



**INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT**

**MBA FT 2019-2021**

**Summer Internship Project**

**With**



Submitted by:

**Divya Punjabi(191421)**

*Pulse Sports Pvt. Ltd. (Sports365)*

Submitted to - **Prof. P.K. Yadav**

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## **TITLE PAGE**

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<b>Project Title</b>	<b>A Study on Sales Strategy and Channel Partnership with school365 - A new wing of sports365</b>
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<b>Purpose of Report</b>	Submitted as partial fulfilled of the requirement of the MBA Course (2019 - 21)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The internship opportunity with **Sports365** was great chance for learning and professional development. I want to thank IMNU for giving me permission to commence this project, to do necessary work and tasks.

No work can be carried out without the help and guidance of various people. I am happy to take this opportunity to express gratitude to those who have been helpful to me in completing this project.

I would like to express my gratitude to **Mr. Ashish Bhiwani, Sales Manager & Operations head, Ms. Upasana Bhat, HR Manager** who in spite of being extraordinarily busy with their duties, took time out to hear, guide and keep me on the correct path during hard times with work from home. They constantly motivated me to overcome the hurdles and difficulties in the project.

I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude and special thanks to **Mr. P.K. Yadav** for giving me these opportunities to learn even during these pandemic conditions.

Lastly I would like to thank my parents, friends, fellow interns who encouraged me to do this project work efficiently. I am bound to senior batch students for their stimulating support.

**Divya Punjabi**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2-months Summer Internship Program at Institute of Management, Nirma University is a vital part of the 2-year MBA Course. The SIP adds worth to our CV by giving us immense learning about the corporate world. I got opportunity to work with one of India's 1<sup>st</sup> sports and fitness company SPORTS365 through our campus placement. In this report I am going to share some of my experiences and learning while working with Sports365 from 01-05-2020 to 30-06-2020. I am working as role of Management Trainee - Sales for project titled **“A Study on Sales Strategy and channel Partnership with school365”**. I was responsible to help company for their new product line called as School365. Company is looking forward to start E-commerce for school related products likes - Uniform, Bags, toys and school accessories etc. They have tie-ups with 150-200 schools where they are supplying sports products and now company want to serve these schools with new product category. So my role is to analyze this new product category, its potential growth and help company to launch it successfully.



## UNDERTAKING

I, Divya Punjabi, here by declare that my Summer Internship Report, submitted in partial fulfillment of the Summer Internship Program is original and is not substantially the same as one which has already been submitted in part or in full for any such similar qualification to the University to the best of my knowledge.

**Name** - Divya Punjabi

**Roll No** - 191421

**Section** - D

**Batch** - MBA - FT (2019-2021)

**Signature** -



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Sports365, India's premier sports and fitness company, resulted as collaborative effort of experienced management professionals with passion for sports, The founders of Sports365 are having professional experience of 25+ years across leading companies like Mckinsey & Co, P&G and KPMG with strong education from NITs and IIMs. The company is supported by sports & fitness icons like Mahesh Bhupathi, Yuvraj Singh & Lara Dutta.

Sports365 operates various online portals like **Sports365.in**, **Tennis365.in**, **Running365.in** & many more which are the preferred choice for the sports lovers in India.

**Vision-** Born out of passion for sports, the company's vision is **"To be the first port of call for sports and fitness related needs"** for individuals and institutions.

**Market & Scope of business-** To provide one stop solutions for the sporting requirements through hybrid business solutions through e-commerce and to institutions like Clubs & Academies, Schools & Colleges, Premier sporting event, corporate and many more. Some of the products/services offered to different institutions include sports goods, sports merchandise design, development and distribution, sports infrastructure and events. So company is trying to cover huge market space through hybrid business models.

**Age of Company - 8 years, 8 months, 26 days**



***Mr. Aashutosh Chaudhari, Vice President***



***Mr. Chandra Sekhar Reddy, CEO***



## School365

### India's largest edu-commerce platform

With 230 million students, India is one of the largest K12 markets (kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> standard) in the world. Approximately 170 million students belong to public schools and the rest of the students belong to private schools. The private school segment is growing at a rate of over 20% on year on year basis. It is evident that K12 segment is a massive opportunity space in India.

