

MAY 2026

Marketing Insights Newsletter of Marketing360.in

PANORAMA

MARKETING 360°

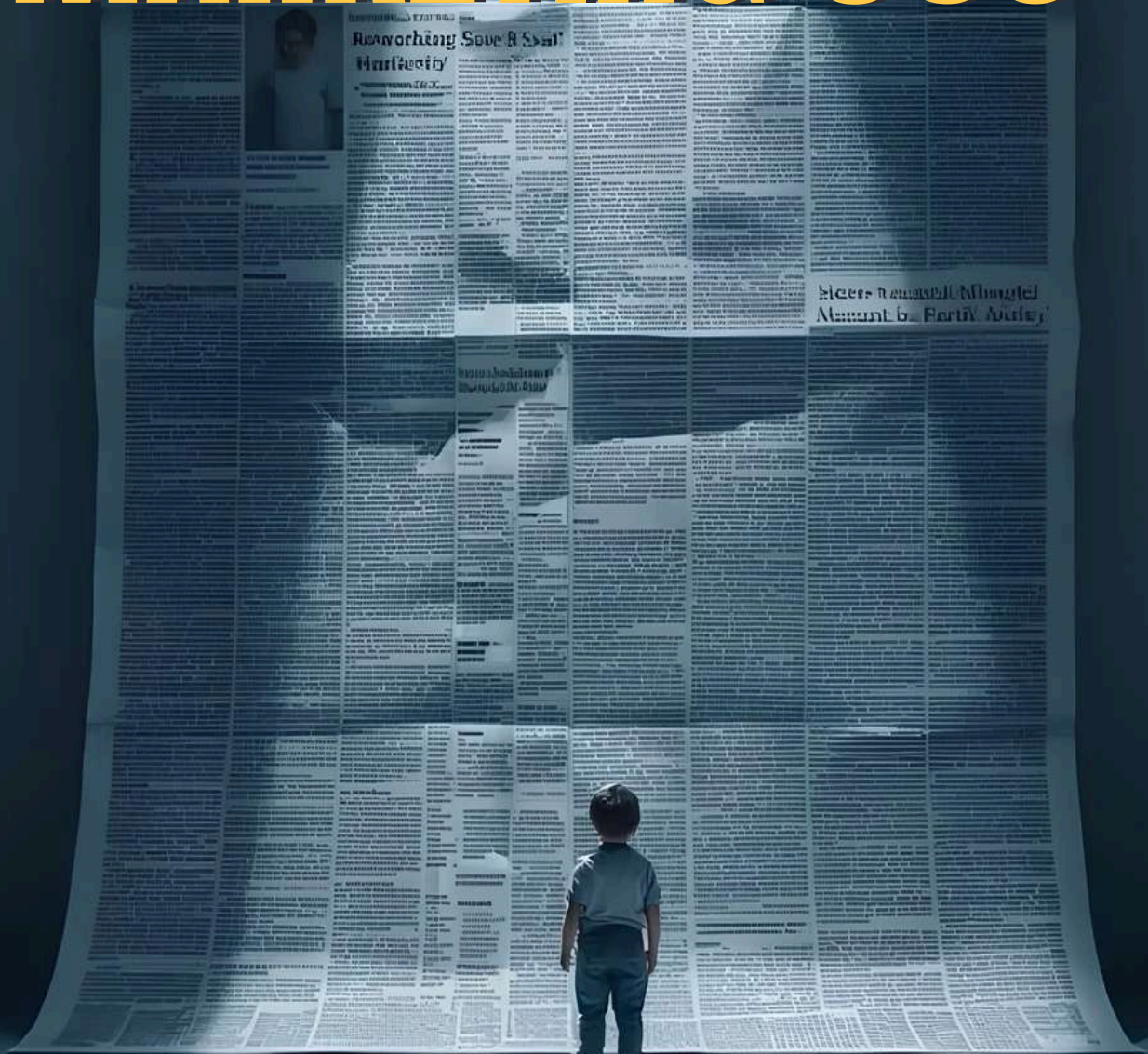


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WHAT IS MARKETING 360°?

