Case Study on Pohewala.com The Pohewala Story

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Abstract:

Pohewala.com is a well-known e-commerce site that has achieved notable success and recognition in the cutthroat internet business. This case study explores the development and methods used by Pohewala.com to become a successful online retailer. This research attempts to offer important insights into the elements influencing the company's ongoing growth and market leadership by analyzing its history, business strategy, marketing approaches, and customer interaction techniques.

The case study opens with a description of the e-commerce environment, noting the potential and difficulties faced by companies operating in this market. The development of Pohewala.com is then followed, offering insight on the founders' original business plans and ambition. The report also analyses the platform's distinctive selling points, namely a wide range of products a wide selection, an easy-to-use interface, and effective supply chain management.

This case study also examines Pohewala.com's marketing tactics, which include social media interaction, digital marketing, and consumer loyalty programmes. It assesses how these activities affect client acquisition, retention, and brand awareness. The study also examines how data analytics and artificial intelligence might be used to improve customer experience and streamline operations.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, start up, turnover, food business

The Pohewala Story

Introduction:

India offers an array of ethnic along with Western snack products. Earlier, many Indian households prepared traditional snacks at home to enjoy between meals or while traveling. Nowadays, changing lifestyles, convenience, and increasing disposable income have augmented on-the-go and ready-to-eat snack products. Moreover, the industry's innovation for new products with unique tastes and flavors for the customers is influenced by the diverse food culture of India. With population increase, hunger pangs in urban and rural districts of India are growing every year. Taste is an important factor, and snacks or nashta is one satisfying meal which can be consumed any time of the day. The industry is predicted to grow at 15-16% CAGR in the next two to three years. In India, the snacks market is divided between organised and unorganised players. The unorganised snack sector is contributing about 40% to this category. The organised western salty snack segment is estimated at about Rs 240 billion and projected to grow 14-15% for next two to three years.

Poha has always won the hearts of people in India. Each region has its own type, preference and toppings to go with it. The thinking behind Pohewala was to introduce this humble dish that is full of nutrition and easily fills up, at an odd hour of the day hence delivering 24 x 7, bringing at your doorsteps through Swiggy, Zomato & Pohewala Own Delivery. Complimenting each order with a free bottle of water, we at Pohewala works around the 'customer satisfaction' only. The idea behind the concept was always to provide nutritious food at reasonable costs. ''Food that could be served at any hour, Food that would relish the Indian palates, Food that would be ideal for all ages, Food that would be good for the stomach, Food that would be common, Food that could be served at an uncommon hour''.

The journey of entrepreneurship started around 6 years ago when Chahul (Co-owner, Pohewala) stepped into the industry with a hard goal to achieve success at any cost. His focus and efforts soon turned into results with his successful venture Parkingwala.With his experience in the business field, he always wanted to do something for the people, that would define bliss. And that's when Pohewala came into existence along with **Pawan** (Co-owners, Pohewala) who shared the same intention. The owners wanted to touch people's hearts through their entrepreneurial interests, and food was the way that made their dream into a reality. A dream with the aim to bring smiles on people's faces and satisfaction to their stomachs with 24 outlets in Nagpur city offering different varieties of poha like tarri poha, Indori poha, paneer poha and so on.

It has been 6 yrs of commencement, Chahul and Pawan were worried about how to deliver Poha to customers with good quality, less price and hygienic ambience. With mouthwatering varieties of Pohe, they were able to reach a turnover of Rs. 45 lakhs per outlet and earn an operating profit margin of 25-30%.

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Key Issues:

Market competition: Analyze the competitive landscape and identify competitors.

Customer satisfaction: Assess customer feedback, satisfaction levels, and areas for improvement.

Operational challenges: Address any logistical or operational issues the company faces, such as supply chain management or delivery efficiency.

Growth strategies: Explore opportunities for expansion, new markets, or product/service diversification.

Technology integration: Evaluate the role of technology in the company's operations and its impact on business processes.

Financial performance: Examine the company's financial health, revenue growth, profitability, and any financial challenges it encounters. There is a deviation with respect to turnover and profit margin.