Schools365 is envisaged to tap into this massive opportunity – a digital platform designed to service the needs of consumers of K12 segment in India. The consumer needs fall across several categories – school uniform, shoes, books, stationery, bags & accessories, e-learning and more.

Within each segment several opportunities exist; few of them being distribution, private labels, discovery etc. The platform itself has the potential to attract plethora of education focused products and service providers as potential advertisers.

Thanks to the early recognition of this opportunity space and the steps the company took, Sports 365 has a huge number of promised clients of Schools and School students in and around Bengaluru and Hyderabad who avail their services.

Sports 365's vision is to target K12 students and expand its market and customer base in India. K12 stands at \$ 1.53 million in 2018 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 0.29% to reach \$ 1.55 million by 2024 with an increase in private schools. Because of this reason, Sports 365 started their new segment - Schools 365 which would provide school students with required materials like school bags, uniforms, shoes, school accessories and e-learning education platforms.

This project is conducted in order to analyse the potential in this new markets the company is trying to enter as well as to build a pipeline and steady network of vendors and partners who have good relations with schools. It will also help in evaluating the various ideas used by the company in enhancing customer satisfaction and profit generation.





## Context of Organization

Sports365 is India's first professionally run integrated Sports & Fitness goods company. Sports365 is an amalgamation of an experienced professional team, India's best known sporting icons & industry experts to drive sporting revolution in India. Incorporated in 2012, Sports365 operates on a very unique hybrid business model with the mission to become the first port of call for sports & fitness needs of consumers in India. Some of the services offered to institutions include sports goods, sports merchandise design, development and distribution, sports infrastructure, events and consulting. The company has received several accolades and has been identified as one of the Top 50s start-ups of India.

I was working in the marketing department of company. Like any other organization, this department is responsible for promoting services offered by company. But the unique proposition is that the this department tries to maintain relationship with vendors and clients. The team has not only has helped to increase the brand awareness but also worked on campaigns in school to make students understands the importance of sports. Every person in department is having **Never Give Up** attitude like any sports person have. The team was good in sports as in business acumen.

I was working with Sales manager of Hyderabad and HR manager of Bangalore. Both were having equal understanding of company. It seems everyone in organization gets equal chance to grow. This department is responsible for creating various strategies to increase the revenues for the company. Team is responsible for working on both end of funnel that is they help in on-boarding vendors for supply and also help in converting customers (Specially Schools). We as a team were now working on new products like i.e., school365. Ideally my internship was of field work but because of pandemic we need to work from home. So it was new for company also. They were equally worried about our internships. But team helped us in smooth on-boarding with introduction to company and management. The main focus on was learning than just completing work.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **A. Ethnographic Study (collecting information as a participant observer)**

Proper research is very important for market mapping process especially when any company is trying to enter in new segment. Schools as a client was not new for company but school accessories as products is new for them. So as a part of my internships, the following were the key research areas -

1. Impact of Covid-19 on school accessories products and its retails sales
2. Opportunities for school accessories market
3. Competitors and E-commerce selling schools related products
4. Critical success factors and key risk areas for sports365
5. Understanding the feasibility factors for company to enter in this segment

**Data collection plan:** The secondary data is being collected by doing some market research in the websites like India-mart, SchoolKart, Amazon, Flipkart, etc regarding product categories and then, listing out the collection of brands that consists of both local and well-established ones which can be potential clients of Schools 365.

Other data sources includes Reports and Text books,

This data was further used for generating leads of vendors and in strategy making

### **B. Maintenance of Dairy (given below is an illustrative list of issues the I have keep tracked of)**

#### **❖ Company- image from Inside**

The difficult task for company at-present is to tackle competition and get funding. The competition has already affected their revenues. So working as intern I can say the company is struggling for generating good numbers as sales. The struggle has increased more with Covid-19. Their logistics and operations are affected during lockdown period. Their plan for launching school365 this year might get delayed.



But the positive part is every employee is working hard. All team members are involved in decision making. No matter what situation is they try best to make company successful.

