

UT Tourism presents Travel Trails

Marketing Case study competition

Indian Institute of Management Lucknow

Problem Statement:

The UP government wishes to outsource the commercialization of the Kumbh Mela, to be held in 2025. They have invited bids from various firms to decide upon the quantum and nature of marketing that can be done to ensure the best possible utilisation of the Mela's resources while generating the maximum possible revenue for the state. As point-person in one of the top marketing firms, you are required to devise the Kumbh Mela commercialization strategy to be submitted to the UP government. The objective is to maximise revenue while minimising the costs incurred. The total of costs of different avenues of marketing will be the bid amount. (Remember the bid cannot be more than Rs. 100 Crore)
P.S. Consider Quantitative and Qualitative analysis keeping in view Kumbh Mela 2025 to be organized in Allahabad only.

KUMBH MELA

Current Situation:

A massive 'pop-up mega city' is being created for the Kumbh Mela. The mega-structure is no different from any ordinary city except that it is a temporary establishment which is taken down after the conclusion of the Mela. The city houses millions of visitors who come to the Mela to take a dip in the holy waters.

The City – Planning and Development

The city spans across 1,900 hectares (4,700 acres or more than 8 square miles) and is built with roads, bridges, electric power, tiny tents, midsize tents, and impressive multi-story temples.

Some of the mega city's important tokens of engineering design are the roads, the pedestrian corrals, the water, the sanitation, the provision of electricity, the thoughtful deployment of public-private partnerships, and the land allocation necessary to support up to 200 million pilgrims.

The people who planned this pop-up city had to wait until the monsoon passed to assess the banks. They needed to understand how many hectares each Akhara required. (The Juna Akhara, the biggest, has four separate quadrants.) They had to figure out how to provide 30 MVa of power to 22,000 temporary poles (provided by a bank of diesel generators out of sight of the main event, supplementing the state grid), not to mention designing a route to the river, into the river, and out of the river for millions of pilgrims. There are more than 156 kilometres of double track checker plate steel creating drivable roads in the sand and more than 4,000 hollow steel floating pontoons supporting 18 temporary bridges spanning the Ganga and Yamuna.

Current commercialization scenario of Kumbh Mela

The Maha Kumbh Mela, which started in January in Allahabad, no longer has merely tottering stalls selling everyday products to pilgrims. It is also a place for companies manufacturing heavy equipments, construction and agricultural equipment manufacturer *JCB India* to peddle their wares priced at lakhs of rupees.

"Last time I was here in 2001, there were stalls of only consumer goods items like toothpaste." says Mr. Mehta, a pilgrim at the Kumbh Mela, Allahbad.

For many organizations, for example, JCB, the world's biggest religious festival held at regular intervals is sheer advertising nirvana. The Kumbh Mela has dependably been a major business opportunity, yet this time organization are going the additional step to advance their brands by utilizing conventional methodology and current innovation to interface with shoppers, be it white collar class travellers or ash-smearad sadhus.

"Not only are companies becoming more concerned about consumers at the Kumbh grounds but they are also realising the importance of subtlety for their services and promotions," says Pradeep Kashyap, CEO of rural marketing consultancy MART.

Mobile service provider *Vodafone India*, for instance, is reaching out to consumers by screening films and providing musical ear-muffs, wired with in-built speakers that play devotional songs. *GlaxoSmithKline* Consumer Healthcare has a basketball ring at its stall for people to shoot hoops and win free biscuits with their cups of *Horlicks* while cosmetics company *Emami Ltd* has set up massage kiosks for pilgrims to experience its *Navratna Oil* brand. It has also introduced stilt-walkers to hand out dry sampling packs.

Coca-Cola India has chosen to go high-tech and set up Wi-Fi services at 12 of its 16 stalls where people can download free Coke-Studio music and other brand content such as a new ad jingle. The strategy has paid off: it has logged more than 11,000 downloads a month since the nearly two-month fair began (52 Number of companies marketing their products at the mela).

"Drawing inspiration from the insight that the rural population loves cinema and entertainment, we decided to turn a regular stall into a cinema hall. We also handed out free passes for a film about the Kumbh," says Anuradha Aggarwal, Senior Vice President, Brand Communication and Insights, Vodafone India. (42 Number of companies at the Kumbh for the first time)

"It takes organisers 60 days to set up this mela, which has an estimated population equal to that of any of the four metros. This has always been a great place for companies to market their products," says Kashyap.

Government authorities estimate up to 30 million individuals take a plunge at the Sangam - the intersection of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati waterways - on the major Shahi Snan days. With such massive numbers of people, the Kumbh Mela is the subject of a Harvard University case study on the logistics behind the "pop-up mega-city" that comes up in Allahabad during the religious festival.

As the Kumbh Mela goes upmarket, guests don't need to grunge it out in makeshift tents any longer. For about Rs 11,000 a night, they can remain in extravagance tents offering all the common luxuries they need from tiled restrooms to buffet breakfasts. Laxmi Kutir, a private camp on a slope along the Ganga, for instance, invites gurus and guides to engage with guests and organises daily prayers for spiritually-hungry visitors.

"This is a soft padding for our Kumbh guests," says Laxmi Singh, coowner of Laxmi Kutir. "We don't want to throw them into the chaos of the Kumbh off guard."

