

Scratch



DIA GOEL

Founder, Hookd Chips
PGP TBM '23



Founder's Desk

This edition comes back to something we see often: build, test, learn, repeat. Not as a framework. Just how things tend to work here.

You see it in student ventures like **HOOKd Chicken Chips** by **Dia Goel**, which secured a **₹50 lakh deal** on Shark Tank alongside **Arjun Goel's Meta Fashion**, exploring the intersection of digital identity and physical expression through platforms like Roblox. Different categories, same instinct. Build fast, test in public, and let reality shape the next step.

The same energy shaped **THE NEXT TECH 1.0**, the AI Summit with **Cisco** and **Invideo**, where conversations moved beyond AI theory into execution, systems, and scale.

That mindset also carried through conversations with builders who have scaled businesses over decades.

That pattern doesn't end at campus. Ventures like **Playsuper**, **SeedsAI**, and **Sanyark Space** are already moving from early-stage experimentation into funding conversations, and acquisitions.

There is also clarity in listening to those who have already built at scale. Conversations with **Joe Foster, Co-Founder of Reebok**, **Anupam Mittal, Founder & CEO of People Group**, **Ashwin Damera, CEO of Eruditus & Emeritus**, and **Avnish Bajaj, Founder & Investor, Z47**, reinforce a simple point: enduring brands are rarely built on speed alone. They are shaped by timing, trust, and the discipline to stay useful over time.

On campus, the energy feels similar, students are building MVPs, competing under pressure, working in AI labs, and experimenting in the creator economy. UG startups like **Khet** and **Nomo** capture that pace of experimentation, where ideas are constantly being pushed and refined in real time.

The **UG Global immersion** in the **Middle East**, where students recently spent time across Dubai and Abu Dhabi, adds another layer. They show how policy, business, and culture interact when systems actually have to work at scale.

Faculty bring that same grounding. **Vaibhav Jain** connects M&A and restructuring to live deal thinking. **Saurabh Arora** examines how communication shapes decisions inside organisations. **Dr Antra** approaches decision sciences and applied AI through the lens of judgement under uncertainty.

Careers and alumni journeys reflect the same shift. **Parthik Yadav**, **Kriti Gupta**, and **Ketan Pasari** each represent how quickly modern careers evolve. Roles change, industries shift, and outcomes increasingly matter more than conventional job titles.

Alongside this, new programmes in **Design**, **Sustainability**, **Applied AI**, and **Sports Management** are expanding how students can engage with industries that are still being shaped. And beyond the classroom, the alumni community continues to show up through mentorship, campus gatherings, and shared experiences that extend learning well past graduation.

Across all of it, the thread stays simple: ideas don't stay ideas here for long. They are built, tested, and rebuilt until they work.

Onward,
Pratham Mittal
Founder, Masters' Union



What's Inside

Pg. 01

The MUnth That Was

From global immersion and investor-led insights to high-pressure competitions, MVP building, AI labs, creator economy challenges, and initiatives like THE NEXT TECH 1.0, Masters' Union turns learning into a continuous cycle of hands-on execution, decision-making, and impact.

Pg. 47

Series C

Joe Foster (Reebok), Anupam Mittal (Shaadi.com) and Ashwin Damera (Eruditus) unpack how enduring brands and institutions are built through trust, timing and real-world outcomes.

Pg. 65

Off Campus

Bacca Bucci's rise to a ₹100 crore footwear brand reveals how Natwar Agrawal and Anuj Nevatia built a mass-premium model through lean supply chains, Gen Z-led design, Warner Bros partnerships and Shark Tank India visibility.

Pg. 71

PGP Bharat

A cross-city journey uncovering how industries, ecosystems, and execution styles shape modern India's evolving business and innovation landscape.

Pg. 77

Cover Story

Masters' Union student ventures HOOKd Chicken Chips with Shark Tank Season 5 ₹50 lakh deal, and Meta Fashion's AI-led Roblox fashion platform bridging digital and physical fashion.

Pg. 89

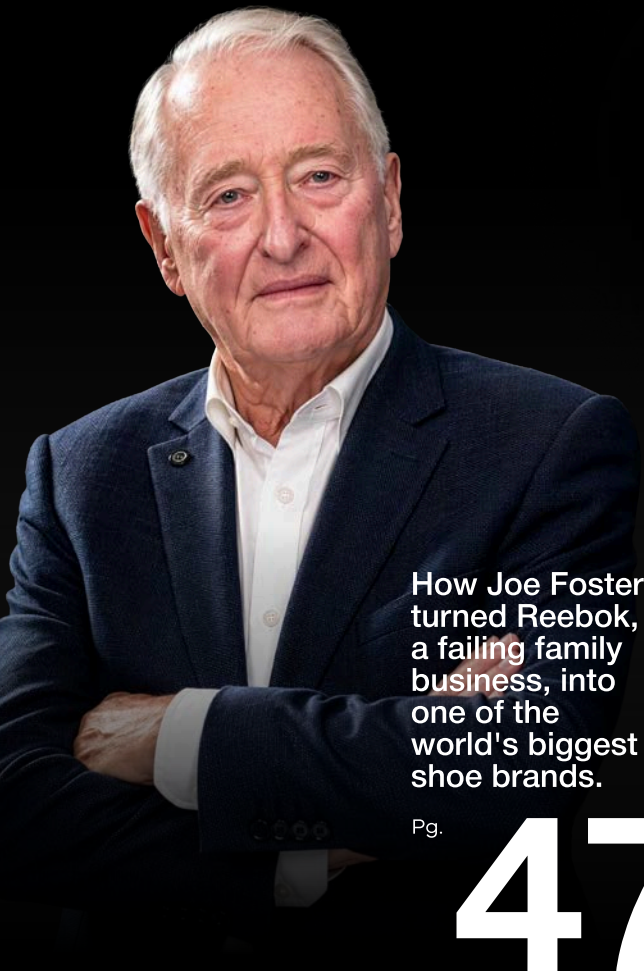
Campus to Capital

Playsuper, SeedsAI, and Sanyark Space; Masters' Union alumni startups scale campus-built ideas into funding, acquisition, and deeptech infrastructure bets.

Pg. 93

Startup Garage

Nomo, a UG student startup, balances indulgence and nutrition by reinventing India's favorite street snack; momo, with millet-based ingredients and strong early market traction.



How Joe Foster turned Reebok, a failing family business, into one of the world's biggest shoe brands.

Pg.

47

Anupam Mittal, Founder & CEO of Shaadi.com, on why most D2C brands die before they scale.

Pg.

53



Pg. 97

Brand Book

How Masters' Union UG student founders built Khet Perfumes, translating everyday Indian sensory experiences into a premium D2C fragrance brand.

Pg. 101

Alumni Spotlight

Masters' Union alumna Kriti Gupta built her career across Foodpanda, Flipkart, Swiggy Instamart, and Careem, while Ketan Pasari moved from co-founding Haldar Kisan to category management at Flipkart.

Pg. 109

The Art of Pivot

Parthik Yadav, an alumnus, pivoted from TCS to Blinkit and Maersk, moving from hierarchical enterprise roles to high-velocity, global systems where outcomes matter more than titles.

Pg. 113

Masters Of The Union

Vaibhav Jain teaches M&A and corporate restructuring

through behavioural insight and real deal experience, while Saurabh Arora explores business storytelling as a leadership tool shaping decisions and organisational outcomes.

Pg. 121

Masterminds

Dr Antra translates decision sciences into applied AI through predictive analytics, explainable models, and real-world healthcare case studies, shaping ethical, industry-ready thinkers.

Pg. 127

Courses on Campus

Masters' Union launches Design, PGP Sustainability & Business Management, Applied AI & Agentic Systems, and Sports Management & Gaming, delivering experiential, industry-led programmes for future-ready careers.

Pg. 133

Life After Masters' Union

Alumni reconnected through memory hunts, community mornings, startup mentorship, and campus gatherings, strengthening bonds and shaping student journeys beyond graduation.

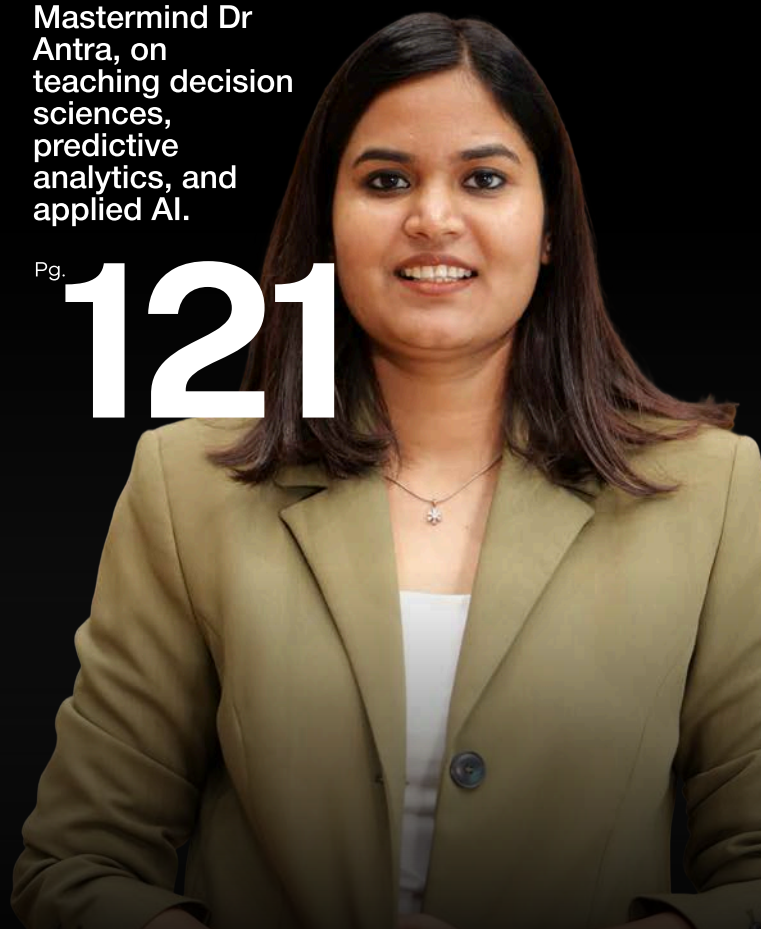


Parthik Yadav, a Masters' Union alum, moved from TCS to Blinkit to Maersk, choosing speed and scale over structure and impact over titles.

Pg. **109**

This edition's Mastermind Dr Antra, on teaching decision sciences, predictive analytics, and applied AI.

Pg. **121**



@masters.union

@themastersunion

Masters' Union

Masters' Union

mastersunion.org

THE MONTH THAT WAS

MIDDLE
EAST



TICKET
HAPPIN



GLOBAL IMMERSION PROGRAMME: MIDDLE EAST

How the Global Immersion Programme in the Middle East helped UG students understand innovation ecosystems, global enterprise and leadership at scale.



THE MIDDLE EAST OFFERED A LIVE CASE STUDY IN NATION-BUILDING THROUGH ENTERPRISE. FOR STUDENTS, IT BECAME A LENS TO DECODE HOW POLICY, CAPITAL, AND LEADERSHIP ALIGN TO CREATE GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE ECOSYSTEMS.

- **DR ANUSHREE PODDAR**

Lead - Outclass Experiential Learning
Masters' Union

Great cities show how ambition works in practice.

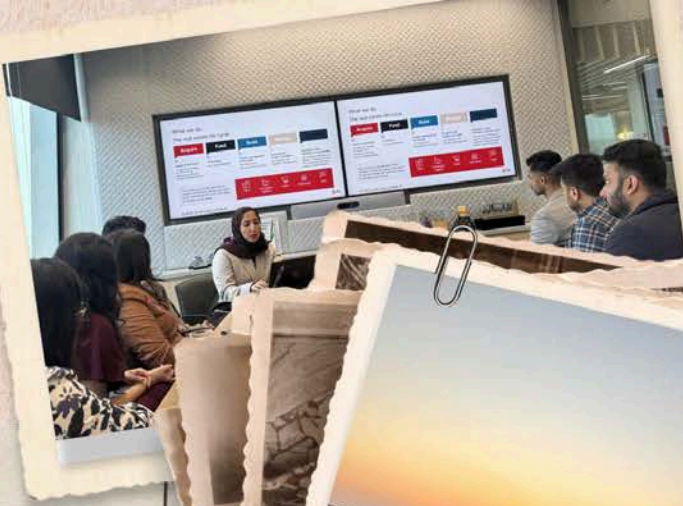
Dubai and Abu Dhabi are perhaps the clearest examples in the modern world. In less than a generation, these cities have transformed into global hubs for aviation, trade, technology and tourism. For students of business and leadership, the Middle East offers a rare opportunity: a live classroom where vision becomes infrastructure, policy becomes execution, and long-term ambition shapes entire economies.

Leading this journey was **Dr Anushree Poddar**, Lead of Outclass Experiential Learning at Masters' Union. She guided undergraduate students through the Global Immersion Programme, designed to show how modern economies build innovation, leadership, and enterprise at scale.

Over the next few days, students experienced far more than a conventional study trip. They were asked to observe, question, and analyse how global cities think, plan, and compete.

ITINERARY: IMMERSION WEEK AT A GLANCE





Day 2: Dubai
(Corporate &
Cultural Immersion)



-Company Visit:
JLL

-Company Visit:
Kraft Heinz

-Cultural
Experience at
Desert Safari &
BBQ Dinner



Day 3: Abu Dhabi
(Cultural &
Experiential Day)



-Sheikh Zayed
Grand Mosque

-Abu Dhabi city
drive with photo
stops at key
landmarks

-Ferrari World
Excursion





Day 4: Dubai
(Future, Innovation
& City Experience)



-Dubai Mall

-Burj Khalifa
visit

-Museum of the
Future visit

-Group dinner at
Mausam, Dubai
Mall



-Company Visit:
Emirates
Innovation Centre

-Expo City Dubai
exploration

Day 5: Dubai
(Innovation, Retail
& Departure Day)



Experiencing Creative Economies and Urban Identity in Dubai

The programme began with a creative immersion at **AYA Universe**, an interactive space where art, technology, and storytelling converge. Students quickly realised that cities do not compete through buildings alone; imagination, culture, and experience play an equally critical role.

That evening, a dinner cruise along **Dubai Marina** offered views of one of the world's most iconic waterfronts. Students saw a skyline that has risen from desert to global hub within a generation. The city stood as a visible example of how ambition, investment and long-term planning can reshape an entire region.

Understanding Global Corporate Strategy Through Industry Engagements

Next came corporate immersion. At **JLL**, students explored how a global real estate advisory firm manages geographically diverse portfolios. Conversations covered urban development, investment flows, and the decisions that underpin success in international markets.

At **The Kraft Heinz Company**, the focus shifted to consumer markets and brand strategy. Students observed how multinational organisations balance global consistency with local adaptation. The takeaway was practical: scale matters, but insight into local markets is what makes execution effective.

Reflecting on Culture and Nation-Building in Abu Dhabi

In Abu Dhabi, students began with a visit to the **Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque**. Its grandeur and design offer more than awe; they provide insight into the UAE's values, heritage, and identity.

Students saw how cultural principles anchor economic and civic development, giving context to leadership and governance.

Later, at **Ferrari World Abu Dhabi**, the focus was on experiential business. Students observed how brands extend influence beyond products, creating immersive ecosystems that strengthen loyalty and engagement. The message was actionable: experience is a strategic lever for any organisation looking to grow.

Exploring the Future of Innovation and Technology in Dubai

Back in Dubai, students explored innovation at scale. The **Burj Khalifa** demonstrated how vision and engineering intersect to create a city-defining landmark. From its heights, the city revealed an integrated ecosystem of tourism, finance, infrastructure, and technology.

At the **Museum of the Future**, students engaged with artificial intelligence, sustainability, mobility, and the future of work. The key takeaway: strategy cannot be reactive. Effective leaders anticipate the forces that will define tomorrow and act today to prepare for them.

Observing Innovation Ecosystems and Digital Commerce in The Middle East

The final phase examined innovation and entrepreneurship. At the **Emirates Innovation Centre**, students saw how a major airline fosters a culture of experimentation and operational excellence. They attended a **Pitchathon** where the students had to create pitch decks presenting a solution to a case study and were judged by senior executives there.

At **Expo City Dubai**, a hub for sustainability and global collaboration, students learned how governments can design platforms that connect startups,

corporations, and policymakers to accelerate innovation.

The programme concluded at **Mumzworld**, a leading e-commerce platform. Here, students witnessed how startups scale operations, optimise supply chains, and put customers at the centre of every decision. The lesson was simple: adaptability and execution define success in dynamic markets.

A Week that Reframed How Students Think About Leadership and Enterprise

Across the week, one truth stood out: the Middle East builds at pace and ambition. Airports become global hubs. Museums spark conversations about the future. Brands evolve into immersive experiences. Cities become symbols.

For students, the Global Immersion Programme offered more than exposure. It offered perspective. It challenged them to think critically about how innovation, leadership, and culture intersect to shape economies and how they can apply these lessons in their own careers.

Leading in a globalised world is about seeing how vision turns into reality, testing ideas in real conditions, and staying mindful of how culture, identity and lived experience shape outcomes.



In Frame: UG students with global leaders, exploring innovation, enterprise, and leadership across the Middle East.

THE MONTH THAT WAS

Z47



**AVNISH
BAJAJ**

Founder and Investor,
Z47

07

HOW TOP INVESTORS IDENTIFY THE NEXT BILLION-RUPEE STARTUP

Avnish Bajaj of Z47 shares lessons from two decades of backing founders, reading markets, and recognising breakout opportunities.



SUCCESS IN INVESTING COMES LESS FROM AVOIDING LOSSES AND MORE FROM RECOGNISING OPPORTUNITIES WHERE MASSIVE RETURNS ARE POSSIBLE.

In a recent session, Avnish Bajaj, founder and investor at Z47 (formerly a Matrix Partners India company), shared candid lessons on startup investing, market timing, and founder evaluation. Hosted by Swati Ganeti, Managing Director of Masters' Union, the conversation combined real-world anecdotes with frameworks for assessing opportunities, offering students actionable insights for high-growth ventures.

Read the Person Before You Read the Pitch

Most investors say they are founder-first, but Avnish Bajaj takes it seriously. Markets change, and business models evolve, but a founder's core wiring rarely does. Their tolerance for discomfort, how they make decisions under pressure, and their relationship with failure are largely shaped much earlier in the journey, long before a term sheet is even on the table.

He does not spend much time on resumes. He looks further back at upbringing, family, and the key moments that shaped how a person sees risk. The question he is really asking is not just, "Can this person build a company?" It is closer to: "Will they keep going when most would quit, and stop when they should?"

Pick a Market That's Hot, Not Crowded

Sequoia's "Hair on Fire" framework highlights markets where demand is urgent and customers are actively searching for solutions. Avnish Bajaj uses it as a starting point but quickly warns of its pitfalls. Take protein powder in India: the market is hot, but it is also crowded. Dozens of founders are chasing the same shelf space, the same Instagram audience and the same distribution playbook.

A hot market is not automatically a good market to enter. The real opportunity lies in spotting what is about to take off before everyone else notices. That requires genuine domain expertise, not just following trends.

Avnish's advice for AI startups makes this clear. Do not build another horizontal workflow automation tool and try to compete with established platforms. Instead, pick one industry where you have real access, where you understand the pain points personally and build strong network effects there first. Grow from a position of strength, not from chasing the crowd.

Concentrate Capital Where Conviction is Highest

Discussing Z47's portfolio, Avnish Bajaj introduced the concept of **Power Law**, where a small number of successes generate the majority of returns. 'Warren Buffett's top five investments generated 80 to 90% of his life's returns. It's the same in VC,' he explained.



THE FRAMEWORK IS A STARTING POINT, NOT THE ENDING POINT. FOR US, IT BEGINS AND ENDS WITH FOUNDERS.

50%

Loss rate by number of bets

25%

Actual capital lost

90%

Buffett's returns from top 5 investments

He highlighted that while startup failure rates are high, around 50%, capital allocation matters more than raw numbers. At Z47, careful deployment has reduced financial loss to 25%, even as half the portfolio continues to fail in number terms. Students learn an important lesson: in venture investing, strategic insight and selective risk-taking outweigh simple risk avoidance.

Vertical Focus and Gaining Disproportionate Knowledge in Niche Markets

A recurring theme in the session was the importance of vertical focus. He explained that horizontal, broad-based solutions often struggle to compete with entrenched players. He advised young founders to select a single vertical where they possess deep knowledge or access to design partners, early adopters who can validate and refine the product.

Illustrating this, he shared advice for an AI startup targeting workflow automation: rather than competing with large horizontal platforms, find one industry with high responsiveness and create network effects there. The practical implication for students is to develop domain expertise and leverage it to achieve a foothold before scaling.

Own One Segment Before Expanding the Category

Avnish's Bajaj's investments in Whole Truth and Open Secret often draw the same question: isn't the healthy-snacking consumer just a small slice of Tier-1 India? His response is clear, that the right question isn't how big the market looks today. It's whether a 500 crore ARR business is achievable, and whether you can reach that point before a better-funded competitor spots the gap.

Focusing on a niche isn't a limitation, it can be a strength.

A brand that truly owns a specific consumer relationship is much harder to displace than a broad platform that serves everyone half-heartedly. The founders who succeed understand this instinctively: they go deep before they go wide. Those who don't often end up fighting on price instead of building loyalty.

Prove It Works Before You Push It Fast

Healthcare and AI highlight the tension between rapid growth and operational precision. Bajaj stressed that efficacy should always precede speed. "First, do no harm. Only when the technology is proven to work should teams focus on moving quickly," he advised, adding examples from cancer detection and drug discovery.

He argued that this principle extends beyond healthcare. Even in emerging technologies like AI, startups must combine technical accuracy with iterative execution. The lesson for students is clear: fast expansion without operational integrity risks both reputation and results.

How Early Life Signals, Behavioural Cues and Mindset Shape High-Potential Founders

Avnish reflected on the age-old nature versus nurture debate. He referenced Sam Altman's "187" framework, which suggests that the first 18 years of life play a defining role in shaping entrepreneurial potential, often more than the early years of adulthood that follow.

'By understanding background, experiences, and mindset, investors can identify high-potential founders early,' Avnish explained. He advised listening actively, following up on subtle cues, and asking thoughtful questions to uncover intrinsic motivation and resilience. For students,

cultivating observational skills and analytical listening is invaluable, whether building ventures or evaluating investment opportunities.

Avnish's session offered a rare window into the mechanics of venture investing. Founder quality, market timing, vertical expertise, and disciplined risk-reward strategies form the pillars of high-growth startups.

Essential Observations from the Session

- ▶ **Invest in the Founder, Not Just the Idea** – Look for grit, instinct, and clarity under pressure. The person behind the startup often matters more than the market they're in.
- ▶ **Early Moves Beat Hot Markets** – Chasing trends late means competing with everyone else. The biggest rewards come from spotting opportunities before the crowd notices.
- ▶ **Master One Niche First** – Focus on a single industry or customer segment. Deep understanding creates influence and leverage before expanding.
- ▶ **Embrace Calculated Failure** – Losing on some bets is part of the game. Strategic capital allocation ensures that when you're right, the payoff is significant.
- ▶ **Narrow Focus Builds Strength** – Brands that truly own a customer relationship withstand competition. Trying to serve everyone often leads to price wars and weak differentiation.

In the end, the session left students with a sharper understanding of entrepreneurship: success rarely comes from chasing noise. It comes from spotting what others miss, staying steady under pressure, and knowing where to go deep.

THE MONTH THAT WAS

**GURLEEN
PANNU**

Stand-up Comedian and Writer

UNMUTE 2026 CHALLENGES STUDENTS WITH LIVE BUSINESS, CULTURAL AND COMPETITIVE EVENTS

Participants from top colleges showcasing talent and creativity across high-impact competitions and experiential learning opportunities.

- ▶ 12 EVENTS
- ▶ 1000+ STUDENTS
- ▶ 200+ COLLEGES

On 7th February 2026, nearly 1,000 students from India's top colleges came together for a full day of competition and collaboration. Teams moved between business challenges, cultural performances, and competitive games, often switching contexts within minutes. By evening, the day had turned into a continuous test of ideas, execution, and decision-making.

Competing in a High-Stakes Environment

Participants did not compete in a typical campus event. From the very first round, it was clear that careful planning, quick thinking, and solid execution mattered more than theatrics. Students from institutions such as **IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur, IIT Madras, IIM Indore, IIM Rohtak, IIM Ranchi, IIM Amritsar, SRCC, LSR, St Stephen's**, and more brought different skills and perspectives, pushing one another to raise the bar. The level of competition was high, and performing alongside top peers challenged participants to elevate their performance at every stage.

Business Events Tested Judgement, Not Knowledge

The business competitions were designed to mirror situations where there are no clear answers, only trade-offs. Participants had to make decisions with limited information, defend their thinking, and adapt as scenarios evolved.

Events like **Midnight Crisis** placed teams in ambiguous, high-pressure situations that demanded quick judgement. **Pitch Perfect** brought in an investor lens, where ideas were tested on market clarity and business viability. **CEO Challenge**, judged by **Ajay Nambiar, COO at M3M**, focused on leadership presence and decision-making under scrutiny. **Dalal Street** simulated market conditions, where timing, risk appetite, and strategy determined outcomes.

Across these formats, success depended less on what participants knew and more on how they thought, decided, and executed in the moment.

Cultural Events Built on Collaboration, Creativity and Performance

Events like **Group Dance** and **Nukkad Naatak** had the highest footfall. They tested:

- Team coordination under pressure
- Audience engagement
- Storytelling within constraints

The skills translated directly to professional scenarios: leading teams, communicating ideas, and holding attention.

Direct Industry Feedback and Hands-On Student Execution

Judges were industry practitioners, offering direct, actionable feedback on execution, clarity and real-world applicability. Students quickly learned where their thinking aligned with industry expectations and where it fell short. The mix of participants also brought a global dimension, with students from TETR stepping into unfamiliar formats like street plays and group performances, collaborating and competing alongside Indian peers. The festival also featured nine student-run stalls showcasing early-stage products, from paper-based detergent sheets to unwrinkle sprays and iced drinks. These stalls provided a hands-on space for experimentation, where students observed user behaviour, iterated quickly, and realised that execution often matters more than perfection.

Networking and Informal Learning

As the day wound down, the pace shifted. A stand-up set by **Gurleen Pannu** and a Bolly-Punjabi DJ night by **DJ Adi** created spaces

for informal interaction. Conversations flowed naturally, participants exchanged insights, and networks formed beyond the competitions.

By the time UNMUTE 2026 wrapped, it was clear that the festival was less about accolades and more about testing, learning, and performing under pressure. It gave students a chance to experience real-world scenarios, measure their capabilities, and see firsthand how thinking, acting, and collaborating intersect in high-stakes environments.

By the end of the day, UNMUTE 2026 had left behind a simple pattern of experience. Students were constantly making decisions, adjusting to feedback, and working through unfamiliar situations with limited time to think. Some things went as planned, many did not. What stayed was the sense of being pushed to act, respond, and collaborate without overthinking. Long after the events ended, it was this pace of thinking and doing that participants remembered most.





THE MUNTH THAT WAS



MVP FAIR 2026: TURNING IDEAS INTO REAL PRODUCTS

From early prototypes to evaluated products, the UG and PG startup showcases revealed what it takes to build, test, and refine ideas in real time.