Nature of problems

1.   Technical Challenges:

   •   Website downtime or slow loading times affecting user experience.
   •   Security vulnerabilities leading to data breaches or unauthorized access.
   •   Compatibility issues with different devices and browsers.

2.   Logistical Issues:

   •   Inefficient order processing and fulfillment leading to delays.
   •   Inventory management problems causing stockouts or overstocking.
   •   Delivery delays or issues with logistics partners impacting customer satisfaction.

3.   Customer Service Problems:

   •   Inadequate support channels or long response times to customer queries.
   •   Difficulty in handling returns, refunds, or exchanges.
   •   Poor communication regarding order status or updates.

4.   Competitive Pressures:

   •   Intense competition from established players or new entrants in the market.
   •   Pricing pressures affecting profit margins.
   •   Difficulty in differentiating products or services from competitors.

5.   Marketing and Branding Challenges:

   •   Limited brand awareness or visibility in target markets.
   •   Ineffective marketing strategies or campaigns.
   •   Negative reviews or publicity impacting brand reputation.

6.   Regulatory and Compliance Issues:

   •   Non-compliance with data protection regulations (e.g., GDPR, CCPA).
   •   Legal challenges related to product safety, labeling, or advertising.
   •   Taxation or regulatory changes affecting business operations.

7.   Financial Concerns:

   •   Cash flow problems due to seasonality or irregular revenue streams.
   •   High overhead costs affecting profitability.
   •   Difficulty in securing funding or investment for growth initiatives.

8.   Organizational and HR Challenges:

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- • Talent acquisition and retention issues, particularly in technical or specialized roles.
- • Lack of employee training or skill development programs.
- • Internal conflicts or communication breakdowns impacting team productivity.

9. Market Trends and External Factors:

- • Changes in consumer preferences or shopping habits.
- • Economic downturns or fluctuations affecting consumer spending.
- • Technological advancements disrupting traditional business models.

10. Ethical and Social Responsibility Concerns:

- • Sustainability issues in the supply chain or product sourcing.
- • Ethical dilemmas related to marketing practices or treatment of employees.
- • Lack of corporate social responsibility initiatives impacting brand perception.

Objectives:

1. To delve into real-world situations or problems, and to better understand the complexities and nuances of food businesses.
2. To bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and practical application and fostering a deeper understanding of how concepts work in real life.
3. To identify the key issues and formulate solutions or recommendations.
4. To offer a more holistic understanding of the situation.

Report Summary

Pohewala.com is a process based business ensuring no change in taste in different outlets. The different outlets work in shift of 8 hours daily. 6 Persons work in one shift. According to the owner there is no competition as he believes in unique concept**.**

SWOC analysis is a strategic planning tool used to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of a business or project. The SWOC analysis of the firm depicts the following.

Strengths:

Unique Selling Proposition (USP): Pohewala.com sets apart from competitors as there is uniformity in taste. Pohewala.com have a recognizable brand which leads to customer loyalty. The website is easy to navigate and user-friendly interface can enhance the user experience.

Weaknesses:

They do not have standard operating procedure for service and production.

Opportunities:

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Market Growth: Capitalizing on a growing market can lead to expansion as getting franchisee enquiry from all over India.

Challenge:

Competition: Intense competition from established players or new entrants can threaten the market share.

Changing Consumer Preferences: Shifts in consumer preferences and trends can impact the demand for the product offerings.

Economic Factors: Economic downturns or fluctuations can lead to reduced consumer spending, affecting the sales. With the existing low costs and good ambience surviving in the market is challenging.

Recommendations :

Based on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges outlined for Pohewala.com, here are some recommendations to consider:

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Address the weakness of lacking SOPs for both service and production. Developing clear and consistent standard operating procedures will ensure uniformity in taste and service quality. This will also facilitate training for new employees and help maintain a high level of quality as the business expands.

Franchisee Expansion: Leverage the opportunity presented by franchisee inquiries from various parts of India. This can help you scale the business while maintaining consistency in taste and customer experience across different locations.

 Market Research: Monitor the market closely to identify emerging trends and changing consumer preferences.

