and customer satisfaction while expanding internationally. The case highlights that quality management is not just a set of tools but a strategic enabler for growth and resilience in competitive industries.

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Blockchain in Indian Payments: The Rise of Paytm and its Blockchain

Prof. S. Nagarajan
Assistant Professor
Jansons School of Business

One of the most prominent examples of digital payment innovation in India is Paytm, which emerged as a market leader during the rapid transformation of the country's financial ecosystem. Founded by Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Paytm initially began as a mobile recharge and bill payment platform but quickly evolved into a comprehensive digital financial services provider. As India moved towards a cashless economy particularly after the 2016 demonetization. Paytm explored emerging technologies such as blockchain to enhance transparency, security, and efficiency in digital payments.

Blockchain technology, which enables decentralized, immutable, and transparent record-keeping, offered Paytm an opportunity to address long-standing challenges in the Indian payments' ecosystem. These challenges included transaction fraud, reconciliation delays, lack of trust in intermediaries, and high operational costs. By experimenting with blockchain-based solutions, Paytm aimed to strengthen its technological infrastructure while aligning with India's broader digital transformation goals.

Blockchain is a distributed ledger technology (DLT) that records transactions across a network of computers in a secure and tamper-resistant manner. In the context of digital payments, blockchain can enable faster settlements, enhanced auditability, and reduced dependency on centralized intermediaries. For Paytm, blockchain was not intended to replace existing banking infrastructure but to complement it by improving backend efficiency and trust mechanisms.

Before adopting blockchain, Paytm faced several operational challenges. As transaction volumes grew exponentially, ensuring real-time settlement, preventing fraud, and maintaining data integrity became increasingly complex. The Indian payments ecosystem also involved multiple stakeholders, including banks, merchants, customers, and regulators, leading to reconciliation issues and delays. Moreover, concerns related to cybersecurity and data privacy demanded more robust technological solutions. Recognizing these challenges, Paytm began exploring blockchain applications around 2017-18, focusing primarily on backend processes such as transaction reconciliation, supply chain financing, and identity verification.

Unlike public cryptocurrencies, Paytm's blockchain initiatives emphasized permissioned and enterprise blockchain models that complied with regulatory norms set by the Reserve Bank of India.Leadership commitment played a critical role in Paytm's blockchain experimentation. Vijay Shekhar Sharma publicly emphasized the importance of blockchain as a foundational technology for the future of financial services. Paytm invested in research and development teams specializing in blockchain and collaborated with global technology partners to pilot blockchain-based use cases. Rather than a company-wide overhaul, Paytm adopted a phased and experimental approach, testing blockchain solutions in controlled environments.

A key focus area was transparency and trust. Blockchain-enabled ledgers allowed Paytm to create immutable transaction records, reducing disputes between merchants and payment partners. This was particularly useful in merchant settlements, where delays and mismatches were common. By leveraging blockchain, Paytm improved settlement accuracy and reduced processing time, thereby enhancing merchant confidence in the platform.

Customer-centricity also guided Paytm's blockchain initiatives. Although end-users did not directly interact with blockchain interfaces, they benefited from faster transactions, reduced payment failures, and improved security. Blockchain-based identity verification solutions further strengthened Know Your Customer (KYC) processes, minimizing fraud while ensuring regulatory compliance.

Data integrity and security were central to Paytm's blockchain strategy. The decentralized nature of blockchain reduced single points of failure, making systems more resilient to cyberattacks. Smart contracts—self-executing programs on the blockchain—were explored to automate settlement and compliance processes, reducing manual intervention and operational costs.

Cross-functional collaboration was evident as Paytm's technology, compliance, legal, and business teams worked together to design blockchain solutions suitable for the Indian regulatory environment. This collaboration ensured that innovation did not conflict with regulatory expectations, a critical factor in India's tightly regulated financial sector.