Everything you're looking out to quench your curiosity about marketing, whether it's marketing concepts, latest trends, news, brand stories, innovative campaigns, or buzz-worthy advertisements, we've got you covered. marketing360.in is your one-stop solution to look forward to.



GLOBAL NEWS

INDIA IMPOSES BAN ON SUGAR EXPORTS TO CURB INFLATION

India has imposed a ban on the export of raw, white, and refined sugar up to September 2026 to guarantee adequate supplies within the country and curb inflation. The decision has been made considering the low sugar production over the last two years due to low cane production and its impact.

India is the second-largest producer of sugar in the world and produces sugar products for nations such as Sri Lanka, the UAE, Sudan, and Afghanistan. However, due to the present scenario of the global energy crisis, an increase in cost of production, and inflation, India has decided to focus on domestic consumption rather than exports. The rate of inflation in the wholesale market is at its peak at 8.3%.

The decision will help stabilise sugar prices in domestic markets during festive seasons and provide sufficient sugar production for ethanol. However, it can affect sugar mills since they earn a lot from exports. In terms of the international market, higher prices of sugar will favour Brazil and Thailand as they expand their market share.

➤ MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

Price stability may become an even greater challenge to FMCG brands, beverages, and confectionery businesses than shrinkflation. FMCG brands should use local sourcing and festive campaigns because of the high cost of production.

➤ FUTURE CONSEQUENCES

If there is continued poor weather and inflation, then the government might come up with further restrictions on the exports of sugar.



KEY INSIGHTS

The Indian government has put restrictions on the exportation of sugar until September 2026 because of inflation

The Indian government has imposed an export ban due to low production of sugar and the fear of El Niño

The price of sugar will fall in domestic markets, although sugar mills might incur losses

The price of sugar will rise internationally due to low production of sugar

GOVT NEWS

INDIA PULLS THE BRAKES ON DUTY-FREE GOLD IMPORTS



► Introduction

The Indian government has put further restrictions on how much gold can be imported without paying import duties. This is the case with the Advance Authorisation (AA) scheme, under which firms can import gold without paying duties, but only if the gold is used to make products meant for export.

Until now, there has been no limit on the amount of gold that can be brought in duty-free under this scheme. Recently, this has been cut down to 100 kilograms per authorisation by the government. Under the AA programme, no company can import gold beyond this limit, irrespective of its size or its export performance.

► How did this happen?

The Indian government has raised the gold import duty rate to 15 per cent, reversing cuts announced in 2024. The percentage of import duty levied on gold imports was high, which made the authorities wary of possible manipulation of the duty-free AA scheme to make illegal profits through price arbitrage.

The government has taken various measures to prevent any misuse of these facilities, such as mandatory physical verification of the manufacturing plant, mandatory performance in exports before granting any licenses and a periodic report of all licensees. Compliance reports are also required to be submitted by regional offices on a monthly basis.



KEY INSIGHTS

100 kg per permit - fixed maximum set by the government on duty-free import of gold

15% rise in duties - The steep rise in import tariffs created a loophole that needed closing fast

Export compliance criteria of 50% fulfillment - no export of goods until companies fulfill at least 50% of their previous commitments

Regular Audits and fortnightly reports ensure that the system cannot be manipulated Strict Monitoring



INDUSTRIAL TRENDS

THE FMCG SECTOR IN MAY: HIGHER PRICES, SLOWER DEMAND

For years, India's FMCG companies absorbed cost shocks quietly. They reduced grammage in silence and kept ₹5-10 packs untouched. The consumer wasn't meant to feel the pinch immediately. May 2026 has broken that pattern.

What triggered the price hikes?

