



SCOUTING & GROOMING FUTURE DIGITAL STAR'

SINCE ITS INCEPTION in 2013, One Digital Entertainment has grown to manage a repertoire of more than 3,000 content creators and partners with over 20 billion minutes of content watched on YouTube, making it **India's largest certified multi-channel network**. Currently home to some of the biggest names in the Indian media industry, One Digital Entertainment caters to content creators' every single need, from planning and strategising video content to production, syndication and distribution of the same. Founder Gurpreet Singh tells BW Businessworld that he created One Digital Entertainment with the vision "to identify and nurture artists on the digital platforms and to build not just views but hone them to transform into sustainable brands." Excerpts from an interview:

GURPREET SINGH

CATEGORY: 3-7 YEARS

One Digital Entertainment



The idea behind the startup

Along the course of my career, I have been very fortunate to work with some really talented content creators across different genres and at times have felt that there is so much more these creators can do on the digital platforms if just backed them with right resources, teams and strategy. The idea behind starting One Digital Entertainment was to support that very talent with the required resources in order to build a mutually beneficial network that could grow together — a self-sustaining digital content ecosystem. To identify and nurture artists on the digital platforms and to build not just views but hone them to transform into sustainable brands is the very vision with which One Digital Entertainment was conceived. In terms of targets we started the company with just five creators and today we are a huge family of over 1,000 creators and content partners across multiple genres like music, food, comedy, lifestyle, fashion and Bollywood engaging with 150-plus brands and delivering more than 1.5 billion video views every month. Going forward, we intend to scale a lot more by diversifying into newer genres, creating more IPs, onboarding a substantial amount of talent and penetrate into the international market.

The USP

We are the first company in India to scout and groom digital stars of the future. The cornerstone of ODE's success lies in our ability to empower our creators with multiple support functions like content strategy, production, distribution, syndication, monetisation, marketing, sales, and overall artist management. We have a brilliant team of over 40 people working with these amazing creators and delivering quality content, building their digital portfolios and monetizing their reach and content to the maximum potential while working alongside brands and platforms. I believe my partner Shabir Momin's vast

knowledge of technology and my experience in the digital content industry right from the days of creating monophonic ringtones during the early days of telecom revolution in 2002 to now when we are creating high-scale web originals has allowed us to consistently stand apart and grow immensely. We have recently joined hands with HoloSuit to soon bring the AR/VR experience to the digital creators' world. Our home-grown talent Prajakta Koli have been recognised by esteemed organisations like United Nations, YouTube, several renowned publications for her work. Our original first of its kind projects with well-known celebrities like Badshah, Raftaar, chefs Sanjeev Kapoor, Saransh Goila and many others have been garnered us love and appreciation and several awards and recognition from the industry.

WE ARE ALREADY
USING MACHINE
LEARNING AND AI IN
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AS WELL AS CONTENT
CONSUMPTION
PATTERNS.

Business model

We have a revenue share model with our creators. There is no doubt that the competition is immense with the upsurge in digital video consumption. However, with the integrated offerings of creative and tech support alongside the hybrid business model we have built, helps us to emerge as leaders.

The way forward

With the digital growth being projected to swell at the speed of light for the next few years and the upward graph of the marketing and advertising industry turning to content creation for pillar support due to the massive shift in brands allocating budgets from quintessential traditional to contemporary methods, the potential for our growth is parallel and the possibilities are endless.

Overseas foray

Yes, in fact that is one of our plans for the near future. As a matter of fact, we recently curated a successful collaboration for Simon Fuller's XIX Entertainment between interna

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Radico



tional pop group Now United and Badshah for Pepsi global and India teams. We are in the process of working on few other international projects as we speak. Setting up offices in other markets is the next step for us.

Social touch

As a company, we have always tried to push the envelope in the social spectrum by creating content that is communally relevant and can speak the stories of lives that deserve to be showcased to the world. Our original documentary web series “SOS – Survivors of Suicide” reflects the strength and throws light on the positivity of the survivors because of which they turned their life around. A few projects that reflect the understanding of ODE’s social and corporate responsibility are the one’s created by our talent Prajakta Koli like “Shameless and No Offence” that directly impact the youth of the nation and the world. “Shameless” was a project on body shaming that saw about 10,000 people writing to her about their issues just with a hope of being heard on World Mental Health Day. Prajakta further made a song called Shameless featuring some of the other influencers as well, to spread awareness about the issue.

The paradigm shift

Who would have thought that people sitting at their homes could one day record content on their mobile phones anywhere anytime and upload them online for everyone to see? This is the power of the digital revolution. There is no dearth of talent in this country and with the projected elevation in the evolution of smartphones and the penetration of high speed data, our business will continue evolving at an even higher rate.

Tech disruptions

We are already using machine learning and AI in understanding user behaviours as well as content consumption patterns. This in turn helps our creators and our internal teams to understand the reaction of the audiences better thereby enabling us to create enhanced content.

Idea of wealth generation

I feel the intellectual wealth we are creating is significant; everything else will automatically follow. The potential as mentioned above is vast and the possibilities are endless.

Our knack of identifying the nerve of the audience has led to numerous artists and content creators/agencies reaching out to us for our expertise. Our delivery of strategic collaborations have paved way for newer kinds of marketing concepts and first of its kind content. We have tried to add value to our clients’ needs via bespoke and unique strategies which have resulted in first of its kind projects and paved way for different business models. Artist management, brand collaborations and marketing, curating industry related panels and conferences, production and packaging of regular and off-beat content has opened its door to not just successful careers for full-fledged celebrities but upcoming artists and influencers too.

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Self realisation

I feel the first sign of success is when people appreciate your work or contribution. I am lucky to get a lot of that along with good guidance from the industry, my friends and my own team. I hope and pray that God continues giving me more strength to keep going and 10 years down the line I should have achieved a level of satisfaction that I have managed to impact some lives.

Message to entrepreneurs

As clichéd and repetitive as it may sound, I truly believe when they say that if you truly follow your passion and chase your dreams by setting targets and working towards them, one step at a time, then nothing is out of your reach. Celebrating your rights and learning from your wrongs, pursuing your passion with rigid commitment, the hunger to grow, to enjoy what you do, to have immense trust in yourself and your team firmly and to believe that patience and perseverance always pay no matter what, is a sure-shot concoction for success.

Dare to dream moment

My dare to dream moment happened when this one fine day in my late 20s I decided to quit my comparatively comfortable life to begin my entrepreneurial journey and start One Digital Entertainment with limited resources but a big dream to help, build and create. Today I can say that I don’t regret any of it and it was by far the best decision of my life! 

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