The results of Paytm's blockchain experimentation were significant, though more qualitative than immediate financial gains. Operational efficiency improved through faster reconciliation and reduced disputes. Merchant satisfaction increased due to transparent and reliable settlement mechanisms. Blockchain also positioned Paytm as a technology-forward organization, strengthening its brand image among investors, partners, and regulators.

From a strategic perspective, blockchain helped Paytm future-proof its operations. While large-scale blockchain deployment in Indian payments remains gradual, Paytm's early experimentation provided valuable learning and capability-building. It also enabled the company to explore adjacent areas such as supply chain finance, cross-border payments, and digital identity solutions.

Despite these benefits, Paytm faced notable challenges in blockchain adoption. Regulatory uncertainty surrounding blockchain and cryptocurrencies in India limited large-scale implementation. High implementation costs, integration with legacy systems, and a shortage of blockchain-skilled professionals further constrained rapid deployment. Additionally, blockchain's benefits were often indirect, making it difficult to quantify immediate returns on investment.

In conclusion, Paytm's blockchain experiment represents a strategic and cautious approach to adopting emerging technology in a regulated financial environment. By leveraging blockchain to enhance backend efficiency, transparency, and security, Paytm strengthened its digital payments ecosystem without disrupting existing banking frameworks. The case of Paytm illustrates how blockchain can be applied pragmatically in Indian payments not as a disruptive replacement, but as an enabling technology for trust, efficiency, and scalability. As India's digital economy continues to evolve, Paytm's blockchain initiatives offer valuable insights for fintech firms seeking sustainable innovation and long-term growth.

Teaching Objectives

This case is designed to help students:

1. Understand the application of blockchain technology in digital payments.
2. Analyze how emerging technologies are adopted in financial services.
3. Examine the role of leadership and strategic intent in technology-driven innovation.
4. Evaluate technology adoption trade-offs, including cost, scalability, and regulatory uncertainty.
5. Apply concepts from FinTech, Blockchain, Digital Transformation and Innovation Management.

Key Issues

1. How can blockchain be effectively integrated into an existing digital payments ecosystem?
2. What role does regulation play in shaping blockchain adoption in India?
3. How can firms justify investment in blockchain when benefits are largely indirect or long-term?
4. Should blockchain be viewed as a disruptive or enabling technology in Indian payments?
5. How can fintech firms balance innovation with compliance and operational stability?

Abstract

This case examines the adoption of blockchain technology by Paytm, one of India's largest digital payment platforms, as part of its efforts to improve efficiency, transparency, and trust in the Indian payment's ecosystem. Faced with rapid transaction growth, reconciliation challenges, and regulatory constraints, Paytm explored permissioned blockchain solutions to enhance backend operations. The case highlights leadership vision, strategic experimentation, regulatory alignment, and operational outcomes, while evaluating the opportunities and challenges of blockchain adoption in a regulated financial environment.

Teaching Notes

Pre-Reading: Digital payments in India, Basics of Blockchain Technology.

Target audience group: This case is intended for undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in Management programmes who are pursuing courses or electives in FinTech, Blockchain Technology, Digital Transformation, Digital Banking, Financial Innovation, and Technology Management.

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. What operational problems did Paytm aim to solve using blockchain?
2. Could traditional databases deliver similar outcomes more efficiently?
3. How do regulatory constraints influence Paytm's technology strategy?
4. Should Paytm scale blockchain adoption or limit it to specific use cases?
5. What lessons does this case offer to other FinTech firms in India?

Possible Analytical Approaches

1. Cost-Benefit Analysis
2. SWOT Analysis of Blockchain Adoption

A response that changed the scenario British Airways Flight 009

Dr Benison B
Professor
Jansons School of Business

The real challenge in business is our response to a situation. The decision we take will make things survive or get worse further. In this case we are going to see the incident which shocked the airways industry and is still remembered for a person who handled it at ease.

In the year 1982, on June 24, a British Airways flight named Flight 009, a Boeing 747, took passengers from London Heathrow, England, to Auckland, New Zealand. Everything was fine, and the flight was proceeding smoothly at a height of 37,000 feet. The flight crew is headed by Captain Eric Moody, carrying 263 souls.