Three things happened in quick succession. Wholesale inflation rose to 8.3% in April, driven by mineral oil and crude. Edible oil prices jumped nearly 10% in March, and India imports 60% of its edible oil. Milk, and wheat became costlier after unseasonal rains, while crude-linked packaging followed the West Asia conflict upward. Companies stopped absorbing costs, instead they started passing costs.

Who raised what?

Dabur announced a 4% hike, Marico and Godrej Consumer raised 6-7%. Hindustan Unilever is doing 2-5% increases plus grammage cuts. Britannia confirmed lighter ₹10 packs. Even Amul and Mother Dairy raised milk by ₹2 per litre.

Why does order matter?

The hikes hit home care first, then personal care, then food. That means food inflation has arrived sooner than companies expected. And that's where the real problem sits.



The demand question

Rural India drives nearly 40% of FMCG sales. A Deloitte partner said plainly: "From Q2, you will start seeing demand fall." Hindustan Unilever has already cut its marketing budget by ₹100 crore. The festive season (August-September) is now under watch.



KEY INSIGHTS

FMCG firms are raising prices faster than usual. Rising input costs have accelerated price hikes and reduced pack-sizes

Edible oil remains a key inflation risk, as India's heavy import dependence is likely to keep prices elevated despite government interventions

Unorganized players are quietly losing ground while HUL and Dabur are gaining share



ECONOMICS DECLASSIFIED

May 2026: Cheaper EMIs, Weaker Rupee, Silent Consumer

1. What Happened in May?

- Inflation inched up to around 4% (not falling, actually rising due to fuel price hikes)
- RBI kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.25% which led to no rate cut in May.
- The rupee hit a record low of 96.35 per dollar, averaging ₹95-96 through the month

2. The Reality Check – Why the Consumer Isn't Celebrating

A. The rupee is at an all-time low

The rupee touched 96.35 against the dollar in May, the weakest ever. That means everything imported, from smartphones and laptops to edible oil and even the chips inside your washing machine, just became more expensive for brands and sooner or later, you pay for that.

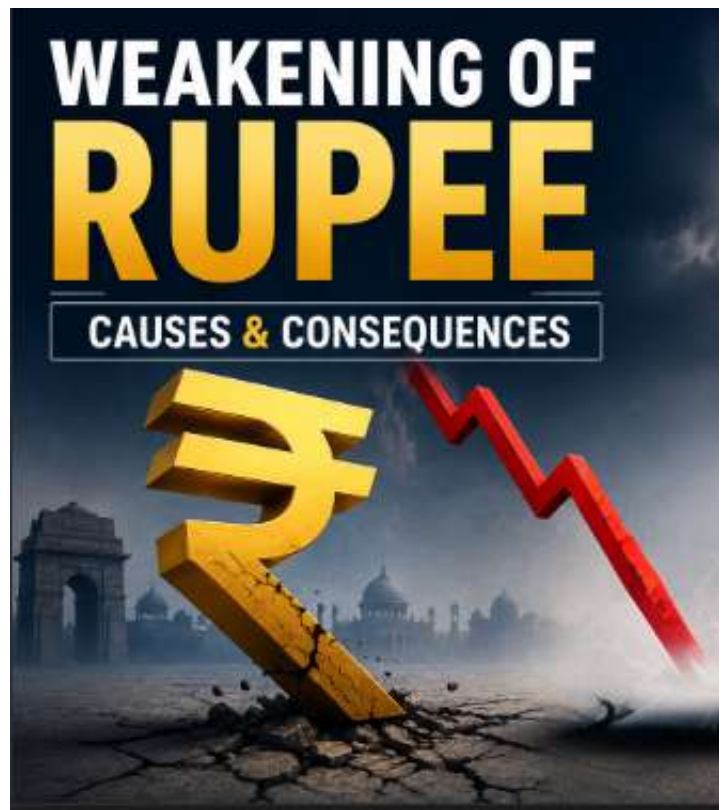
B. Core industries are shrinking, not growing

Steel, cement, and electricity, the backbone of any economy, actually contracted by 0.4% in the latest data. When core industries shrink, factories stop investing. When factories stop investing, jobs disappear.