#### ❖ **Employee Satisfaction -**

I was mostly interacting with team members of marketing department. I understood the working on field sales is not easy task. Apart from hard skills like communications and product understanding, it also requires patience, positive thinking, motivation. Many times we had to face the rejections from clients. So sometimes it lead to frustrations also. But still all team member were working hard for company because they were satisfied. The roles and responsibilities given to all were unique and worth for growth in career. The healthy working environment was the result of employee satisfaction.

I wished I could have got chance to work with them on field.

#### ❖ **Effectiveness of instruments for motivating employees -**

Company believes in team work but when it comes to motivation, it tries to motivate individuals rather than the team. They celebrate each success together. Whenever any intern or sales representative successfully converted lead than whole team used to congratulate. Sr. Manager used to praise interns which lead to sense of gratitude. The interesting technique for me was that mentor or guide never used to give solutions to our problems. The intention was to let us take lead and work in our own ways. So this was their internal strategy to evaluate interns.

#### ❖ **Work Culture -**

The unique proposition for this company is its Team. Everyone coming from varied sports background like cricket, basket-ball, football etc. The company is supported by Mr. Yuvraj Singh. This sporting mindset of company helped in shaping the organization's culture. While having meeting we used to interact on sports topics. This lead to positive and friendly environment in company. Every person try to relate their game at play-ground with game at work-place. The skills of sports like single-minded focus, multi-dexterity, perfection, team play, discipline helped in shaping the work-culture of company. Management of company believes in **"The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime."** this lead to team culture build on positive energy, inclusivity, collaboration and supportiveness.

## ❖ Sources for opportunities for company -

### 1. Enter in new place -

Company has tie-up with schools of Bangalore and Hyderabad only. With the huge potential for this segment, company need to cover more cities. They can use USP of one stop solutions for all sports and school related equipments.

Tier-1 cities such as Bangalore, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai are dominating online sales of school related products in 2017, with 45% approx market share. Market in other cities is expected to increase with fastest growing e-commerce consumer base.

### 2. E-learning opportunities -

We can say that, E-learning space has seen tremendous growth in this pandemic. Providing E-learning solutions can help company to increase its brands awareness and also allow to grow. All the educational needs from academic kit (Books, E-learning CDs, Videos etc) to school essential supplies can be facilitated through one platform. This will eliminate wastage of parents' time and energy and provide hassle free services.

### 3. Consultation & Supply for Gym Equipments -

We are aware of fact that home fitness equipment witnesses a spike in demand as gyms are closed in order to prevent spread of virus. So this is good opportunity for company to supply gym related machines. The shift towards home gyms has contributed to 300% to 400% increase in demand and sales of fitness equipment used in home gyms, both offline and online. Dumbles, light rods, plates, treadmills and basic gym equipment demands are so high that its difficult to meet with requirement. These space of business is competitive with presence of local players but company can work on several marketing strategies, product innovation and partnership with different companies to expand the product portfolio.



## ❖ **Issues for future competitions -**

### **1. Accepting local players than E-commerce platform -**

The end customers for school365 are not students but their parents. Traditionally parents avoid buying products online. The market share is generally with local unorganized players who basically provide cheap, non-branded and low quality products to the customers. The usual e-commerce portals are not primarily focused on children's requirements and personalized school supplies.

#### **Recommendation -**

Company need is to overcome these challenges through a single efficient platform by bringing everything under one umbrella so that the learning & development services and information become affordable and accessible.

### **2. Competitions in presence of E-commerce giants like Amazon, Schoolkart -**

Indian are price sensitive but are ready to spend more if dependable products are offered. But the purchasing behavior of the customer towards school related products is that of rawness that depend on variety of products or the correct usage of the product available in the market. So it is necessary to provide the good quality and large variety of products. Amazon is still not known for E-commerce of school supplies. School365 can dominate in this space.

Schoolkart is known for school supplies vary from books, lunchboxes, water bottles to uniform. But after having small research about it, I can have customers are not happy with products and delivery systems of schoolkart. The ratings are low and reviews are very poor. So school365 can seize this opportunity and provide best quality products on time.

#### **Recommendation -**

Company need to build good network of distributors & dealers providing quality of products. Prominent players supplying good quality of stationary products are Luxor, Office Linc, Odyssey etc.