- ▶ 2 COHORTS
- ▶ OVER 24L IN FUNDING
- ▶ 28+ TEAMS

A good idea is easy to come by. A working product is not. The gap between what a founder imagines and what a user actually experiences is exactly what the MVP Fair exposes. This year, on **10th February** for undergraduates and **27th February** for postgraduates, Masters' Union showed dozens of students just how different an idea is from a working product, making

them build, test, and improve in real time. The rules are straightforward. Forget slide decks and hypotheticals. You build something real, show it to people who will challenge it, and then fix it before the next day. By the time students reach the final showcase, their prototypes have already been tested once. And that's exactly the point.

UG MVP Demo Day: From Concept to Practical Solution

The undergraduate showcase focused on turning early concepts into usable products. By this stage, students had moved beyond ideation and validation. The challenge was simple: **build quickly, test early, fix what breaks, and iterate.**

Overengineering had no place. Execution was everything.

Before the final day, each team participated in the **UG MVP Prelim Demo Day**, where investors and mentors provided critical feedback. Panelists included:

- + **Ankit Harjai**, MountTech Growth Fund
- + **Ankit Maheshwari**, Inflection Point Ventures
- + **Sparsh Bhardwaj**, InfoEdge Ventures
- + **Sagar Guliani**, D2C Insider

This process forced students to question assumptions, refine usability, and justify their product positioning. By the time they reached the final showcase, their prototypes had already been broken and rebuilt once.

On the **final day**, the focus tightened further. **Judges Swati Ganeti, Managing Director, Masters' Union, and Ashish Kumar, Co-founder and GP, Fundamentum**, assessed startups on execution, traction, and clarity of thought. Their feedback highlighted that the most successful teams were not always those with the most ambitious ideas, but those who executed well and demonstrated real user value.

THE STARTUPS THAT STOOD OUT



Reduces teachers' lesson planning and assessment time.

Affordable, healthier momos without compromising on taste.



Perfumes inspired by Indian culture, offering an alternative to western-heavy narratives.



STARTUP ACHIEVEMENTS BEYOND THE WINNING TITLES

- + **SHIFTSDEAL:** Converts idle spaces into reliable income streams.
- + **ZENMO:** Builds traction through a defined community with automotive-inspired lifestyle products.
- + **SOLOMON BHARAT:** Makes complex logistics simple and accessible.
- + **GATI:** Focuses on building community engagement before scaling.
- + **BABYLON:** Simplifies hiring with AI for sourcing, screening, and interviews.

By the end of the UG MVP Demo Day, students were no longer discussing ideas in theory. They had built products, tested assumptions, responded to feedback and refined their solutions for real-world use.

PG MVP Demo Day: Scaling Bold Ideas to Market-Ready Products

The postgraduate showcase took execution a step further, combining insights, market intelligence, and operational feasibility. The students were expected to not just validate their ideas, but also demonstrate market-ready solutions.

Investors and mentors offered guidance on scalability, market fit, and operational strategy. Panellists included:

- + **Ravinder Pal Singh**, Kalaari Capital
- + **Zeal Lilani**, Eternal Capital
- + **Sera Arora**, Bharat Founders Fund

- + **Radhika Agarwal**, GoodCapital
- + **Vibhuti Aggarwal**, Real Time Angel Fund
- + **Nidhi S Mittal**, Blue Vector
- + **Kartik Mehta**, WaterBridge Ventures
- + **Sagar Guliani**, D2C Insider
- + **Aman Chugh** and others

TOP PERFORMERS WHO DELIVERED MARKET-READY PRODUCTS

BREEZ MOBILITY

Premium Airport Transportation Platform

- ▶ Dhruv Arora
- ▶ Ishaan Kawatra
- ▶ Ayush Sibal
- ▶ Bhoumik Parmar

Amount

2.5L



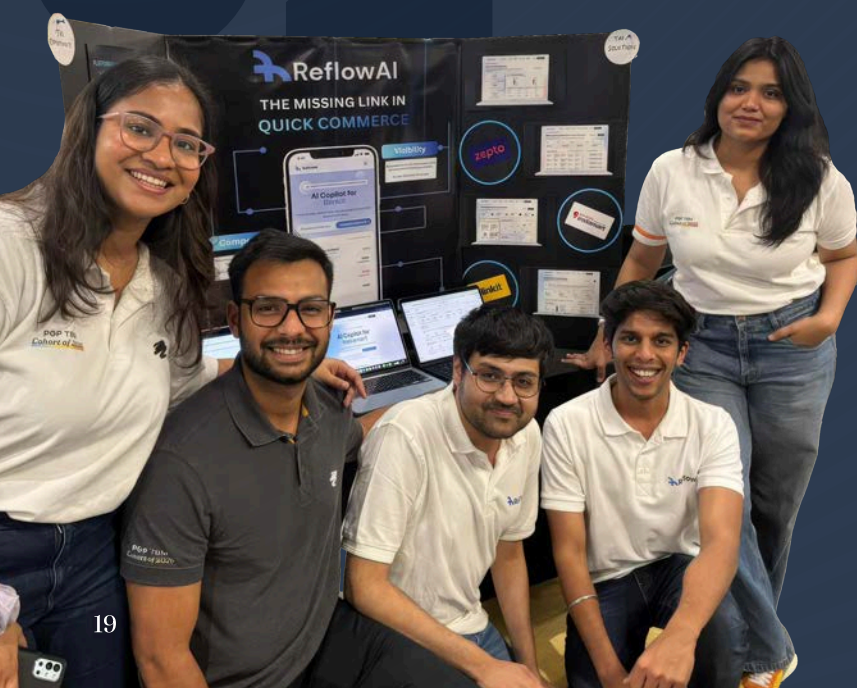
REFLOWAI

AI-Driven Market Intelligence For Quick Commerce Brands

- ▶ Amol Jain
- ▶ Priyanshu Sharma
- ▶ Neelaksh Sharma
- ▶ Shivani Shivhare
- ▶ Akshaya Bharadwaj

Amount

1.75L



STORI.AI

Alternative Credit Scoring Engine Providing A 360° View Of Borrowers

- ▶ Tanya
- ▶ Nishil Parekh

Amount

1.75L



FOR PAWS

Pet Wellness Solutions For Holistic Health

- ▶ Manan Goel
- ▶ Deep Ashar
- ▶ Swaraj Mangaonkar
- ▶ Rishabh Asrani

Amount

1.25L



UNBRAND

Lifestyle-First Nutrition Brand Challenging Supplement Stereotypes

- ▶ Varun S Rao
- ▶ Sanal Suresh
- ▶ Annapurna Gupta
- ▶ Archit Dubey

Amount

1.25L



NEXO

Personal CRM Delivering Structure And Relationship Intelligence

- ▶ Harsh Jain
- ▶ Naman Maheshwari
- ▶ Akul P

Amount

1.0L



SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS THAT SET TEAMS APART

Across both UG and PG showcases, the lesson was consistent. The most successful ventures are not necessarily the most ambitious, but the **most well-executed**

Students learned several key lessons from the MVP Fair. They learned to prioritise execution over theory, taking action instead of getting lost in planning. They learned to receive feedback without defensiveness and to use it to improve their product. They practised communicating value clearly and concisely, ensuring their ideas could be understood by anyone. And they discovered the importance of balancing product functionality with presentation and social relevance, recognising that a solution only succeeds when it works well and resonates with real users.

UG students left with validated MVPs, ready for real-world testing. PG students demonstrated scalability and market readiness. Both groups proved that the transition from intention to execution defines true entrepreneurship.

Best Deck	Wing Women	Simran Wasan Hardik Jaimini	50K
Best Pitch	Kalateet	Samrth Kanungo Anuj Sardesai Kamya Ladsaria Nitya Gupta Madhur Maheshwari	50K
Most Socially Impactful	Incinera	Pratheek M Arun Subramanian Rishu Shiwakoti Gautam Lakshman Jhanvi Bonu Kashyap V	50K
Best Product Packaging	RuSticks	Khushbu Kothari Aagrah Nigam Sanya Aggarwal Aditya Sharma	50K
Best Product Packaging	High Card	Kabir Sachdeva Dev Kantol Dhruv Vasudha Dahiya	50K
Best Product Packaging	High Card	Kabir Sachdeva Dev Kantol Dhruv Vasudha Dahiya	50K
Best Product Demo	Pesha	Aman Agarwal	50K
Best Product Demo	Mul Threads	Ujjwal Mohata	50K
Game Changing Idea	Oohlala	Muskurahat Bajaj Priyanshu Kumar Jha Nishi Jain	50K
Promising Product Concept	Team Alpha	Shrasti Varshney Rishabh Agarwal Shreyas Palod Kritika Agarwal Rithik Gangwal	50K
High Potential Product	Ahar. ai	Sachin Reddy Sourabh Bajabale Zeel Desai Shridhar Bhat Vojaswwin	50K
High Potential Product	Auditbuddy. ai	Pranjal Kapur Sidhant Patnaik Dev Amlani	50K
Flavour Champion	Moonzy	Kartik Mundra Rishav Kumar Shreya Gupta Nidhi Prabhakaran Vivikta Kona	50K

THE MUNTH THAT WAS



MASTERS' UNION HOSTS LEADERS FROM EIGHT GLOBAL BUSINESS SCHOOLS

Global universities share programme insights, career pathways, and practical learning with Masters' Union students.

- ▶ 8 GLOBAL BUSINESS SCHOOLS
- ▶ 4 COUNTRIES FEATURED IN THE DELEGATION
- ▶ STUDENT Q&A AND ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

On 6th February 2026, Masters' Union welcomed senior leaders from eight prestigious international business schools. Representatives from **London Business School in the United Kingdom, Università Bocconi in Italy, Singapore Management University, Johns Hopkins**

University, Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Rochester, University of San Francisco, and Bentley University visited the campus to engage directly with students and faculty. The event was designed to give students early exposure to global

academic standards and provide a window into international learning opportunities. It also highlighted Masters' Union's commitment to practical, real-world education that prepares students for complex careers.

Leading Global Business Schools that Participated



London Business School is a world-class global business school that combines academic excellence, London spirit and a global mindset. It brings together outstanding faculty and students, recognised around the world for their expertise and impact.

The School nurtures bright minds and deep thinkers, preparing them not only to face but also to drive solutions for interconnected global challenges. London Business School's approach is built on five foundations: striving for excellence, delivering impact, embracing global reach, leveraging agility, and community.

Bocconi University, ranked among the top 5 European universities, offers pre-experience Master's programmes in Economics, Management, Finance, Political Science, Data Science, AI, and Legal Studies, all taught in English. Highly regarded by Financial Times and QS, programmes like Finance and International Management stand out. Many Master's programmes include study abroad options or Double Degrees with prestigious global business schools.



Singapore Management University's Lee Kong Chian School of Business (LKCSB) is one of Asia's leading business schools, offering a dynamic, industry-connected learning experience in the heart of Singapore's financial district. With a strong focus on leadership, innovation, and real-world problem-solving, LKCSB blends Asian insights with global perspectives. Supported by renowned faculty and deep corporate partnerships, the school is consistently ranked among Asia's top institutions for academic excellence and career outcomes.



Singapore Management University (Singapore)



Johns Hopkins University (USA)

Johns Hopkins Carey Business School shapes business leaders who seize opportunity, inspire change, and create lasting value. Their full-time, part-time, and online MBA and MS degrees in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. are data-driven and built to compete in the global marketplace. They learn by doing. Their experiential learning courses immerse students in one-day to month-long field projects from Baltimore to Belize and beyond.



ROBERT H. SMITH
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Robert H. Smith School of Business (USA)

Get ready to shape the future at the Robert H. Smith School of Business! Their STEM-designated programmes put you right at the intersection of AI, analytics, and innovation, where big ideas meet real-world impact. Just minutes from Washington, D.C., you'll be connected to a powerful network of business leaders and global changemakers so you can take the next step toward your dream job.

The Simon Business School at the University of Rochester is a leading private business school known for its strong focus on analytics, economics-based learning, and data-driven decision-making. Located in Rochester, New York, it offers MBA and MS programmes that emphasize quantitative skills and career readiness. Simon is also recognized for its inclusive community, STEM-designated programmes, and strong placement outcomes in consulting, finance, tech, and analytics roles.



University of
Rochester (USA)



University of San
Francisco (USA)

The Masagung School of Management is located in the heart of San Francisco, one of the most concentrated business ecosystems in the world, which allows USF to provide students with unparalleled access to STEM fields in tech, finance, venture capital, and entrepreneurial leaders. The school combines strong experiential learning with access to technology, finance, venture capital, and entrepreneurship, preparing students for today's dynamic marketplace.

Bentley's Graduate School sits at the intersection of business and technology, preparing students to thrive in a digital-first world. Programmes are designed to be both technically rigorous and grounded in real-world business applications, ensuring graduates can turn data into impact. With a curriculum that blends analytics, innovation, and leadership, Bentley equips students to drive change across industries.



Bentley University (USA)

Together, these institutions offered students a comprehensive view of how business education is evolving across regions and industries.

Pratham Mittal, founder & CEO of Masters' Union, opened the session by sharing his perspective on what modern business education should look like. He explained that programmes must combine academic rigour with practical relevance so students are equipped to solve real-world problems with clarity and confidence.

Panel Discussion on Global Academic Perspectives

The afternoon began with a panel discussion. Each university representative gave an introduction to their institution, highlighting the programmes they offer, the global collaborations available to students, and the unique approach of their campuses. Presentations were projected for all attendees, giving students an insight into the culture and academic standards of universities across four continents.

After the introductions, a moderated question and answer session followed. Students were encouraged to ask thoughtful questions about curriculum design, international internships, and opportunities for collaboration. The conversation was candid and informative, helping students understand how global business education can shape their careers.

One-on-One Student Interactions

Following the panel, students had the opportunity to meet the representatives one-on-one. These sessions allowed students to discuss their individual interests, explore potential pathways, and gain personalised guidance on global programmes. Light refreshments and coffee

created a relaxed setting for networking and deeper conversations.

Building Exposure and Global Pathways

The event was driven by three key objectives. First, it aimed to give students early exposure to international education standards. Second, it sought to create pathways for students to explore collaborative and overseas programmes. Third, it emphasised learning that is grounded in practical application, ensuring that what students learn in the classroom can be applied in real-world scenarios.

Benefits for Students

- ▶ **Global Partnerships:** Access to collaborations with top international business schools.
- ▶ **Exchange Opportunities:** Possibilities for student and faculty exchanges to broaden learning experiences.
- ▶ **Financial Support:** Special scholarships and application fee waivers for selected programmes.
- ▶ **Direct Connections:** Opportunities to interact with university representatives and explore personalised pathways.

Masters' Union Team

The event was facilitated by the Masters' Union team to ensure smooth execution and meaningful interactions:

- ✦ **Nikhil Mittal**, Managing Director, Masters' Union
- ✦ **Poornima Rai**, Director's Office, Head Strategic Initiatives
- ✦ **Gaurav Sharma**, Associate Director, Masters' Union
- ✦ **Gautam**, Programme Manager

Their guidance and coordination ensured students maximised their engagement

with the visiting representatives.

Students at the Centre of Global Conversations

By bringing together leaders from eight world-class institutions, Masters' Union created an environment where students could experience global perspectives first-hand. The discussions helped students understand international academic standards, explore cross-border opportunities, and start building networks that will shape their future careers. Events like these reinforce Masters' Union's commitment to preparing students for a complex, interconnected world. For students, this is an opportunity to gain insights and guidance that can shape their career trajectory long before graduation.

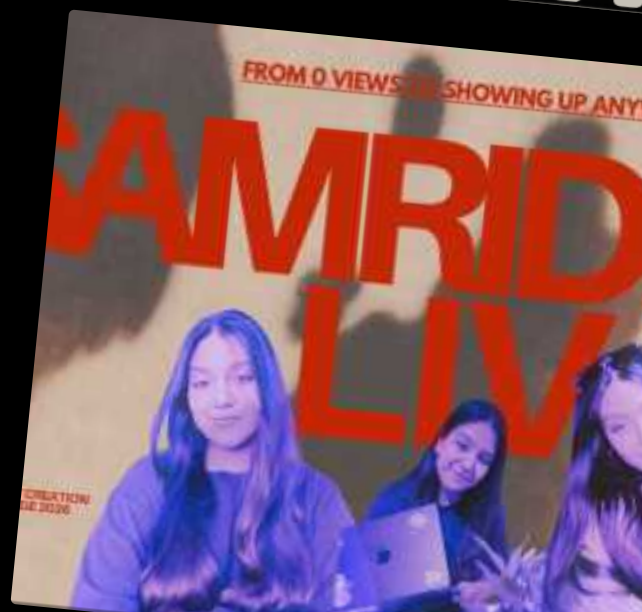


THE MUNTH THAT WAS



CONTENT CREATOR CHALLENGE

Experiencing the creator economy, undergraduate Class of 2028 builds influence, earns recognition, and transforms their passion into meaningful digital journeys.



From identifying a content niche to building an audience, students are trained to grow their personal brands on YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

In most traditional B-schools, learning still leans on repetitive textbooks and predictable theory, with practical exposure often remaining simulated, far removed from real-world relevance. At Masters' Union, Content Creator Challenge breaks that mould. Instead of

learning the creator economy in theory, students test it in real time. Students engage with audiences, experiment with content, and build real communities, exploring their digital identities in real time.

In a room charged with ambition and algorithms, stories unfolded not just in numbers, but in narratives of growth, and digital instinct. Even though it started as a competition; it still stood out to be a showcase of creators turning

moments into movements, and content into capital. What follows is not just a list of winners, but a glimpse into futures being tested, built, and boldly lived. It brings together these journeys, showcasing the defining wins, standout performances, and special recognitions that emerged from the dynamic undergraduate cohort of 2028, capturing the spirit of a new-age creator generation in motion.

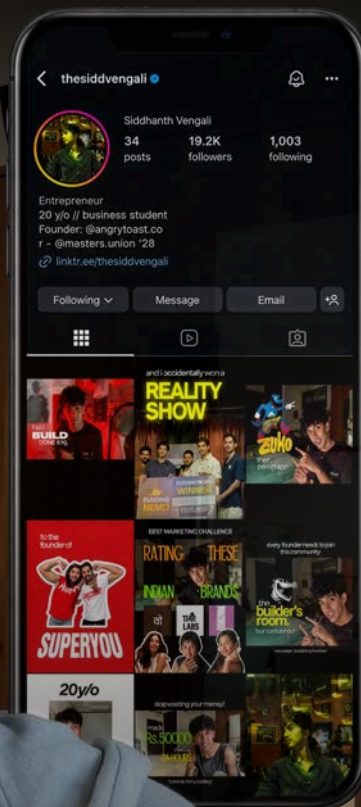
WINNERS

1st Position

Siddhant Vengali

(@thesiddvengali)

- ▶ **40+ Posts | 19.2K+ Followers**
- ▶ **Founder @AngryToast**
- ▶ **7+ Brand Deals** within the last month (**Moxie Beauty, Rosier Foods, PitchLadder, Souled Store, SuperProfile, among others**)
- ▶ Was invited to **Funding Nemo by Ayushman Pandita** and proceeded to **win the show!**
- ▶ **35-40% Sales Boost** of Angry Toast
- ▶ **Crossed 4L+ Revenue in 2 months** for Angry Toast!
- ▶ Angry Toast got listed in its **First Multi Branded Store in Mumbai!**



Awarded

₹1,00,000

- ★ **5M+ Views**
- ★ **7+ Brand Deals**
- ★ **276K+ Interactions**

2nd Position

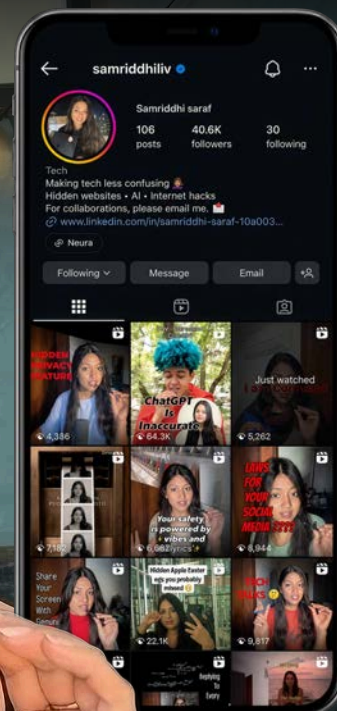
Samriddhi Saraf

(@Samriddhiliv)

- ▶ Built **Tech and AI-focused** content platform
- ▶ Successfully secured **20+ brand collaborations** like **Sparx** (Podcast by the founder of Myntra), **Superprofilebio**, **Calorielens**, **Vision Board Maker** (by the students of MU), **Stickitup**
- ▶ Recognised by **Industry Leaders** - received outreach from teams of **Dhruv Rathee** and **Mukesh Bansal**

Awarded
₹75,000

- ★ **15M+ Views**
- ★ **20+ Brand Collaborations**
- ★ **40.6K Followers**



#3rd Position - I

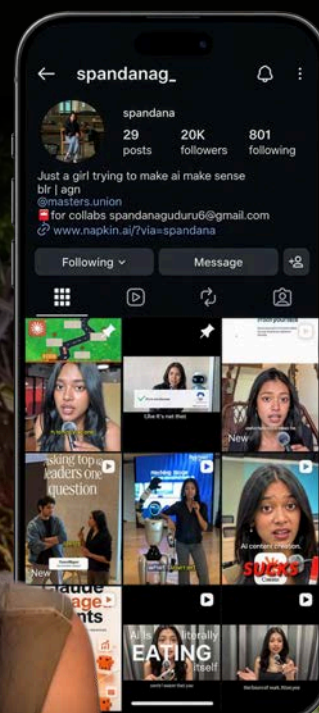
Guduru Spandana

(@Spandanag_)

- ▶ Grew from **2,000 to 11,500+ followers** in **under a month**. The growth was entirely organic.
- ▶ Produced a reel that crossed **1.8 million views** - establishing a significant digital footprint within the Indian student-led AI content space
- ▶ Consistently hit **100K-500K views** per reel after cracking her content framework.
- ▶ Received inbound interest from **Y Combinator-backed** companies for roles and partnerships

Awarded
₹50,000

- ★ **4.5M+ Views**
- ★ **5+ Brand Collaborations**
- ★ **20K+ Followers**

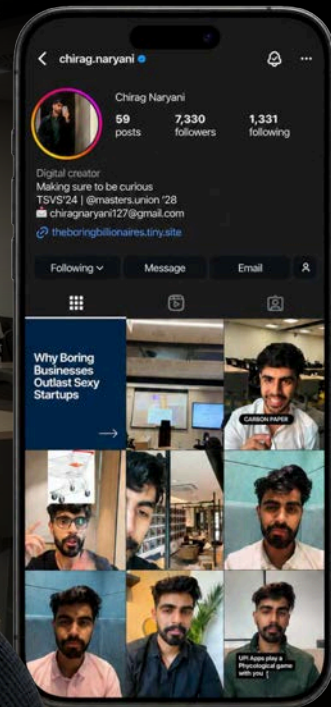


#3rd Position - II

Chirag Naryani

(@chirag.naryani)

- ▶ Generated a cumulative **3.5M+** organic views
- ▶ Paid collaborations with brands such as **MIVI, Philips, Fixderma, BlueOcean, Curie Money, and Tutedude**
- ▶ Received recognition from **Nikunj Biyani** for his work and insights in the **business content space**



Awarded
₹50,000

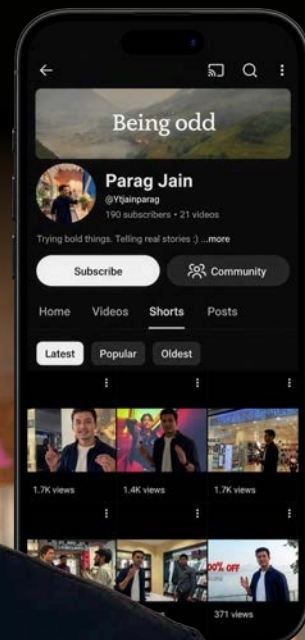
✦ **3.5M+** Views
✦ **7+** Brand Collaborations
✦ **7.3K** Followers

#Special Award

Parag Jain

(@Ytjainparag)

- ▶ Secured his first brand sponsorship by the 5th video, collaborating in exchange for a product by Flying Machine
- ▶ Scaled content reach from ~800 to 25,000+ impressions within just 7 days
- ▶ Achieved 100%+ average view duration across multiple YouTube Shorts
- ▶ Maintained a consistent ~7% CTR on long-form video content
- ▶ YouTube Shorts consistently surpassed 1,500+ views



Awarded
₹50,000

25K+
Impressions On YT Video

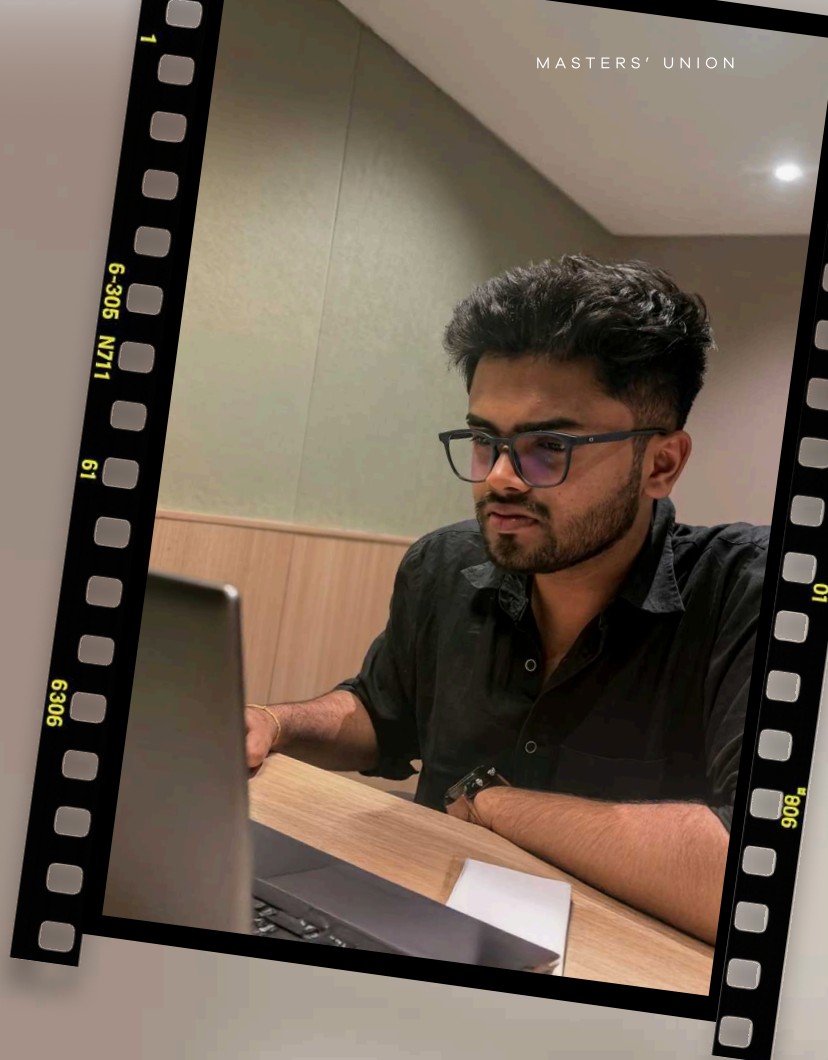
STUDENTS FEEDBACK

DEVANSH SRIVASTAVA

Class of 2028

Growing @by.devansh to over **9,000 followers** wasn't just a vanity milestone. It delivered tangible results. By consistently creating relatable and motivational content, I now reach thousands of people daily. One of my reels even surpassed **1 million views**, proving the power of a great idea executed well.

Beyond the metrics, this growth triggered a wave of inbound opportunities, including a **collaboration with Philips OneBlade**, a stronger professional network, and access to high-level conversations. The real shift happened when I moved from inconsistent posting to a strategic, intentional approach and that's where CCC played a pivotal role.