C. The deeper structural problem hasn't gone anywhere

India still hasn't built a real manufacturing base. We jumped from farms to services, leaving most workers in low-wage, no-contract jobs. Around 90% of India's workforce has no written job contract. The Noida factory protests in May weren't a blip, they were a symptom.

Marketing takeaway: You cannot sell premium products to people who don't know where next month's income is coming from.



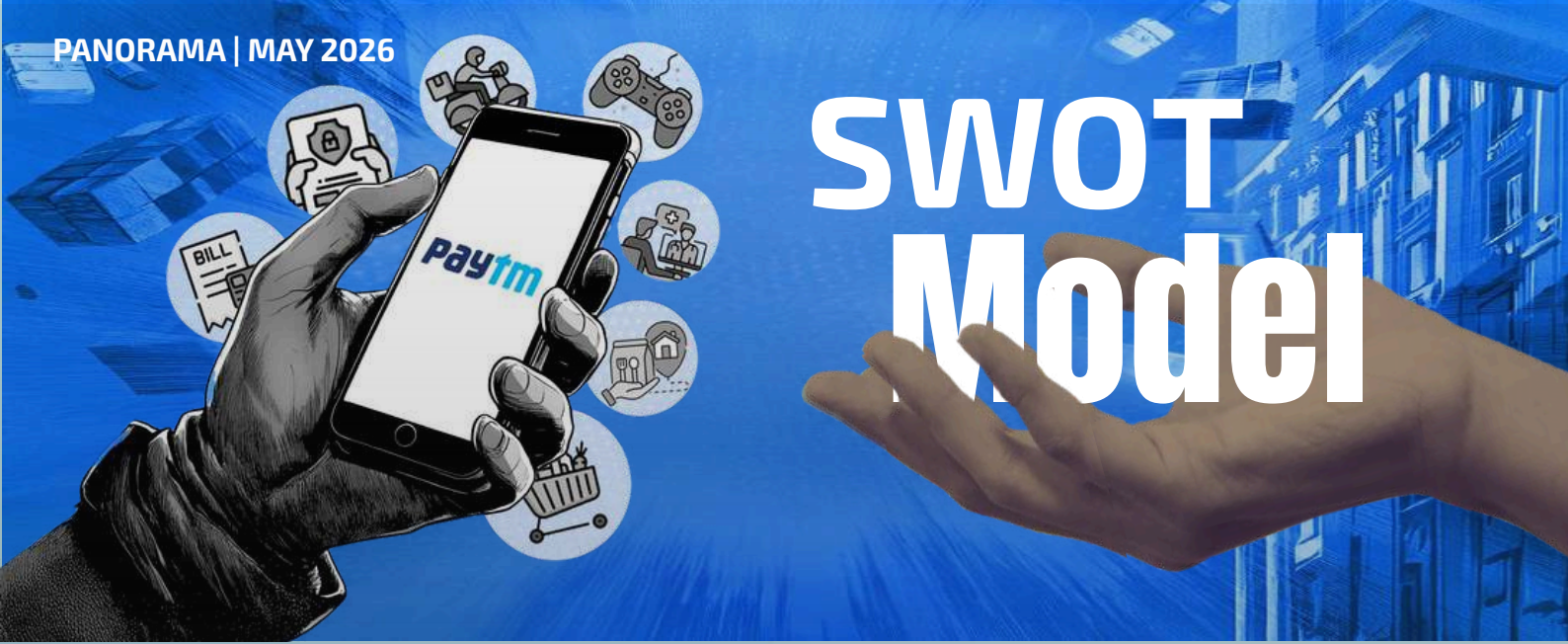
KEY INSIGHTS

Aspirational India has two speeds, the top 10% spend, the rest just survive

A record-low rupee taxes every middle-class purchase, localise or lose

No rate cuts mean no cheap EMIs and jobs aren't coming to save demand either.