### **3. Low Cost products and price variance-**

The school supplies products are generally low cost & non-banded products. The advertisement spending is very low in this industry; it is difficult to attract the customers to buy a particular product. Local players and retailer deal without any proper billing process and sell products at cheap prices, whereas, school365 have to go through proper billing and taxation, which creates a huge gap between the prices of the two sectors.

#### **Recommendation -**

School365 need to work on pricing strategies and margins. Advertising is must to compete with local players and to create the brand awareness. So it cannot avoid marketing and advertising just to increase its profit.

#### **❖ Discussible Vs Non-discussible Issues -**

- High growth potential
- Price variance
- Internal conflicts
- Funding issues

#### **❖ Early warning signs -**

- Low brand awareness
- High frequency of bad reviews on sports365 portal
- Less social media presence
- Issue of work-life balance of employees

## PROJECT WORK

### ❖ General Objective -

To study ways to build and maintain channel partners and to analyse sustainable business expansion strategies.

### ❖ Specific objectives:

- Assess the market potential of the category – School supplies by conducting a comprehensive market study in India.
- Create a pipeline of database for vendor on-boarding.
- To study the effectiveness of channel partners in trade.
- The study also includes about Competition analysis for School365
- To comment on critical success factors and key risk areas.
- Develop a go-to-market strategy for the same category by identifying and recommending opportunity spaces which the company should pursue.

### ❖ Market Mapping Process -

The process includes the analysis of Industry and demand drivers. After conducting research I can say that industry is dominated by local suppliers and working in unorganized sectors. Factors like lack of modern facilities for production and manufacturing, un-organised nature of dealing with business and functioning, average demands for products are largely contributing for avoiding businesses entering in this industry space.

The demand drivers includes following points -

- Modern-Day Education
- Development of educational Infrastructure
- Increase of government incentives of educational institutes
- Rise in disposable income
- Requirement of high degree of personalized school products

It can be concluded that in order to make school365 successful, company needs to understand that **“Consumers want a wide variety of choices from private label/branded, domestic/international etc”**

## Key pointers -

- Some of the reports indicate that parents plan to spend 56% of their budget of school related products in in-store purchase and 29% online with the remaining 15% up with undecided local shops.
- Price, Product and Convenience are the top attributes that are driving purchase decisions of school supplies.
- Price is the most important consideration for shoppers followed by product & convenience. So while designing price strategies company need to keep in mind the products should be affordable in order to get good market share. Price includes Competitive prices, price matching and sales and discounts. Product includes brand, Product quality. Convenience include free shipping, everything on one platform.
- As schools and individual shoppers are the customers for school365



### Price



### Product



### Convenience

Expectations of Individual Shoppers	Low prices, more deals and coupons	Wide variety of products	Easy payment modes and delivery options
Expectations of Schools	Cheap products & off brands	Provide as per specific shopping list given by school	Keep items available in-stocks in summer for schools.

- ✓ Peak period for shopping of school supplies is June-August. Shoppers generally start shopping approximately four to six weeks before school starts.