SIMRAN DHANKANI

Class of 2028

Starting a personal branding page from scratch in November and growing it to **6,000 followers in just 4 months**, with **reels crossing 700K views** was proof that all it takes is that one push to begin.

The biggest lessons? Consistency is everything, and a raw, attention-grabbing script can make or break your content. These weren't just theories, I lived them with every post.

What surprised me most was how quickly opportunities followed. Brands like **Pinq Polka, Bla Bli Blu, Photobooth Cafes**, and several other consumer labels reached out for collaborations.

CCC taught me how to build a personal brand from the ground up, attract real opportunities, and show up with intent, and that's something I'll carry well beyond college.



THE MUNTH THAT WAS



AI Skills — for — Students



Dr Nandini Seth
Professor of AI, Masters' Union

INSIDE A COURSE WHERE CHATBOTS BECAME REAL SOLUTIONS

UG Data Science & AI students built impactful AI chatbots solving real problems through accessibility, empathy, and intelligent decision-making.

- ▶ AI FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING
- ▶ REAL-TIME DECISION FRAMEWORKS
- ▶ HUMAN-CENTRED CHATBOT DESIGN

Every Monday to Thursday at 8:00 PM, while most students wind down, a different kind of classroom comes alive. Screens light up, ideas collide, and concepts from AI theory are pushed into real-world experimentation. Weekends are no lighter, with intensive four-hour lab sessions that feel less like assignments and more like product sprints. Add to that early morning proctored tests at 7:00 AM or tightly scheduled weekend evaluations, and what emerges is not just a course, but a full-stack immersion into building with AI. It is in this high-intensity environment that students were challenged to design chatbots that go beyond novelty, culminating in three standout winners who didn't just build bots, but built solutions. Each winning team took home a prize of ₹75,000, but more importantly, they walked away with something far more valuable: proof that thoughtful AI can meaningfully impact lives.

From Code to Compassion: What Winning Chatbots Actually Look Like

What set these projects apart wasn't just technical execution, but intent. Each chatbot addressed a real, often overlooked problem, using AI not as a gimmick but as a bridge.

VOICELESS BY THE HOLY TRINITY

(Most Useful Chatbot | Team: The Holy Trinity – Sarthak Gupta, Harsh Dhanuka, Pranav Verma)

VoiceLess begins with a simple but powerful idea: what if AI could communicate in sign language, not just translate it? Designed for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) users, VoiceLess flips the traditional chatbot interface. Instead of typing or speaking, users interact through sign language using a webcam. The system captures hand movements, processes them through a computer vision pipeline, and converts them into meaningful text responses.

At its core lies a custom-built AI pipeline that integrates:

- ✦ Webcam-based gesture input
- ✦ Hand landmark detection using MediaPipe
- ✦ A trained machine learning classifier using LSTM models

This enables the chatbot to recognise American Sign Language (ASL) gestures such as "hello," "thank you," or "yes," and convert them into conversational responses. The system doesn't stop at recognition; it feeds the translated text into a chatbot engine to maintain a seamless interaction flow.

What makes VoiceLess particularly thoughtful is its handling of uncertainty. If the model's confidence score is low, it doesn't guess. Instead, it prompts the user to repeat the sign, ensuring accuracy and reducing miscommunication.

Testing revealed both strengths and real-world challenges. While the chatbot performed reliably across different users and repeated gestures, factors like poor lighting or partial hand visibility reduced accuracy. The team iterated on this by improving lighting normalisation and expanding training datasets.

In a space where accessibility is often an afterthought, VoiceLess positions it at the centre. It doesn't just make AI usable for DHH individuals; it makes AI speak their language first.

DANDELION BY INNOV8HERS

(Most Engaging Chatbot | Team: Innov8Hers – Megha Pareek, Hiteshree Sharma)

Built as an AI-powered learning companion, Dandelion supports children with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. But rather than treating these as limitations, the chatbot reframes them as learning differences that require adaptive approaches.

The chatbot operates across three core domains:

- ✦ Reading support for dyslexia

- ✦ Writing assistance for dysgraphia
- ✦ Numerical understanding for dyscalculia

What sets Dandelion apart is its deeply empathetic design. It doesn't just answer questions; it adjusts how it answers based on the learner's needs. For example, a student struggling with reading can upload text, and the bot will:

- ✦ Read it aloud
- ✦ Break it into smaller chunks
- ✦ Highlight difficult words
- ✦ Simplify vocabulary

It also incorporates DSM-5 aligned screening questions; not to diagnose, but to personalise support levels. This ensures that each interaction feels tailored without crossing ethical boundaries.

The conversational flow is equally thoughtful. It begins with personalisation, identifies the user's challenge area, adapts the learning mode (visual, auditory, or textual), and continuously reinforces progress. The tone is deliberately encouraging and non-judgemental, with responses like "You're doing great" or "Let's try another way together."

Dandelion also shines in handling emotional edge cases. If a user expresses frustration or distress, the bot slows down, reassures them, and, in severe cases, even suggests reaching out to mental health helplines. In a world where ed-tech often prioritises scale over sensitivity, Dandelion proves that AI can be both intelligent and kind.

CIAO BY DEGENAIRATES

(Smartest Chatbot | Team: DegenAlrates – Ishaan Bansal, Harman Manik, Divyam Jindal)

The third winning chatbot idea, cIAo, tackles complexity.

Designed as a virtual executive team for small and medium businesses (SMBs), cIAo replaces the need for multiple C-level leaders by simulating them through AI. Instead of a single

chatbot, it deploys five specialised agents:

- ✦ A CEO for strategy
- ✦ A CFO for financial analysis
- ✦ A COO for operations
- ✦ A CTO for technology decisions
- ✦ A CHRO for people strategy

These bots don't work in isolation. They debate, challenge each other, and collaboratively arrive at a unified recommendation, mimicking real-world executive dynamics.

The problem it addresses is both clear and compelling. SMB founders often face decision delays of over two weeks, spend ₹15–20 lakh annually on consultants, and lose significant time navigating cross-functional challenges. cIAo compresses this process into minutes by delivering structured, data-backed insights.

A typical interaction might involve a founder asking whether to expand into a new city. Each AI "executive" contributes:

- ✦ The CFO estimates costs and breakeven timelines
- ✦ The COO evaluates operational readiness
- ✦ The CTO flags technical risks
- ✦ The CHRO assesses hiring needs

- ✦ The CEO synthesises the final recommendation with a confidence score

What makes cIAo particularly advanced is its conflict resolution system. When bots disagree, the system visualises trade-offs and weights each perspective. Financial inputs carry more weight than strategy, for instance, before arriving at a final decision.

It also integrates over 500 business frameworks, from Porter's Five Forces to unit economics, ensuring recommendations are grounded in established theory rather than guesswork.

Ethically, cIAo is designed with clear guardrails. It avoids giving legal or medical advice, maintains strict data privacy with session-based storage, and explicitly communicates that its outputs are AI-generated suggestions, not final decisions. In essence, cIAo doesn't just answer questions; it thinks like a boardroom.

The Bigger Picture: What this Says About Learning AI Today

Across all three winners, a pattern emerges. The best AI projects are not the most complex; they are the most intentional.

- ✦ VoiceLess shows that accessibility can be engineered into the interface itself.

- ✦ Dandelion proves that empathy can be systematised without losing authenticity.

- ✦ cIAo demonstrates that AI can handle complexity by breaking it into collaborative intelligence.

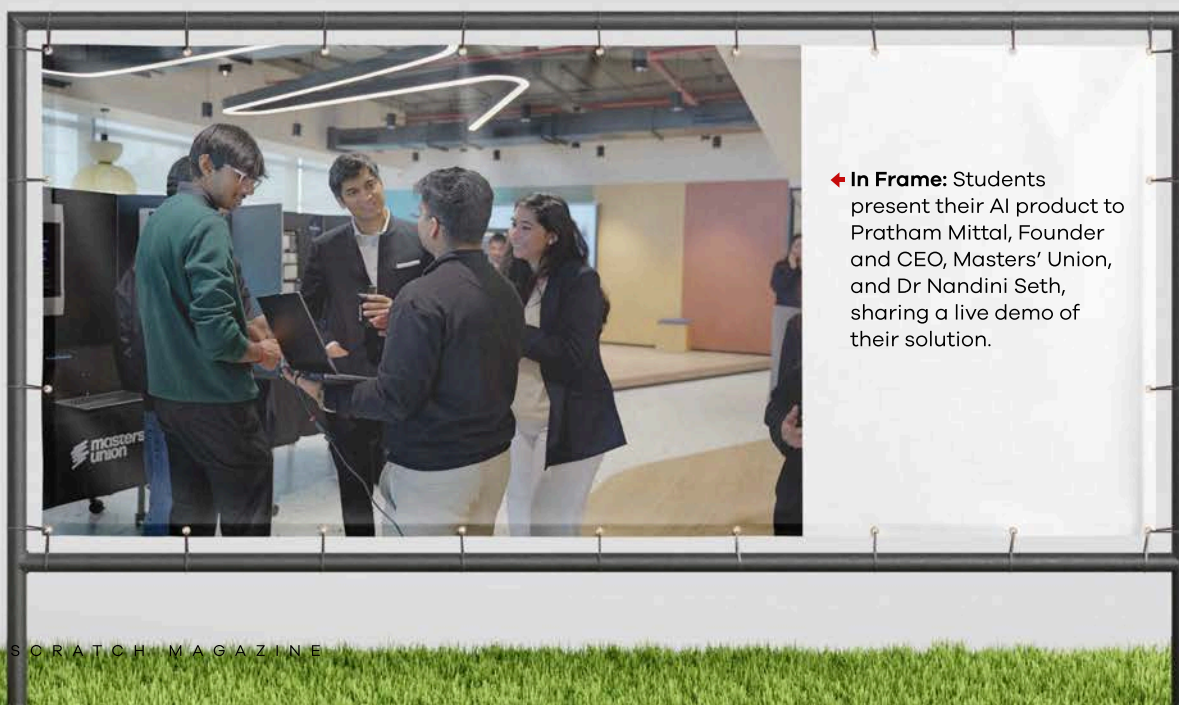
What ties them together is a shift from building chatbots to designing experiences. These students weren't just coding responses; they were anticipating human needs, frustrations, and behaviours.

When Students Stop Learning AI and Start Using It

Somewhere between late-night classes and weekend labs, something shifts. AI stops being a subject and starts becoming a tool. A medium. A way to solve problems that matter.

The three winning teams didn't just meet the brief; they redefined it. They showed that with the right mix of technical skill, empathy, and curiosity, AI can move beyond convenience and into impact.

And perhaps that's the real takeaway from this course. Not the schedules, not the tests, not even the prize money. It's the realisation that the future of AI won't be built only by experts in labs, but by students in classrooms who are willing to ask a simple question: what problem is worth solving, and how can AI make it better?



✦ **In Frame:** Students present their AI product to Pratham Mittal, Founder and CEO, Masters' Union, and Dr Nandini Seth, sharing a live demo of their solution.

THE MUNTH THAT WAS



THE NEXT TECH 1.0 FINDS ITS CENTRE

Inside Masters' Union AI Summit, co-sponsored by Cisco and Invideo, which brought together builders, founders, and leaders, defining the next phase of technological infrastructure.

- ▶ 3,000+ ATTENDEES
- ▶ 400+ TECH STARTUPS
- ▶ 150+ SHOWCASES
- ▶ 45+ SPEAKERS
- ▶ 20+ SESSIONS

On 18 April 2026, Masters' Union hosted THE NEXT TECH 1.0 at its campus in DLF CyberPark Campus in Gurugram. The event brought together 3,000+ attendees, 400+ tech startups, 150+ showcases, 45+ speakers, and 20+ sessions, making it one of the largest institution-led gatherings focused on AI and startup execution in India.

The opening made the intent clear from the start. **Pratham Mittal, founder and CEO Masters' Union**, kept it simple. The summit was not designed as a stage for passive observation, but as a space where ideas were expected to turn into work. That principle carried through every layer of the day.

Speakers such as **Nuseir Yassin, founder and CEO of Nas Daily**, and **CP Gurnani, co-founder of AIONOS and former CEO and MD of Tech Mahindra**, spoke about AI as a shift in how work is structured. Not a disruption in theory, but something already changing operating models, decision cycles, and speed expectations.

On the infrastructure side, **Vishal Dhupar, MD, NVIDIA Asia South**, brought the focus to something more foundational. AI, he suggested, is not a product-layer problem. It is a structural problem. Compute, energy, chips, and architecture sit beneath every visible application. Everything depends on that base holding.

In enterprise and policy contexts, **Joydeep Roy, partner, PwC India**, and **Abhishek Singh, CEO, IndiaAI Mission, Ministry of Electronics and IT, Government of India**, approached the same issue from different angles. Organisations are not struggling with intent. They are struggling with the redesign. India's AI ambition is tied to scale, inclusion, and public infrastructure that can carry real load.

Fireside Conversations that Stayed Close to Execution

The fireside sessions remained grounded in systems, constraints, and implementation.

NUSEIR YASSIN

Founder and CEO of Nas Daily



Spoke about AI collapsing effort, redefining interfaces from apps to agents, and compressing entrepreneurship into 15-second, high-intent storytelling built for distribution-first platforms rather than traditional product journeys.

ABHISHEK SINGH

CEO of IndiaAI Mission

Discussed the architecture behind India's digital public systems and the push toward a sovereign AI stack. The focus remained on national-scale infrastructure and accessibility across a billion users.



BIKRAM SINGH BEDI

Founder of TAL and former Google Cloud APAC VP



Examined enterprise AI from both sides of the table. His focus stayed on execution gaps rather than ambition. What separates pilots from production systems is rarely the model itself, but organisational readiness, leadership alignment, and the ability to absorb change without breaking core workflows.

CP GURNANI

Co-founder of AIONOS

Brought a longer arc into the room. From scaling Tech Mahindra to building AI-native ventures later in his career, his perspective stayed fixed on one shift: India must move from competing on cost to competing on capability. The conversation returned repeatedly to systems thinking and the discipline required to rebuild legacy structures.

**JOYDEEP ROY**

Partner at PwC India



Focused on what AI is doing inside organisations rather than outside them. The centre of gravity, he suggested, is shifting from effort to judgment. Roles are being rewritten quietly, and HR is becoming a design function for talent systems rather than a support function for hiring.

JEANIE FANG

Director of Data and AI at Crunchbase



Directed conversation back to signal versus noise. Funding data, startup distribution, and investor behaviour revealed a gap between public narrative and actual value creation. What looks visible is not always what is durable.

VISHAL DHUPAR

MD, Asia South at NVIDIA



Closed the layer of conversations with a reminder that everything sits on infrastructure. AI, in his framing, is a layered system. Energy, chips, infrastructure, models, applications. Most attention sits at the top. Stability is determined at the bottom.

Inside the Labs Where Ideas Became Working Systems

The most revealing part of the summit was not on stage. It was inside the labs where participants built under constraints. Across every lab, the constraint remained the same. The goal was not explanation. It was execution under pressure, building systems that could function beyond the idea stage.

SNO.	THEME	TRAINER
1	EBIT LAB RAG CHATBOT BUILDER A working Q&A bot prototype querying anything with LLMs for retrieval-augmented generation using Weaviate vector database.	Vivekanand Vivek Co-Founder, Zenith School of AI

2

AOV LAB | DATA VISUALIZATION DASHBOARD BLITZ

A deployable Streamlit dashboard screenshot or HTML file with key insights highlighted using **Seaborn/Plotly**.

Aadyaa SrivastavaData Analytics,
Google

3

EBIT LAB | PROMPT ENGINEERING MASTERY

Generate a custom chatbot script handling real queries (eg: startup pitch analyser) by crafting 20+ LLM prompts on **Open AI API**.

Gaurav GhaiTech Content
Creator (1M+)

4

AOV LAB | THEME: BUILD & UNLEASH AI AGENTS

Deploy an AI Agent handling real-world tasks like query routing or automation, built with **MCP, N8N APIs, OpenAI API**.

Harneet Singh(Assisted By: Trisha
Khare & Mehak
Rastogi)

5

EBIT LAB | AGENTIC AI AUTOMATION

Build a Telegram AI agent that turns messy ideas into clear outputs using **N8N**

Megha KhetrapalFraud Fighting
Head, TransUnion

6

EBIT LAB | PROMPT ENGINEERING MASTERY

A trained model with accuracy metrics and predictions saved as a Jupyter notebook shareable on GitHub using **Scikit-learn**.

Vipul Prakash SinghalVP, Data Intelligence,
BobbieAI

7

EBIT LAB | NLP SENTIMENT ANALYZER

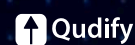
Train a Hugging Face **Transformer model** classifying 100+ tweets for sentiments marked as **"positive", "negative" or "neutral"**.

Tanya Chopra(Assisted By: Ataish
Nehra)AI Excellence Centre
Head, Paxcom India

Panel Partners



Exhibition Partners



Panel Discussion: The Human Side of AI in Balancing Radical Tech Ambitions vs Moral Imperatives

+ **Rajat Mathur**, Former CHRO,
Morgan Stanley

+ **Divya Rajagopal**, Partner
and Executive Director,
Hybrid Cloud, IBM

+ **Ranganathan Vaidyanathan
Iyer**, Group CIO, JBM Group

+ **Vivek Rajagopal**, Chief
Analytics and AI Officer,
Narayana Health

Across finance, cloud infrastructure, industrial systems, and healthcare, the discussion kept returning to real-world trade-offs. Speed versus safety. Scale versus accountability. Innovation versus the limits of governance.

There were no abstract answers. Only a shared recognition that as AI moves deeper into core systems, human judgment does not disappear, it becomes harder, and more necessary, to define.

A Gamified System for Participation Across the Campus

Running parallel to the sessions was THE CIRCUIT, a gamification system that turned participation into measurable engagement. Attendees collected cards after each segment. Six completed cards unlocked rewards worth ₹5,000.

Segments included:

- ✦ Fireside Chat (The Think Tank)
- ✦ Panel Discussion (The Convergence)
- ✦ Keynote (The System Boot)
- ✦ Hands-on Lab (The Buildtime)
- ✦ Live Shark Tank Pitches (The Front Row)
- ✦ AI Filmmaking Workshop (The Render Pipeline)
- ✦ OpenAI Hackathon (The Token Limit)
- ✦ Co-founder Roulette (The Vector Match)

Each space had a defined role across the campus, making movement part of the design itself.

Tech and AI Awards That Defined Applied Intelligence

The summit came to a close by recognising builders solving real technology problems,

not just discussing ideas. The focus was on translating abstract code into real-world impact across industries and geographies

The awards celebrated the builders dedicated to solving technology problems globally, from disruptive startups to seasoned visionaries transforming abstract code into real-world breakthroughs that resonate across borders.

A Subtle Shift in How AI Ecosystems Now Operate

What THE NEXT TECH 1.0 made visible was not a breakthrough

moment, but a structural change in format. The emphasis moved away from stage time and towards execution time. Away from visibility and towards output. Away from inspiration and towards iteration.

India's AI ecosystem is still in its early phase. But one pattern is becoming harder to ignore. The most meaningful work is no longer confined to panels or announcements. It is happening in rooms where ideas are built, tested, and broken in real time. That is where the signal now settles.



COMPANY / INDIVIDUAL

AWARD FINALIZED

SQUARE YARDS AI VISIONARY AWARD 2026

NILAM INSIGHTS AI PARADIGM DISRUPTOR
AWARD 2026

VTION EMERGING TITAN IN AI 2026

JAGRAN HI-TECH AI BHARAT IMPACT AWARD
2026

CRM MASTERS
INFOTECH AI ENTERPRISE CATALYST
AWARD 2026

OPTOPS.AI LEGACY LAUREATE IN AI 2026

YASHIKA
KOTHARI,
ANANTYA.AI AI FOUNDER OF THE YEAR
2026

VAARIVERSE
STUDIOS CREATIVE AI LUMINARY
AWARD 2026

EXPANSE COSMOS AI STARTUP OF THE YEAR
2026

INSURANCEDEKHO AI DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
AWARD 2026

Tech and AI Awards

SERIES C



**JOE
FOSTER**

Co-Founder,
Reebok

47

Reebok 

STRUGGLING FAMILY SHOE BUSINESS TO A \$3 BILLION GLOBAL BRAND

What Joe Foster's 30-year journey teaches about finding gaps, staying patient, and building something that lasts.



TWO YEARS AWAY FROM THE FAMILY BUSINESS GAVE US PERSPECTIVE. WE CAME BACK TO A FAILING COMPANY AND KNEW WE HAD TO ACT.

Recently, Swati Ganeti, co-founder and managing director of Masters' Union, sat down with Joe Foster, co-founder of Reebok. The conversation was far from a standard origin story. Over an hour, Joe traced his journey from a struggling family business in the UK to building a global athletic empire.

What emerged was a masterclass in spotting gaps, staying patient, and knowing when to act, lessons for students, aspiring entrepreneurs, and anyone interested in how persistence turns opportunity into lasting success.

When the Family Business is Dying, You Stop Waiting for Permission

JW Foster & Sons was no ordinary shoemaking company. Founded in **1895** in Bolton, England, it had earned a reputation for crafting shoes for Olympic athletes and sprinters. By the 1950s, however, the glory days were behind them. A family feud simmered beneath the surface, markets were shifting, and the company was slowly losing its footing.

Joe and his brother Jeff didn't return to JW Foster & Sons with a plan. They had stepped away because staying had become impossible. Two years away from the family business gave them perspective. When they came back, the company was failing, and they knew they had to act. My father said, 'When I'm gone, it's your company. Do what you like.' I knew it wouldn't survive that long.

There were no romantic notions about entrepreneurship. They didn't have investors. They didn't have a plan. All they knew was that the company needed saving. They started Mercury Sports Footwear because they had to make a living, but the first setback hit early. The name Mercury was already registered by another company and buying it from the British Shoe Corporation would have cost £1,000. So Joe returned to a childhood memory. A brand born



I WAS EIGHT IN 1943. MY PRIZE FOR WINNING A PARK RACE WAS A WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY. I LIKED THE LETTER R. YEARS LATER, FLIPPING THROUGH IT, I FOUND REEBOK, A SMALL SOUTH AFRICAN GAZELLE. AGILE. FAST. MEMORABLE. PERFECT FOR A RUNNING COMPANY.

out of necessity. A name pulled from a boyhood prize. And the start of something that would eventually become a global powerhouse.

Turning Overlooked Sports Into a Shoe Empire

Reebok started with three people, a tiny team and almost no budget. Competing head-to-head with a losing battle. Adidas would have been suicidal. Joe and Jeff knew it and chose another path.

They looked for gaps. Sports that were too niche for the giants: cross-country running, fell racing, orienteering, etc. This was what Joe calls the white space. Sports where a quality shoe and a personal connection with a club could make all the difference.

Initially, there were three or four of them going door to door. The Amateur Athletic Association's directory gave them access to hundreds of clubs. A simple letter offering a **15% discount brought in 100 agents, eventually growing to 250.**

It was a straightforward strategy. They did not have a huge sales team, CRM, or marketing budget. Just a genuine product, a personal touch, and persistence. By the time the big brands noticed, Reebok had built loyalty that money could not easily buy.

How Reebok Persevered for 11 Years Before America Took Notice

Entering the US market took over a decade. Early agents struggled. Attempts stalled. Most founders would have given up or pivoted. Joe kept going and he was genuinely enjoying the process.

FUN FACT!

J.W. FOSTER AND SONS' RUNNING SPIKES WERE FAMOUSLY WORN BY ATHLETES INCLUDING HAROLD ABRAHAMS AT THE 1924 PARIS OLYMPICS.



The turning point came not from a sales push or a marketing campaign, but from a magazine. **Runner's World** awarded three Reebok shoes a **five-star rating**. Almost overnight, the American market came to them. 'Once we got five stars, demand exploded. Retailers wanted our shoes. We finally had a distributor and a foothold in the US,' he said.

Spotting a \$900 Million Gap: How Reebok Gave Women a Sport They Could Own

What happened next is arguably one of the greatest product insights in sporting goods history. Aerobic classes were exploding across Los Angeles in the early 1980s. Thousands of women were showing up to classes, studios, and gyms, wearing running shoes. Not because running shoes were right for the job, but because nobody had made anything better.

Joe saw it. The major brands either missed the opportunity or chose to ignore it. Reebok responded with the **Freestyle**, crafted from glove leather for a fit that felt like a second skin.



THIS WAS THE PERFECT WHITE SPACE. WE GAVE WOMEN A SPORT THEY COULD OWN, WITH A PRODUCT DESIGNED FOR THEM. IN FOUR YEARS, WE WENT FROM A \$9 MILLION BUSINESS TO \$900 MILLION.

Making the shoes wasn't easy. The glove leather kept causing problems and every fix meant rethinking both how they were made and how they looked. But when it finally came together, it felt completely new. Reebok hadn't just made another shoe. They had made something people didn't even know they wanted.

What to Do When Demand Outruns You

Suddenly, orders were flooding in. Joe hired designers. Set up processes. Created a culture to sustain innovation. Everything changed; for four years, we didn't have to sell shoes. They sold themselves. But you have to be ready; manufacturing, distribution, everything must be

able to scale,' he said. Timing helped. Nike's production limitations in South Korea created a window for Reebok to fill. But it took more than luck to capitalise on it. Joe had built the distribution infrastructure carefully over the preceding years, so when demand arrived, Reebok was ready to meet it.

There's a lesson here that gets overlooked in most startup narratives: the boring work of building systems, relationships, and supply chains is what allows you to move fast when the moment comes. The Freestyle was a brilliant product. But distribution is what made it a billion-dollar business.

Building a \$3 Billion Brand and Then Walking Away at 55

By 1989, Reebok was a \$3 billion global business. Joe Foster was 55. And he was done.

This is the part of the founder story nobody writes about, because it doesn't fit the mythology. We like our entrepreneurs relentless, tireless, building until they drop. But Joe's decision to step back wasn't a failure of nerve; it was wisdom. He had built something extraordinary. He knew when it was finished.

For founders still early in the journey, that's a harder idea to hold onto. But it's worth remembering: knowing when to stop is just as important as knowing when to push.

Lessons Every Founder Can Take to Heart

Joe Foster's story is about more than shoes. It's about seeing opportunities others ignore, staying patient when success seems distant, and enjoying the process.

'Find a technical innovation people can see. Something that stands out visually. Whether it's soles, design, or custom fits, the principle is the same: make it distinctive,' Joe said.

Persistence, curiosity, and focus. That's the DNA of Reebok, and the blueprint Joe offers any founder today.



ALL THE EXCITEMENT WAS GONE. I HAD PUT DISTRIBUTION IN PLACE WORLDWIDE. WHAT ELSE COULD I DO? I WANTED TO ENJOY LIFE, STEP BACK, AND EXPLORE NEW PATHS.

FUN FACT!



IN 1982, REEBOK RELEASED THE REEBOK FREESTYLE, THE FIRST ATHLETIC SHOE DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR WOMEN, TAPPING INTO THE AEROBICS CRAZE.

THE Reebok TRAJECTORY

1958-1960

Mercury Sports founded; rebranded to Reebok. A dictionary, a gazelle, and a name for a new future.

1960s

Three people, 250 athletic clubs, and a niche UK market. Outsmarted Adidas without trying.

1968-1979

Eleven years to crack the US. A magazine review made the breakthrough.





1989

Joe Foster steps back at 55. A legacy secured.

Mid-1980s

Expanded into tennis, basketball and football. Reebok became the number one global shoe brand.

Early 1980s

One product. One overlooked audience. Four years. \$9 million became \$900 million.

