

Living the dream

From planning their start-up and building the right team to successfully marketing their brand, these entrepreneurs will teach you a thing or two about taking care of a business.

By Shubhangi Jindal

Toying with an idea you think has great potential? A good business concept is always followed by a leap of faith to translate into something commercially viable. Although working out the logistics can (usually) overpower dreams of rolling

in piles of cash. As an entrepreneur, you often find yourself in uncharted territory, unsure what the ‘right’ answers are. Launching a start-up in a world that is rapidly evolving is no easy feat, but you have to agree there’s never been a better time to act on your instincts.

FOOD & WELLNESS



VIBHA HARISH AND SOORYA JAGADISH

CO-FOUNDERS, COSMIX WELLNESS

Cosmo: What inspired you to start Cosmix Wellness?

Vibha Harish: Imagine this—You are scrolling through Instagram, bombarded with pictures of ‘perfect’ bodies and quick-fix wellness solutions. You know the drill: drink this detox tea, buy this magic cream, and poof, your problems disappear. Been there, done that. That’s exactly how I felt when I was diagnosed with PCOS. The whole health and wellness industry seemed obsessed with fads and unrealistic beauty standards. I wanted something real, something that addressed the root cause, not just slapped a bandage on the symptoms.

I teamed up with my husband, Soorya (co-founder and resident agriculturist), to create clean, plant-based superfood solutions. No gimmicks, just simple ingredients that tackle gut health, hormones, even your skin and sleep! Cosmix is

about feeling good from the inside out, not conforming to some airbrushed ideal. We want to empower people to make informed choices about their well-being, because, let’s be honest, true health is a journey, not a destination.

C: How did an industrial engineer turn into a founder of a nutrition brand? Tell us about your pre-launch journey.

VH: In my engineering days, I spent a lot of time untangling supply chains and figuring out how to run things leaner. Let’s just say it gave me a crash course in business basics (and a whole lot of spreadsheets!). After five years of studying plants and their incredible healing power, I knew I wanted to share that knowledge with the world. Think of it as merging my love for optimisation with the magic of nature! It might seem like an unexpected combo, but it allows me to approach wellness from a unique perspective—using natural ingredients and a strategic mindset to create effective solutions.

C: What are your views on the evolving nutrition sector in India? Describe the challenges you encountered while setting up your brand.

VH: Imagine trying to navigate the nutrition section at the grocery store—rows and rows of products promising quick fixes and miracle results. It is overwhelming, right? But here’s the good news: People are becoming more aware of what they put in their bodies. There’s a growing desire to understand real food and its impact on our health. This is exactly what Cosmix is all about. Coming to our challenge, it is cutting through the noise.

The flip side of this awareness is the abundance of information—some good, some not so good. That’s the biggest challenge we face in the nutrition sector. I want people to think of us as their friendly, neighbourhood nutrition guide. We translate complex science into easy-to-understand language. Creating an education-first brand has always been the Cosmix approach and will continue to be so.

C: As a duo, how do you both collectively find common ground when it comes to taking important brand decisions?

VH: Building a brand together as a couple can be a recipe for disaster or success. But we see them as opportunities, not roadblocks. Let’s

say we’re brainstorming a new product, and Soorya has a vision that doesn’t match mine—it might sound like a culinary catastrophe. But here’s where the magic happens. When we reach a fork in the road, we patiently listen to each other’s perspectives. We debate, we reason, and most importantly, we trust.

C: How did you manage to run a nutrition brand during a global pandemic?

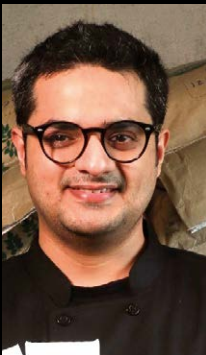
VH: Back in 2020, I was on the cusp of launching Cosmix, brimming with excitement, when...pow! the pandemic hits. Suddenly, the world’s attention shifts to staying healthy, and new immunity-boosting products are popping up like over-proof bread in a crisis.

