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The Doon School WEEKLY

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BEHIND SNAPDEAL.COM...

The Doon School Weekly interviewed Mr. Kunal Behl, Founder and CEO of Snapdeal.com, who was the Chief Guest for the recently concluded Founders' celebrations

Doon School Weekly (DSW): How did you come to the decision to start a company in the online market and what were the initial problems that snapdeal faced and any challenges these startups faced?

Kunal Behl (KNB): I always wanted to do something of my own. I just did not know where to start, when to start, how to start which is the case for most of the people. For me it was more the circumstances, I struggled sometimes. I struggled in the US while I was both working and studying there. I was disheartened when the application for my visa was rejected after all the hard-work put in by me. Once I came back to India, I decided that had two options- either to work somewhere or start a company of my own. I chose the second option, and eventually it worked out despite the challenges I faced, particularly the low support I received from those close to me. I would be approached by both my friends and family with discouragement and advice against becoming an entrepreneur. I however, chose to resist this advice and started a small company with a few staff members. Despite the hardships, we were very persistent, which is the key to overcome all challenges whilst building a business.

DSW: What would you say is the Snapdeal's differentiating factor from other e-commerce companies that exist in this world?

KNB: The e-commerce market in India, being worth over a hundred billion dollars, is extremely vast. Snapdeal, as a company, is growing faster than all other entities in the industry. The reason for this rapid growth is our optimum business model, which is that we do not own any products on our website. We are just a platform through which sellers can reach buyers, which has worked out favourably for us. A company is fundamentally burdened when it owns all or most of the inventories as they are limited by the number of products they can offer. This leads to a loss in the variety of products, as one company cannot possible own stock of most commodities. In our case we are able to offer a variety of products, thus attracting more customers. Our business is also more cost effective and efficient, as our funds are utilized on marketing strategies and technology platforms. I think the key to our company's success is that we focus primarily on the quality of our services and products, rather than adopting a business model entirely.

“I think the key to our company's success is that we focus primarily on the quality of our products, rather than adopting a business model entirely”

DSW: On the same note, has Snapdeal gone into a cash-flow positive mode in terms of operations revenue?

KNB: We base our company strategy on that of the early years of the Telecom Industry (1995-1999). They were investing in communications towers as it would enable them to generate customers. In the same manner, Snapdeal is investing in technology and marketing in order to do the same, much like any other company. After a period of time, I think that investment in these areas will no longer be required, as they will cease to have a profound effect on our revenue. That is the moment we will become cash-flow positive. However, we make a profit on products available on our website, which is the sole contributor to our annual profits.

DSW: How is Snapdeal keeping ahead of the e-commerce industry, which is characterized by its fierce competition?

(Contd. on page 3)



Regulars

BLAZERS

Arush Sood, Anant Singh Mann, Akhil Ranjan, Rishav Raj Das and Siddharth Sarin have been awarded **Games' Blazers**.

Suyash Raj Shivam, Vireshwar Singh Sidhu, Pulkit Agarwal and Gaurav Kothari have been awarded **Scholars' Blazers**.

Congratulations!

SWIMMING SUCCESS

The **School Swimming Team** participated in the **29th All India IPSC Swimming Championship (Boys)** held at **Birla Public School, Pilani** from October 8 to October 10. Nehansh Saxena won **Gold** in 50m Backstroke, **Silver** in 200m Backstroke and **Bronze** in 100m Backstroke. Rishabh Goel won **Silver** in 100m and 50m Backstroke events and **Bronze** in 200m Backstroke. Raghav Kumar won **Silver** in 200m Butterfly and **Bronze** in 100m Butterfly. Pratyaksh Parmar won **Silver** in 100m Breaststroke and Uday Nath Behl won **Bronze** in 200m Breaststroke. Nihal Singh Mann won **Bronze** in 100m Freestyle. The Under-17 Freestyle Relay Team and Medley Relay Team won **Gold** in their respective events. The school stood first in the **Under-17** Category
Well Done!

DEBATING

Chaitanya Kediya, Arth Gupta, Devansh Agarwal and Arnaav Bhavanani represented the school at the **JTM Gibson Memorial Debates** held at the **Mayo College, Ajmer**. Chaitanya Kediya was adjudged **Best Speaker** in the Semi-Final round. The School was declared **Joint Winners** along with the host school.

Well Done!

Pulkit Agarwal has been awarded **Debating Colours**.
Congratulations!

BASKETBALL

Tanvir Singh Bal, Nachiket Jain and Karan Sethy represented **Dehradun** at the **Under-16 State Basketball Tournament**, being a part of the **winning team** of the tournament. Nachiket Jain and Karan Sethy were further selected to represent **Uttarakhand** in the **Under-16 National Basketball Championship**, which lost to Himachal Pradesh in the **Semi-Finals**.

Well Done!