SERIES C

**ANUPAM
MITTAL**

Founder and Chief Executive Officer,
Shaadi.com and People Group

WHY MOST D2C BRANDS FAIL AND HOW TO BUILD ONE THAT LASTS

Hard-won lessons from Anupam Mittal on category, credibility, and long-term consumer trust.



MOST PEOPLE THINK D2C IS ABOUT SELLING ONLINE. IT ISN'T. IT'S ABOUT BUILDING A BRAND THAT RESONATES WITH CONSUMERS OVER THE LONG TERM.

When Shaadi.com launched almost two decades ago, the idea of online matchmaking was novel in India. Today, the platform has **facilitated over 8 million marriages**, a number that reflects both scale and sustained consumer trust. Numbers like this matter because they aren't vanity; they are evidence of strategy executed with discipline.

In a Masters' Union podcast hosted by **Pratham Mittal, founder and CEO of Masters' Union, Anupam Mittal, founder and CEO of Shaadi.com and People Group and investor on Shark Tank India**, explained why so many Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) brands fail. Drawing on experience of building companies and backing over **350 ventures**, Anupam offered insight into what separates fleeting experiments from enduring brands.

The discussion moved quickly beyond ads and performance marketing to the fundamentals of category choice, brand personality, distribution strategy, and demand creation.

Choose the Right Category Before Anything Else

Anupam stressed that founders often jump straight to branding or marketing channels without first answering one critical question: is the category right? A brand can have great products and slick marketing, but if the underlying category lacks frequency or relevance, it is fighting uphill.



YOU CAN HAVE THE BEST PRODUCT IN THE WORLD, BUT IF CONSUMERS DON'T CARE ENOUGH TO PAY FOR IT, GROWTH WILL BE LIMITED.

He explained why frequent purchase categories matter. Many consumer durables, for example, are bought once or twice in a user's lifetime. A refrigerator or washing machine may sit in a home for years. Frequent buying cycles allow brands to remain top-of-mind. Clothing, accessories, and personal care categories present repeated buying opportunities, provided the brand can differentiate itself.

Shaadi.com's category, matchmaking, was inherently high intent. For many Indians, marriage is a major life decision, not an impulse purchase. That urgency gave the platform a built-in, addressable audience willing to engage and pay for a structured solution.

Brand Personality Must Matter More than Performance Marketing

Marketing dollars can buy visibility but not loyalty. Anupam emphasised that brand narrative must precede tactics. 'Consumers engage with people and ideas more than products. If they feel connected, they stick,' he said.

Shaadi.com's early growth came not from blitz campaigns but from positioning itself as a trustworthy, culturally resonant service for serious relationships. Branding is not window dressing. It embodies values, voice, visual identity, and the story a founder chooses to tell. He suggested founders commit to a clear identity early because consistency builds credibility over time.

He gave the example of fashion brands in India. Many have excellent products, but few command the loyalty seen in brands like Polo or Hugo Boss abroad. He argued that Indian consumers will buy premium if the brand has personality and meaning, not just price.

Distribution Strategy Determines Whether People Actually Buy

Performance marketing can generate traffic, but distribution determines adoption. This was a recurring theme in Anupam's conversation. 'Even the best product fails if it doesn't reach the customer efficiently,' he said.

Many D2C brands make the mistake of relying only on their own website or paid channels. He explained that distribution must reflect how real consumers shop and engage. This may include offline presence, partnerships, marketplaces, or hybrid models. Shaadi.com paired online visibility with offline relevance, helping the platform become discoverable in multiple ways.

He spoke about **Vijay Sales**, a consumer durables distributor with **over 200 stores and annual revenue approaching ₹12,000 crore**, as an example of how powerful distribution and customer service can sustain a business even when online alternatives emerge. The lesson is clear: if a brand's promise and distribution are not aligned with customer behaviour, it will struggle to scale.



YOU HAVE TO CREATE THE DESIRE FIRST. ONCE PEOPLE ARE CURIOUS AND ENGAGED, SCALING BECOMES MUCH MORE SUSTAINABLE.

Build Anticipation and Validate Demand Before Scaling

Rushing to scale is a common pitfall. Anupam explained that many founders jump to growth before they truly understand demand. Instead, he urged a disciplined sequence: create anticipation, validate market fit, and then scale.

Shaadi.com's early campaigns focused on educating consumers about online matchmaking, a concept that was unfamiliar and, at times, culturally sensitive. By shaping expectations and educating users, the brand built demand before leaning into large-scale growth.

This principle applies directly to D2C brands. Founders should engage communities early, gather feedback, test concepts, and refine positioning before allocating significant budgets to customer acquisition.

Focus on Fundamentals, Not Short-term Wins

Anupam highlighted the danger of chasing immediate metrics like click-through rates or short-term revenue without building foundational assets like trust, loyalty, and consumer insight. 'Short-term thinking kills brands, you need to invest in story, culture, and customer experience. These are the compounding assets of a business,' he remarked.

Shaadi.com did not grow overnight. Numbers like **8 million marriages and millions of active users** are the result of consistent iteration on product, positioning, and distribution, not one viral moment. For founders, this translates into disciplined prioritisation of activities that build value over time, not just in the next quarter.

FUN FACT!

THERE ARE RECORDED, VERIFIED SUCCESS STORIES OF COUPLES FINDING THEIR PARTNERS WITHIN 3 DAYS OF JOINING, AND SOME EVEN SWITCHING TO SENDING THEIR RESUMES INSTEAD OF BIODATA.



shaadi.com
The World's Largest Matrimonial Service offers a blueprint for founders building consumer-facing businesses. Anupam outlined five actionable principles:

► CHOOSE THE RIGHT CATEGORY

Avoid crowded spaces unless you have a clear advantage. The correct niche brings natural demand and easier conversion.

► BUILD BRAND PERSONALITY

Connect with consumers through relatable stories, not just product features.

► PRIORITISE DISTRIBUTION

Seamless access drives adoption. Online visibility alone is insufficient.

► CREATE ANTICIPATION

Understand your audience before scaling. Build demand early to ensure sustainable growth.

► THINK LONG-TERM

Measure success by meaningful consumer impact, not short-term revenue.



Behavioural Insight Matters More than Trends

One of the most actionable lessons from the podcast was the emphasis on human behaviour. Anupam noted that successful brands understand not just what consumers buy but why they buy it. 'D2C success is not about growth hacks. It's about insight into human behaviour,' he emphasised.

This means founders should spend time with customers, observe their habits, and listen to their words.

Quantitative marketing metrics are important, but they don't replace qualitative understanding. Brands that invest in behavioural insight make better product, pricing, and positioning decisions.

Real Examples Show What Works

Throughout the conversation, Anupam referenced real data and examples to ground his advice. Shaadi.com's scale, the funding of over **350 companies** in his portfolio, and references to

established businesses like Vijay Sales all served to illustrate how strategy plays out in reality.

He also discussed a failed sub-brand experiment from early Shaadi.com days called sagai.com, which highlighted a naming mistake. The lesson there wasn't merely about branding but about the importance of simplicity and memorability in early product decisions.

FUN FACT!



IN 2012, TO HIGHLIGHT THE SOCIAL ISSUE OF DOWRY IN INDIA, SHAADI.COM CREATED A FACEBOOK GAME CALLED "ANGRY BRIDES".

Practical Steps for Founders

Founders looking to build D2C brands that last can take immediate action from Anupam's experience:

Building a D2C brand that lasts is hard work. It requires a rigorous choice of category, thoughtful positioning, strategic distribution, and a deep understanding of consumer behaviour. Anupam Mittal's reflection on brands like Shaadi.com offers founders a concrete framework grounded in real numbers and real outcomes. The brands that endure are not built overnight; they are constructed with deliberate choices and patient execution.

- 
- ▶ Founders should start by **validating the category first**. Is there genuine demand? Are consumers willing to pay? Does the category allow repeat engagement?
 - ▶ Next, **define your brand personality early**. This means developing a clear narrative about who you are, what you stand for, and why consumers should care.
 - ▶ Then, **design a distribution strategy that reflects real consumer behaviour**. Don't assume digital channels alone will suffice. Consider omnichannel approaches where appropriate.
 - ▶ Before scaling, **validate demand** and build anticipation. Engage communities, gather feedback, and refine the product and messaging based on real usage.
 - ▶ Finally, **invest in long-term fundamentals** like customer experience, trust, and insight. Short-term performance metrics are useful, but they do not replace sustainable strategy.

SERIES C

**ASHWIN
DAMERA**

Founder,
Eruditus Executive Education



ERUDITUS

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA AND BEYOND

Insights from Eruditus Founder Ashwin Damera on how universities must evolve in a rapidly changing landscape.



STUDENTS TODAY MEASURE EDUCATION BY THE SKILLS THEY ACQUIRE AND THE NETWORKS THEY BUILD.

Universities are navigating a period of profound change. The traditional model; lectures, exams, and campus prestige, is under pressure from a generation of students who prioritise tangible outcomes over legacy. Globally, 60 million students graduate each year, and many are now questioning whether a conventional degree delivers sufficient value for the investment of time, effort, and money.

Recently at Masters' Union, a conversation hosted by Pratham Mittal, founder and CEO, explored the future of higher education with Eruditus founder Ashwin Damera. The discussion revealed how education must evolve to meet student expectations for skills, engagement, and career readiness.

Aligning Education with Career Readiness

The conversation highlighted that students are growing increasingly impatient with purely theoretical knowledge. They are seeking programmes that deliver tangible career outcomes rather than abstract credentials. Cohort-based learning, where students progress together through structured modules, naturally fosters accountability and measurable skill growth.

Modern students assess education based on the practical abilities they acquire and the professional networks they develop. In this context, a degree alone is no longer sufficient to ensure career readiness. The broader learning ecosystem, including mentorship, real-world projects, and applied learning opportunities; has become as critical as the curriculum itself.

This shift presents a challenge for universities. Traditional models, which emphasise research prestige and exam-based assessments, must adapt to integrate applied learning and

mentorship. Programmes that directly connect education to professional demands offer students clear, actionable value and prepare them for the evolving workplace.

Redefining the Role of Universities in a Changing Landscape

Ashwin argued that universities still have a critical role, but they must evolve. He described a future where institutions operate alongside new learning models rather than in isolation.

'Universities offer credibility, tradition, and research depth,' he said. Innovative programmes complement that by providing immediacy and flexibility. The challenge is integrating both for maximum student benefit.

The discussion also noted that students increasingly weigh cost against outcomes. High tuition fees, combined with uncertain employment prospects, create pressure on traditional models. Ashwin suggested that universities explore hybrid models, blending credibility with agility.

Building Cohort-Based Learning that Drives Engagement

One of the most striking points Ashwin made was the impact of cohort structure on engagement. Unlike traditional lecture formats, cohorts create a shared sense of purpose, peer accountability, and community.



WHEN STUDENTS MOVE TOGETHER THROUGH A PROGRAMME, THEY PUSH EACH OTHER TO ACHIEVE MORE. THIS KIND OF LEARNING FOSTERS RESILIENCE, COLLABORATION, AND A READINESS TO APPLY SKILLS IN REAL-WORLD SCENARIOS.

For educators and programme designers, the lesson is clear: structure matters. Learning experiences must be intentional, interactive, and outcome-driven, rather than passive and exam-centric.

'The tension is not a failure of universities, it is a reflection of changing expectations, those who can embrace innovation without compromising on quality will thrive,' he explained.

He emphasised that new models of learning are not intended to replace universities but to offer flexible approaches for students seeking skills, networks, and career impact.

Focusing on Skills Over Credentials

A recurring theme in the discussion was the shift from credentialism to demonstrable competence. Ashwin pointed out that employers increasingly value portfolios, project experience, and applied skills over traditional degrees.



EDUCATION SHOULD EQUIP STUDENTS WITH CAPABILITIES, NOT JUST CREDENTIALS. THAT REQUIRES A MINDSET SHIFT IN HOW PROGRAMMES ARE DESIGNED AND DELIVERED."

This perspective encourages institutions to rethink curricula, assessment methods, and student engagement strategies. Experiential learning, industry collaborations, and mentorship programmes are becoming essential.

Creating Learning Ecosystems that Adapt to Student Needs

Ashwin emphasised the importance of viewing education through an ecosystem lens. Institutions that focus solely on internal processes risk limiting the value they provide. By integrating partnerships, networks, and external resources, learning can extend well beyond the classroom.

Cohort-based programmes, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on projects create a layered learning ecosystem that accelerates skill development. This approach not only enhances practical abilities but also helps students build professional networks they can draw on throughout their careers.

Preparing Students for an Uncertain Future

The conversation concluded with a focus on adaptability. Ashwin urged educators to embrace continuous learning models that prepare students for unpredictable career paths.

'Future-ready students are those who can learn, unlearn, and relearn, we cannot predict the exact roles they will occupy, but we can equip them to succeed in dynamic environments,' he said.

For universities, this means embracing flexibility, interdisciplinary learning, and continuous upskilling as core principles. It also means engaging with industry and new learning approaches to stay relevant.

Guiding Principles to Align Education with Career Outcomes

The discussion highlighted several actionable insights for education leaders and students alike:

- ✦ **Prioritise practical outcomes over tradition**
Students value applied learning, mentorship, and networks.
- ✦ **Design programmes with intentional structure**
Cohort-based learning drives engagement and accountability.

- ✦ **Integrate traditional credibility with modern learning approaches**

Hybrid models offer trust plus agility.

- ✦ **Shift focus from credentials to competence**

Portfolios, projects, and skills matter more than degrees.

- ✦ **Build adaptive learning ecosystems**

Collaboration, mentorship, and real-world projects enhance readiness.

Ashwin's conversation at Masters' Union underscored a central idea: the future of higher education will not be about replacing universities. It will be about complementing them with flexible, skills-focused learning that equips students for a rapidly changing world.

Education is no longer just about degrees. It is about building capabilities, networks, and confidence. Those are the things that make learning valuable and relevant today.



SERIES C CROSSWORD CHALLENGE

Connect the letters to form words on strategy, innovation, and leadership lessons from Joe Foster, Anupam Mittal, and Ashwin Damera.

I	F	B	I	N	C	R	E	D	I	B	I	L	I	T	G	F	H	Y
N	O	J	C	N	Y	P	M	G	G	J	R	L	Q	O	T	G	J	M
T	R	C	T	H	F	C	K	E	F	G	M	N	Q	A	N	S	O	X
E	B	D	E	D	Q	R	D	Y	A	F	P	M	R	O	W	A	D	J
R	E	D	I	L	O	P	A	O	L	D	S	Y	K	X	X	E	M	C
S	A	M	I	S	S	Y	P	S	V	T	Q	Q	U	K	N	R	K	O
T	R	V	P	Z	T	O	S	K	T	M	N	G	H	Z	T	S	H	H
I	A	K	J	M	E	I	U	C	D	R	L	O	Y	V	R	O	J	O
C	N	M	I	K	P	I	N	S	A	I	U	B	N	Q	D	N	D	R
E	C	P	X	S	R	U	R	C	E	L	S	C	C	I	A	A	K	T
A	E	B	R	A	I	T	T	W	T	R	I	C	T	A	S	X	J	I
G	L	K	S	P	I	H	B	W	I	E	N	E	U	Z	Y	I	L	N
G	L	K	S	P	I	H	B	W	N	S	V	N	G	R	F	T	I	G
W	J	W	F	Z	N	Y	A	B	W	A	U	E	D	X	N	E	Y	C
N	Z	D	B	Y	G	P	H	G	U	F	C	U	N	I	O	M	Z	A
A	D	A	P	T	A	B	I	L	I	T	Y	I	S	E	P	J	E	O
X	I	N	G	E	N	U	I	T	Y	P	K	S	T	O	I	W	N	A
F	P	H	P	D	U	T	N	H	N	O	G	Z	O	Y	C	S	T	T
S	Y	C	Q	I	D	D	R	F	W	W	C	F	A	F	Q	W	Y	Z
T	P	E	R	S	P	I	C	A	C	I	T	Y	O	H	O	T	N	Q

Find these words!

PERSPICACITY

Joe Foster demonstrates this ability to identify overlooked opportunities before competitors

FORBEARANCE

A quality that Joe Foster relied on to sustain a 30-year journey building Reebok

INTERSTICE

Growing within gaps ignored by dominant brands was a strategy Joe deliberately targeted

TENACITY

Joe embodies this by persisting through an 11-year US market struggle

SERENDIPITY

Is the feeling called, in the moment of discovering the name "Reebok" by chance

INFRASTRUCTURE

Is what Joe believes strengthens the conversion of demand into scalable growth

INGENUITY

Joe Foster applies this to design breakthrough products like the Freestyle

SCALING

Prepares the building of systems before demand surges

DISCERNMENT

Anupam Mittal uses this to choose the right category for building brands

CREDIBILITY

Establishing long-term consumer trust is how Anupam builds this over time

DISTINCTIVENESS

Matters a lot in crafting memorable brand personalities

PRIMING

Anupam practices this to create demand before scaling

PERSONALITY

Making brands resonate beyond products is where this becomes critical

ADAPTABILITY

Ashwin Damara highlights this as essential for institutions in a changing world

COHORTING

Enhancing engagement in modern education is why this model is promoted by Ashwin

OFF CAMPUS



**NATWAR
AGRAWAL**

Founder and Director
Bacca Bucci



**ANUJ
NEVATIA**

Co-Founder and Director
Bacca Bucci

THE ₹100 CRORE SHOE BRAND THAT OUTSMARTED FACTORIES AND BIG INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS

A deep dive into Bacca Bucci's growth strategy, design process, and supply chain model behind its rise in India's footwear market.



THE NEXT WAVE OF INDIAN FOOTWEAR BRANDS IS BEING BUILT ON ONE SIMPLE IDEA: MAKING STYLISH SHOES ACCESSIBLE WITHOUT THE PREMIUM PRICE TAG.

- NATWAR AGRAWAL, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR,
BACCA BUCCI

Walking through Delhi's bustling shoe markets, we notice international brands dominate. They promise style, quality, and prestige. Yet, most Indian consumers cannot afford these price tags. This gap is where brands like Bacca Bucci step in, offering mass-premium footwear that is both aspirational and affordable.

Masters' Union PGP students recently visited Bacca Bucci as part of an *Off-Campus* initiative. The objective was clear: observe how offline trade operates in India, understand supply chains, and see how a local brand scales from a small idea into a ₹100 crore business.

From a Simple Experiment to Becoming a Leading Mass-Premium Footwear Brand

During the visit, students met Natwar Agrawal, founder & director, and Anuj Nevatia, co-founder, and learned how Bacca Bucci began from a simple market observation. Natwar, a CA who completed his certification in 2012, noticed a price gap between online and local footwear markets in Delhi. Curious, he bought shoes from Karol Bagh and sold them online on early marketplaces like **eBay** and **Snapdeal**. What started as a small side hustle soon revealed a bigger opportunity.

Within months, this small experiment evolved into Bacca Bucci. Today, the brand is valued at **₹130 crore**, with annual revenues exceeding ₹100 crore. Natwar's story is a practical lesson in spotting market gaps, testing ideas, and building a scalable business with minimal capital.

Understanding Offline Markets and Pricing Strategies

The students explored how Bacca Bucci navigates offline trade. Indian footwear is divided into three segments:

under ₹1,000, ₹1,000–₹3,500, and above ₹3,500. Legacy brands dominate the lowest segment, while international labels lead the premium segment. Bacca Bucci occupies the middle ground, a mass-premium space largely ignored by competitors.

By balancing pricing with quality, the brand ensures accessibility without compromising design or durability. Natwar explained that maintaining lean operations and low overheads is key. Outsourcing production across multiple factories allows flexibility, while stringent SOPs and a dedicated R&D team maintain consistency across product lines.



WE SELL OUR PRODUCTS AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE POINT, BUT THEY ARE JUST AS GOOD AS ANY GLOBAL BRAND OUT THERE. THAT'S POSSIBLE BECAUSE OUR OVERHEADS ARE LOWER AND OUR MARGINS LEANER.

– ANUJ NEVATIA

₹100Cr+

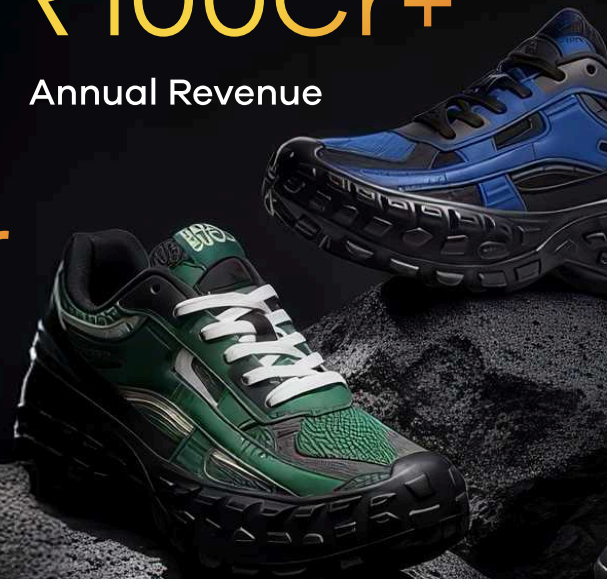
Annual Revenue

₹130Cr

Brand Valuation

3M+

Customers Served





Key Stats: Bacca Bucci at a Glance



5-6

Monthly Releases

6 Months

Time to Design
One Shoe

Building a Customer-Centric Brand

Fashion is unpredictable, but one constant is Gen Z's demand for individuality. Natwar emphasised that Bacca Bucci designs with the customer in mind. Trend forecasting reports guide the creation of mood boards and colour palettes, which inform sketches, final renderings, and tech packs. Each tech pack details every material and specification before production.

Licensing partnerships with **Warner Bros** bring global IPs to Indian consumers, featuring characters such as **Superman**, **Looney Tunes**, and **Game of Thrones**. These collaborations reflect a strategy to resonate with younger consumers while positioning the brand internationally.



WE TRY TO VIBE WITH HOW OUR CUSTOMERS FEEL, ESPECIALLY GEN Z. THEY'RE NOT AFRAID TO SHOW EXACTLY HOW THEY WANT TO LOOK.

- NATWAR AGRAWAL

The team follows a six-month cycle to design one shoe but maintains five to six releases per month, demonstrating agility in an unpredictable market.

Design Process at Play



TREND REPORTS

MOODBOARDS AND
CLIENT BOARDS



TECHNICAL PACKS

SKETCHES AND
FINAL RENDER



VENDOR



➔ **In Frame:** Jerin Mathew, Product Designer at Bacca Bucci, explains to Jessica, a student of Masters' Union, how his Warner Bros. partnership character selection of Superman led to the creation of this shoe.

Bootstrapping to Series A at Shark Tank India

Exposure through **Shark Tank India** played a pivotal role in Bacca Bucci's growth. Natwar described it as a Series A round without equity dilution, generating nationwide awareness and validating the product. Students also examined e-commerce challenges, particularly quick-commerce delivery, which requires precise inventory and return management.

Bacca Bucci's experience demonstrates how operational excellence and strategic visibility go hand in hand to scale a brand successfully.

Supply Chain Discipline and Lean Operations

Footwear production is capital-intensive, but Bacca Bucci's model shows a disciplined approach. Supplier relationships allow operations on credit, reducing upfront capital needs. No single factory can produce all categories, so Bacca Bucci carefully selects multiple specialised manufacturers.

Outsourcing, combined with internal SOPs and R&D, ensures quality without the cost of a factory. Students observed the importance of operational discipline, supply chain trust, and careful planning for long-term sustainability.

➔ **In Frame:** Anuj Nevatia, co-founder of Bacca Bucci in conversation with a student, breaking down the process behind building and scaling the brand.

What High-Growth Businesses Teach Young Leaders

The Off-Campus visit offered actionable lessons beyond textbooks

- ▶ **Spot Market Gaps**
Identify underserved segments and position the brand strategically.
- ▶ **Balance Creativity and Economics**
Merge design excellence with lean operations and pricing discipline.
- ▶ **Build Trust in Supply Chains**
Strong supplier relationships can substitute for external funding.
- ▶ **Leverage Strategic Partnerships**
Collaborations and visibility initiatives amplify brand reach
- ▶ **Scale Step by Steps**
Growth is a process, not a sprint. Patience and discipline matter.



PGP BHARAT



PGP BHARAT COHORT 1: INSIDE INDIA'S CITY IMMERSION JOURNEY

Across India, students decode how ambition, infrastructure, and execution shape real business successes.

- ▶ 3 MONTHS
- ▶ 9 CITIES
- ▶ 30+ IMMERSIONS



Cohort 1's City Immersion was not just a study tour, but a deep dive into the diverse engines powering India's economy. Across cities, students experienced how strategy, scale, culture, and execution come together in real-world contexts. From manufacturing hubs and policy corridors to tech ecosystems and cultural economies, each destination offered a distinct lens on value creation. These reflections capture not only what was observed, but how perspectives evolved - bridging classroom frameworks with lived business realities, and revealing the nuanced interplay between infrastructure, innovation, and intent shaping.

DELHI

T&T Motors | Addverb



ADDVERB



Delhi set the tone for commercial India. At T&T Motors, students saw how luxury is operationalised through frictionless service design and tactile marketing. Addverb reframed automation as a software-first challenge, with culture acting as its founding operating system.

PGP
BHARA

JALANDHAR

ITC | Sonalika | Nivia



Jalandhar revealed the backbone of India's manufacturing economy. ITC showed vertical integration from farm gate to shelf. Sonalika demonstrated world-class tractor production from a Tier-2 town. Nivia proved that distribution-led growth, SKU flexibility, and compliance culture can outcompete advertising spend.



AHMEDABAD

Amul | EDII | Adani Ports |
Adani Wilmar | Adani Power



Ahmedabad offered a masterclass in scale and ownership models. Amul inverted corporate logic with farmer-first economics. EDII treated entrepreneurship as infrastructure. The Adani cluster revealed how port proximity, energy integration, and cargo segmentation compound into irreplaceable competitive moats.



KHAVDA (GUJARAT)

Adani Khavda Solar Plant

adani



Khavda was a lesson in civilisational infrastructure. Five times the size of Paris, 30 GW of planned solar capacity, executed on a decade-long horizon. Students saw how transmission readiness, land logistics, and capital efficiency, not just sunlight, determine whether renewable energy projects deliver their promised returns.

INDIA

MUMBAI

Kotak Private Banking | ADCPS



Mumbai examined where capital meets complexity. Kotak Private Banking exposed how trust and relationship governance define wealth advisory. ADCPS at IIT Bombay reframed policy as a rigorous applied discipline, with real consequences for how businesses and citizens operate.

INDIA

GOA

Zydus Pharma | JSW Mines | IndoBevs



Goa presented three industries built on compliance, timing, and distribution. Zydus showed how patent cliff intelligence drives pharma strategy. JSW Mines unpacked the economics of captive ore and ore quality management. IndoBevs revealed how regulatory arbitrage and surrogate marketing built a cult consumer brand.

Welcome Aboard

BENGALURU

Meesho | Zerodha | Infosys |
Swiggy | The Renovation Lab

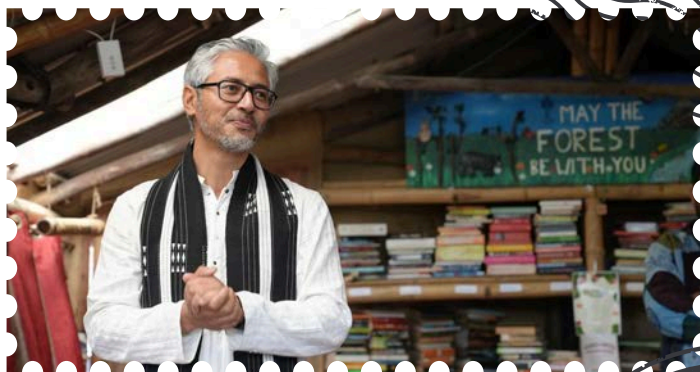


Bengaluru was the cohort's deepest immersion into India's tech economy. Meesho showed how logistics intelligence, not infrastructure, wins in value commerce. Zerodha demonstrated bootstrap discipline as product philosophy. Infosys forced a hard question about India's IT transition from effort exports to capability exports.