Online Presence and User Experience: Continue to focus on your user-friendly website interface. Enhance your online presence by leveraging social media platforms and online marketing strategies. This can help you reach a larger audience and engage with potential customers.

Quality Control and Training: Invest in robust quality control mechanisms to ensure consistency in taste and service. Additionally, provide thorough training to your staff to maintain high standards in customer service and production.

Remember, success in the market requires adaptability, continuous improvement, and a customer-centric approach. By addressing weaknesses, capitalizing on opportunities, and proactively tackling challenges, you can position Pohewala.com for sustained growth and market leadership.

Conclusion:

The case study discusses Pohewala.com's struggles and setbacks, including competitiveness, cybersecurity risks, and scaling concerns. It looks into how the business overcame these difficulties and modified its tactics to achieve long-term viability and expansion in the dynamic e-commerce business in obtaining and sustaining success.

In conclusion, the case study of Pohewala.com offers insightful information for prospective business owners, e-commerce professionals, and market researchers. It emphasizes the value of innovation, customer focus, and tactical agility.

Teaching Notes:

Summary of the case

The case study examines the rise of Pohewala.com, an e-commerce platform that has carved a niche in the competitive online retail market. It traces the company's evolution, from its inception to its current status as a prominent player in the industry.

Initially, the case outlines the challenges and opportunities present in the e-commerce landscape, setting the stage for Pohewala.com's journey. The founders' ambitious vision and strategic planning are highlighted as key drivers behind the platform's success.

Pohewala.com distinguishes itself through a diverse product range, user-friendly interface, and efficient supply chain management. These elements contribute to its appeal and competitive advantage in the market.

The case also delves into Pohewala.com's marketing strategies, which encompass social media engagement, digital marketing campaigns, and customer loyalty programs. These initiatives have played a crucial role in acquiring and retaining customers while enhancing brand recognition.

Furthermore, the study explores the potential of data analytics and artificial intelligence in optimizing customer experience and operational efficiency within Pohewala.com's ecosystem. By leveraging data-driven insights and innovative technologies, the platform aims to stay ahead of evolving consumer trends and market dynamics.

Overall, the case underscores Pohewala.com's strategic approach to e-commerce, emphasizing its commitment to customer satisfaction, innovation, and sustainable growth in an ever-changing digital landscape.

Teaching objectives and target audience

Teaching Objectives:

1. Understanding E-Commerce Dynamics: To educate students or professionals about the opportunities and challenges present in the e-commerce landscape, with a focus on factors influencing market growth, customer behaviour, and competitive strategies.

2. Analysing Business Success Factors: To help learners analyse the critical success factors behind the growth and success of e-commerce platforms like Pohewala.com, including

strategic planning, product differentiation, marketing tactics, and customer engagement strategies.

3. Exploring Marketing and Customer Engagement: To delve into various marketing techniques and customer engagement strategies employed by e-commerce platforms, including social media marketing, digital advertising, and loyalty programs, and assess their effectiveness in acquiring and retaining customers.

4. Utilizing Data Analytics and Technology: To understand the role of data analytics, artificial intelligence, and technology in optimizing customer experiences, streamlining operations, and gaining actionable insights to drive business growth and innovation in e-commerce.

5. Promoting Critical Thinking and Decision-Making: To foster critical thinking skills by encouraging learners to analyse case studies, evaluate business strategies, and make informed decisions regarding market opportunities, competitive positioning, and future growth prospects in the e-commerce sector.

Target Audience:

1. Students: Undergraduate or graduate students pursuing degrees in business administration, marketing, e-commerce, or related fields who seek to understand the dynamics and best practices of e-commerce business models and digital marketing strategies.

2. Professionals: Marketing professionals, e-commerce managers, entrepreneurs, and business leaders interested in enhancing their knowledge and skills in e-commerce strategy, digital marketing, customer engagement, and leveraging technology for business growth.

3. Entrepreneurs: Individuals planning to start or scale their e-commerce ventures who wish to gain insights into successful business models, effective marketing tactics, and strategies for building and sustaining a competitive advantage in the digital marketplace.