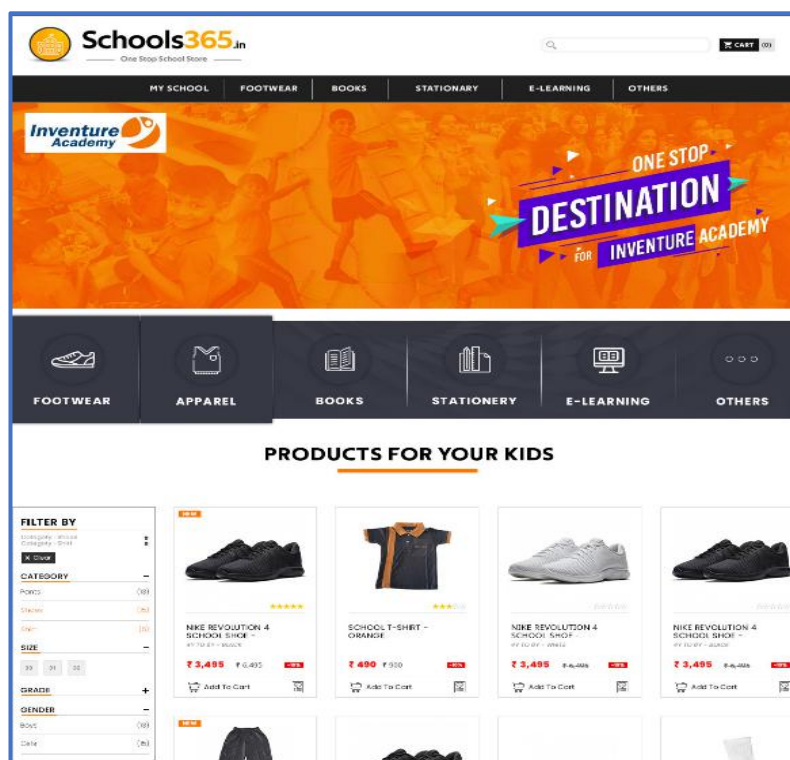
## ❖ To Categorize the products -

For 2<sup>nd</sup> week we were given task to study different E-commerce sites and come up with what ways company should categorize its products on E-commerce website. So in team we divided ourselves according to products we want to work on. The product category include - K-12 Books, K-12 stationary, school bags, school Uniform, school Footwear, E-learning. I was taking care for Bags as product category. I studied about Amazon and Flipkart product categorization in detail. This process is also called **Product Taxonomy**. I did proper website analysis to understand how product Taxonomy can be done.

- The categorization needs to efficient that can make sense to customers and lead to conversion. I worked on category tree which follows clear hierarchy, moving from the general to specific.
- Product categorization has 3 elements **1. Categories & Sub- categories 2. Attributes 3. Values.**
- The right no of categories / Sub-categories lead to high site ranking for certain key-words.

I worked on categorization on basis of accessories, features, themes, school kids bags, brands and pricing.

At the end of week we as a team came up with different ways of categorizing products in 1 particular product category. We made a report and presented to company with our recommendations.



## ❖ Process for Channel Partnership

- A database was created consisting of details of manufacturers belonging to the assigned category.
- This database was created using the secondary data available on websites like JustDial and Indiamart.com. Furthermore, I also collected data from websites like Schoolkart and Amazon who provide details of vendors and manufacturers along with the listed products. This helps us get a set of manufacturers who are already fairly familiar with the process.
- Before contacting these vendors and manufacturers, an outreach plan was created highlighting the approach I would take while talking to the vendors and manufacturers. Areas including communication plan, information to be delivered, information to be collected and client relationship were addressed.
- Upon creating a steady pipeline of database of vendors and manufacturers, first level calls are being made to these manufacturers. In these calls, I collect relevant information about their businesses such as scale of manufacturing, inventory, product range, pricing etc. Information about how their businesses are being affected due to the pandemic and the steps they are taking to tackle it are also being collected in order to understand the current market scenario and to come up with solutions for them.
- Next, second level calls were made to select manufacturers who are interested in potentially being our channel partners and who fit the requirements of the company. In these calls, the manufacturers are appraised about all details regarding online on-boarding. They are given different options and are explained about the support the company would provide in the entire process. The commercial details and the higher level negotiations are carried out by my mentor in my presence.
- Post this, the channel partners were assigned to me and I was am expected to build a nice relationship with the clients on behalf of the company. The clients are to be provided support on doubts regarding delivery, catalogue, packaging, website etc. Some of these clients have no prior experience in dealing online and it's our responsibility to ease them into the process.



- Some of issues I faced were around language. I was getting good response from manufactures of Gujarat because of trust between us. I had good response from metro cites like Bangalore, Hyderabad, Delhi and Mumbai because suppliers their believe in Start-ups so they listen to us and try to understand. For other tier-2 cities it was difficult to make them understand the purpose of calls.
- The database I submitted to company includes 250+ manufactures for bags as category. Some of them looking forward to have their product listing on school365 but as of now the process is delayed because of pandemic conditions. Once the condition will improve and company will start working from office, my mentor will again connect this potential channel partners and help them to on-board.
- The intent of these calls was not to just convince them for getting partnership with school365 but also to understand their pain-points. These problems will ultimately become the opportunities for school365.
- Manufacturing of bags takes pick in march-Aprils before 8-10 weeks of school reopens. But this year it was not possible. There were no labors to work in manufacturing unit. The situation is getting worse as the days are passing but still the school are not re-open. Many of manufactures shared that they have started producing the Covid-19 products like dead body bag, PPE kits.
- I made calls to distributors of big brands like Nike, American tourister, Wild-craft etc. Their feedback was that they are not getting enough stock from company because of pandemic conditions.
- The conversations with these distributors includes the pieces(of bag) they supply in one month, credit terms, issues in supply chain from company.
- The details I used to shared includes the importance of going online in these hard times. Many of manufactures were stubborn to understand the importance of E-commerce but I tried my level best to help in increasing their sales and revenue.