DARJEELING

Glenburn Tea Estate | Tea
Auction | TIEEDI | GI Indication
Tour



Darjeeling reframed luxury, sustainability, and community. Glenburn made terroir and seasonal harvests tangible. The auction simulation exposed estate reputation as a pricing lever. TIEEDI showed sustainability as founding architecture, not retrofit compliance. GI sessions revealed the gap between protection and monetisation for artisans.



LUCKNOW

IRRPL | Deloitte CM Office |
Ada Chikankari | SEWA



Lucknow connected defence manufacturing, policy design, and craft economics. IRRPL demonstrated how 100% technology transfer builds sovereign capability. Deloitte framed the state's role as an infrastructure enabler for industry. Chikankari immersions at Ada and SEWA showed distributed livelihoods hiding inside each handcrafted piece.



Student Testimonials

GAURAV SURANA

The Rann of Kutch was a beautiful cultural immersion and one of the most enjoyable parts of the journey. It gave everyone a chance to unwind, connect, and experience something truly unique together. Overall, each destination added a different dimension to the journey: learning, exposure, and unforgettable shared experiences.



HARDIK GOYAL

Mumbai felt like a real classroom of execution. From Dabbawalas to Dharavi, I saw how systems, discipline and constraints create scale. What stood out most was that success here is not about sophistication, but about consistency, clarity, and the ability to operate efficiently in high-pressure, real-world conditions.



ARCHIT AGARWAL

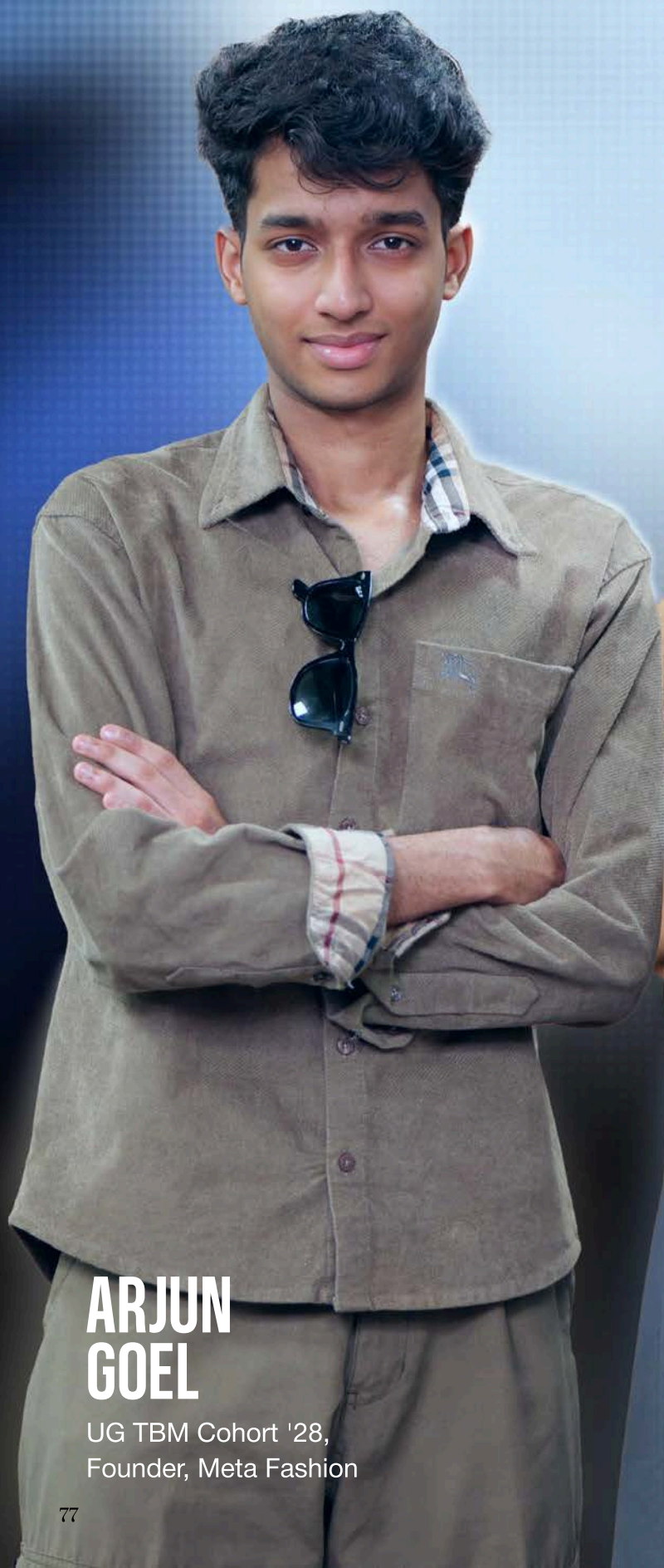
Lucknow revealed a state on the cusp of transformation. As a UP native, witnessing the ambition behind a trillion-dollar economy felt personal. From Chikankari's timeless craft to Deloitte partnering with government on strategic development, the city beautifully bridges heritage with modern intent, a masterclass in public-private collaboration driving real change.



PAWIT PASSY

My Punjab immersion was an enriching, hands-on learning experience. Visits to ITC, Sonalika, and Nivia gave me insights into large-scale manufacturing, supply chains, and brand building. It helped me understand how businesses operate on ground, bridging the gap between classroom concepts and practical industry exposure.

COVER STORY



**ARJUN
GOEL**

UG TBM Cohort '28,
Founder, Meta Fashion



**DIA
GOEL**

PGP TBM Cohort '23,
Founder, Hookd Chips

MASTERS' UNION STUDENT STARTUPS ON SHARK TANK SEASON 5

HOOKd Chips is redefining snacking with high-protein chicken chips, while Meta Fashion is turning virtual identity into a fashion business built on AI, customers, and real demand.



SHARK TANK GAVE US VISIBILITY, BUT THE REAL IMPACT CAME AFTERWARDS. THE FEEDBACK FORCED US TO SHARPEN OUR PRODUCT, RETHINK POSITIONING, AND BUILD THE BUSINESS WITH FAR MORE CLARITY AND SPEED.

COVER STORY

HOOKd Chips: How A Protein Snack Brand Captivated Customers And Secured 50 Lakh Funding.

“INDIA HAS 77% NON-VEGETARIANS, YET THERE WERE VIRTUALLY NO READY-TO-EAT NON-VEGETARIAN SNACKS AVAILABLE,” DIA SAYS. “WE SAW A REAL CONSUMER NEED AND REALISED SOMEONE HAD TO FILL IT.”



Walk into any Indian kirana or supermarket snack aisle. You'll see walls of potato chips, namkeens, murukku, and chakli, all carbohydrate-heavy, mostly vegetarian, and entirely predictable. For the 77% of Indians who eat meat, the options were nearly non-existent. There was protein in eggs and chicken dinners, yes, but nothing on the ready-to-eat shelf.

Dia Goel, a Masters' Union PGP TBM Cohort 3 alumna, recognised this gap during the Venture Initiation Programme (VIP), where students test and prototype real business ideas under pressure. She and her brother **Akul Goel** realised that creating a high-protein, chicken-based snack wasn't just an idea; it was a necessity.

This realisation became the seed of **HOOKd Chicken Chips**, India's first high-protein chicken snack, now redefining what it means to snack in the country.

From College Kitchens to a Market-Ready Snack

The brand's journey began under the name **Buzzinga**, intended as a parent brand for multiple products. Early testing revealed a critical insight: people didn't just try the chips, they finished packets mid-conversation.

'That's when we realised our product was addictive in the best way,' Dia recalls.

“WHenever someone tried our chips, they'd immediately ask for another. That's how we got the name HOOKd, because the product kept people coming back.”

But building a chicken chip that worked wasn't easy. Every oven, microwave, and rotary method failed until the siblings explored **commercial demo kitchens**, where they could experiment at scale. Packaging also required iteration: initial designs with a chicken illustration were confusing, so they replaced it with a human character to signal the product was for people, not pets.

'Our current packaging is the tenth version, and it's finally hitting the right note with customers,' Dia says. 'Constant feedback and iteration were key to getting it right.'

How HOOKd Won Investor Confidence

With an initial capital of ₹2.5 lakh, the Dia built the first real prototypes at Masters' Union, testing seasoning profiles, refining the bake process, and iterating packaging. The programme's Demo Day,

attended by 50 to 70 investors, was the first real test of whether anyone outside their sampling circle would believe in it.

Dia finished second. She left with ₹1.1 lakh in seed funding and, more importantly, a proof point: investors with real money had put it on the table for a product that didn't yet exist at commercial scale.

The Masters' Union network did more than provide funding. Founders within the ecosystem stepped in to unlock distribution contacts and supply chain connections, often anticipating challenges before Dia had even raised them. This kind of support and infrastructure proved to be as valuable as the financial backing itself.

Pitching a Category on Shark Tank India

HOOKd was only 90 days old when Dia and Akul pitched it on Shark Tank India Season 5. Judges Namita Thapar, Anupam Mittal, Vineeta Singh, Kunal Bahl, and Varun Alagh scrutinised their pitch. The siblings weren't just selling chips; they were presenting a category-first concept, ready-to-eat, high-protein, non-vegetarian snacks that had never existed in India.

Varun Alagh recognised the opportunity and invested **₹50 Lakh for 20% equity**, validating the siblings' vision.

During testing and sampling, it quickly became clear that people kept coming back for more. The repeated consumption wasn't just feedback; it was proof that the product was hitting the right mark.

What Makes HOOKd Chicken Chips Different

HOOKd distinguishes itself in a market saturated with carbohydrate-heavy snacks. Each 30g pack delivers a high-protein, low-fat, gluten-free alternative without preservatives or artificial colours. By combining taste with functional benefits, HOOKd provides a snack that fuels rather than just fills.



Gluten-free & palm oil-free
Suitable for sensitive consumers



Clean ingredients
No preservatives or artificial colours



Bold flavours
Classic and Tandoori options, plus combo packs



Baked, not fried
Crispy texture without the guilt



High protein
17g per 30g serving



Growth and Metrics Post-Shark Tank

After the Initial Demo Day Seed Funding of ₹1.1 Lakh at Masters' Union, national exposure through Shark Tank translated into measurable growth.

₹50 LAKH FOR 20% EQUITY

Shark Tank Funding

₹2 CRORE

Annual Run Rate

8× INCREASE

In Monthly Recurring Revenue

400% INCREASE

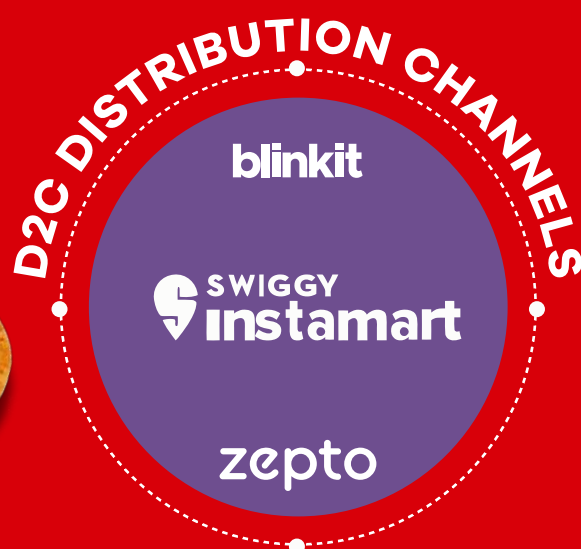
In Website Traffic

41% REPEAT

Purchase Rate (Industry Average 15–20%)

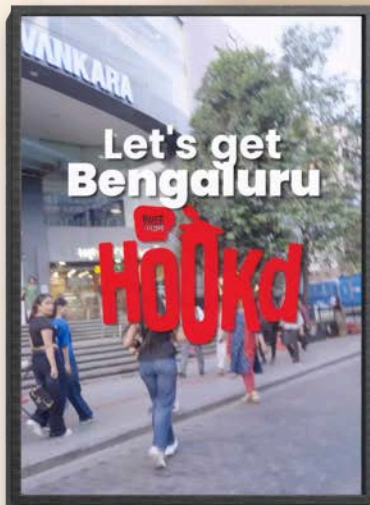
33% WEBSITE

Website Return Rate



Marketing for HOOKd goes beyond visibility; the focus is on creating a presence where consumers naturally discover and engage with the product.

Marketing Innovation: Guerrilla Tactics and AI Visibility



- Guerrilla campaigns with branded packets across Delhi

Early marketing relied on **creative, lean strategies**:



- Influencer partnerships to amplify reach

Lessons Learned: Building a New Snack Category

Dia highlights that HOOKd's success is as much about insight and iteration as it is about product quality:

- ✦ **Early validation:** Accelerates product-market fit
- ✦ **Educate the market:** Category-first products require awareness-building
- ✦ **Operational control matters:** In-house production ensures consistent quality
- ✦ **Creative marketing drives discovery:** Unconventional strategies can outperform traditional campaigns

The Road Ahead: Expanding HOOKd's Reach

With a loyal customer base and retention metrics exceeding industry norms, HOOKd plans to expand into **new high-protein snacks**, including chicken popcorn and other ready-to-eat options. The brand is also exploring **offline retail and B2B channels** to ensure availability at scale.

The journey from **college kitchens to Shark Tank** proves that innovation, persistence, and consumer insight can **create entirely new categories in India**.



- AI-powered content creation and search crawlers to make the product discoverable

These efforts maximised awareness while keeping costs low, positioning HOOKd as a recognisable, pioneering brand among early adopters.

Scan and Snack



SCRATCH MAGAZINE



GET HOOKD ON INDIA'S FAVOURITE CHICKEN CHIPS!

COVER STORY

META FASHION : Arjun Goel's Shark Tank Bet Paid Off

“NOT GETTING A DEAL ON THE TANK TURNED OUT TO BE A GOOD THING. THE MARKET HAS VALIDATED US IN WAYS THAT ROOM COULDN'T.



Arjun left Shark Tank without a deal, but by 19 built a digital-to-physical fashion company selling to millions globally.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a 15-year-old theatre enthusiast and current Masters' Union undergraduate, **Arjun Goel**, found himself on Roblox. For most, it was a pastime. For Arjun, it was a revelation. He noticed something others overlooked: this virtual space wasn't just for play. It was a place where identity could be expressed, communities could form, and creativity could turn into tangible economic opportunity. That insight laid the foundation for Meta Fashion, a company now bridging the **digital and physical worlds of fashion**.

From a Single Hairstyle to a Digital Fashion Empire

Meta Fashion's origin was simple yet personal. Arjun began by creating a single hairstyle in Roblox, collaborating with the small

pool of creators already in the UGC programme. At the time, there were only about **300 creators globally** in an **invite-only programme**, each with limited slots, and he had to push hard to secure them, splitting the Robux (virtual currency used in Roblox) earned.

“THE QUALITY WASN'T SOMETHING I WAS EMBARRASSED BY. I'VE ALWAYS SEEN EVERYTHING AS GROWTH, NOT FAILURE

That first item sparked a deeper realisation: fashion in virtual spaces was treated as an afterthought. He wanted to change that, translating a theatrical understanding of identity and storytelling into the digital realm.

By **24th August 2022**, Meta Fashion officially launched, with **Arjun becoming one of the first Indians accepted into Roblox's UGC programme**. The early work laid the blueprint for what would

become an AI-driven fashion ecosystem, combining trend analysis, 3D execution, and quality control before any product reached the marketplace.

How AI Powers Trend Prediction and a Seamless Fashion Pipeline

Today, Meta Fashion is more than a digital boutique. It is an **AI-native fashion house**. Trends are identified through AI at a scale and precision that traditional teams cannot match. Production briefs follow, executed by a skilled 3D team and then filtered through rigorous quality control processes. But discovery does not rely solely on listing products. Meta Fashion **owns its distribution**, pushing items through its games and virtual environments to gather better data, improve margins, and maintain a direct relationship with its users.

The business model bridges **digital and physical worlds**. When a digital design gains traction, it signals the creation

of a real-world product, which is then sold back into the same ecosystem through pop-ups and IP partnerships. The three revenue streams, marketplace sales, proprietary virtual environments, and physical products, feed each other.



VIRTUAL IS WHERE IDENTITY GETS CREATED AND EXPERIMENTED WITH. ONCE SOMEONE IS CONFIDENT IN THAT IDENTITY, THEY WANT TO BRING IT INTO THE REAL WORLD.

Shark Tank Season 5: Validation Beyond Deals

Meta Fashion's appearance on **Shark Tank Season 5** was a turning point, not in sales, but in credibility. With **India representing roughly 1% of Roblox's global market**, a figure shared by Roblox's India team, local viewers saw little immediate impact. But investors in the gaming and creator economy recognised the opportunity. Post-show, fundraising conversations moved faster and at significantly higher valuations.

The exposure accelerated hiring, strategic partnerships, and investor interest, proving that credibility is sometimes more valuable than immediate capital. At the time of Shark Tank, the business had already **sold over 2 million virtual items, generated ₹2 crore in sales, and onboarded 80,000 paid users on the game.**

Serving Gen Z: Avatars as a Reflection of Identity

Today, Meta Fashion caters to Gen Z players who want their avatars to reflect their identity. Discovery happens through social media,

influencer campaigns, and platform algorithms. But Arjun is moving away from algorithm dependency, building proprietary distribution networks through immersive virtual environments. These ecosystems allow users to experiment with AI-assisted styling and directly apply looks to their avatars, creating a seamless loop of discovery, experimentation, and purchase.

Building a Supply Chain for agility and precision

Meta Fashion avoids large-scale factories. Instead, it partners with smaller manufacturers evaluated for **flexibility, speed, and the ability to execute unique designs on low minimum order quantities.** Per-unit costs may be slightly higher, but the tradeoff avoids losses from excess inventory and redundant stock.

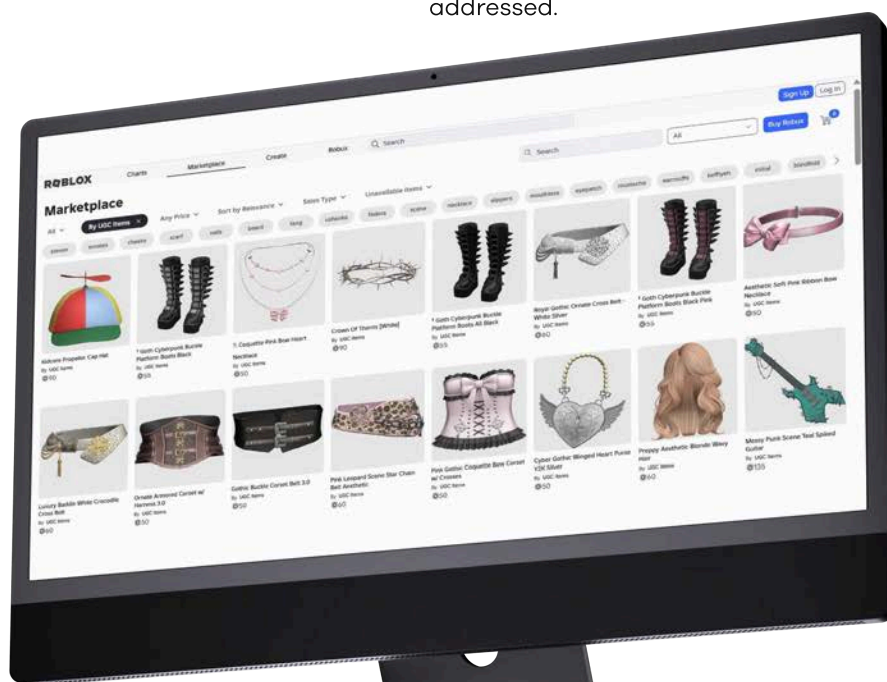
Arjun credits his father and co-founder, **Sanjay Goel**, with building the operational backbone, drawing on decades of experience in manufacturing, consumer brands, and tech-enabled businesses. Strategic industry connections, such as strategic

support from fellow UG student **Arav Jain** of a Forbes-featured company Valentine Silver International, a significant sterling silver jewellery manufacturing unit in Jaipur, has provided key manufacturing insight, particularly around building agile factory partnerships on low minimum order quantities.

Strategic Scaling with Selective Investors and Focused Hiring

Meta Fashion bootstrapped its early stages, generating revenue from day one on Roblox. Fundraising followed only to accelerate growth, not out of necessity. The company has been selective, seeking investors who bring strategic insight alongside capital. Arjun emphasises that the next phase is all about building the right team across marketing, distribution, and technology.

Arjun's view is simple: follow your interests, let quality and persistence lead and own your distribution. 'When you're doing something you genuinely enjoy, the money comes as a byproduct,' says Arjun. The one choice he would reconsider is building proprietary distribution earlier, a vulnerability he has since addressed.



META FASHION TODAY IN NUMBERS AND MOMENTUM

Meta Fashion is now a bridge between digital experimentation and physical fashion. With Shark Tank validation, AI-driven trend execution, and a strategic approach to distribution, Arjun Goel has positioned the brand at the intersection of identity, creativity, and commerce.

2M+

Virtual items sold

₹2.5CR+

Revenue

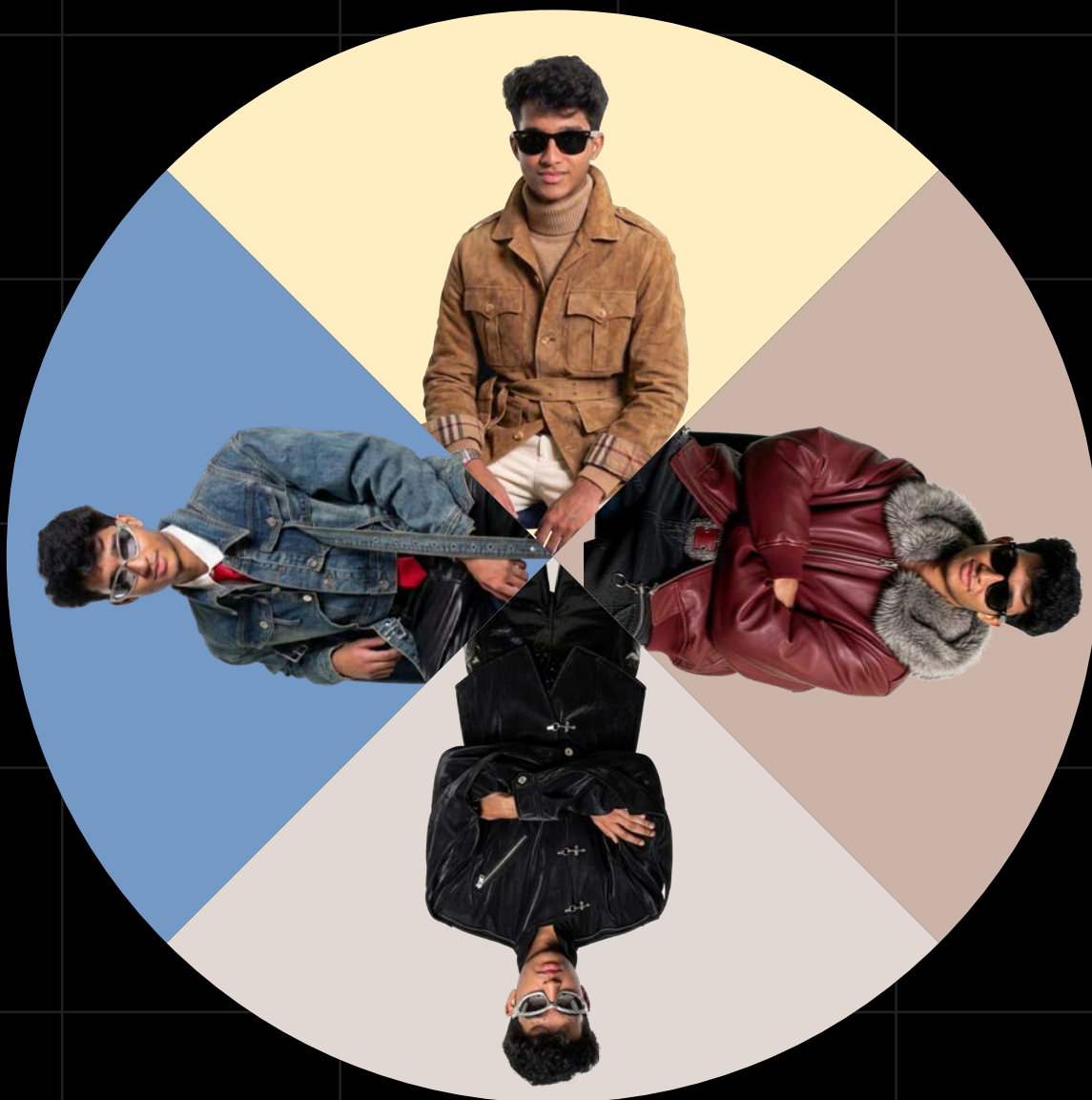
80,000+

Paid Users After Shark Tank

100,000+

Players Onboarded





Enter the Future of Fashion

One destination for digital and physical fashion culture.

*Also open for collaborations with
3D artists, factories, brands,
game developers, and
influencers.*



Scan this QR Code

FLASHBACK TO LAST SEASONS

Revisiting four standout student startups that made waves on Shark Tank India Season 4, celebrating their startups and their pitches.



Hive School: India's First Sales B-School Reforming Business Education

Hive School was founded to address a critical gap: despite over 50% of jobs being sales-oriented, no dedicated business school existed. Leveraging experience across edtech, SaaS, and operations, the founders built an industry-aligned, hands-on programme. On Shark Tank India, **CEO Nikhil Gaur, PGP TBM Cohort '24**, faced intense questioning on scalability, adoption, and vision. Hive's model stood out with 30+ hiring partners, including MongoDB, Gartner, VWO, and Spry. He did not walk away with a deal, but the exposure drove 10x website traffic and surging applications. Already profitable, Hive plans to launch a one-year PGP, expand cohorts to 300 students annually, and introduce an undergraduate programme in business, marketing, and sales.

BullSpree: The Startup Turning Stock Trading Into a Game

Founded by Masters' Union alumnus **Dharmil Bavishi of PGP TBM Cohort '23**, BullSpree is a fintech startup gamifying stock trading education through a risk-free simulation app. It gained national attention on Shark Tank India, where Dharmil pitched its vision of democratising financial literacy. Despite initial scepticism around scalability, the startup secured **₹75 lakh in funding**. The team underwent rigorous preparation, refining their pitch with mentors and industry experts. Post-episode, BullSpree saw a surge in app downloads, visibility, and credibility. The funding and investor mentorship enabled tech enhancements and expansion. BullSpree now aims to become India's leading platform for financial literacy and investing education.





MemoTag: Redefining Eldercare with AI and Empathy

MemoTag is an AI-driven eldercare startup using cognitive and behavioural tracking to create personalised, genome-linked care plans for dementia patients. Founded by **UG TBM Cohort '28** student **Reyansh Juneja**, inspired by his grandfather's battle with dementia, the startup gained national visibility on Shark Tank India. While the Sharks questioned scalability, technology, and market potential, the experience strengthened MemoTag's vision. Even though any deal was not secured, website traffic and interest surged, prompting a pivot from wearables to a software-first model. Looking ahead, MemoTag aims to scale across India and North America, integrate with wearables, achieve ₹100 Cr ARR, and expand into Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative diseases.