Our mission at Cosmix has always been about genuine, science-backed wellness, not quick fixes. Sticking to that principle was tough, especially when finances were tight and the future uncertain. But here’s the beauty of having a strong purpose—it became our compass. We focused on creating high-quality content, debunking myths, and offering trustworthy resources for navigating the confusing world of pandemic nutrition.

DISRUPTORS TO LOOK OUT FOR



CHINMAYA
ARJUN RAJA
PANAKAM



DEVANSH
ASHAR
PASCATI



KUNAL SINGH
CHHABRA
GENRE



SAMEER
MIRAJKAR
INACAN



VIRAJ
SAWANT
INACAN



RADHIKA
CHOPRA
NO. 3 CLIVE ROAD

BEAUTY & SKINCARE



KARISHMA KEWALRAMANI

FOUNDER, FAE BEAUTY

Cosmo: What does beauty mean to you?

Karishma Kewalramani: Beauty is a feeling, not a formula. It is the ability to feel comfortable and confident in your skin—with or without make-up.

C: What inspired you to start Fae Beauty? Tell us about the goal and thought process behind the brand’s name and packaging.

KK: After completing my graduation in Business at the University of California, Berkeley, I worked as a management consultant in San Francisco, USA. Upon returning to India, I identified a gap in the market for a beauty brand that catered to brown skin but didn’t break the bank. This realisation led to the creation of Fae Beauty, a brand rooted in innovation and inclusivity. The brand’s name, ‘Fae’, embodies our mission to redefine beauty free from stereotypes or societal pressures, offering equality for all, regardless of appearance or identity.

C: What should every beauty entrepreneur keep in mind before launching a brand from scratch?

KK: Think deeply about why your brand exists—What is the problem you are trying to address? And how is it doing so in an effective way? There are more than enough beauty brands in India today, so you must define your purpose, and make sure that purpose is communicated effectively to your consumer.

C: What makes Fae Beauty stand out?

“Beauty is a feeling, not a formula. It is the ability to feel comfortable and confident in your own skin.”

KK: We are unabashedly authentic. We refrain from editing or filtering our images and embrace facial hair, acne, pigmentation, and pores to authentically represent real brown skin—a departure from the polished and often unattainable standards set by other beauty brands.

C: Describe the moment when you decided that this was something you wanted to start on your own.

KK: The decision to start Fae Beauty stemmed from a pivotal moment during my stint as a make-up artist at Fashion Week. While shopping for foundations for models, I realised the limited options for individuals with

deeper skin tones, often priced exorbitantly. This disparity fuelled my determination to create beauty products that are for Indian skin tones, and are accessible to all.

C: When did you realise that you were building a community around Fae Beauty through your platform and unfiltered campaigns?

KK: The realisation dawned when community members began expressing gratitude for feeling seen and represented for the first time while exploring Fae’s offerings. Our commitment to diversity and authenticity resonated with consumers, creating a space where they felt empowered to express themselves freely.

C: What is the defining moment of your business journey thus far?

KK: When our order volume outgrew our office space, forcing us to move to a larger premises. This tangible indicator of growth symbolised the increasing demand and resonance of Fae Beauty within the market.

DISRUPTORS TO LOOK OUT FOR



DIIPA BÜLLER-KHOSLA
INDE WILD

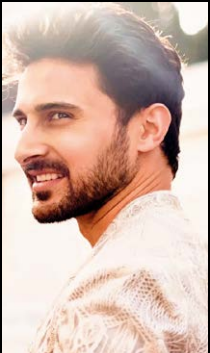


SHAMIKA HAL DIPURKAR
D'YOU



KARAN RAJ KOHLI

SALT ORAL CARE



VIRAJ KAPUR



PARUL GULATI
NISH HAIR



SHUBHIKA JAIN
RAS LUXURY OILS

SNEAKER CULTURE



UTKARSH GUPTA & DISHANT DARYANI

CO-FOUNDERS, COMET

Cosmo: What inspired you to start your brand?