IAYP

Sudhansh Agarwal, Arush Sood, Sidharth Pahuja, Sachin Mehra, Rishabh Sharma, Gaurav Kothari, Divyansh Goel, Uday Rathore, Rohan Agarwal, Digvijay Gupta, Vrindam Nagpal and Aashim Bansal have been awarded the **IAYP Blazer** as they have completed **Gold, Silver** and **Bronze** levels of the award.

Congratulations!

TABLE TENNIS

Kanav Agarwal, Shrey Raj Kapoor, Chaitanya Agarwal and Vineet Puri represented the **IPSC Team** in the **60th SGFI National Table Tennis Tournament (Boys)** held at **Tadepalligudem, Andhra Pradesh** from October 2 to October 6.

The team reached the group stages where they lost to Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

Well Tried!

FOOTBALL

The results of the **Inter-House Football Competition 2014** is as follows:

Juniors	House Cup
First: Tata	First: Tata House
Second: Oberoi	Second: Hyderabad
Third: Hyderabad	Third: Oberoi
Fourth: Jaipur	Fourth: Jaipur
Fifth: Kashmir	Fifth: Kashmir

Well Done!

Seniors

First: Tata
Second: Hyderabad
Third: Oberoi
Fourth: Jaipur
Fifth: Kashmir

DRAMATICS

The following boys have been awarded **Dramatics Colours**:

Aditya Dhingra, Rishabh Sharma, Sudhansh Agarwal, Vrindam Nagpal, Mrigank Khemka
Jai Ahuja (**Re-awarded for the second time**)

Congratulations!

The Week Gone By

Rishabh Agarwal

The campus is scattered with pieces of attire of a make different than that of the regulation attire, with Blazers and Colors being handed out in handfuls. Now that the Founder's weekend is over, the disappearance of the incredibly complicated equipment belonging to the A.V. Squad comes as a relief to those of the 'performing arts' persuasion. And even though the previous week came as a disruption, the marching display by the houses and the continuing efforts of the participants in the Athletics Competition is truly commendable, not to mention well contested. Talking about contest, assemblies are loaded with anxiety, now that the various batons must be passed on to the 'industrious' hopefuls, and announcements must be made. As the end-of-term is nearing, the atmosphere is getting colder (especially for the S-Form). Lot of changes have been made in the administration of school activities; whether it is for the better or the worse, we shall find out in the course of some time. But on a grave note, Trials is not so far. Time to hit the books!

KNB: Competition is present in every industry. The only way to tackle it is through creativity and decisive execution of strategy. If a company wishes to be successful in the long run, it must take decisions that will produce benefit within an extended time frame. This often means that one must compromise on immediate gains and be willing to incur losses. Investors that approach a company are not only interested in their profit but also in long-term growth and success of the company. They are looking to build relationships and systems with a company, which is crucial building a stable and strong company. By employing this strategy, Snapdeal achieved billion dollars in sales with less than a hundred million dollars in investment. Management of capital, resources and time is also extremely important and is often the deciding factor in a company's success. In the end, all that matters is what decisions you take and how you implement them. A right combination of these will bring in prosperity.

DSW: What would you say is Snapdeal's most efficient and best marketing tactic?

KNB: I would say it is our promotion and publicity and focus on marketing. Since our revenue is mostly diverted into marketing, we are at an advantage unlike other companies. Apart from numerous commercials and advertisements, we also try to help society and let our reputation build. A few years ago, we went to a village on the outskirts of Sonapat in Haryana and installed 22 Water Tankers. The village subsequently renamed itself to 'Snapdeal.com', which heavily assisted us in our marketing. It is the small investments that we make which are the main contributors to our profits.

DSW: What exactly does the concept of snap mean?

KNB: The main criteria of us choosing a name was based on the factors that it should not be hard to pronounce and it should say what we do. Therefore the name 'snap' definitely fulfilled these criterias. However there is nothing like a good or bad name; it is the company behind the name that determines its future. It is more about the company and the decisions you make while working for the company that makes a difference and not merely the name by which it is called.

I Love My Willie

Umung D Varma reviews *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*, a play staged during the Founder's Day Celebrations

Towards the end of the first half of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [abridged]*, when the cast realizes they still have the most important play left to perform, one of the actors refuses because, "I just don't think I could do justice to it," to which the retort flies, "What are you talking about?! We don't have to do justice to it... we just have to do it!" Such is the manic meta-humor oozing through every scene of the Complete Works, and true to their word, Sahir Choudhary, Arjun Sharma and Shivam Sharma proceeded to bowdlerize Hamlet – not once, but four times – including one performance all the way through in under a minute, and then one more time, but in reverse! All evening, the Multi-Purpose Hall reverberated with laughter as the audience doubled over at the hysterics.

Of the countless gags, one in particular illustrates the performance's impact perfectly. Juliet takes in her hands Romeo's ample scabbard so as to unsheathe his sword, but what emerges is only a tiny knife. "That's Romeo for you," she laments. She then tries to stab herself repeatedly, only to find the stage prop impotent, and the spring-loaded plastic knife collapses back in on itself with every thrust. In the Hall, wives cackled knowingly, while the soon-to-be betrothed director just crossed his legs and smiled.