NearBook: Making Books Affordable Through Community

NearBook, founded in 2020 by **Sanjay Modi, PGP TBM Cohort '26**, is a marketplace for buying, selling, renting, and donating second-hand books, making reading affordable and accessible. The platform connects local buyers and sellers while promoting sustainability and a culture of reading. On Shark Tank India Season 4 (February 2025), Sanjay pitched for ₹40 lakh for 20% equity at a ₹2 crore valuation and secured the deal from Anupam Mittal. Despite early doubts about its ability to scale, the startup grew rapidly after the show, recording a 300% jump in users. With plans for AI recommendations, subscriptions, and nationwide expansion, NearBook aims to build a global, community-driven reading ecosystem.



CAMPUS TO CAPITAL



RAISED AND ACQUIRED: STUDENTS WHO BUILT AT MASTERS' UNION

How three alumni founders built companies that secured funding, scaled products, and attracted strategic acquisition.

- ▶ PLAYSUPER
- ▶ SEEDSAI
- ▶ SANYARK SPACE

Somewhere between late-night ideation, pitch decks that began as class assignments, and a healthy dose of “let’s just try it”, three student-founded startups have quietly stepped into a new league. Funding secured. Acquisition completed. Momentum unlocked.

This is not just a story about capital flowing in. It is about conviction compounding over time. It is about founders who took early signals seriously and stayed in the game long enough for the market to notice. It is also about the slightly surreal moment when something that once lived in a classroom document becomes a line item in an investor memo.

GAMING THAT PAYS BACK: PLAYSUPER RAISES \$1 MILLION

Mobile gaming is no longer just entertainment. It is an economy. PlaySuper is building at that intersection, where how you play starts to carry real-world value.

Founded in 2024 by **PGP TBM Cohort '24** students **Shouradeep Chakraborty (CEO)** and **Upamanyu Chatterjee (COO)**, with their third partner **Abhir Das (CBO)**, this startup recently secured **\$1 million in seed funding**, led by **Chimera**, with participation from other investors like **Audacity VC**, **IAN Capital Fund**, and **Dhruv Vohra, Managing Director at Meta APAC Emerging Markets**. While the number itself is impressive, the underlying idea is what stands out. PlaySuper is reimagining how players interact with games by introducing real-world rewards into gameplay ecosystems.

The dream team has repeat founders. Before PlaySuper, there was **CollegeShala**. Built by Upamanyu and Shouradeep, it grew to 500K+ users and ended in a **\$1.1 million exit**. Post-acquisition by edtech, they helped scale the ed-tech firm by raising \$2.5 million, doubling the user base and driving \$1 million in annual revenue. With PlaySuper, they’re betting big on the \$300 billion global gaming industry this time, at the intersection of commerce and mobile gaming.

In simpler terms, they are moving gaming from “just for fun” to “fun



that pays back”. Rewarding players with practical rewards tied directly to their everyday digital engagement.

The platform enables developers to integrate reward systems that translate in-game achievements into real-world benefits. This could mean discounts, offers, or tangible perks that extend beyond the screen. For users, it creates a stronger incentive loop. For developers, it unlocks new monetisation pathways.

What makes this particularly relevant today is the shift in user expectations. Gen Z players are not passive consumers. They are value seekers.

They want experiences that feel rewarding in more ways than one. PlaySuper taps directly into this mindset, building a bridge between digital engagement and real-world utility.

It turns gameplay into a loop where attention, effort, and achievement

carry tangible outcomes. In doing so, it aligns gaming with the broader expectation of immediacy, relevance, and return that defines how this generation interacts with digital platforms.

The funding will likely accelerate product development, expand partnerships with gaming studios, and strengthen its rewards infrastructure. Beyond operational growth, this milestone signals something bigger.

It shows that gaming monetisation is evolving, and investors are backing models that prioritise user value alongside revenue.

For a company that started with a simple question, what if gaming gave you more, this is strong validation.

STRATEGIC ACQUISITION: SEEDSAI JOINS GIRNAR FINSERV

If PlaySuper represents expansion, SeedsAI represents consolidation.

In a strategic move, **Girnar Finserv acquired SeedsAI**, bringing the AI platform into its broader technology ecosystem. While acquisitions often read like routine business headlines, this one reflects a deeper shift in how financial services are evolving.

Shubham Khatri and Vansh Miglani of PGP TBM Cohort '24 founded SeedsAI in 2024 with a focus on leveraging artificial intelligence to enhance decision-making, automation, and data-driven processes. By integrating this capability, Girnar Finserv is not just adding a tool. It is embedding intelligence into its core operations.

Think smarter underwriting, faster processing, and more personalised financial products.



From the outside, it may look like a straightforward acquisition. From a strategic lens, it signals where the industry is heading. Financial institutions are no longer just adopting technology. They are acquiring it, owning it, and building around it.

For SeedsAI, this marks a transition from being an independent innovator to becoming a foundational layer within a larger system. It is the kind of shift that allows

technology to scale faster, reach more users, and operate with deeper integration.

For anyone tracking startup journeys, this is an important reminder that success does not always look like staying independent. Sometimes, the real win is finding the right environment where your technology can amplify its impact.

SANYARK SPACE: BAGS \$2 MILLION IN PRE-SEED ROUND

If the first two stories are grounded in digital ecosystems, Sanyark Space operates at an entirely different altitude.

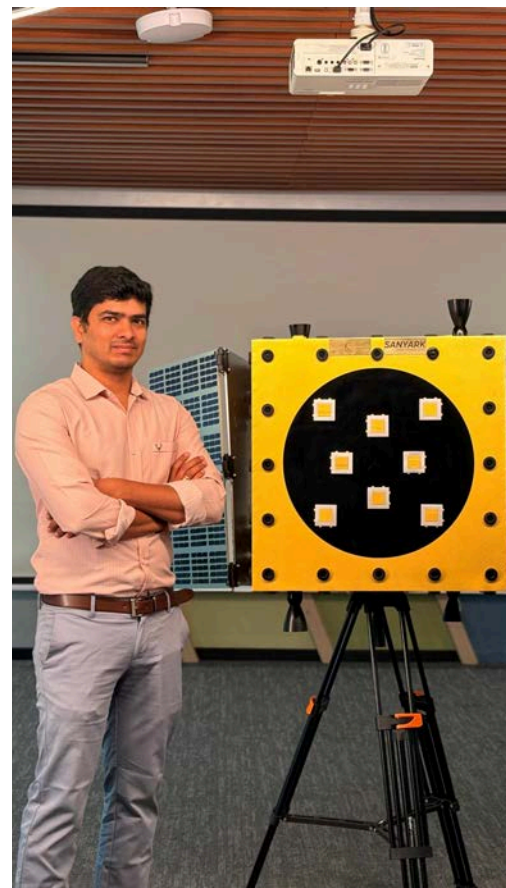
Founded by alumnus **Raghava Kundrapu, PGP TBM Cohort '23**, along with co-founder **Akhileshwar Reddy**, the startup is building a LEO-based, multi-mission satellite constellation designed for precision positioning, navigation, timing, and secure communication. Yes, it is as ambitious as it sounds.

The company has closed a **\$2 million pre-seed funding round**, with **Avaana** leading the investment at \$1.5 million and **AUM Ventures** contributing \$0.5 million. While formal announcements from all

investors are still in progress, the backing reflects strong confidence in the vision.

At its core, Sanyark Space is working on integrating navigation and communication into a single satellite architecture. This has significant implications. It means more efficient systems, higher business value per satellite, and enabling applications that demand both precision and security.

The use cases span defence and commercial sectors, particularly in areas that rely on autonomous systems and hyper-connected infrastructure. As industries move towards automation, the need for reliable positioning and secure communication becomes essential. Sanyark's approach places it at the intersection of deeptech, space infrastructure, and next-generation connectivity.



STARTUP GARAGE



RETHINKING MOMO FOR A HEALTH- CONSCIOUS GENERATION

How three UG student founders are bridging indulgence and nutrition while reimagining India's favourite street snack.



THERE WERE BRANDS SOLVING FOR HYGIENE OR TASTE, BUT NO ONE WAS REALLY SOLVING FOR BOTH HEALTH AND TASTE TOGETHER. THAT'S THE GAP WE IDENTIFIED.

- *FOUNDERS, NOMO*

Nomo began with something deceptively simple. Not a market gap deck, not a venture thesis, but a shared habit between three students at Masters' Union. Momos were the default choice across campus life. They were quick, familiar, and comforting in a routine defined by deadlines and long study hours. Yet, over time, a quiet discomfort surfaced. The same food that felt right in the moment did not feel right in the long run. Almost every momo they ate was built on refined flour, and **maida dominated the category with little attention to nutrition.**

That tension became the starting point. Why should something so widely loved come with an underlying sense of compromise? The question was not about replacing momos but rebuilding them in a way that aligned with how people's expectations of food were changing. Nomo was born from that intent, to create momos that feel indulgent while being made with better ingredients like **wheat, ragi, oats, and millets**, without stripping away the familiarity that makes them popular in the first place.

The founding team came together with clear, execution-heavy roles. **Swayam** took charge of marketing, supply chain, and product. **Harshita** focused on brand, customer experience, and strategy. **Adish** led operations and on-ground execution. What defined them was not just ambition but a bias for iteration, learning directly from customers instead of assumptions, and moving fast enough to let the product evolve in real time.

From Campus Stalls to Real Validation Through Repeat Customer Behaviour

Nomo did not start in a polished kitchen or a commercial setup. It started on campus, through MVP stalls placed across two to three touchpoints. The objective was not scale but validation. The team was trying to answer a simple question: would people come back after trying it once?

The response gave them their first real signal. Students did not just try the product; they returned for it. Many brought friends the next time. In food businesses, that shift matters more than curiosity because it signals **repeat behaviour and emerging habit formation rather than a one-time trial.** Each stall became a feedback loop where every sale carried insight into taste, pricing, and perception.

At that stage, Nomo stopped being an idea and started behaving like something closer to a product under pressure, shaped directly by consumption rather than theory.

The Gap Between Health and Taste that Most Momo Brands Have Overlooked

The momo market in India was already defined. Brands like Wow! Momo had built scale and solved for hygiene and standardisation, while Prasuma had pushed quality and taste. Yet a gap still existed in the middle of the category.

Health and taste rarely coexisted in the same offering. Consumers were left with a choice that felt increasingly outdated. Eat something delicious but heavy, or choose something healthier that compromises on taste. Nomo identified this gap not as a niche opportunity but as a structural problem in how the category had evolved.

Their positioning was not to create a separate "healthy momo" segment. It was to build something that could sit comfortably in everyday consumption. The idea was simple but difficult to execute: **guilt-free indulgence that still feels like a momo people already recognise and enjoy.**

Rebuilding Momo with Better Ingredients without Losing Familiarity

Ingredient design became the core of Nomo's product philosophy. The shift away from refined flour was

intentional, but substitution alone was not enough. The team worked with **wheat, ragi, oats, and millets** to build a base that improved nutritional value without breaking consumer expectations of taste and texture.

The challenge was not just formulation, but memory. Momos in India carry a very specific sensory identity, and even small deviations risk rejection. To manage this, the team built a strict internal discipline where every batch was tested before reaching customers. The rule was clear: if it does not meet internal taste standards, it does not go out.

At the same time, nutrition was not treated as a secondary claim. Ingredient sourcing, especially protein quality, was monitored closely to ensure the health positioning was real and not cosmetic. However, the most important feedback loop came from outside the kitchen. Every stall functioned as a live testing environment where customers responded immediately, and those reactions shaped the next iteration.

Over time, this balance between internal control and external feedback created a product that evolved continuously while staying anchored in familiarity.

What Pop-Ups in Societies and Tech Parks Revealed About Real Consumption

As Nomo expanded beyond campus, it entered premium residential societies and tech parks, and the learning curve changed completely. These environments exposed two very different consumption patterns. Societies brought in health-conscious families, while tech parks introduced working professionals operating under strict time constraints.

One insight became especially clear across both contexts. Time scarcity often matters more than price sensitivity.

People who are willing to spend more money are often not willing to spend more time waiting. This insight forced the team to rethink operations as seriously as they thought about product.

Several behavioural patterns emerged. Demand did not build gradually; it came in sharp spikes. Sampling significantly increased conversion rates. First impressions played a disproportionate role in repeat behaviour. And most importantly, repeat purchases were driven by a combination of taste and convenience, not taste alone.

These learnings directly influenced how stalls were designed, how inventory was planned, and how peak-hour efficiency was managed.

Early Revenue Traction Showing Strong Repeat-Driven Demand

Within two months of launch, Nomo reached approximately **₹2.7 lakh in total sales**, moving from early days of around **₹10,000** in revenue to a more stable per-stall average of nearly **₹21,000 per stall**. The consistency of sell-outs across multiple activations became one of the strongest early indicators of demand.

What made this growth meaningful was not just the top line, but the structure behind it. A significant portion of sales came from repeat customers, reducing dependency on constant new acquisition. Alongside this, the team also began seeing bulk and corporate orders, suggesting that usage contexts were expanding beyond individual consumption.

For an early-stage food brand, these signals pointed to one thing: demand was not experimental anymore.

Organic Marketing Driven by Visibility, Word of Mouth, and Recall

Nomo's early marketing did not rely on heavy spending or structured campaigns. It was product-led and environment-

Early Traction, Revenue Growth, and Market Validation at Nomo

- ▶ Approximately **₹2.7 lakh total sales in 2 months**
- ▶ Early launch revenue of around **₹10,000**, scaling steadily thereafter
- ▶ Average stall performance reached nearly **₹21,000 per stall**
- ▶ MVP tested across **2–3 campus stalls**
- ▶ Expansion across **campus, societies, and tech parks**
- ▶ Strong **repeat customer behaviour is driving growth**
- ▶ Multiple instances of **sell-outs across activations**
- ▶ Early **bulk and corporate orders are emerging**
- ▶ Planned rollout of **5 kiosks in high-footfall locations**

driven. High-visibility stalls created awareness, and strong product experience converted that awareness into word of mouth.

The team also experimented with meme-based communication at the stall level. These interventions were designed to create recall in crowded, high-noise environments. While not every interaction translated into an immediate purchase, they contributed to familiarity, which often converted later.

The approach was simple in structure: **attention first, experience second, repeat consumption third**. Over time, this created a layered funnel that did not depend on aggressive persuasion.

From Kiosks to Gourmet Dimsums: Building a Dual-Market Strategy

Nomo's next phase is focused on structured expansion. The immediate goal is to strengthen offline presence through kiosks, with plans to

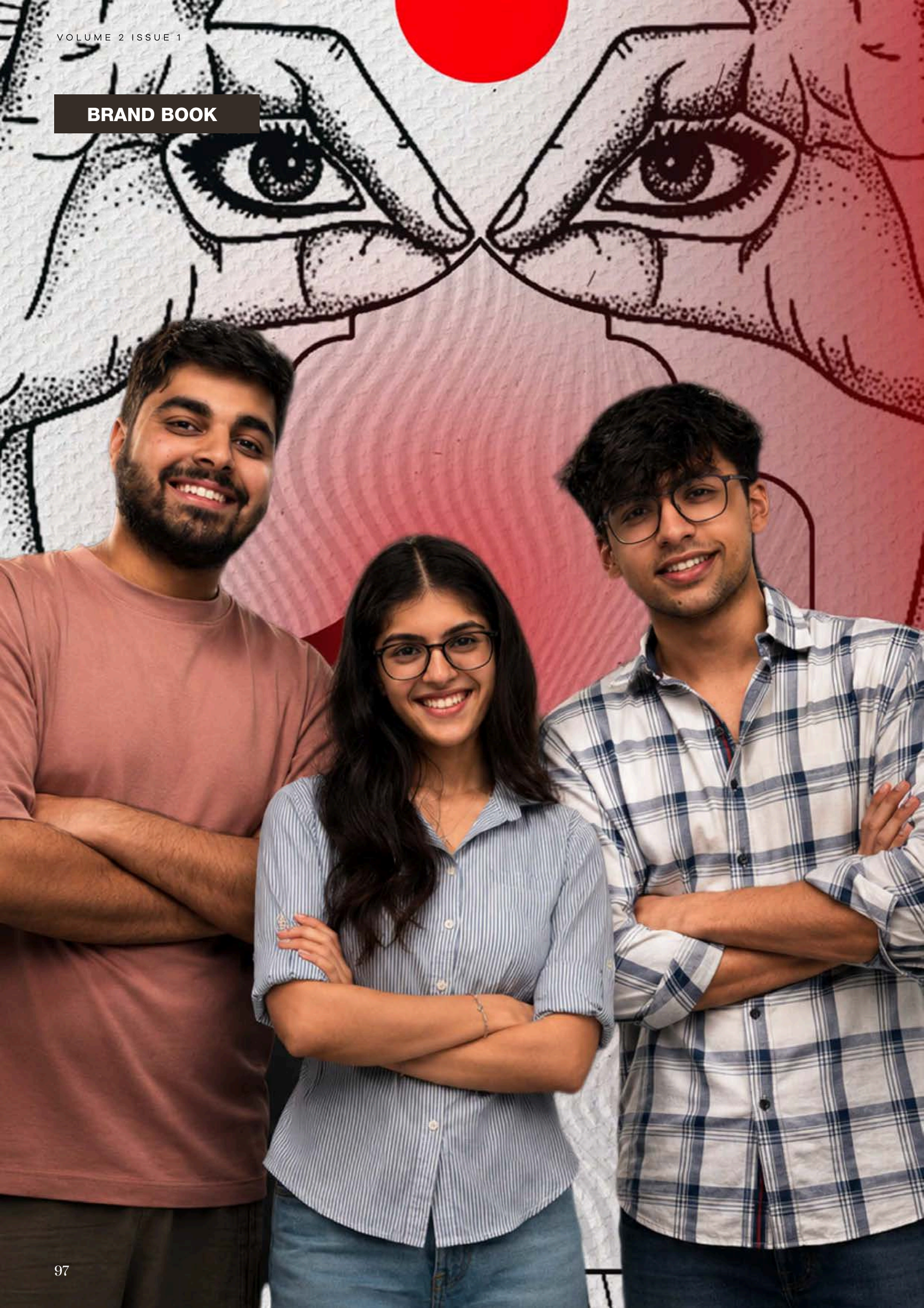
launch five **kiosks in high-footfall locations**. These kiosks are designed to improve operational depth while building stronger brand recall.

In parallel, the team is preparing to expand into cities like Bangalore, extending its footprint beyond its current base. The longer-term ambition sits in a different category altogether: gourmet dimsums. Unlike momos, dimsums currently occupy a premium and relatively niche space, often limited to high-end restaurants.

Nomo's intention is to democratise that category. The strategy is to build mass accessibility through momos while simultaneously building a premium layer through dimsums distributed via online channels. This creates a dual structure where scale and aspiration coexist rather than compete.

In a category often defined by trade-offs between health, taste, and accessibility, Nomo is betting on a simpler idea. Consumers do not want fewer choices. They want better versions of what they already love.

BRAND BOOK



KHET: A PERFUME BRAND BOTTLING RAW INDIA

Student founders from Masters' Union spotted a ₹1,500 to ₹5,000 price gap in the fragrance market that nobody was addressing.

“

WE STARTED KHET BECAUSE WE BELIEVE GREAT PRODUCTS START WITH GREAT TASTE. WE'RE BUILDING PERFUMES THAT DON'T SHY AWAY FROM WHERE THEY COME FROM, ROOTED IN REAL INDIAN STORIES, INGREDIENTS, AND SPIRIT.

- CO-FOUNDERS, KHET PERFUMES

India has never been a single story. It is temple smoke drifting into the same air as metro dust, ancient rituals existing alongside fast, restless modern lives. It is contradictions that don't cancel each other out, but coexist. Yet most perfumes Indians wear feel borrowed, designed for somewhere else, not here. Khet begins with a simple belief: fragrance should smell like this land, layered, alive, and unmistakably ours. **Built on stories and anecdotes drawn from Indian culture**, every scent starts with something lived before it becomes something worn.

That belief did not begin as a brand idea. It began as a recurring discomfort for the co-founders of Khet Perfumes, **Arhum Jain** and **Madhav Narang**, incubated at Masters' Union, along with founding member **Maanya Agarwal**. What they kept circling back to was a simple question: why did every fragrance they encountered feel like it had been designed for somewhere else? India has one of the oldest fragrance traditions on the planet, yet most retail shelves were split between cheap mass-market body sprays and imported luxury bottles priced above ₹20,000. Nobody was building for the middle. That gap, precisely between ₹1,500 and ₹5,000, is where Khet was born.

The Indian Fragrance Market Was Split into Two, and the Middle Was Empty

The structure of the Indian perfume market is oddly binary. At one end sits a crowded mass segment dominated by a handful of large players competing on price and shelf space. At the other, global luxury maisons occupy a price bracket that functions more as aspiration than accessibility for most Indian consumers.

What was missing was a space in between. Not mass-market body mists, not luxury bottles that felt out of reach, but something that sat quietly in the middle and delivered what it cost.

They saw this not as a gap to fill, but as a story to tell. The premium consumer, young, urban, and culturally aware, was not being spoken to honestly. They were being handed either commodity or clout. Khet's proposition was simpler: cultural depth at a price point that does not require a second thought.

The Product Came Before the Business Plan

Khet's founding story carries an honesty that is rare in the DTC space. The brand did not emerge from a market-sizing exercise. It began with a question: why are we

wearing fragrances that don't feel like us?

India, as Khet's founders describe it, is not a fixed identity but a living contradiction. It is constantly shifting, shaped by memory and modernity, in which the old and the new don't replace each other but coexist. It is a ritual and rebellion happening on the same afternoon. Nothing here stands still; everything evolves, overlaps, and quietly reinvents itself while staying unmistakably rooted in its own complexity. The global fragrance industry had produced no convincing answer to this reality, so Khet decided to become one.

The process of developing a fragrance at Khet starts not in a laboratory but in cultural research. The founders identify a story, an emotion, a texture of Indian life. They work with perfumers to translate that narrative into notes, not the other way around. The scent follows the story.

The two best-selling products, **Kala Pani** and **Tota Keri**, are not names that need translation for an Indian customer. They land with the weight of shared cultural memory. That is precisely the point.

Testing the Market First and Letting Real Customers Shape the Brand

khet



Before the current brand existed, there was a quieter beginning. In September 2024, Khet launched a minimum viable product to test whether the concept could hold up outside a classroom and outside their own enthusiasm.

It could. But the feedback also revealed something important: the brand's early form did not fully communicate the premium experience the product deserved. The packaging, the tone, the visual language, all of it needed elevation.

That learning drove the rebranded launch on **2nd October 2025**, the new Khet arrived with hard-box packaging designed for reuse, wooden magnetic caps crafted from sheesham, and shipping boxes considered as carefully as the bottle itself. The choice of date was deliberate. Gandhi Jayanti carries its own complicated, layered Indianness, and that suited the brand perfectly. The **unboxing experience** is, in the language of the brand, a statement. Every detail earns its place.

From Pop-ups to Performance Marketing: How Khet Sells

Khet operates primarily as a D2C brand, with its website and Meta advertising driving sales. Beyond digital, the brand has built an offline presence through pop-up shops and select retail partner stores in Mumbai. They are also featuring a Khet Experience Centre at All You Can Fest from 12th to 14th June. This offline presence drives revenue, generates direct customer feedback, and builds stronger brand familiarity.

Beyond D2C, Khet has also developed a B2B scentscaping business, creating signature fragrances for brands, offices, and retail spaces. It reflects the growing idea that a company's scent can be as intentional as its logo; a category still nascent in

India but expanding rapidly.

The Numbers Behind the Brand Tell a Compelling Early Story

For a brand less than two years into its public life, with a meaningful portion of that time spent in MVP mode, the traction is notable. Here is where Khet stands today:

- ▶ **4,000+ orders** processed since launch
- ▶ **₹70 lakh+** in revenue generated to date
- ▶ **Kala Pani** and **Tota Keri** are the top-selling fragrances, both rooted in unmistakably Indian references
- ▶ **150+ days** of pop-up sales and 2 store presence across Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata

The customer base reveals the brand's wider ambitions. Alongside its core urban Indian audience, Khet is already seeing traction amongst NRI communities and international travellers, people who want to carry India with them, or give it to someone who has never been. International shipping is planned for 2026, a first offline retail store for early 2027, and formal international market entry for 2028.

What Khet is Actually Building

There is a category of Indian brand that tells you it represents Indian culture and then show you a lotus. Khet is not that brand.

Its philosophy, summarised internally as "Savage yet Rooted," refuses the sanitised version of India that plays well in global pitch decks. The India Khet is interested in is contradictory, physical, sometimes uncomfortable, and always alive. A country that is simultaneously ancient and chaotic, spiritual and irreverent, and one that has never needed external validation for its own depth.

That positioning is a commercial bet as much as a cultural one. There is a generation of Indian consumers who are deeply proud of where they are from and deeply tired of being handed a diluted version of it. They want the real thing, made well, at a price that respects their intelligence.

Khet is betting those consumers exist in large numbers, in India and in every city on earth where an Indian has ever made a home. Given the evidence so far, it looks like a reasonable bet.



Wear the scents that are making **Indians go crazy!**

You might find yourself grabbing **limited offers** too.

Shop Khet



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



**KRITI
GUPTA**

PGP TBM Cohort '25,
Merchandising Manager,
Careem

 **Careem**

THE CAREER SHE BUILT BY STARTING OVER

Kriti Gupta, a Masters' Union PGP TBM alum, never followed a fixed plan. She had something better: the courage to start again.

“

TRY AGAIN. THAT'S HOW I'VE LEARNED, SHIFTED, AND BUILT EVERYTHING I HAVE.



For Kriti Gupta, those words are less a motivational line and more a way of operating. It is not a motto meant for speeches; it is the principle by which she navigates both work and life. When a plan fails or a path closes, she does not dwell. Instead, she looks for the next opportunity, the next step, the next angle to explore. To make the mantra tangible, she carries a small refresh symbol tattoo on her wrist, a constant visual reminder that growth is iterative and that progress is built on repeated effort rather than sudden, dramatic breakthroughs. This philosophy has been the quiet engine behind a career that has taken her from an internship at **Foodpanda in India** to her current role as **Merchandising Manager at Careem**, one of the Middle East's most recognised super apps.

Seek Opportunities that Challenge You to Grow

Kriti's journey shows that careers are rarely linear. Her start at

Foodpanda was practical: an internship that turned into a full-time role, where she gained foundational skills in marketing and brand management. But she did not stay within that comfort zone. Her curiosity drove her to Flipkart, a step that involved moving to a new city and diving into a domain she had not explored before. Flipkart exposed her to operations at a scale that most people encounter only in textbooks or case studies. The challenge was immediate and intense, but it allowed her to discover **merchandising**, a field that combines psychology, data, and design to guide how users discover products. It was here that Kriti realised the kind of work she wanted to commit to: **shaping experiences, nudging choices, and understanding consumer behaviour at scale.**

Adapt Your Skills for New Business Models

Her next move, to **Swiggy Instamart**, required a different mindset altogether. Quick

commerce does not allow users to meander or browse leisurely; the customers arrive with intent and expect rapid fulfilment. Kriti had to rethink her approach entirely, from **UX design and merchandising strategy to understanding the real-time decision-making of consumers.** She adapted by combining her creative instincts with analytical rigour, learning to make rapid decisions that balanced speed with experience. Moving to Careem increased the complexity even further. Operating in multiple countries with a diverse user base meant that there was no single strategy that could be applied universally. **Every campaign, every product placement, every UI decision required an understanding of cultural context, local behaviour, and market dynamics.** It is demanding work, yet Kriti thrives on that challenge, constantly refining her approach while keeping the core principle intact: understand the user and optimise for them.