SWOT Model



STRENGTHS

- REPUTATION:**
 It is one of the best payment apps in India as Paytm has more than 330 million users.
- MERCHANT USER BASE:**
 Over 30 million merchants in India use the Paytm QR code.
- DIFFERENT SERVICES PROVIDED:**
 Paytm provides different services such as payments, lending, insurance, bookings and investments.
- REVENUE GENERATION:**
 In the financial year 2025-26 paytm generates revenue of 8400cr.



WEAKNESSES

- REGULATORY ISSUE:**
 Paytm Payments Bank restricted by the Reserve Bank of India.
- STRONG COMPETITORS:**
 Apps like PhonePe and Google Pay are strong players of the UPI system.
- PROFITABILITY ISSUE:**
 The company struggles with maintaining stable profit margins.
- NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS:**
 Number of active customers decreased because of new regulations.



OPPORTUNITIES

- GROWTH IN DIGITAL INDIA:**
 Usage of online payments will continue to grow in the country.
- GROWING RURAL AREAS:**
 Small towns are ideal for future growth of Paytm.
- FINANCE BUSINESSES:**
 Lending and insurance businesses would help increase profits.
- AI SERVICES:**
 Artificial intelligence techniques might prove helpful.



THREATS

- CYBERCRIME THREATS:**
 Internet fraud cases are quite frequent in India, which is risky for customers.
- CHANGE IN RBI REGULATIONS:**
 The new rules might limit the business in the coming years.
- CUSTOMER MOBILITY:**
 Customers can easily switch over to other applications.
- GROWTH OF FINTECH COMPANIES:**
 Competition would limit the company's future growth opportunities.



BRAND IN TALK



How Airbnb Won India Through Experiences

Introduction

A Mint report recently took a closer look at where Airbnb stands in India, almost fifteen years after it launched here. The short answer is, it's doing quite well. A mix of rising domestic tourism, the workcation trend, and shifting ideas about what a good trip looks like have all worked in Airbnb's favour.

Brand Journey

The early days were rough. Most Indians had never heard of home-sharing, and hotels weren't going anywhere. Then the pandemic hit, and suddenly people wanted space, privacy, and something that didn't feel like a generic room. Goa, Jaipur, Kerala - these places basically carried Airbnb's growth story in India, with domestic bookings jumping noticeably.



Marketing Strategy

Airbnb stopped talking about rooms, and started talking about people. Host stories, local traditions, hidden destinations became the campaign. Influencers helped push the workcation angle, and younger audiences responded well to content that felt real rather than polished.



Brand Positioning & Consumer Connect

Airbnb shifted focus from selling stays to promoting experiences rooted in local culture. Host stories, hidden destinations, and authentic travel moments became central to its campaigns. Influencer-led workcation content and relatable digital storytelling helped the brand connect strongly with millennials and Gen Z travelers.