The Kumbh Mela is seeing gigantic commercialization with the choice of the Uttar Pradesh government to offer the celebration's TV rights to huge corporates. The thought is accepted to have looked for motivation from the IPL (Indian Premier League) matches which create gigantic income for their coordinators. This year in May, the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary Jawed Usmani sent a letter instructing the local administration to 'generate revenue by auctioning advertising and telecast rights' of the mega festival which would see participation of more than 70 million people.

The auctioning of the TV rights to a specific company will lead to the infringement of a pilgrim's freedom and discretion to capture the divine moments in his or her camera. The attendee would have to pay a heavy charge to the company owning the media rights. This would certainly lead to disappointment and unrest among the participants who would want to capture the memories of the sacred festival. Additionally, the small local news channels would be debarred from telecasting the events of the Mela to its viewers. The decision is bound to impact the lives of the countless participants of the Kumbh Mela at an individual and spiritual level (For more please see Exhibit 1)

So, your job is:

To put things into perspective, imagine you have been assigned the task of devising a strategy to commercialize the Kumbh Mela. The purpose is to market the Mela in the best possible way to ensure maximum revenue for the state. You will have to think about the various possible avenues that can generate revenue. For instance, selling space for food stalls can be one possible source of revenue. As the point-person in your company, your job is to think of the most lucrative options (also keeping in mind their cost). You will also have to logically explain how a particular option can generate revenue and approximately how much revenue you are expecting from it. Logical and coherent Guess-estimation of revenue making use of the numbers given in the case and assuming some numbers could be one possible method of estimating revenue.

Don't forget

- While crunching through numbers, don't lose sight of the big picture – coming up with best possible avenues to commercialise the Kumbh Mela
- Practical implementation of the idea should be an important consideration keeping in mind the facts of the case as numbers itself wouldn't be the sole criteria of evaluation.
- Coherent and clear presentation of ideas will be factored in while evaluating your strategy.

Exhibit 1

Additional Information

About Kumbh Mela, its history and relevance in a broader perspective?

The Kumbh Mela (Allahabad) is believed to be the biggest religious gathering on earth. It is organised every 12 years on the banks of 'Sangam'- the confluence of the rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. The Mela takes place in four different cities - Nasik, Allahabad, Ujjain and Haridwar every three years. The one that is celebrated at the Holy Sangam in Allahabad is considered the largest and holiest of all. This Mela is attended by crores of devotees. A holy dip in the sacred waters of the rivers is believed to purge the soul of all sins. The Sangam comes alive during Kumbh and Ardh Kumbh with an enormous temporary township set up on the vacant land on the Allahabad side of the river.

The festival is one of the biggest gatherings in the world, and considered as the "world's largest congregation of religious pilgrims". There is no precise method of ascertaining the number of pilgrims, and the estimates of the number of pilgrims taking a dip in the holy waters on the most auspicious day may vary. Approximately 12 crore people visited Maha Kumbh Mela in 2013 in Allahabad over a two-month period, including over 3 crore on a single day i.e. 10 February 2013.

Why people visit Kumbh Mela, in such huge numbers?

It is believed that the gods and the demons battled for a pot of nectar (Amrit Kumbh), the nectar of immortality. Lord Vishnu grabbed the nectar from the demons. While fleeing from the demons, Lord Vishnu passed the nectar to his winged mount, Garuda. The demons finally caught up with Garuda and in the ensuing struggle, a few drops of the precious nectar fell on Allahabad, Nasik, Haridwar and Ujjain. Since then, the Kumbh Mela has been held in all these places, alternately, every 12 years.

Other Major Stakeholders (Not Exhaustive):

- **Health Care Interventions**
- **Water and sewage intervention**
- **Bhule Bhatke Kendra**
- **Fire Stations**



Marketing Campaign by Coca-Cola at Kumbh Mela



Marketing Campaign by Vodafone, Kumbh Mela

Submission Guidelines

Round 1:

1. A **1 page executive summary** has to be submitted. Use of tables, etc. is allowed.
2. Additional information from online and offline sources can be used to solve your case and is encouraged in order to make your plan more implementable.
3. Font style to be used is **Arial** and **font size** should be **10**.
4. The submission should be a **PDF** file.
5. The document has to be uploaded on the following link:-

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/nJP88cdBgHb0mxOqBJIt>

Naming convention to be followed: <Team Name>_<College Name>_Travel Trails_R1

Round 2 (on campus final round):

- The final presentation will be a Power-point deck (.pdf/.ppt/.pptx)
- The presentation should not be more than 5 slides.
- Further details will be informed in due course

The submissions will be evaluated on the following parameters:

- Exhaustive understanding of the case scenario and context
- Depth of analysis of industry & key challenges - Novelty, feasibility and practicality of ideas proposed
- Structure of presentation & clarity of ideas conveyed

References-

<https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/why-a-harvard-finance-instructor-went-to-the-kumbh-mela>

<http://doctorsforyou.org/files/field-report/Kumbh%20Mela%20Final%20Report.pdf>

<http://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/features/how-corporate-india-is-making-the-most-of-the-maha-kumbh/story/192380.html>