Build Analytical Rigor Through Hands-On Learning

Kriti credits Masters' Union with giving her the structure and analytical skills that allowed her to thrive across these diverse roles. She arrived with strong marketing instincts and creative thinking, but wanted to complement that with quantitative and strategic skills. Courses in data visualisation, product analytics, and market research strengthened her ability to interpret complex information and make data-driven decisions. Meanwhile, sessions with Professor Bhupesh on marketing strategy and consumer behaviour reshaped how she approached decision-making, encouraging her to combine intuition with empirical insights. Beyond classroom theory, it was the hands-on, applied learning; projects like dropshipping, that cemented these lessons. Kriti learned to connect operational execution with consumer insights and business strategy, gaining

confidence to tackle problems with a structured yet practical approach. She reflects that this combination of skill-building and applied experience has shaped the way she approaches challenges today, giving her the agility to move seamlessly between marketing, UX, and merchandising.

Lead Teams with Empathy and Ownership

Managing people brought another set of lessons. Kriti learned that leadership is less about having the answers and more about creating conditions for others to find theirs. She gives her teams real ownership and responsibility, coupled with room to make mistakes, knowing that genuine learning emerges from experience. Empathy, clarity, and accountability guide her approach. She explains that her role is not to shield her team from difficulty but to help them understand challenges, reflect on

outcomes, and grow stronger. This grounded, human approach to leadership stems from her own experiences as a junior professional, giving her insight into what it feels like to be mentored effectively.

Combine Creativity with Data to Drive Result

In her work across campaigns, product curation, and process optimisation, Kriti balances creativity with data-backed decision-making. Ideas start with creative instincts but are always tested against historical performance and validated through A/B testing before scaling. This ensures that every project is not only visually compelling but also effective for the user and aligned with business goals. For Kriti, creativity and business outcomes are inseparable; one without the other cannot achieve meaningful impact. This principle informs everything from UI tweaks to merchandising decisions and marketing campaigns.

↓ **In Frame:** Kriti Gupta running her booth during the Dropshipping Challenge, an early glimpse into her future in merchandising and consumer experience.



Maximise Your Masters' Union Experience

For current students, Kriti offers actionable advice: lean into the full breadth of learning. Build a foundation across functions, including finance. Take CXO sessions seriously; these interactions are an opportunity to absorb real-world knowledge from industry leaders. Treat experiential projects like Outclass and VIP as live businesses, because the instincts developed under genuine stakes are irreplaceable. Engaging fully with these experiences develops the confidence, adaptability, and strategic thinking necessary to succeed in e-commerce, digital marketing, and merchandising.

And when things go wrong? You already know her answer: try again.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

**KETAN
PASARI**

PGP TBM Cohort '25,
Category Manager, Flipkart

105



A CAREER IN BUILDING AND SCALING D2C BRANDS

Masters' Union PGP TBM alum Ketan Pasari on transitioning from ground-level execution to category management at Flipkart.



NEVER COMPLAIN ABOUT HAVING TOO MUCH WORK;
AS LONG AS YOU ENJOY THE PROCESS, IT'S A GOOD
PROBLEM TO HAVE.

Ketan Pasari's career has not followed a linear path or a predictable sequence of roles. Instead, it has been shaped by immersion in environments where ambiguity is constant, decisions carry immediate consequences, and learning happens through execution rather than reflection. Across these shifts, one pattern remains unchanged: he has stayed close to the work itself, whether building a business from scratch or operating inside a large digital marketplace. That grounding began with **Haldar Kisan**, where he was not observing operations from the outside but directly shaping the earliest version of the business.

Learning How Businesses Function by Building One

Co-founding Haldar Kisan placed Ketan in a setting where ideas had value only when they translated into execution. The early phase required him to work across functions that are typically separated in scaled organisations, including procurement, supply chain design, branding, packaging, and distribution.

Working in a B2B agribusiness focused on processed agricultural pulses in West Bengal, he was responsible for both understanding business fundamentals and executing them on the ground. This included placing the first container order of pulses, defining the brand identity, and setting up distribution networks across Eastern India while simultaneously building early customer trust in an untested market.

What defined this experience was not just the breadth of responsibility but the absence of functional boundaries. Strategy, operations, and customer engagement often converged into the same set of decisions. Over time, this shaped a mindset rooted in outcomes rather than frameworks, with a

clear preference for what moves the business forward over what appears structurally complete on paper.

Shifting Focus from Building Businesses to Understanding Scale

After working within a tightly execution-driven startup environment, Ketan began to focus on a different set of questions: how brands scale within structured marketplaces, and why some businesses accelerate while others plateau despite strong fundamentals.

That curiosity led him to Flipkart, where he now works as a **Category Manager in the Beauty and Personal Care segment**, operating at the intersection of platform dynamics and D2C brand growth.

Here, his work begins with clarity of intent. Every brand he engages with arrives at a different stage of maturity and with a different definition of success. Some are pursuing rapid scale, while others are focused on long-term positioning. Understanding this context becomes the starting point for any strategy.

From there, he builds tailored approaches that align brand ambition with platform behaviour, ensuring that growth is not treated as a uniform output but as a function of positioning, consumer behaviour, and category dynamics working together.

Where Execution and Strategy Operate Together

Although the role is often perceived as strategic, a large part of Ketan's weekly work is operational and directly tied to performance outcomes. This includes improving catalogue hygiene, expanding relevant assortment, optimising delivery timelines, and strengthening

visibility across high-intent surfaces. These are the foundational levers that determine how effectively a brand performs in a marketplace environment.

Alongside this, the role demands a strong layer of product and category thinking. Ketan works closely with brands to identify gaps in the market, evaluate unmet consumer needs, and shape product decisions that improve competitiveness in an increasingly crowded D2C ecosystem.

As a result, the focus often shifts from optimising existing performance to defining what should be built next, making the role less about incremental improvement and more about influencing the direction of category growth itself.

A Structural Decision That Changed the Growth Trajectory

One of the most defining decisions in his role came while working with a premium personal care brand generating approximately **₹250 crore in annual revenue**, but with limited traction on Flipkart.

The initial approach would have been incremental, focused on improving visibility, refining listings, and driving steady performance gains within the existing structure. Instead, Ketan proposed a structural shift: launching a sub-brand at a lower price point to expand the total addressable market while preserving the premium positioning of the core brand.

The recommendation carried a clear risk, particularly around the potential dilution of a carefully built brand identity. After detailed discussions and evaluation of trade-offs, the strategy was implemented.

The outcome was significant. The sub-brand scaled rapidly, delivering a **fivefold increase in revenue within four months**, while also creating a halo effect

that strengthened demand for the core premium range. The experience reinforced a core principle: in certain categories, growth is not driven by refinement alone but by rethinking structure itself.

Building Structured Thinking Through Applied Learning

Ketan attributes much of his analytical approach to his time at Masters' Union, where learning was rooted in applied problem-solving rather than theoretical instruction.

He worked on analysing the P&L of MakeMyTrip and presented insights directly to their finance team, studied supply chain inefficiencies within startup environments and proposed solutions to founders, and built a venture from scratch that was evaluated by investors.

These experiences created sustained exposure to ambiguity, pressure, and decision-making under constraints, which gradually shaped a more structured approach to problem-solving.

Faculty guidance reinforced this further through mentors such as Dr Nandini Seth, Professor Ankur, Dr Bhupesh, and Professor Vipin, consistently pushing students to move beyond surface-level answers and focus on clarity of reasoning and structured breakdown of complex problems. One framework he continues to use is **MECE-based thinking**, which helps him deconstruct challenges into distinct, non-overlapping components and approach them with greater precision.

Balancing Short-Term Execution with Long-Term Brand Building

Category management requires constant negotiation between immediate performance and long-term

brand development. Ketan operates within this tension on a daily basis. Short-term priorities include conversions, visibility, and operational efficiency. Long-term priorities focus on brand positioning, customer perception, and sustained demand creation.

These objectives often move in different directions. Short-term optimisation can weaken brand equity, while long-term decisions may delay immediate results. His approach is to anchor decisions in data while interpreting them through context, including consumer behaviour, category trends, and brand intent. Metrics provide direction, but they do not provide answers in isolation. This balance becomes essential in ensuring that growth is not only achieved but also sustained over time.

What Matters When Entering Similar Roles

Ketan's advice for aspiring professionals is rooted in execution. He stresses alignment, where academic choices, projects, and internships should reflect the demands of the role rather than broad exploration.

Applied learning becomes a key differentiator, with case studies treated as real business problems requiring structured thinking. Staying updated with industry evolution is equally important in fast-changing digital commerce. Ultimately, he reduces success to two drivers: intent and analytical ability. Intent shapes depth of engagement, while analytical ability determines how effectively opportunities translate into outcomes.

Advice for Future Cohorts

Ketan's advice remains practical and execution-focused. He recommends choosing courses and projects that closely mirror real business scenarios to accelerate industry readiness. He prioritises applied thinking over theory, using case studies to build structured judgment. Staying connected to industry shifts is critical, given the pace of change in digital commerce. At its core, he highlights two essentials: intent and analytical ability. Intent drives engagement, and analytical ability defines outcomes, forming the foundation for everything else.

Ketan's Career Highlights



5x Revenue Growth

In 4 months via sub-brand launch



Marketplace Strategy

Aligned brand positioning with platform growth



Sub-Brand Launch

Expanded total addressable market



Founder Collaboration

Worked directly with founders and investors



D2C Brand Scaling

Across Beauty and Personal Care

THE ART OF PIVOT

**Solving
Harder
Problems**
OVER
Better Times

PARTHIK YADAV

PGP Rise Cohort '25,
Transformation Manager - Investments,
Growth & Strategy,
A.P. Moller - Maersk



BUILD SYSTEMS THAT MAKE YOU BETTER EVERY DAY

How Parthik Yadav moved from TCS to Maersk by choosing harder problems over better titles.



YOU DON'T RISE TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR AMBITIONS;
YOU FALL TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR SYSTEMS. THIS IDEA
FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED HOW I THINK ABOUT
CAREER CHOICES.

Most people treat a career as a sequence of promotions. Parthik treats it as a sequence of systems. Each role he has taken, from structured enterprise work at TCS, to high-velocity operations at Blinkit, to global supply chain transformation at Maersk, was chosen not for the title it carried but for the operating environment it offered. The logic is consistent: place yourself inside systems that force you to build better frameworks, and the growth takes care of itself.

It is a deceptively simple idea. But executed with discipline over several years, it produces something most career advice does not: a professional who can operate credibly across radically different contexts.

Preparation is Leverage: Know the System Before You Enter It

The move from TCS to Blinkit was not impulsive, and it was not a reaction to dissatisfaction. TCS gave him something genuinely valuable: an understanding of how large institutions manage complexity, how decisions travel through layers of hierarchy, and how consistency is maintained across thousands of people and dozens of geographies. That foundation mattered. But the feedback loop between a decision and its consequence was measured in quarters, and he wanted it measured in hours.

So he spent months studying quick commerce before pursuing the role. He mapped the operating models behind Blinkit, Instamart, and Zepto. He analysed the economics of dark stores and the feasibility of the 10-minute delivery promise. He understood last-mile logistics and demand forecasting well enough to have a formed opinion on the business, not just an interest in joining it.

By the time he entered an interview room, he was not asking for a job. He was presenting a point of view. That distinction is what made a transition from a

large enterprise to a fast-paced operational company both logical and credible.

Real Accountability Shows Up in Outcomes, Not Intent

At Blinkit, ownership arrived quickly, and with it, the uncomfortable reality that real accountability extends beyond the decisions you make to the outcomes those decisions create, including the ones you did not anticipate.

Adjusting delivery partner payouts by even a small amount may improve supply availability in the short term, but it also shifts unit economics and the cost per order. Optimise costs too aggressively without accounting for partner behaviour, and supply shortages follow. A surge at a dark store creates delays, which creates customer dissatisfaction, which suppresses order conversion, which hits both revenue and margin. Every operational decision is also a financial one, and ownership means understanding that chain in its entirety.

The most instructive initiative he led was transitioning select dark stores to 24-hour operations to unlock late-night demand. The demand existed. The constraint was behavioural, not logistical: inconsistent rider availability in the late hours made the service unreliable, and unreliable services do not earn trust. He redesigned how earnings visibility worked during late-night shifts, aligned incentives with actual demand patterns, and built enough predictability into shift behaviour that riders would reliably show up, night after night.

The results were concrete: expanded serviceable hours, higher order volumes during late-night windows, improved asset utilisation and stronger retention among high-intent cohorts. But the lesson outlasted the metrics; surface problems are rarely the real lever. Find the second-order problem and solve that instead.

Move to Systems that Expand Your Range, Not Your Title

Blinkit trained him to move fast, iterate quickly, and treat most decisions as reversible. Maersk asked something fundamentally different. At the scale of a global shipping and logistics company, decisions carry second and third-order effects that can take months to fully surface across a network of ports, shipping lines, logistics partners, and regulatory environments spanning multiple continents.

He had a long-standing interest in global trade - how goods move across borders, how large organisations transform the systems that carry them, and what it takes to operate at the intersection of infrastructure, regulation, and commerce. Maersk, in the middle of a significant internal transformation programme, offered exactly that environment.

India's trajectory made the timing feel right. With growing government investment in infrastructure and trade corridors, the country's supply chain story is being written in real time. Being present for that moment, and being part of the transformation, was not something he was willing to miss.

What changed between Blinkit and Maersk was not his philosophy but its calibration. In fast-moving environments, you optimise for velocity and learning speed. In large, interconnected organisations, you optimise for alignment and long-term consequence, because decisions are harder to reverse and stakeholders span continents rather than floors. The goal in both cases is identical: decisions that are not just effective today but resilient for the future.

Comfort with Ambiguity is a Core Professional Skill

He is precise about what Masters' Union gave him. It was not a set of



BUSINESS IMPACT OFTEN COMES FROM SOLVING SECOND-ORDER PROBLEMS. THE OPPORTUNITY APPEARS AS 'UNLOCKING DEMAND', BUT THE REAL LEVER IS SHAPING ECOSYSTEM BEHAVIOUR: ALIGNING INCENTIVES, BUILDING RELIABILITY, AND CREATING SYSTEMS THAT SUSTAIN OUTCOMES AT SCALE.



portable frameworks or theoretical models. It was something harder to teach: the ability to make a call when the information is imperfect and keep moving when the path forward is not yet fully visible.

The programme was built around that logic. An early observation from orientation framed it well; Masters' Union is like a gym. Strength only builds if you show up consistently and work against real resistance. Assignments were not evaluated on analysis alone but on execution and measurable outcomes. Several required students to build real businesses and generate actual revenue, so the stakes were not academic.

Learning directly from practitioners who had built and scaled businesses themselves meant discussions stayed close to operational reality. The bias for action the programme instilled was not incidental to the curriculum. It was the curriculum.

Two capabilities emerged and have compounded ever since: structured thinking and comfort with ambiguity. The first helps you navigate complexity. The second stops you from waiting for a certainty that will never arrive. Both are essential in his current role. Together, they make it possible to operate coherently across environments as different as Blinkit and Maersk.

Proof of Work Outweighs Credentials in High-Quality Roles

His advice to students is specific, and it starts well before any conversation with a recruiter. Spend at least a month doing genuine market research, not skimming reports but studying the structure of the ecosystem, mapping how value flows, identifying key stakeholders, and understanding customer behaviour in enough depth to form a real point of view. When you do that work, you stop being a candidate and start being someone who already understands the business. That distinction gets noticed.

Proof of work matters more than credentials in the environments worth entering. Demonstrated capability, through real problems solved, deep analyses conducted, or measurable impact created, is what actually stands out. A resume describes what you have done. Proof of work shows how you think.

Business fundamentals are non-negotiable. Understand unit economics. Break a P&L down to its smallest drivers. Identify the operational levers that connect day-to-day decisions to long-term profitability. These are not advanced skills reserved for senior roles. They are the baseline for anyone who wants genuine

ownership rather than the appearance of it.

He does not follow a rigid career plan. He follows a direction: towards roles where the scope of ownership grows, the problems become harder, and the stakes are higher. Titles are secondary. Careers rarely move in straight lines, they follow a curve, sometimes low, sometimes high. But place yourself consistently in environments that demand growth, and the trajectory tends to take care of itself.

Five Career Principles that Actually Compound Over Time

- ✦ **Careers compound in the right systems, not the right titles:** Growth comes from better operating environments.
- ✦ **Preparation creates leverage; enter roles with a point of view:** Research helps you understand the business early.
- ✦ **Ownership is measured in outcomes, not decisions:** Accountability is reflected in business impact.
- ✦ **The biggest impact lies in solving second-order problems:** The real lever often lies beneath the surface.
- ✦ **Learn to decide without perfect information:** Structured thinking compounds across environments.

MASTERS OF THE UNION

**PROFESSOR
VAIBHAV JAIN**

Visiting Faculty at Masters' Union,
Ex- Head of Growth - Equities,
Share.Market by PhonePe

TEACHING MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS AND CORPORATE RESTRUCTURING

Why understanding human behaviour, and not just financial models, determines success in M&A, investing, and high-stakes decision-making.



THE REAL VALUE OF FINANCE LIES NOT IN MAKING COMPLEX THINGS SOUND INTELLIGENT, BUT IN MAKING IMPORTANT THINGS UNDERSTANDABLE.

Understanding deals is not just about numbers or frameworks; it's about seeing how businesses, people, and markets collide in practice, across **Deutsche Bank**, **Edelweiss**, **WealthDesk**, and **PhonePe's Share.Market**, I've worked every side of that collision: executing transactions, managing client behaviour through crises, scaling fintech platforms, and building financial education for retail investors. What connects those experiences is a single conviction, that mastering M&A (merger and acquisitions) and corporate restructuring requires something textbooks rarely provide: exposure to real situations, the ability to read incentives, and the judgment to act when outcomes are genuinely uncertain. That's what I try to build in the classroom at Masters' Union.

What Real M&A Deals Taught Me About Value Creation and Strategic Alignment

Early in my career at Deutsche Bank, I executed some of India's largest IPOs and capital market transactions. The work was technical and demanding, but the real education came from watching which deals held and which ones didn't.

A transaction I worked on early in my career looked sound by every conventional measure; the financials were clean, the

synergies were credible, and the structure was tight. It still underperformed. What unravelled it was misalignment: the two companies had different ideas about what they were building together, and neither side had surfaced that difference before signing. No model had captured it because no one had asked the right questions.

That experience shaped how I think about M&A. A technically correct deal can fail if the cultures, objectives, or incentives of the parties involved aren't aligned. When I teach students, the emphasis is never only on financial metrics; it's on evaluating strategic fit, reading organisational intent, and asking what each side actually wants from this transaction, not just what they've put in the term sheet.

Understanding Investor Behaviour Beyond the Numbers

One of the biggest misconceptions in finance is that better analysis automatically leads to better decisions. In reality, some of the hardest moments have very little to do with technical capability.

During my time at Edelweiss, I

worked closely with high-net-worth clients through the COVID-19 market crash. Many portfolios were built on strong fundamentals and long-term thinking. Yet, when markets corrected sharply, logic alone stopped being enough. Fear changed how people processed risk.

I remember conversations where the challenge was no longer portfolio strategy. The real challenge was helping clients separate temporary panic from permanent decisions. In those moments, finance becomes deeply psychological. You realise that investors are not only reacting to numbers; they are reacting to uncertainty, headlines, loss, and emotion.

In M&A and corporate restructuring, deals rarely fail because of numbers alone. More often, pressure, ego, timing, and fear influence decisions. That is why judgement remains one of finance's most underrated skills, especially when leaders must stay disciplined and rational during uncertain, high-stakes situations.

Scaling Fintech and Building Trust

At WealthDesk, I helped scale a B2B2C SaaS platform from four partners to over forty. On the surface, that's a sales story. In practice, it was almost entirely a trust story. Each partner came with different

Ankit Sharma

PGP TBM Cohort 5



compliance requirements, different business objectives, and different levels of institutional sophistication. Some were growing fast and wanted us to move faster. Some were navigating regulatory grey areas carefully and needed us to slow down. Getting alignment across forty different stakeholders, without a uniform contract or a one-size-fits-all solution, required constant recalibration of incentives, communication, and patience.

Post-merger integration fails for the same reasons. The organisation charts merge, the systems eventually connect, but the people on either side of the deal continue operating as though they're in separate companies, because no one invested in the relationships that make integration actually work. The ability to map competing stakeholder incentives and build credibility across groups who don't share your timeline or your priorities is what separates executives who can lead complex change from those who can only plan it on paper.

Simplifying Finance While Maintaining Rigour

When I joined PhonePe's Share.Market, the task was to build a content and education engine that made finance

accessible to retail investors. The industry often uses complexity as gatekeeping, dense jargon that discourages participation and enables mis-selling.

My principle is simple: clarity amplifies impact, but never at the cost of accuracy. Making something accessible requires understanding it deeply enough to translate it, not dilute it. A simplified explanation that's wrong isn't clarity; it's misinformation.

This matters for students. Whether presenting a deal thesis, advising a client, or pitching an investment committee, communicating complex ideas clearly is as important as the ideas themselves.

Learning from Markets First-Hand

I hold the CMT charter and have traded derivatives with my own capital for over a decade. Trading your own money changes the learning.

Losses teach in a way that theory cannot. Being wrong on direction, timing, or sizing forces you to adjust without overcorrecting. That space, between loss and the next decision, is closer to a deal room than any case study. This shapes my teaching. Theory provides structure, but immersion builds the ability to act under pressure.

Bringing Real-World Deals into the Classroom

In M&A and Corporate Restructuring at Masters' Union, I don't present deals as finished outcomes. I present them as they unfold, with incomplete information, shifting positions, and decisions that later prove wrong.

Students step into these moments. They advise on hostile bids without full visibility, work through restructurings with conflicting stakeholder interests, and negotiate term sheets where the answer depends on perspective.

The goal isn't to teach how to decide. It's to teach how to decide when situations are ambiguous, which they usually are.

Bridging Theory and Practice

Traditional finance education relies on clean problems and clear answers. Real deals don't. They involve missing data, conflicting signals, and counterparties who change positions mid-process.

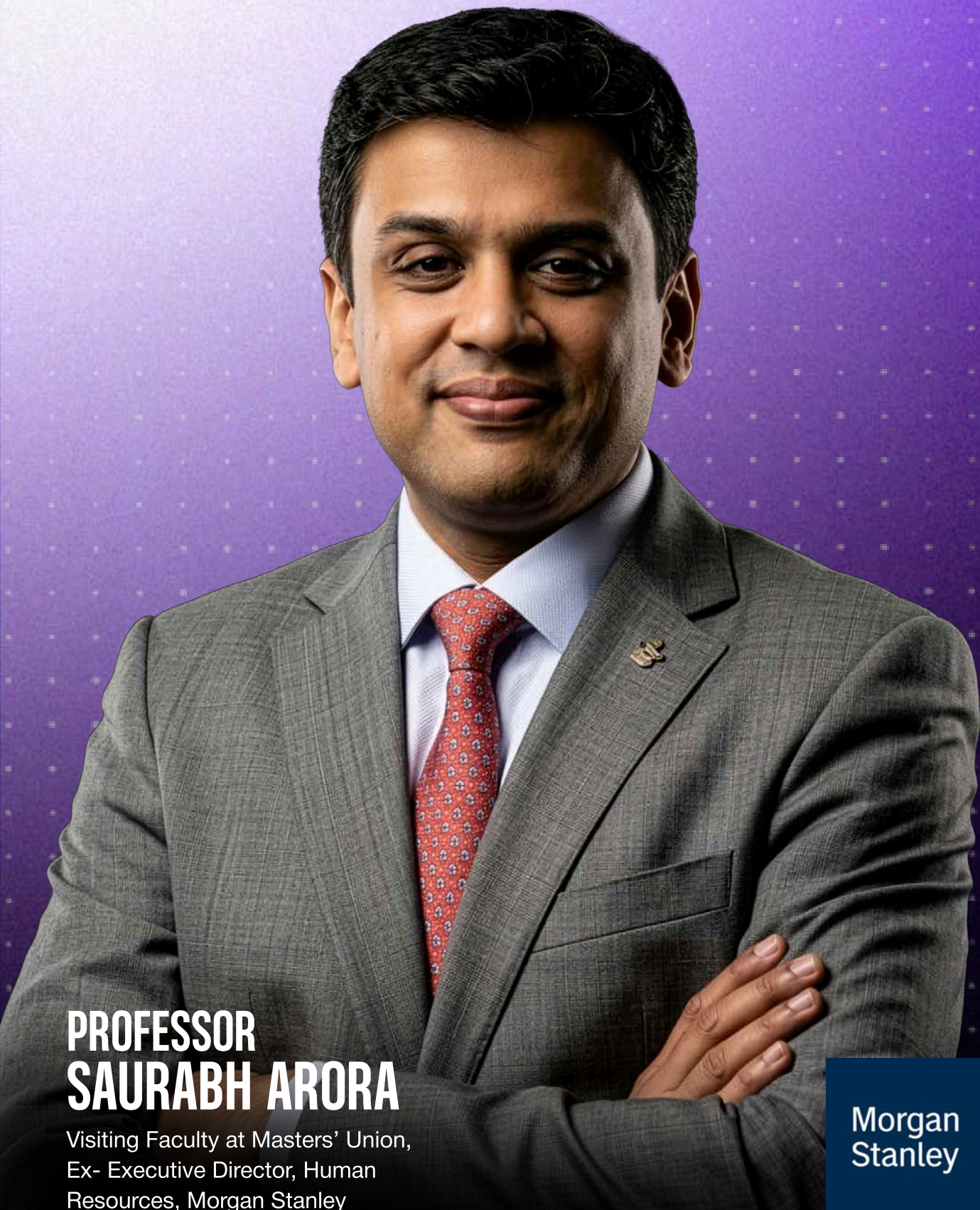
I introduce this ambiguity deliberately. Students evaluate options without all the facts, anticipate second-order effects, and adapt when outcomes shift. Over time, this builds judgment, the quality the market rewards most in senior roles.

“A professor who doesn't just teach M&A, but truly shapes the way you think about the real world.”

Professor Vaibhav Jain's course on Mergers & Acquisitions and Corporate Restructuring was truly one of the most impactful experiences in my academic journey. What made his teaching special for me was the way he brought concepts to life. M&A can often feel complex and abstract, but through his use of real-world examples, live deals, and practical insights, he made everything feel tangible and meaningful. I found myself not just understanding the subject, but genuinely enjoying it and thinking about how it applies in the real world.

Beyond academics, what I deeply appreciate is how supportive and approachable he is as a mentor. There were multiple instances where he took time outside of class to guide me, whether it was clarifying concepts or helping me think through my career path. Those conversations made a lasting impact on me and gave me a lot of clarity and confidence. He doesn't just teach a subject, he invests in his students, and it shows in the way he encourages them, stays patient with their learning, and consistently goes the extra mile to help them grow. I feel grateful to have learned from him, and I will carry both the knowledge and the guidance he provided with me as I move forward in my career.

MASTERS OF THE UNION



**PROFESSOR
SAURABH ARORA**

Visiting Faculty at Masters' Union,
Ex- Executive Director, Human
Resources, Morgan Stanley

**Morgan
Stanley**

TEACHING BUSINESS STORYTELLING FOR REAL-WORLD LEADERSHIP

Why crafting evocative narratives drives decisions, influence, and organisational impact.



YOU BECOME A LEADER WHEN YOU CARE
ABOUT OTHERS MORE THAN YOURSELF.

That insight has guided every stage of my career. From **American Express** to **JPMorgan, Morgan Stanley, Russell Investments**, and now **Waterfield Advisors**. I've realised that business is ultimately about people. Numbers, frameworks, and models matter, but what truly determines outcomes is how humans behave under pressure, in uncertainty, and when stakes are high. The stories people tell themselves, and those they choose to believe, often decide whether a strategy succeeds or fails.