Utkarsh Gupta: Dishant and I initiated Comet in 2022 and officially launched the brand in July 2023. Before this venture, I spent two years in Chicago pursuing my master's degree. It was during this time that I developed a profound love for sneakers. Chicago had always been at the heart of sneaker culture and provided an inspiring backdrop where I witnessed American brands elevating sneakers into pieces of art rather than mere utility items.

I observed the lacklustre sneaker market in India and—inspired by the innovative strides made by other brands abroad—envisioned bringing a similar approach to the country. We aimed to view sneakers as canvases for relatable storytelling, extending the limits of design.

Witnessing the rise of streetwear brands in India, I foresaw a burgeoning demand for a high-quality sneaker brand. Thus, Comet was born. We came to fill the gap and along with that, live our passion—sneakers.

C: Sneaker collaborations have become increasingly popular. What drives the success of these partnerships?

UG: The first ingredient has to be 'fit'. Some collaborations do well naturally while others are

carried by the existing hype. When the synergy between the collaborating entities is paramount, magic happens. Secondly, there must be mutual respect between the brands, with a genuine desire to highlight the best attributes of the collaborating partner. Attention to detail is crucial in ensuring that the collaboration accurately captures the essence of the partner. Take, for instance, the 'Chunky Dunky' collaboration between Nike and Ben & Jerry's, where the design beautifully incorporates elements of the ice cream brand's packaging, showcasing a reverence for the partner's identity.

In our case, our collaboration with multi-disciplinary artist Santanu Hazarika stemmed from his unique artistic expression that truly embodies our brand ethos, 'Never Shy, Never Sorry'.

C: How do you navigate important brand decisions collectively?

UG: I oversee branding, marketing, and product design, while my co-founder manages the supply chain, manufacturing, and logistics. By leveraging each other's expertise and perspectives, we ensure critical brand

decisions are thoroughly evaluated and aligned with our vision.

C: How do you ensure that your offerings resonate with the Indian market amidst the booming sneakerhead culture?

UG: Trends come and go, we want to create things that last. We believe in creating evergreen silhouettes that are technically sound and tailored for the Indian feet. For instance, our Comet X shoes feature a wider toe box to accommodate the wider feet common among Indians.

Additionally, we differentiate ourselves by designing and crafting our soles, ensuring technical excellence and durability.

C: How do you maintain a strong community of sneaker enthusiasts and customers?

UG: Our community thrives primarily on Instagram, where we boast a highly engaged audience. By continuously pushing the boundaries of design, introducing unique concepts, and prioritising product quality, we foster a sense of loyalty and advocacy among our customers. Our commitment to authenticity and innovation resonates with sneaker enthusiasts, resulting in rapid sell-outs during product launches solely

through organic Instagram engagement.

C: What trends and innovations do you foresee shaping the sneaker industry in the coming years?

UG: We anticipate a surge in homegrown brands entering the Indian market, driven by a focus on end-to-end product excellence. With government support for domestic manufacturing, expect advancements in Indian footwear production. Additionally, casual sneakers are poised to overshadow semi-formal styles, reflecting a broader societal shift towards comfort and versatility.

C: Share that defining moment of your business journey so far, and are there any exciting developments on the horizon?

UG: A pivotal moment for us was witnessing the overwhelming response to our unique drops, culminating in rapid sell-outs within minutes. This reaffirmed our belief in the power of storytelling and innovation in sneaker design.

Looking ahead, we plan to expand our colour offerings and introduce a new silhouette later this year, further solidifying Comet's presence in the dynamic sneaker market.