When the flight passed over between Kuala Lumpur and Perth above Mount Galunggung, they saw some unusual electric strikes outside the flight on the wings. Before recognising that, one of the engines (engine four) had stopped working, and immediately engine two, engine one and engine three stopped functioning. The crew were shocked to see that situation and are trying all that they can. However, they are left blind all of a sudden, as they don't know the reason for the engine failure.

And the flight started losing its altitude and came down to 13,000 feet in 23 minutes. Beneath them was the Indian Ocean and Indonesian mountains and coastlines. All the oxygen masks were dropped. The passengers started writing their farewell notes to family and loved ones. The cabin was filled with acrid smoke which smelt like sulphur.

Then Captain Eric Moody took the phone and started announcing in a calm voice to the passengers,

“Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. We have a small problem. All four engines have stopped. We are doing our damnedest to get them going again. I trust you are not in too much distress.”

To make the situation worse, the co-pilot Roger Grooves' oxygen mask got broken, and he was struggling for breath. Due to which Captain Moody decided to reduce the altitude further for his co-pilot to breathe comfortably.

Simultaneously, the flight engineer Barry Townley-Freeman tried to restart the engine again and again and again. No improvements. They tried the tenth time, the twelfth time and again for the fourteenth time to restart the engine. Fortunately, on the fifteenth attempt, engine four coughed and started moving. Right after, engine three and engine one started running, followed by engine two.

Being completely stopped in the middle of the air, now all four engines started performing. And they immediately planned to land the vehicle at the nearby Jakarta Airport. Again, a hindrance came in their way. The dust formed on the front windscreen of the plane has covered it so densely that the pilots can't recognise their way for landing. However, in spite of all odds, they landed the vehicle with the help of side windows and following the radio guidance from the landing Jakarta airport.

Finally, Captain Moody, along with the help of his crew members, landed the Boeing 747 at Jakarta's Halim Perdanakusuma Airport. Not even a single person died on that travel. All crew and passengers were alive.

You may wonder how the engine restarted again. And why did it actually stop?

Volcanic ash is a glass shard particle which can suspend in air. While the Boeing 747 crosses above Mount Galunggung in Java, these suspended particles melt and cover all throughout the engine and plane parts. Since the flight runs with almost 1000 degrees of heat, these ashes covered them all. While, when the captain drove the plane below again for oxygen for his copilot, there cool air further solidified the ash coating and started breaking it off, leading to the engine restarting.

After this incident, a global volcanic ash detection system was established, and flights were rerouted if they found potential threats of eruption of volcanic ash. Captain Moody's calm mindset and the whole team's never-giving-up attitude actually saved them. The right word placed at the right time creates the right impact.

Teaching Notes:

Learning Objectives:

1. To understand the power of the right words delivered at the right time at the right place.
2. To know that never giving up on things you need will eventually come to pass.
3. To drive a team needs an unsettled mindset irrespective of what the situation is ahead.
4. To understand that, communication matters in all situations wherever you are taking a decision.

Discussion Questions:

1. What kind of communication approach did Captain Moody use when delivering bad news to the passengers?
2. What made them restart the engine 15 times again and again?
3. Why didn't Moody and his crew give up even though the situation is not in their control?
4. Do hopeful and encouraging words matter during worse situations?

Summary:

The power of communication is evident by the incident that happened in the year 1982 on British Airways Flight 9. When the flight was at 37,000 feet, all four engines failed to work. In such a situation, the captain of the flight, Eric Moody, calmed the passengers with a calm voice: “We have a small problem. All four engines have stopped.” This statement has become a famous quote towards the leadership, where Moody and his team refused to give up and safely landed the flight, saving 263 souls. None of them travelled on the flight died on that day. Hence, it is evident that the words spoken at the right time can change any situation upside down.

Keywords: Communication, teamwork, leadership, patience, resilience

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- Target Audience: MBA students who are in their initial years.