	S365 - Lite (Online Ordering Only)	S365 - Business (Online Selling & Order Fulfilment)	S365 - Pro (End to End Online Selling)
Dedicated Page for School Product Listing Customer Support Service Business Dashboard			
Shipping to Customers - Order processing - Packaging Material - Delivery to Customer			
Warehousing - Inventory storage & insurance - Packaging			

➤ Above mentioned 3 options were given.

## ❖ Sales and Go-to-Market Strategies -

- We all are aware of Amazon, Flipkart. Whenever we want to make online shopping we just login to amazon account and make purchases. But not all of us know that there is dedicated E-commerce for sports related products. So it is very important for company to work on brand awareness. Company need to work on SEO keyword strategies, Social media marketing, E-mail marketing. Company has very little presence on social media like Instagram and Facebook. I have recommended some of strategies in later part of report in recommendation section
- After doing some research and understanding the products of school supplies, I can say that products are of low cost, bought by millions of customers, simple to operate, high fit and finish. So for such products company need to be marketing intensive because switching cost is very low.
- Should do tie-ups with logistics partners for product delivery like Blue cart, Delhivery and SPOTON. Strategies like API integration with automated order processing and deliveries, reliable services with active tracking, pan India coverage will help to boost the sales.
- Integration with India's largest payment gateways like Net banking, UPI, Debit/Credit cards, COD, Bank transfer etc.
- There can be Zero-Cost branding through content marketing and organic traffic. Content marketing includes various blogs on company website, videos etc. Content can be promoted on Instagram and facebook page, posting stories and testimonials will increase the brand awareness. For organic traffic we need to know what ideal our customers search for and then working on SEO optimization. There are different tools for SEO like google trends, MOZ, Schema.com etc. This method is competitive and required hard work to stay on top.
- Parents are influencer and decision maker for purchase decision of school related products. It is very important to understand which factors affects their decision making. I have mentioned 3 factors in earlier part of report as per my research.



- The business model for school365 is Self-Service model (When trying to target the end customer for E-commerce website). For these business model company don't need sales person but need marketing team to drive traffic and conversion to our site. For field sales business model (Targeting schools for direct supplies) company already have sales representative.
- For demand generation through outbound methods, I recommend to build E-mail campaigns and cold calls to schools for direct sales.



### 3. OBSERVATIONS

#### Classifications of Observations

##### A) About Organizational training -

Top management of company believe Sports & fitness as passion and it has been integral part of their life. This reflects when employee deal with customers. For an example, sales representative visiting a school for a sales work and ending up doing few knocks at the badminton court or TT table and sharing knowledge related to sports.

COO mentioned that stars were align to form a team like sports365 has. It's possible to replicate strategies, product/services but tough to do with team DNA and work culture that company has.

**Vision-** Born out of passion for sports, the company's vision is **“To be the first port of call for sports and fitness related needs”** for individuals and institutions. Every person associate with organization believe in above stated statement and work accordingly. They share values to make work easy. The employees, staff, managers and interns value teamwork and trust each other. Company has democratic management style with believe of sports as culture.

According to my observation the working environment in company was positive and motivating. It was new for company to assign work which can be carried out at home. But within a week they started allocating work and SOP that we need to go through. Virtual on-boarding was fun and they gave us all resources that will be needed to carry out work.