Stay, on the move

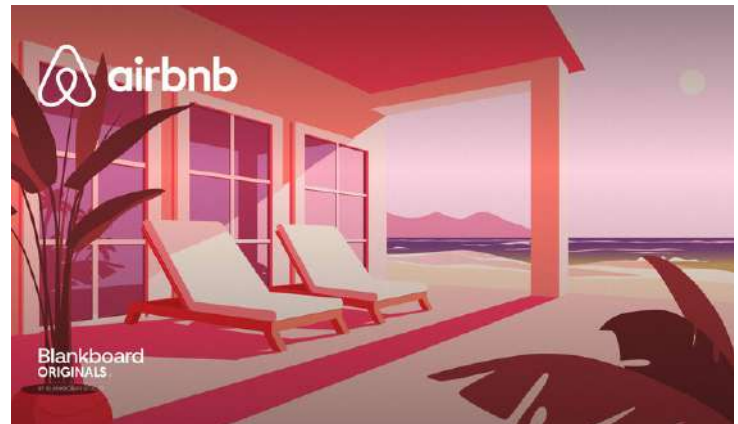


The Boot
Nelson, New Zealand



Market Impact

Trust followed. More Indians started booking, more homeowners started hosting, and the platform quietly crept beyond the big metros into smaller towns and leisure spots. It caught a larger wave too Indians are increasingly choosing experiences over just showing up somewhere and checking in.



Future Outlook

India isn't slowing down for Airbnb anytime soon. Domestic travel is still growing, and the company will likely keep investing in local experiences, onboarding more hosts, and making the platform feel more personal through better technology.

KEY INSIGHTS

India has become one of Airbnb's fastest-growing markets due to the rise in domestic travel

Airbnb connected with audiences by focusing on local culture and authentic storytelling instead of just accommodations

Millennials and Gen Z are increasingly choosing unique travel experiences over traditional hotel stay

Trends like workcations and experiential travel helped Airbnb move from a niche platform to a mainstream travel choice in India

CAMPAIGN BREAKDOWN

Selling Romance to a Generation Suffering from Swipe Fatigue



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Bumble's "For the Love of Love" campaign tackles dating app burnout head-on by ditching the usual tech-heavy ads. Instead of showing off features, they made a quiet, black-and-white short film about real couples who met on the app. It focuses on genuine, vulnerable moments from queer love to long-distance marriages, rather than how the app works.

CONSUMER INSIGHT

People are completely exhausted by endless swiping and algorithm grind. This "swipe fatigue" has made singles incredibly cynical about dating apps, which often feel like shallow games full of ghosting and dry chats. Deep down, they are just craving a sign that real, human connection is still possible.



IDEA / CONCEPT

"The Monochrome Pause" cuts through the loud, colorful digital noise by stripping away the app interface entirely, using raw realism to make romance feel human again.



EXECUTION

The Film: A cinematic, black-and-white video capturing real, unscripted couples to highlight the little things, like shared looks and genuine laughter.

Real-World Tie-Ins: Moving beyond the screen by hosting actual singles mixers and setting up an advice hub with real relationship therapists.



WHY IT RESONATED

It serves as a comforting pause for a generation that is completely burnt out by modern dating culture.

**We will
always need
human
connection.**

Download Bumble.



IMPACT

The Good: It was a massive breath of fresh air. Using real couples instead of actors gave a skeptical audience a genuine reason to hope again.

The Bad: It created a pretty jarring reality check. The poetic, high-stakes ads about marriage felt miles away from the grueling daily grind of actually using the app, which risked alienating Gen-Z daters who just want low-pressure vibes.



bumble

KEY INSIGHTS

Authenticity beats gloss: Raw, unscripted human stories always outperform polished, corporate marketing when you're trying to reach a cynical audience.

The monochrome pause: Stripping away visual noise and color acts as a pattern-interrupter that cuts through digital clutter and forces an emotional connection.

Mind the reality gap. A beautiful ad means nothing if the product experience doesn't match.



THE DEAL THAT MADE SONY OWN THE MUSIC HISTORY

Michael Jackson's \$47 Million Bet

In 1985, Michael Jackson did something that left the music world speechless. He paid nearly \$47 million to acquire ATV Music Publishing, a catalogue containing the publishing rights to over 250 Beatles songs. Most people at the time thought he had lost his mind. Who spends that kind of money on old records? As it turned out, almost everyone who doubted him was wrong.

The Real Power Behind Music

What Jackson grasped, and others missed, was that owning music rights is an entirely different game from making music. Publishing rights earn royalties every time a song gets streamed, played on radio, dropped into a film, picked up by an advertiser, or performed live. That income doesn't stop after a big launch weekend, it keeps coming in for decades. Jackson treated timeless music the same way a shrewd investor treats a long-term asset. Not entertainment. Capital.