DISRUPTORS TO LOOK OUT FOR



ARJUN SINGH
GULLY LABS



ASHAY BHAVE
THAELY



MEHANDEE MEERA DUREJA
BANJAARAN



ANCHIT KAPIL



BHARAT MEHROTRA
CREPDOG CREW



SHAURYA KUMAR



SHIBANI BHAGAT
7-10

ENTERTAINMENT & DISRUPTIVE MEDIA



VEDANT MAHAJAN

FOUNDER, MVM ENTERTAINMENT

Cosmo: What inspired you to start your event company?
Vedant Mahajan: In Mumbai, going out would mean you're likely to bump into half the city. London, however, presented a stark contrast. Despite the steep entry fees at Mayfair clubs,

the experience often fell short with average service, indifferent staff, and music that didn't resonate with South Asians. More than just the disconnect of musical taste, it was the lack of familiarity and community that struck me the most. Unlike Mumbai, where you know where to find 'your' crowd, London's nightlife felt fragmented; you didn't necessarily know where the vibe was. The gap in the [latter]

market for quality Bollywood-themed nightlife experience that could bring together the South Asian community in a sophisticated yet familiar environment was glaringly obvious. Existing Bollywood nights lacked the allure to draw us in, akin to commercial dance bars than the vibrant, chic club nights one craved. I envisioned a place where like-minded individuals could meet

without inhibitions, enjoy top-notch service, and truly feel at home. MVM was born out of this vision, aiming to bridge that gap and offer a slice of that Mumbai familiarity in the heart of Mayfair, London.
C: Why did you decide to raise the stakes post-pandemic?
VM: Breaking into London's entertainment industry was no walk in the park—it involved countless meetings in which I tried to convince the high-end clubs of Mayfair to take a chance on an MVM event, all while dodging the hurdles thrown by established players in the industry who weren't too thrilled about the new competition. Despite initial success, the pandemic halted everything. However, during my time in Mumbai, I strategised our comeback. As the world started to re-open, I seized the opportunity, capitalising on the pent-up desire for socialisation post lockdown.
C: When did you realise you were building a community through MVM's platform and experiences?
VM: After resuming events post-pandemic, it became evident that MVM was evolving into more than

just a series of events—it was fostering a unique community, offering a sense of belonging in London. This was particularly noticeable among Indian students finding solace and connections at our events, exemplifying our impact beyond mere entertainment.
C: Can you share a memory that you'll always cherish from one of your events?
VM: The most rewarding part is witnessing hundreds of people enjoying themselves at our events, leaving their worries behind. Proposals and heartwarming stories—like a couple who first met at our event and later got engaged at the same venue—truly highlight the joy we bring to people's lives.
C: How does it feel to be making it big on your merit in London, one of the biggest cities in the world?
VM: The feeling of MVM becoming a name in such a significant city, and carving out a niche where we've become the go-to in our field, surpasses anything I could have imagined just five years ago. Yet, as much as this milestone fills me with pride, it is also a reminder of the vast

potential that lies ahead. The sensation of "making it" has become a driving force, pushing me to explore what more we can achieve. It is clear now that we're at the beginning of an even greater adventure, not at its peak. The path forward is filled with untapped opportunities and uncharted territories waiting to be explored.
C: What's the next big thing for MVM Entertainment?
VM: Global domination. We kicked things off in Dubai this year, and even though it's just the start, the vibe and reception has been unreal. There's a whole world out there for us to dive into, and I truly believe we've got what it takes to rock cities worldwide.
C: What's your advice to entrepreneurs looking to get into the entertainment space?
VM: Focus on originality. The challenge and opportunity lies in spotting what's missing in the current landscape, developing a fresh idea around that gap, and truly believing in its worth. It is about making your mark with something distinct and valuable, creating a space that's uniquely yours.

DISRUPTORS TO LOOK OUT FOR



AALIYA AMRIN



EMAN BATLIWALLA

BY THE GRAM



DANISHA KOHLI



ARCHANA JAIN

PR PUNDIT



RANVEER ALLAHBADIA

MONK ENTERTAINMENT



VIRAJ SHETH

BAGS & ACCESSORIES



AAKANKSHA KOTAWALA

FOUNDER, ANATINA

Cosmo: You hail from a 200-year-old family background in jewellery. Take us through your journey of becoming a jewellery designer and what ultimately inspired you to launch your label.