Last year, Shivam floored audiences in his form-fitting dress and come-hither drawl, and this year he took the drag in an opposite tack, with impeccable comedic timing prancing about the stage in a tattered wig and frumpy

“All evening, the Multi-Purpose Hall reverberated with laughter as the audience doubled over at the hysterics”

pink skirt playing every Shakespearian woman except Ophelia. For Ophelia, a sporting young lady was “volunteered” from the audience to supply a blood-curdling scream, while your humble critic was himself dragooned from the back of the Auditorium to run frantically around the stage embodying Ophelia's ego. Sahir's callisthenic fights were as pleasantly choreographed as his gyrating hips were disturbing.

But it was Arjun's semi-sincere soliloquy near the close of the show that reminded us how the Complete Works only succeeds because the source material is eternal, profound, and full of beauty.

The Arms of Death

Abhayraj Jain

He turned a corner, sweating feverishly. Though hurried, he was always cautious before being out in the open, even if for a second. I tread behind him with bated breath.. Holding up my silenced pistol, I threw a pebble down the corridor. No response. My partner inched his head forward and a moment later ...

I watched ,as if in slow motion, the bullet enter his temple. He landed 3 feet away. Without missing a beat, I threw a grenade down the aisle, and it unceremoniously blew up, taking our rival with it.

Before walking away, I looked down the aisle at what was my partner. He was lying in a bloody heap. He wasn't just my partner; he had been my best friend, my confidante, the closest I had to a life-partner. He was never meant to be my partner - I had goaded him into it; saying that nothing could happen. Now, he was collateral damage. I steeled myself; telling myself that I would grieve later. And just like that, I moved on.

Taking care of the five remaining amateur participants was a cinch. It was the one remaining professional that I had to worry about. These were his third games', and I couldn't hope to compete with his cold blooded experience and clinical efficiency. As I stalked the dark hallways for signs of him, I began to see taunts from him addressed to any other professional who happened to see them, i.e., me. They were subtle, yet apparent to the trained eye. His symbol, a perfect white rose, was everywhere. On some tortured emotional level, his psychotic brain considered himself akin to an unblemished white rose, even with all the blood on his hands. In the last game, he had single-handedly wiped out every other participant with just a knife. But that wasn't enough for him. He had mutilated their bodies and had carved a rudimentary flower on each one's torso. When journalists questioned him, his scarred face contorted into a grimace. Or it could have been a smile; difficult to tell.

While hunting the amateurs, I began to see a white rose right after scoring a kill. My last kill had been unclean, as I underestimated him, and let his feint trick me. His knife had nicked me on my arm. I killed him with three shots to the head and five to the heart, snapping his neck for good measure. When I turned, the inevitable white rose had a spot of blood on it's topmost petal. That one I pocketed as a reminder to be careful – it was a direct message that even the slightest mistake destroyed perfection.

After all the amateurs were dead, I looked at my spoils. Most functional among them had been the night vision and thermal vision helmet attachments. I took only those, and carefully headed to the vantage point I had been trained to look for, at the top of the building.

I approached the point, looking at the resulting green world for the slightest movement that might give him away. I didn't expect to see anything, he was far too good for that, but I'd be damned before I overestimated him. So I waited.

After a quarter of an hour had passed, I realized that time was running low: I had only 5 minutes to kill him or for him to kill me, and exit the building before it exploded with us inside.

It was then when it all became clear. His plan was just this – he would wait outside my hideout for me to come out, looking for him.. He would then kill me and escape, probably flashing that very same grimace at the press waiting outside.

I looked at the door with renewed fear, knowing Death lurked outside. No matter, Death had also made its appearance in my pistol. I checked the magazine – one last vial of Death to deal out; I had to make it count.

I shuddered, looked at my watch, and sighed: 3 minutes and counting. It was now or never. I yanked the door open and ducked behind the frame. Right on cue, a .44-caliber slug went screaming past my head. Without a pause, I pointed my gun in the direction of the wall and squeezed the trigger.

A satisfying grunt let me know that my bullet had found its mark. Without flinching, I charged out with my knife drawn, a roar erupting from my lungs. All combat training went out the window, and I used brute force to drive the knife into the first body part I saw. Pushing him aside, I yanked my knife clear, and without even stopping to check for a pulse, I ran.

I ran. I ran full tilt for the exit, only to find it barred and just a minute left. There was a biometric lock on it, and it didn't respond to my handprint.

I used the only method I could think of – I stabbed it. I stabbed it repeatedly until my hand was dead . The door, thankfully, slid open, and I half-ran, half-fellout, with no time to spare. I had barely scrambled to safety when the building came crashing down behind me.

I should have felt proud. Happy. Tired. Or at least glad to be alive. But I didn't. All I felt was soul-crushing pain. When I stood, the waiting press ran towards me, ready to record a sound byte from the victor of the closest ,AoD game. Every time someone went inside, less of him came out. Only one thought ran through my head – there is no victor. There is never a victor.

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