Sony Enters the Picture

Sony quickly saw what Jackson had built. In 1995, the two formed Sony/ATV Music Publishing, giving Sony a stake in some of the most recognised songs ever recorded. This wasn't just a deal between a corporation and a pop star. It was a calculated play for control over intellectual property at a global scale.

A Goldmine Across Generations

When streaming changed everything, catalogues like this one didn't just survive, they exploded in value. Beatles songs started appearing across Spotify playlists, film scores, ad campaigns, and documentary soundtracks. Sony collected royalties without recording a single note of new music. What they had really invested in was cultural nostalgia, and that particular product has never once gone out of fashion.



The Modern Lesson in Ownership

Today, the biggest players in media are racing to acquire music, film, and digital IP because ownership is where the real leverage lives. The Beatles catalogue story made that lesson impossible to ignore. The future of entertainment isn't only about what you create; it's about what you control. Some of the most valuable assets in business are things you can't hold in your hands, rights that quietly earn long after the spotlight has moved on.



KEY INSIGHTS

Intellectual property can be more valuable than physical assets.

Nostalgia is one of the strongest business drivers.

Music rights generate revenue for decades.

Content ownership creates long-term market power

Strategic partnerships can unlock premium assets



xiaomi

CASE IN POINT

XIAOMI'S FALL FROM THE TOP IN INDIA

FROM THE OUTSET OF DISRUPTION

Xiaomi's aggressive pricing strategy of affordable, premium features disrupted the space in India, where the audience was primarily students and youth who responded to the online marketing and flash sales of the Redmi series. By late 2017, Xiaomi had dethroned Samsung to become the largest smartphone manufacturer in India, giving the affordable product and digital-first marketing mix a welcome change in the Indian smartphone market.

TIMELINE

20
17



20
18

THE ENTRANCE TO LEADERSHIP

Xiaomi's share of the Indian smartphone market increased to around 30% in 2018. The company expanded to India with its own Mi Stores, service centers, and e-commerce and offline partnerships. The value positioning of the company attracted the Indian middle-class customers. Xiaomi transformed itself from a Chinese smartphone company to India's most preferred technology brand.



xiaomi

THE CORRECTION

The development of the India-China border incursion and the following Anti-China sentiments resulted in negative perceptions of Xiaomi. Though the Chinese smartphone company was the market leader, it lost consumer support in key target segments. The Chinese smartphone market was now led by Samsung, Vivo and Realme. The Indian customers had shifted to expensive smartphones with a better camera, design, and quality, and an improved build. Xiaomi was also unable to establish an emotional relationship with this segment.

20
20



Lei Jun - CEO of Xiaomi

THE DISRUPTION

Xiaomi's market share reportedly fell to below 10% in the Indian smartphone market, meanwhile players like Samsung, Vivo, and Apple went for the kill. The 2025 smartphone market also showed a 20% premium segment growth against a backdrop of declining demand for budget smartphones. Perceived quality features became crucial among Indian consumers, resulting in preferences for better camera quality, premium design, ecosystem integration, and better after-sales service.

20
25

KEY INSIGHTS

Brand longing often becomes a greater priority than the price.

Smartphone sales are impacted significantly by in person accessibility.

Dominant players can fall in the market if they over-apply a single method.

It is difficult to earn consumer trust again after it is lost.

Aside from the quality of the components, the Indian smartphone market is now focused on the overall user experience.