Aakanksha Kotawala: What a journey it's been! Running a jewellery brand wasn't even on my radar despite my deep connections to the industry. I have always had a creative side, dabbling in a couple of ventures before Anatina came along.

However, the pandemic provided me with an opportunity to explore my passion for design more deeply. As I delved into the world of jewellery, I realised its potential to tell stories and foster connections. This realisation spurred me to embark on the journey of founding Anatina, merging my love for design, storytelling, and entrepreneurship.

C: Walk us through the creative process of launching a jewellery brand, and what advice would you offer to aspiring entrepreneurs?

AK: Creativity for me is like diving into the depths of my mind, drawing inspiration from my experiences and surroundings. Growing up in Rajasthan, I have been immersed in a rich tapestry of art and culture, which influences my design instincts. The

creative process is fluid and organic, with ideas emerging spontaneously and evolving naturally. My advice to aspiring entrepreneurs: the first rule—give that product the spotlight it deserves. Second, persistence is your superhero cape—wear it proudly! And here's the plot twist... trust those instincts and let your design dance, even if they decide to waltz in the opposite direction of current trends.

C: How do you perceive the evolving concept of jewellery in India, and what message do you aim to convey through your brand narrative?

AK: Jewellery in India is undergoing a shift from being solely associated with special occasions to becoming an integral part of everyday life. Consumers now seek out unique and distinctive pieces that reflect their individuality. With Anatina, I aim to create timeless designs that celebrate authenticity and allow people to express their unique style and personality through their jewellery choices.

C: How does Anatina embody your vision of celebrating womanhood?

"With Anatina, I aim to create timeless designs that celebrate authenticity."

AK: Through our designs, Anatina strives to capture the diverse essence of femininity, embracing beauty in all its forms, shapes, and expressions. Whether through bold statement pieces or delicate accents, our jewellery reflects the richness and complexity of womanhood.

C: When did you realise that Anatina was fostering a genuine community through its platform and campaigns?

AK: The journey towards community building began organically as we aimed to showcase genuine beauty through unfiltered campaigns, challenging conventional standards. Over time, our commitment to authenticity garnered attention and fostered a supportive community. Encouraging messages from individuals who felt empowered by our campaigns reinforced our dedication to challenging societal

norms in beauty and representation.

C: How do you ensure your jewellery is in sync with the environment?

AK: At the heart of our brand ethos lies a commitment to ethical and sustainable practices. We meticulously source materials, ensuring they meet strict standards of responsibility. Our manufacturing processes are guided by eco-conscious methods, minimising our environmental footprint every step of the way. It is not just about creating beautiful jewellery; it is about doing so in a way that respects our planet and the people involved in every aspect of production.

C: What is the one defining moment of your business journey so far?

AK: A standout moment for Anatina was designing the Chaand Sitaara Hair Pins for Masaba's wedding. The overwhelming response and creative styling by countless individuals not only validated our craftsmanship but also reinforced the significance of our designs in people's lives.

DISRUPTORS TO LOOK OUT FOR



ANMOL VASWANI
STUDIO LOVE LETTER



SHIVAM PUNJYA
BEHNO



KAABIA & SASHA GREWAL
OUTHOUSE JEWELLERY



SUDHEER RAJBHAR
CHAMAR STUDIO



TEJAL KEYUR
TEJAL KEYUR TEXTILES



FASHION & LIFESTYLE

PRANJAL KAILA, PRADHYUMN KAG, ARAVIND NARAYANAN, AND VIVEK MISHRA

CO-FOUNDERS, FETUS

Cosmo: What inspired you to launch Fetus? And, what is the story behind its name and design language?