A strategy well executed The story of Minimalist

Dr Benison B
Assistant Professor
Jansons School of Business

The brothers who challenged the cosmetics market in India for the past five years are Rahul Yadav and Mohit Yadav, the founders of the brand Minimalist. Along with them was Valerie Nebe, a co-founder who played a part in the company during the initial stage in shaping the vision and strategy. But she no longer associated much with the firm publicly in its later stages.

Coming to founders, Rahul Yadav, an IIT Roorkee chemical engineer, started his career as a co-founder of Scopial Fashions, taking care of product management, brand development and marketing strategies. Despite his background as a chemical engineer, Rahul Yadav's primary focus was on business development. On the other hand, Mohit Yadav holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree and is also certified as a chartered accountant. His early stages started with Deloitte as assistant manager, followed by Credit Suisse, an investment bank. After working for a few years, both the brothers started a branded kids' wear online store and named it mangostreet.com. Hushbabies.com later acquired the business. Then Rahul served as director of products in the Car-Dekho Jaipur area. Mohit held the position of vice president at Car Dekho, Jaipur.

After years, the seed for the beauty industry started growing inside them, and they started concentrating on hair products under the name Free Will, providing customised hair products based on customer-specific requirements, lifestyle and surroundings. They find immense reach and success in this company. And almost all their online customer ratings were 5 stars. They continued to run this company for almost 2.5 years. Slowly, the brothers thought about the gap that prevails in the beauty product market. They claimed that people believed in the myth that all those chemicals are not good for skin. Rahul and Mohit aim to dispel this myth, asserting that certain chemicals actually have positive effects on skin health. This leads to the idea of 'minimalist', the term which trends around the globe for the way of living, now becoming the name of a brand in India.

Initially, the brothers pitched their idea on Surge, an investment platform through which they got their first investment from Peak XV Partners, formerly known as Sequoia Capital of India, sanctioned on September 14, 2019, as a seed round, and they received $2.02 M (around 14–15 crores).

With the investment, the brothers launched minimalist (Uprising Science Private Limited) with their first Instagram post, "We are live." In the post they mentioned their aspiration to change the entire beauty industry. And they emphasise "clean beauty practice" and want to break the misconception that it is "100% natural".

To initiate this transformation, the company produced only 1000 bottles of a single face serum to test the Indian market and gauge consumer acceptance of the brand.

They made changes in their way of packaging their products. Instead of hiding the ingredients in small fonts on the back of the packet, they actually put them front and centre. They also emphasised the importance of using the ingredient for its stated purpose. And to their surprise, all the 1000 bottles were sold within 2-3 days. With around 300 Instagram followers, they achieved this, not even spending a single penny on marketing. Soon, it comes to their notice that a single beauty influencer actually bought and tried their product; since it results well on their skin, it has been shared with their followers. Other beauty influencers further tried the product like a snowball, and in less than 2 months, the company has reached 10,000 followers on Instagram.

Instead of going with further marketing initiatives, the brothers took the real reviews from customers. They asked their real customers to post their testimonials as videos. And this approach made the brand feel more authentic and saved a lot of money on ad campaigns.

By the end of the first eight months, they are able to reach 100 crore revenue out of their brand.

Again, in the year 2021, on July 23, Unilever Ventures and Peak XV made their investment in a Series A round for Minimalist for about $15 million (110 crore). They invested the money in global expansion in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. They focused on strengthening their infrastructure, boosting R&D capabilities, and building content and brands. They also followed their in-house production facility in Jaipur.

However, this successful company seems to be struggling with their investment in R&D. Because of their use of quality-assured product use practice, they faced many issues. Due to the hefty investment in product development, the company, in spite of all those revenue hikes, can't manage their company expenses on product quality and control.

They try to counterbalance the R&D expenses through lower investment in advertising. Focusing on enhancing the product really worked well for the brothers. They intentionally limited their product offerings to 60 varieties in order to better predict and meet customer demand. They also sell 90% of their products through the D-C (Direct to Consumer) market, which is their preferred channel to avoid intermediary expenses.