4. Researchers and Academics: Scholars, researchers, and educators exploring topics related to e-commerce, digital marketing, consumer behaviour, and technological innovations in business who aim to deepen their understanding and contribute to academic discourse in the field.

Analysis

The case study of Pohewala.com offers a comprehensive analysis of the entrepreneurial journey undertaken by the co-owners, detailing their transition from a successful parking venture to establishing an e-commerce platform specializing in the sale of poha, a traditional Indian dish. Through a SWOC analysis, the case identifies key internal strengths such as a unique selling proposition (USP) centered around uniform taste and brand recognition, alongside weaknesses like the absence of standard operating procedures. External opportunities such as market growth and franchise inquiries are juxtaposed with challenges such as intense competition and shifting consumer preferences. The recommendations provided focus on addressing these

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weaknesses and capitalizing on opportunities, including the development of SOPs, expansion through franchising, and enhancing online presence and user experience. The case underscores the importance of innovation, customer-centricity, and strategic agility in navigating the dynamic e-commerce landscape, offering valuable insights for entrepreneurs and business professionals seeking to thrive in competitive markets

Overall, the case study of Pohewala.com offers valuable insights into the dynamics of e-commerce entrepreneurship, strategic management, and the challenges and opportunities inherent in the food industry. It serves as a comprehensive resource for entrepreneurs, business professionals, and researchers interested in exploring the complexities of building and scaling a successful online venture in the competitive market landscape.

Teaching approach and strategy: To teach this case study of pohewala.com we can used any of the following teaching approach and strategy to make it engaging and interesting.

Interactive Discussion: Begin by engaging students in an interactive discussion about entrepreneurship, e-commerce, and the food industry. Encourage students to share their insights and experiences related to starting and managing a business.

Case Introduction: Introduce the case study of Pohewala.com, providing background information about the co-owners, their entrepreneurial journey, and the business model of the company. Highlight the key objectives, issues, and findings outlined in the case.

SWOC Analysis: Break down the SWOC analysis presented in the case study and discuss each component (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges) with the students. Encourage critical thinking by asking students to identify additional factors that could impact the business.

Group Activity - Recommendations: Divide students into small groups and assign each group one of the recommendations outlined in the case study. Have groups brainstorm strategies for implementing the recommendation effectively, considering potential barriers and feasibility.

Role-Playing Exercise: Conduct a role-playing exercise where students assume the roles of the co-owners of Pohewala.com. Present them with hypothetical scenarios and challenges faced by the business, such as a new competitor entering the market or a decline in customer satisfaction. Encourage students to brainstorm solutions and make strategic decisions.

Case Analysis and Debate: Have students analyze the recommendations provided in the case study and critically evaluate their effectiveness. Encourage debate and discussion about alternative approaches and potential trade-offs associated with each recommendation.

Guest Speaker or Industry Expert: Invite a guest speaker or industry expert from the e-commerce or food industry to share their insights and experiences related to entrepreneurship, business strategy, and market dynamics. This can provide students with valuable perspectives and real-world examples.

Reflection and Conclusion: Conclude the case study by facilitating a reflection session where students share their key takeaways, lessons learned, and areas for further exploration. Encourage students to relate the insights gained from the case study to broader concepts in entrepreneurship and strategic management.

By following this teaching approach and strategy, students can gain a deeper understanding of entrepreneurship, e-commerce, and strategic decision-making while honing their analytical and problem-solving skills in a practical context.

Feedback:

The case study of Pohewala.com provided a comprehensive exploration of the e-commerce landscape, offering valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities inherent in online retail. Engaging in discussions surrounding Pohewala.com's strategic evolution allowed for a deeper understanding of key concepts such as supply chain management, marketing strategies, and the integration of data analytics in decision-making processes. The case study effectively bridged theoretical knowledge with practical application, fostering critical thinking and analytical skills development. However, to further enhance the learning experience, incorporating more real-time industry data and providing additional guidance on analysis techniques could enrich students' ability to apply course concepts to real-world scenarios. Overall, the case study significantly contributed to students' understanding of e-commerce dynamics and strategic considerations in the digital marketplace.

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