In many ways, my career has been less about mastering functions and more about understanding these human dynamics. Whether it is a leadership decision, a hiring call, or a moment of crisis, the outcome is rarely dictated by logic alone. It is shaped by conviction, hesitation, trust, and sometimes fear. Recognising that early changed how I approached both leadership and teaching.

Investing in Experiences, Not Just Roles

Early in my career, someone told me to "invest in experiences." Initially, it was about travel, but I quickly understood its professional meaning. Every project, responsibility, and organisation became a lens to observe human behaviour, decision-making, and organisational dynamics.

Starting as a finance analyst at American Express, I worked closely with HR colleagues and began to see how culture and communication influenced

performance just as much as metrics did. That exposure stayed with me. At JPMorgan, I observed the pace and precision of decision-making in the Chase card business. Morgan Stanley gave me a front-row seat to global investment banking, where scale, complexity, and stakes were significantly higher. Russell Investments deepened my understanding of asset management and global frameworks, while Waterfield Advisors has allowed me to apply these lessons in a growing wealth advisory environment.

What connects these experiences is not the function, but the pattern. Organisations succeed when people align around a shared narrative. They struggle when that narrative fractures, even if everything else appears technically sound.

Leadership in High-Stakes Moments

Managing teams at scale brings challenges that no classroom can fully prepare you for. At Morgan Stanley, I worked on projects that demanded both precision and perspective:

- ▶ Rebadging and dissolving an entire Research and Investment Banking team.
- ▶ Establishing the HR operations hub in Bangalore while based in Mumbai.
- ▶ Hiring nearly 6,000 employees remotely during COVID-19 over two years.

Each of these required more than execution. They required alignment, communication, and trust. Decisions had to be made quickly, often with incomplete information, and their impact extended far beyond immediate outcomes.

Some moments were far more personal. Letting go of colleagues, handling sensitive employee situations, or navigating conflict within teams are experiences that stay with you. They force you to confront the human side of leadership directly.



YOU CAN'T SOLVE PROBLEMS ALONE, AND SUCCESS IS A TEAM SPORT.

The strength of your team, and the trust within it, often determines whether a difficult situation stabilises or escalates.

These experiences shape how I teach. I remind students that real-world decisions rarely sit neatly within frameworks. They are influenced by people who bring their own motivations, biases, and pressures into the room. Understanding that is not optional. It is central to effective leadership.

Sanya Aggarwal

PGP TBM Cohort 6

Lessons from Early Life and Career

Some of the most enduring lessons I carry come from growing up in a military family. Moving schools frequently taught me how to adapt, build relationships quickly, and navigate unfamiliar environments. Those early experiences shaped how I view resilience and consistency. I often share a few simple principles with students, not because they are novel, but because they are easy to overlook:

- ▶ **Be kind and helpful.** Building genuine relationships matters more than anything else. Do good, and it will come back to you.
- ▶ **Put in your best effort.** Hard work always shows, even if results aren't immediate.
- ▶ **Show up consistently.** Everyone has good days and bad days; the key is to persist and not give up easily.

Over time, these habits compound. They build trust, and trust is what gives leaders the ability to influence decisions when it matters most.

Understanding Behaviour Beyond Frameworks

At Russell Investments, I was responsible for aligning global HR practices with the realities of the Indian workplace. That meant going beyond policy and understanding context. I conducted cultural orientation sessions for teams outside India, explaining nuances that don't show up in formal documentation.

The insight was simple but powerful: frameworks create structure, but context creates meaning. Without that meaning, even the best-designed systems can fail in practice.

I saw the same dynamic play out in wealth advisory. During the COVID-19 market crash, I worked with clients whose portfolios were fundamentally sound. Yet, fear overtook logic. In those moments, my role shifted. It was no longer about analysis. It was about reassurance and clarity.

What they needed was not a better model, but the confidence to stay invested. As I often remind myself and my students: 'Use the data to solve the problem, not the other way round.' Data can guide decisions, but it cannot replace judgment or conviction.

Storytelling as a Leadership and Decision-Making Tool

At Masters' Union, I teach business storytelling. Not storytelling for its own sake, but storytelling that serves a clear business objective. The ability to create evocative and memorable narratives is often what determines whether an idea gains traction or fades away.

A technically sound plan can fail if it isn't communicated effectively. Teams need clarity. Stakeholders need alignment. Leaders need to inspire confidence. All of that depends on how the story is told.

I often tell my students, 'stories are nothing but the truth told well.' When you present an idea, you are not just sharing information. You

are shaping how others interpret it, respond to it, and act on it.

In the classroom, I focus on immersion. Students engage with real-world scenarios where outcomes are uncertain and information is incomplete. They are asked to take positions, defend them, and adapt when new variables emerge. The emphasis is not on arriving at a predefined answer, but on developing the ability to think, respond, and communicate under pressure.

I also maintain a simple rule: no laptops, phones, or tablets. Attention is increasingly fragmented, and without it, meaningful learning becomes difficult.

Learning Through Real Market Exposure

Alongside my corporate experience, I have spent over a decade trading derivatives with my own capital. That experience has been one of the most instructive aspects of my career.

When you trade your own money, the feedback is immediate and unforgiving. Losses are not theoretical. They force you to reflect, adjust, and act again without hesitation. That process builds a form of judgment that is difficult to replicate elsewhere.

It teaches you how to remain composed when outcomes diverge from expectations, and how to avoid overcorrecting in response to short-term setbacks.

“ Understanding storytelling beyond just saying more.

In Saurabh sir's class, we slowly realised that storytelling isn't as complicated as we tend to make it. His calm, thoughtful presence and clear ideas stayed with us. Nothing is entirely new, it's all a remix shaped by how honestly you tell it and while facts may explain, it's feelings people remember. There was a quiet emphasis on getting to the heart of what we wanted to say, without dressing it up. We found ourselves choosing clearer words and more honest stories, ones that felt closer to us. In the end, it came back to something very simple: storytelling is simply truth told well.

MASTERMINDS

DR ANTRA

Assistant Professor at Masters' Union,
PhD - Indian Institute of Management,
Bangalore

HOW DR ANTRA TRANSLATES DECISION SCIENCES INTO APPLIED AI LEARNING

Bringing predictive analytics, hands-on projects, and ethical AI into undergraduate and postgraduate classrooms.



IN A WORLD CHASING QUICK SUCCESS, I BELIEVE IT IS CONSISTENCY, QUIET AND UNWAVERING, THAT TRULY LEADS TO EXCELLENCE.

At Masters' Union, Dr Antra, Assistant Professor of Decision Sciences, bridges theory and practice in AI and decision sciences. Through predictive modelling, experiential learning, and real-world case studies, she enables students to develop a deep understanding of algorithms and apply them meaningfully in complex operational and business environments. Her teaching philosophy centres on empowering data-driven decision-making, while fostering critical thinking and ethical awareness.

From Mathematics to Decision Sciences: Dr Antra's Academic Journey and Philosophy

Dr Antra's academic path is grounded in both rigour and application. She began with a degree in mathematics from Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi, followed by a master's in operational research from Delhi University (South Campus). Her pursuit of a PhD at IIM Bangalore was motivated by a desire to solve real-world problems using analytical and data-driven approaches. Her doctoral research focused on predictive analytics in healthcare.

Her work on predicting Code Blue events, fall detection, and IVF success demonstrates how data science can deliver timely interventions and improve patient outcomes. This focus on actionable insight continues to shape how she teaches, emphasising that understanding concepts alone is not enough; students must learn to apply them meaningfully.

Enhancing Healthcare Through Predictive Analytics and Explainable AI

Dr Antra's research paper, **Beyond the alarm: proactive predictions for cardiac arrest incidents in hospitals using interpretable**



I WANTED TO CREATE SOLUTIONS THAT WERE NOT JUST THEORETICALLY SOUND BUT PRACTICALLY ACTIONABLE.

machine learning models. AI models capable of detecting critical medical emergencies early. By combining structured patient data with insights extracted from clinical notes via NLP, these models generate transparent, clinically meaningful predictions.

The research goes beyond accuracy. By employing Explainable AI, the models provide actionable insights that clinicians can trust. Hospitals can prioritise high-risk cases, optimise the deployment of Code Blue teams, and ultimately improve patient outcomes. This is an example of how data science can intersect with operational efficiency and human-centred care.

Her Harvard Business Publishing case study, **Indira IVF: AI-Driven Support for Couples on the Road to Parenthood**, extends this principle to fertility treatment. The study demonstrates how predictive analytics can enhance both clinical outcomes and patient experience. Patients gain evidence-based guidance, while clinicians can personalise consultations, manage expectations, and foster trust. The case reflects Dr Antra's philosophy: technology must serve human decisions, not replace them.

Teaching AI: A Balance Between Theory, Application, and Industry Relevance

Dr Antra structures her classes to **introduce concepts, then apply them immediately.** Students first learn the theoretical foundations of supervised and unsupervised learning, model evaluation, and feature engineering. These ideas are quickly translated into

practical exercises using industry-relevant datasets.

One example involves teaching linear algebra through a ride-pooling problem. Students model trips as vectors and use vector addition and dot products to determine whether pooling reduces travel distance. This exercise challenges intuitive assumptions and illustrates how foundational concepts underpin real-world optimisation problems. It also reinforces a key principle: strong conceptual understanding is critical before applying AI in operational settings.

This approach is further extended through applied case discussions such as the **CoRide pooling puzzle**, where students step into the role of data analysts for a ride-hailing platform seeking to optimise operational efficiency. The exercise challenges them to evaluate whether ride-pooling genuinely reduces travel distance or unintentionally introduces inefficiencies. By representing trips as vectors and applying concepts such as vector addition and dot products, students move beyond intuition and use mathematical reasoning to assess real-world trade-offs in logistics and optimisation.

Correcting Misconceptions and Building Critical Judgement in AI

Dr Antra observes that many students believe AI is primarily coding or using prebuilt models. Others assume AI outputs are inherently accurate. She addresses these misconceptions by emphasising **conceptual clarity, critical evaluation, and responsible application.**

Students learn to question how models work, what assumptions underpin them, and where limitations exist. Dr Antra stresses that AI is a **supportive tool**, not a replacement for human judgement. By combining analytical skills with critical reasoning and creativity, students are better prepared to solve complex problems rather than simply execute algorithms.

Building AI Talent for the Next Wave of Industry Transformation

Looking forward, Dr Antra identifies **generative AI, multimodal AI, and agentic AI** as rapidly evolving areas that students must master. She emphasises that understanding these technologies in isolation is insufficient; students must **integrate them into domain-specific applications**. Healthcare, operations, and other high-impact sectors provide fertile ground for applied AI, where thoughtful use of models can yield measurable outcomes.

She also highlights the growing importance of interpretability, ethics, and responsible AI. Organisations increasingly demand models that are not only powerful, but transparent and trustworthy. Students who combine technical proficiency with practical insight, ethical awareness, and critical judgement will emerge as leaders in the field.

Resources and Practical Guidance for Aspiring AI Professionals

Dr Antra recommends a blend of foundational texts, practical experimentation, and industry exposure. Books such as **Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach** by Russell and Norvig and **Hands-On Machine Learning** by Aurélien Géron provide theoretical grounding and applied insight. Platforms

like Coursera, DeepLearning.AI, and Kaggle allow students to work with real-world datasets and refine practical skills. Articles on Medium and Towards Data Science keep them updated on emerging trends.

Beyond resources, she emphasises mindset. Students must cultivate curiosity, adaptability, and a willingness to experiment. Building models, testing assumptions, and iterating solutions are as crucial as understanding the algorithms themselves.

Encouraging Creativity, Ethical Thinking, and Responsibility in AI Projects

Dr Antra goes beyond technical instruction. Her students work on open-ended projects where there is no single correct answer, encouraging creativity and problem-solving. She integrates ethical discussions into project work, addressing bias, fairness, and the social impact of AI.

By instilling these values, she ensures students approach AI holistically, combining technical skill with ethical and analytical judgement.



AI IS NOT JUST A TECHNICAL TOOL: IT IS A SYSTEM THAT REQUIRES THOUGHTFUL APPLICATION AND CONSIDERATION OF CONSEQUENCES.

Preparing Students to Make an Impact with Decision Sciences and AI

Dr Antra's approach reflects her personal maxim: **consistency and critical thinking drive excellence**. Her students graduate equipped to analyse data, derive actionable insights, apply AI in operational contexts, and navigate ethical considerations.

At Masters' Union, this philosophy reshapes what learning feels like in practice. Students do not leave with answers alone. They leave with frameworks for thinking under uncertainty, for translating abstract models into operational decisions, and for recognising the human consequences of algorithmic choices.

In a field defined by speed, scale, and constant change, Dr Antra returns to something quieter. The discipline of consistency. The patience to build understanding properly. And the conviction that real impact in decision sciences and AI comes not from reacting quickly, but from thinking deeply enough to get it right.



What Defines Effective AI Education in Real-World Decision Making

- ▶ Consistency and depth of thinking matter more than speed in mastering AI and decision sciences.
- ▶ Strong mathematical foundations remain critical before advancing into applied AI work.
- ▶ AI should be understood as a decision-support system, not a replacement for human judgement.
- ▶ Ethical reasoning is embedded in every stage of model design, evaluation, and deployment.
- ▶ True impact in AI comes from combining technical skill with contextual awareness and critical thinking.



COURSES ON CAMPUS



NEW PROGRAMMES FOR NEW-AGE CAREERS

Hands-on future-ready programmes built with industry practitioners, not just professors.

- ▶ PGP IN UI/UX AND AI PRODUCT DESIGN
- ▶ PGP IN SUSTAINABILITY AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
- ▶ PGP IN APPLIED AI AND AGENTIC SYSTEMS
- ▶ PGP IN SPORTS MANAGEMENT AND GAMING

PGP IN UI/UX AND AI PRODUCT DESIGN

Build for the new design economy where AI, UX, and product strategy converge.

India's digital economy is projected to reach 20% of GVA by 2029–30, making user experience a business priority. As products scale, there's a growing gap in design leadership to drive research, simplify complexity, and shape decisions - highlighted by Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget 2026–27.

With 93% of designers in India using AI tools, demand is rising for talent skilled in UI/UX, product thinking, and AI-first design, capabilities that this programme builds through hands-on, real-world projects.

Solve Design Challenge Each Term

✦ Dark Pattern Audit Challenge

Identify dark patterns and improve retention & long-term user value

✦ Ghost Cart Revenue Recovery

Reassess checkout drop-offs and reduce abandoned cart losses

✦ AI Copilot SaaS Dashboard

Build an internal AI copilot for faster decisions and operator productivity

✦ Founder-Designer Fellowship

Work on product decisions with real-time pressure & trade-offs

✦ 0 → 100K Users Challenge

Take a product from idea to MVP to live users, iterating with real metrics



Learn Directly From Future Recruiters

✦ Take courses with CDOs and HODs from top companies, startup founders, and academicians from renowned global design institutes.

✦ Get 1-1 mentorship from Masters in your preferred domain.

✦ Master user research, usability, and product design fundamentals under the guidance of highly rated Professors-in-Residence.



Saptarishi Prakash

AVP of Design, Swiggy



Alok Kumar

Director of User Experience, Myntra



PGP IN SUSTAINABILITY & BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Engage with a comprehensive sustainability & business curriculum.

Job-Forward, Industry-Built

Designed at the intersection of business and sustainability, this programme prepares you for real roles in ESG, climate finance, and sustainability strategy through practitioner-led learning and hands-on application. You don't just study sustainability, you build go-to-market strategies, create ESG reports aligned with SEBI BRSR standards, and design revenue models for a decarbonising economy, while gaining global exposure across institutions like the UN and leading climate finance hubs.

The outcome is a portfolio of real-world work and industry context that positions you for careers across consulting firms, corporate sustainability teams, and climate-tech ventures.

Why Sustainability, Why Now?

India's net-zero Greenhouse Gas emissions 2070 goal has turned climate action into a business priority, not a CSR add-on. Much of India's emissions come from power, manufacturing, transport, construction, and supply chains, so companies now need to measure carbon, cut it credibly, and report it transparently.

With BRSR/ESG expectations rising, organisations need job-ready talent that can do carbon accounting, climate-risk analysis, and practical decarbonisation planning. This programme builds those capabilities through hands-on tools, real industry cases, and outcome-focused projects aligned to what companies are hiring for.

A Foundation Enabled by 17 Sustainable Development Goals



Global Sustainability & Business Experts

Learn from sustainability leaders, climate-tech founders, & ESG strategists from NASA, global climate funds, Fortune 500s and consulting firms.



Rachel Konrad

Former Director of Communications



Shashaankk Verma

MBA in Social Entrepreneurship



Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee

Father of Indian CSR & Sustainability



Dr Edward W Rogers

Former Chief Knowledge Officer



PGP IN APPLIED AI & AGENTIC SYSTEMS

A dynamic 15-month programme that evolves with emerging AI trends, tools, and technologies.

The curriculum is not fixed. Both Inclass and Outclass modules continuously adapt to industry shifts, ensuring you work on the latest AI workflows, tools, and real-world applications as they emerge.

Learn from Real AI Experts and Industry Leaders.

- + Courses taught by 20+ AI practitioners from Amazon, Microsoft, PayPal, and MIT.
- + Engage in live Q&A sessions with Global AI leaders and innovators.
- + Access exclusive guest sessions from industry leaders like Tarun Malik and Malthi Satish.
- + 1:1 consultation with experts from Google, IBM, and leading AI startups like Rabbit AI.

Two learning Pathways



Offline Weekday Programme

ON-CAMPUS, GURUGRAM - WEEKDAYS

- Full-time, on-campus learning in Gurugram with studios, labs, and mentor sessions every weekday.
- Build agents in teams, collaborate daily, and participate in campus build sprints and hackrooms.
- Includes placement support & internship assistance for first-time job seekers.



Online Weekend Programme

WEEKEND LIVE CLASSES + FLEXIBLE WEEKDAYS

- For working professionals in tech roles.
- Live weekend classes & self-paced weekday work designed to fit alongside a full-time job.
- Apply everything directly at work, build agents for your current role or organisation.
- Includes career transition support and portfolio positioning for role shifts into Applied AI.

Every term, build an industry-grade AI solution

- + **Term 1 : Applied AI Chatbot Challenge**
Create advanced AI chatbots that solve one meaningful use case by combining Python, LLM APIs, and no-code tools.
- + **Term 2 : Agentic AI Accelerator for Business**
Build autonomous, tool-using AI agents that automate organisation workflows and integrate with live data sources.
- + **Term 3 : AI Application in Industry; ML Consulting Garage**
Transform business data into actionable insights using supervised and unsupervised ML.
- + **Term 4 : RAG System Building Challenge**
Build powerful, domain-specific AI assistants using Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) that deliver accurate, traceable answers on top of private data.
- + **Term 5-6 : AI Immersion in Retail, Health, and Finance**
Build and deploy domain-specific AI solutions that are reliable, compliant, and market-ready.

PGP IN SPORTS MANAGEMENT & GAMING

A 16-month full-time PGP that blends business strategy and growth with sports & gaming.

We believe the best classrooms have no walls. With the SMG National Immersion, you'll travel across India exploring sports and gaming hubs, meeting leagues, studios, tech innovators, and creators shaping the industry. You earn credits as you learn how real businesses operate on the ground.

Building Leaders for the Business of Sports

Learn to run sports leagues, manage athletes and build gaming startups.

Viren Rasquinha

Former India Hockey Captain, Olympian, Arjuna Awardee,
CEO at Olympic Gold Quest



Delivered by Experts

Business of Sport, Delivered by Those Who Build It

Learn how global sports and gaming ecosystems run – monetisation, league ops, franchise strategy, athlete brands, e-sports structures, and fan engagement engines.



Immersive Study Tours at Global Centres of Excellence

Travel to global sports and gaming hubs to experience how world-class organisations operate at scale. Engage with industry leaders, visit iconic venues, and gain first-hand insights into international best practices and innovation.

Future-Ready Career Pathways

JOB PROSPECTS

Career Roles

Opportunities in **operations, partnerships, analytics, and brand management** across the sports and gaming sector.

Industry Exposure

Explore roles with **leagues, franchises, e-sports, media houses, and emerging startups** shaping the industry.

Global Opportunities

Access career paths and collaborations with **national and international sports and gaming organisations**.



SPORTS & GAMING ENTREPRENEURS

Venture Creation

Launch your **own startup in sports tech or gaming** with institutional and peer support.

Expert Mentorship

Learn directly from **founders, CXOs, and industry leaders driving innovation** in sports and gaming.

Practical Learning

Engage in **live projects with leagues, events, and fan engagement** experiences to gain hands-on exposure.



LIFE AFTER MASTERS' UNION

From nostalgic competitions to startup mentorship and community meetups, Masters' Union alumni actively reconnect through events, fostering collaboration, sharing experiences, and strengthening lifelong bonds while shaping student journeys beyond graduation.



Once Upon a Time at Masters' Union

Held from **24th to 30th January** on WhatsApp Alumni Community and Google Forms, the **Once Upon a Time at Masters' Union Memory Hunt** brought alumni together for a **7-day challenge** built around shared campus moments. Through daily riddles, participants tapped into memory, instinct, and speed to decode references from classes, LMS, and iconic phrases like Twenty Seconds of Insane Courage and Learn by Doing. **Prafull Jain (Cohort '25)** emerged as **The Memory Master** with a perfect score, followed by **Anirbit Datta (Cohort '21)** as **The Quick Thinker**, and **Karan Singh (Cohort '25)** as **The Consistent Closer** with six correct answers.

Masters Connect Community Morning

The Masters' Union alumni community in **Hyderabad** came together for the first edition of **the Masters Connect Community Morning on 31st January at Madhapur, Hi-Tech City**. It was designed to bring alumni and Masters together in an informal, engaging setting. The morning began with a high-energy game of pickleball, creating a natural space for interaction, followed by a roundtable discussion and casual networking over quick bites. With a limited group of participants, the session encouraged meaningful conversations and connections that extended beyond structured formats. This gathering offered a fresh way for the community to engage, blending play, dialogue, and share experience.



Startup Weekend

As part of **Startup Weekend** from **31st January to 1st February**, alumni returned to campus as mentors to guide incoming PGP TBM students through an intensive, hands-on startup experience. Over two days, students worked in teams alongside alumni mentors who brought real-world perspectives as founders, operators and industry professionals. With close mentorship and continuous feedback, each team ideated, built and refined a startup concept, culminating in a final pitch presented before a panel of judges. Alumni played a key role in shaping these ideas by challenging assumptions, sharpening execution and sharing practical insights from their own entrepreneurial journeys.



VIP-Pitch to Alumni

As part of the **Venture Initiation Program (VIP)** at Masters' Union, alumni returned to campus on **5th February** to mentor students. Drawing from their diverse startup and industry experience, alumni mentors engaged closely with participants, offering practical perspectives on product, growth and execution. Through candid feedback, strategic insights and founder-to-founder conversations, alumni played an active role in helping students refine ideas, challenge assumptions and strengthen venture strategies. The session highlighted the growing contribution of the alumni network in enabling hands-on entrepreneurial learning, bringing real-world experience into the classroom as students prepare to take their ventures forward toward Demo Day.



SCRATCH MAGAZINE

BYOB: Bring Your Own Buzz (Valentines Games Evening)

On **14th February**, students and alumni came together for **BYOB: Bring Your Own Buzz**, a Valentine's games evening at the CDS Corporate Tower campus. With **Poker, UNO, Jenga**, and **Codenames** in play, friendly competition quickly turned into relaxed chats between rounds. As alumni returned to campus and students joined in, the space naturally filled with stories, laughter, and shared moments. Interactive touches like the **Anti-Valentine Wall** added a playful layer to the evening. More than a game night, BYOB created a casual space for the community to connect and spend time together beyond structured events.



ARE YOU BEING PAID WHAT YOU'RE ACTUALLY WORTH?



Most students pick careers based on trends or peer influence. They don't realise they're underpaid until it's too late. This Masters' Union's Career Analysis Tool puts data-backed self-awareness at the centre and helps you understand your worth before your next negotiation, switch, or appraisal cycle.



EARNING POTENTIAL GAP

See exactly how underpaid you are vs the market, with real 2026 salary benchmarks and your post-PGP earning trajectory.



CAREER HEALTH CHECK

4 sharp, personalised insights; what's working, what the market rewards, your breakout lever, and the one thing to fix.



Analyse my resume



Your data stays private



No account needed



~60 seconds

HOW IT WORKS

Three Steps To Career Clarity

01



UPLOAD YOUR RESUME

A spider graph of 6–8 core competencies mapping your current level versus excellence, with clear actionable insights for each.

02



ADD YOUR DETAILS

Share your email, phone, and current CTC to help us personalise your salary gap analysis and benchmarking.

03



GET YOUR CAREER REPORT

In ~30 seconds, your full AI analysis is ready with earning gap, competency benchmark, and six tailored career paths.



COMPETENCY BENCHMARK

A spider graph of 6–8 core competencies showing your current level vs. excellence, with actionable insights for each.



6 CAREER PATH SUGGESTIONS

Specific roles you should be targeting, with salary ranges, top Indian companies hiring, and growth trajectories.



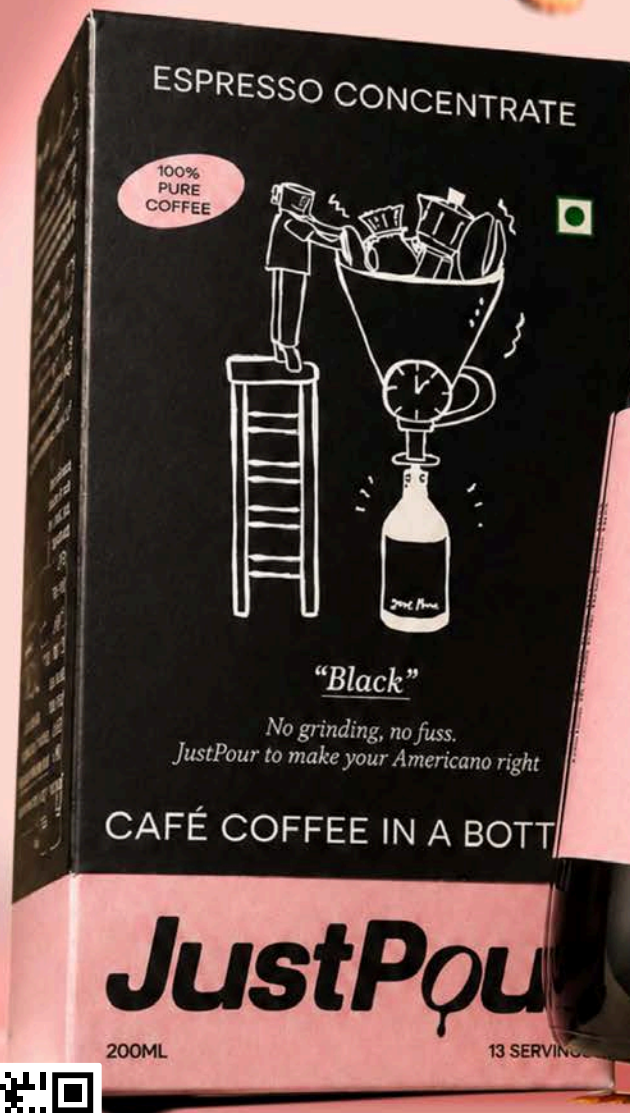
Scan the QR to evaluate your resume.

JustPour!

A liquid coffee concentrate that makes café-quality coffee at home in under 30 seconds.

NO EFFORT *No Machines*

GET POURING!



Scan QR Code To Order.

Also Available On
amazon.in