Fetus: Fetus is a brand made by

misfits, for misfits. As individuals coming from a branding background, we found ourselves constantly feeling creatively stifled. We craved an outlet to unleash our creativity without limitations and connect with like-minded individuals who embrace originality. The name 'Fetus' represents our constant need to give birth to new ideas, new forms, fresher perspectives, and a departure from the norm. It is an unexpected name with no ties to fashion before, allowing us to tap a fresh neural connection in our audience's heads. Our [brand's] protagonist, Fetus,

represents an alien banished from his home planet trying to carve a new space for himself here on Earth. But he doesn't want just a slice; he wants the entire cake. He may be too ambitious for his own good (laughs). With Fetus, we aim to transcend the boundaries of fashion by evolving into an entertainment company, integrating elements of mythology and narrative into its design language to create clothing that sparks intrigue and resonates deeply with its audience.

C: What is the creative process of launching Fetus and integrating

technology into fashion?

F: Our childhood experiences and exposure to Japanese anime heavily influenced our creative journey. We created the character 'Fetus' as an extension of ourselves. The ideas of anti-establishment and nonconformity in a society that rewards clout culture have been in our minds for a long time. Fetus acts as a vessel to talk about such issues and ideas.

At its core, web3 [the emerging phase of the Internet] is about decentralisation and giving control back to individuals. And we believe fashion needs exactly that. We are not here to create beautiful artworks and sell them for crypto or make you wear the next virtual dress.

By leveraging web3 technology, we aim to empower our community and reward loyalty with exclusive content and access to new drops. 'Fetus', as a virtual influencer, bridges the gap between the real and digital worlds, offering a new dimension to the fashion landscape.

C: How is Fetus 'embracing new aesthetics' in an already saturated fashion market?

F: In fashion, we saw a recurring cycle of trends, brands cannibalising each other's designs and ostentatious

collaborations with little substance. Reused, recycled, and reduced to nothing.

We wanted to change that. Fetus disrupts the fashion cycle by weaving immersive mythologies into every collection, forming a cohesive narrative that transcends individual pieces. Each chapter tells a story, inviting customers into a world where every garment holds significance. By operating as an entertainment company, Fetus offers a fresh perspective in an industry rife with recycled trends and superficial collaborations.

C: How do you navigate important brand decisions collectively?

F: We are very passionate people. Although we are almost always in sync with each other, we often go into intense discussions just to get on the same page. The final call is always in line with the larger narrative and brand ethos that we are building. We believe we are setting a textbook example of how to resolve conflicts and collectively find common ground (seriously, we should be streaming our Zoom calls, haha!).

C: How does Fetus bridge the physical and digital realms through its designs and experiences?

F: Every Fetus piece is imbued with deep lore, connecting the physical garment to a broader narrative. Limited editions and a commitment to never repeating silhouettes strengthen the personal connection between customers and the brand's story. With this approach, we can go beyond just 'merch' to 'tangible pieces of mythology' that a person can hold on to.

C: What has been the defining moment of Fetus' business journey?

F: Hosting offline pop-up events has been a defining experience, witnessing first-hand the passion and engagement of our customers as they immerse themselves in the intricate details and stories behind Fetus. These interactions make us more than just a fashion brand...it makes us storytellers resonating with people on a personal level.

C: What's next for Fetus?

F: Our strategic goal this year is towards content creation. With plans to release a graphic novel and subsequently pitch it as an animated series, we aim to engage broader audiences and further establish Fetus as an entertainment powerhouse within the fashion industry.