Minimalist shows resemblance to the brand Ordinary, a Canada-based cosmetics company. Despite the controversy surrounding the brand's perceived copycat status, the founders themselves acknowledge that they drew inspiration from Ordinary. Finally, Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) completely acquired Minimalist in 2025. HUL acquired 90.5% of the company's stake, with plans to acquire the remaining 9.5% within the next two years. The key highlight in this acquisition is that it is worth close to 3000 crore rupees, which is the largest all-cash direct-to-consumer deal in India.

Teaching Notes:

Learning Objectives:

1. To understand the essence of strategy formulation risks involved in a company.
2. To know how to implement a strategy and stay strong for it.
3. To understand how to align with the vision and mission all throughout the journey.
4. To plan when to evaluate the strategy implemented and call for exit.

Discussion Questions:

1.Why did Mohit and Ragul sell the company?

2.Is an exit strategy an essential one for a business?

3.Will the company grow further in the hands of HUL?

4.Which is a necessity? the advertising of the product or the user-expected quality of the product?

5.Does the same strategy work well for other business sectors like software, automobiles, and FMCG?

Summary:

Minimalist, the brand, evolved in India because of their strong investment in research and development in terms of understanding the real customer needs and solving their problems. A firm that didn't spend much of their investment on advertisement still became popular because of relying on genuine customer feedback shared through social media. This strategic vision and mission drive them to see exponential growth of 100 crores within eight months of market entry. And finally, after five years in business, they meticulously made the decision to sell the company stakes to Hindustan Unilever Limited for almost 3000 crores. This exemplifies the necessity of a strategic move from entry to exit in a business environment.

Keywords: strategy formulation, implementation, evaluation, entry strategy, exit strategy, investor funds, minimalist

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Target Audience: MBA students who are in their final year, startup enthusiasts, and strategists.

Case Submission Guidelines

Contributions for the forthcoming issue will be accepted up to December 10, 2025. The authors can follow the guidelines given below for the submission of their work.

Format:

Caselets and Full-fledged cases will be considered for possible publication in CASTLE. Caselets can have a length of around 600 words and Full-fledged cases can have a length of around 5000 words. It should be an original and unpublished work. The completed work should be submitted as a word document. The text should use single-spacing and the Calibri -11 size font, with equal margins on all the four sides of the page. The tables and drawings need to be included at the relevant places in between the text.

Source:

The work can be based on either primary data or secondary data. While the primary-data-based cases (written based on the interviews/discussions with the company officials) should obtain case-release permission from the organization, the secondary-data-based cases (written based on information available in public domain like newspaper, magazine, internet sources etc) need not have to obtain this. However due credit needs to be given to the source at the end of the case in terms of references.

Narration:

The cases need to take a story-telling style and should end with a thought-provoking question for the readers. The content should be written in the past tense and should take an unbiased neutral stand throughout.

Additional teaching material:

Each case needs to be supplemented at the beginning with (i) Teaching objectives (what concepts/models/theories can be explained through this and what course this is suitable for) (ii) Key issues (what main issues/problems are being addressed) and (iii) an Abstract of not more than 100 words.

The case needs to additionally have at the end (iv) A Teaching Note (to explain as to how this case can be administered to students, what possible approaches are available for solving the key issues and how a specific solution can be executed).

Copyright:

The author needs to provide in writing that the case is his/her own original work and is not submitted to any other publication. The author needs to assign the copyright to the Journal. However, the authors are permitted to use the cases for their personal requirements of teaching.

Submission:

The soft-copies of the Cases can be submitted at editorcastle@jsb.ac.in. The cases submitted before December 10, 2025 will be considered for possible publication in the issue of March, 2026.

Review process:

Each case will undergo a blind review process and the feedback given by the reviewers will be discussed with the authors subsequently.

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(AUTONOMOUS)

Karumathampatti, Coimbatore - 641 659

Phone : 0421-2336161-65

E-mail : castle.journal@jsb.ac.in