M-LINGO TOONS

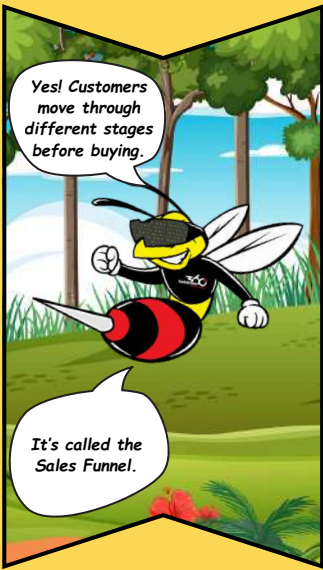
TALES FROM THE HIVE

TALES FROM THE HIVE – UNDERSTANDING THE SALES FUNNEL!

Nico the Fox opens a new online sneaker store in the jungle. On the first day, hundreds of animals visit his website.



But by the end of the week, only a few actually buy sneakers. Nico cannot understand where all the customers have disappeared.



The Sales Funnel explains how customers move from discovering a business to finally making a purchase. Businesses that understand this process can improve customer conversion and increase sales.

The Power of Branding for Startups

- Unique Value
- Build Trust
- Customer Loyalty
- Lasting Impact

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WHEN DIPLOMACY GETS CHOCOLATY

Modi Ji gifted Meloni a pack of Melody toffees & the internet lost it

#Melodi

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Supply Shock Brand Test

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TAGORE'S TIMELESS BRAND INFLUENCE

"Whoever the mind is without first and the hand is held tight."

"It will come for us from the morning of time like dew on the tip of a leaf."

"The highest education is that which shows us the way to a higher life."

"The highest education is that which shows us the way to a higher life."

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DISCOVER SOMETHING NEW HERE TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER!

HOW COCA-COLA TURNS PACKAGING INTO EXPERIENCES

EDICIÓN ESPECIAL Sabor Original

WORLD CUP™ 2026

12 Latas

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&Done Introduces New Haircare Campaign for Modern Women

& DONE

SHOW TOPPER

WWW.MARKETING360.IN

THE HIDDEN PSYCHOLOGY OF BRAND LOYALTY

WHY CONSUMERS LOVE BRANDS?

- EMOTIONAL CONNECTION**
People stay loyal to brands that understand how they feel.
- CONSISTENT EXPERIENCE**
Great experiences build trust, and trust builds loyalty.
- PERCEIVED VALUE**
Loyal customers see more value than just the product or price.
- BELONGING & IDENTITY**
Brands become part of who they are and how they belong.
- HABIT & CONVENIENCE**
Familiarity creates habits & that creates long-term loyalty.

BRAND LOYALTY IS BUILT IN THE MIND, EARNED IN THE HEART, AND KEPT BY CONSISTENCY.

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THE TEAM

GRAPHICS TEAM



**Vineet
Panchal**



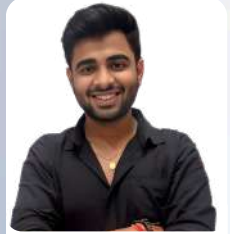
**Tanmay
Deshpande**



**Prayag
Subbaiah**



**Pankti
Shah**



**Tirth
Dave**



**Riya
Giri**



**Aastha
Jain**



**Vanshita
Jain**



**Umang
Mehta**



**Manaswi
Bhanushali**



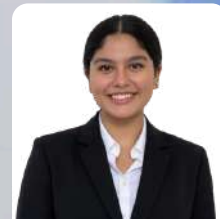
**Taha
Suterwala**



**Sejal
Purohit**



**Neha
Saraf**



**Anannya
Kelkar**

CONTENT TEAM



**Lysandra
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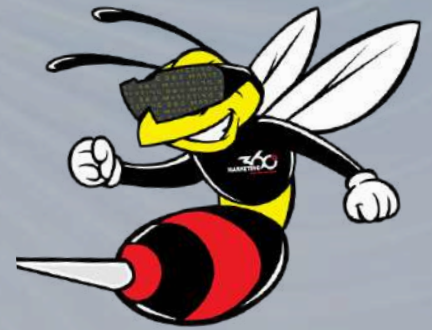


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