DISRUPTORS TO LOOK OUT FOR



DIVYA SAINI
BODEMENTS



ESHITA KABRA
BY ROTATION



INSHA MIR
ECOKASH



RIDDHI JAIN
STUDIO MEDIUM



SHIA RAI
SHIA RAI



TECHNOLOGY & EDUCATION

AMAN SRIVASTAVA, SANSKRITI DAWLE, DILIP RAMESH, AND SAIF SHAIKH

CO-FOUNDERS, THINKERBELL LABS

Cosmo: What inspired you to venture into the realm of assistive technology for the visually impaired?
Thinkerbell Labs: My inspiration stemmed from a visit to a blind school in Hyderabad during my time at BITS

Pilani. Witnessing a student struggling with learning Braille while I had access to education was a profound moment. Recognising the need for advancements in assistive technology for the visually impaired, especially in education, motivated me to co-found Thinkerbell Labs.
C: What were the key challenges you faced while building the company, and how did you navigate through them?
TL: Securing capital and finding committed team members were significant challenges in the early stages. We needed individuals who shared our vision and were willing to navigate the uncertainties that come

with a start-up. Despite these challenges, through strategic networking and a commitment to our vision, we successfully navigated these hurdles, laying the foundation for Thinkerbell Labs' growth and success.
C: What strategies have Thinkerbell Labs implemented to ensure that its solutions are not only technologically advanced but also culturally sensitive and inclusive of diverse learning needs?
TL: Firstly, we offer content on Annie [the world's first self-learning Braille literacy device] in more than 15 languages and are continuously

working on providing more languages, making it accessible to a wide range of users. This commitment extends to localised content tailored to specific regions in India, enabling children to learn Braille in their mother tongue.
Furthermore, we incorporate self-enabled learning as a core feature, so that the student can learn Braille at their own pace. This accessibility feature ensures that no learner is left behind. We are on a mission to reach every child, so we have strategically established over 50 per cent of Annie centres in remote and non-metropolitan cities. This approach ensures that children, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to high-quality Braille learning resources. By prioritising inclusivity and accessibility, we not only advance technological innovation but also foster a more inclusive educational landscape, empowering all children to thrive.
C: How do you balance your roles as a leader in the tech industry and as a social advocate for inclusive education?
TL: Thinkerbell Labs is the fruition of my vision to create social impact,

"Our content is tailored to specific regions in India, enabling children to learn Braille in their mother tongue."
and with the support of a great team, we have been able to realise this vision. By integrating technological innovation with a commitment to social advocacy, we ensure that our work not only advances the field of education technology but also contributes positively to society by promoting inclusivity and accessibility in education.
C: What advice would you give to aspiring female entrepreneurs who are passionate about pursuing a career in mission-driven tech enterprises?
TL: I draw inspiration from the legacy of Savitribai Phule, who, around 150 years ago, revolutionised literacy for women by starting the first schools. Her dedication laid the foundation for women's education, empowering them to contribute to

nation-building. Similarly, I encourage aspiring entrepreneurs to strive to create solutions that help a larger audience and those in need, as success and money will naturally follow.
C: Share that one defining moment of your business journey.
TL: Annie, equipped with my personalised audio, was deployed in blind schools across Maharashtra. During a visit to one such school in Mumbai, a heartwarming encounter unfolded. This decision sparked a chain of events that shaped the trajectory of our company. A child, with whom I had no prior interaction, recognised my voice as Annie's. It was a major realisation of the impact our device was having. This moment showed that our device was more than just a tool. It reaffirmed our mission and inspired us to continue empowering communities through inclusive education.
C: What's the next big thing for Thinkerbell Labs?
TL: Our next goal is international expansion, with plans to establish presence in 10 countries within the next two years. This expansion will further our mission of making education inclusive globally.

DISRUPTORS TO LOOK OUT FOR



MUKUL RUSTAGI & BHASWAT AGARWAL
CLASSPLUS



SAHIL MIGLANI & ANKIT MAGGU
GEEKSTER



RAHUL ARORA & PUSHPENDER RAUTELA
INTERVUE



ANSHUMAN KUMAR, DIVYANSH BORDIA, MIHIR GUPTA, PAYOJ JAIN
TEACHMINT



GAURAV MUNJAL, HEMESH SINGH, ROMAN SAINI, SACHIN GUPTA
UNACADEMY



GIFTING

LAVANYA KRISHNAN AND SANDEEP BETHANABHOTLA

CO-FOUNDERS, BOXWALLA

Cosmo: What inspired the launch of Boxwalla and what's the concept behind the brand?

B: Boxwalla is inspired by the pinnacle of artistic and creative human achievement, be it in beauty, book, film, food, or music. We wanted to create a platform where

we could showcase great artists and artisans from around the world, work [of artists] that we'd personally experienced and loved. We thought of ourselves as 'Boxwallas' or figurative 'travelling merchants', scouring the planet for the best across categories, and sharing them 'in boxes' with a curious, discerning audience.

The brand believes in providing context to enhance the enjoyment of the curated products, delving into the stories behind their creation and the inspiration driving the artists and artisans. The platform operates

through a subscription box model and limited-edition drops across four categories: Green/Clean Beauty (skincare), Books (literary fiction and occasional non-fiction), Art and Cinema, and Artisanal Food.

C: What's the process of working with brands, and how do you choose them?

B: Interacting directly with the creators/founders of the products is central to Boxwalla's approach. These interactions offer insights into the brand's ethos and the passion driving their creations. The selection process for beauty brands involves

meticulous evaluation of ingredient quality and effectiveness through personal testing over time. Choosing brands for curation is an intuitive process, guided by the founders' experiences and a commitment to showcasing excellence. Each selection undergoes rigorous testing to ensure it meets the brand's standards of quality and innovation.

C: Share your experience of curating your first-ever box.

B: Curating the inaugural beauty box in December 2015 was a labour of love for us. Packing each box ourselves, we poured our passion into ensuring every detail was perfect, despite the challenges of wrapping. The positive feedback from customers affirmed our dedication and set the tone for future curations.

The debut book box, featuring Svetlana Alexievich's *Voices from Chernobyl*, faced logistical hurdles, but the eventual success encouraged the team in their curation process.

C: How does your background in neuroscience influence your approach to beauty?

B: It shapes Boxwalla's marketing strategy, emphasising authenticity over manipulation. Understanding human behaviour informs the

"The more widely we experience 'high quality things', the more discerning our 'palette' becomes."

decision to focus on immersive, transparent experiences for customers. Unlike other subscription and discovery boxes in the US, our boxes are never a surprise to our subscribers and customers. They often know the contents a month before they actually get the product.

Additionally, the concept of brain plasticity underscores the brand's mission to broaden perceptions of beauty by exposing consumers to diverse, high-quality products. With respect to beauty, the more elastic you allow your conception of beauty to be, by experiencing beauty in multiple mutable forms, the less you become constrained by the societal definitions of beauty.

C: Who is your target audience, and when did you realise you were building a community around your brand?

B: Boxwalla's target audience

encompasses curious individuals seeking excellence across featured categories. The brand consciously avoided preconceived notions, resulting in a diverse and engaged community. Early signs of community-building emerged through customer interactions and word-of-mouth referrals, culminating in rituals like the 'poem puzzle' and dedicated Reddit channels for discussing box reveals.

C: Share the defining moment of your business journey.

B: The first sale marked a pivotal moment for Boxwalla, affirming our vision and earning the trust of customers. Neither me nor my co-founder had a background in business. The fact that somebody trusted our taste enough to part with their hard-earned money was both incredibly humbling and scary, this experience spurred us to always stick to providing the absolute best for our customers.

C: What's the next big thing for Boxwalla?

B: The upcoming launch of Boxwalla India represents the brand's next significant endeavour, reflecting their excitement to bring Boxwalla home and reconnect with their roots. ■

DISRUPTORS TO LOOK OUT FOR



DESH DEEPAK SINGH
THE BIG BOOK BOX



JUE DE SOUZA
REVOLVER CLUB



NIHARIKA JHUNJHUNWALA
THE SUGAR BOX



RISHI SETH
MY ENVY BOX



SALONI PABUWALA GOYAL
PAPERPLANES