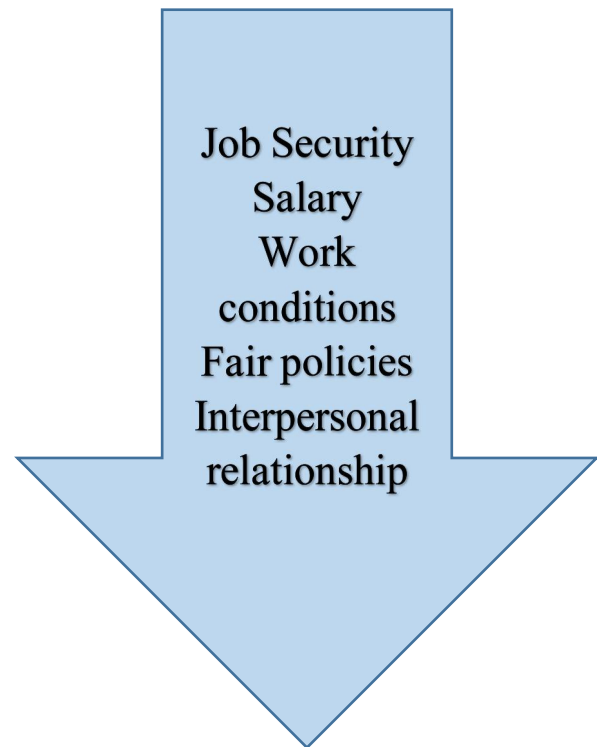
I never felt that I am working as Intern but I was treated as their full-type employee. My guide and mentor shared their experience positive and negative related to company.

Sr. Manager used to share stories and knowledge related to academics and his work-experience. He was a transformational leader who used to motivate us and let the team achieve great heights. His delivery spark feelings of loyalty for company and trust with employees. He used to motivate us by saying **“No matter how much work you do but whatever you do, it should be learning for you “**. This always gave me strength to focus on developing new skills while working.

As per my observation, one of the motivation theories they followed is “Two factor of Motivation” or “Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory” given by Frederick Herzberg.



**Motivators**



**Hygiene Factors**

Top management focused on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The motivators lead to extrinsic motivation and hygiene factors lead to intrinsic motivation.

Regular Con-calls or Video calls with team, Goal setting and proper guidance help me to complete this internship successfully.





## **B) About Self-Learning -**

### **❖ Team Work -**

My internship at sprots365 made me realize importance of team work. In college it was easy to interact with each other for work on projects & assignment. But virtually it become difficult. We were team of 5 (2 from SIBM,Bangalore, 1- XIME, 2- IMNU). We with unique individual capabilities and strengths were able to efficiently pool ideas together to develop improved solutions for various problems. As most of the tasks were interrelated, we have to work together to make different reports simultaneously before proceeding to the next task. Work was distributed according to our strengths so that we can exploit our capabilities. I learned that the sum of the individual parts is indeed greater than the whole and it is important to be an effective team player in order to excel in any aspect of life.

### **❖ Communication -**

I used to believe we cannot learn sales and marketing while sitting at home. Our internship was ideally for field sales. It was difficult in early days to conduct meeting online. Even company was trying to make proper systems to conduct meetings and calls online. Our work was getting delayed and we were becoming procrastinators. We were losing interest. But slowly and gradually we started adapting new normal. I learned how important is to effectively communicate when you are doing it virtually. I learn that communication is the foundation of every organization, regardless of size, thus I should always put in the extra mile to ensure effective communication.

### **❖ Handling work with incisiveness -**

My guide often stressed the importance of being detailed oriented and explained the repercussions if found carelessness. Guide always emphasized that it is extremely critical to provide accurate information of company to manufacturers and trader. Therefore, I learned it is vital to handle all sorts of challenges or projects with incisiveness in order to produce quality output.

Some hard skills which I learn were Partner Relationship Management, Research, Strategy which includes Sales and Go-to- Market Strategy.



### ❖ **Partner Relationship Management -**

For us, our partners were manufactures and traders who are looking forward to have E-commerce support for their school related products. Because of virtual internships, we need to communicate with these partners on calls. For me it was very important to understand their problems and than recommend our services. Many of manufactures cut the calls considering it as typical sales call but I focused on to listen their understanding for this industry. After some days of calling, I saw improvement in my communication. I was able to share all details effectively and partners started showing interest. I also shared that how school365 will help in marketing their products. The elements of PRM I learned were 1)Leading assistance for marketing assistance to partners 2) Partner On-boarding 3) Sales productivity tools. As a part of assistance, school365 will have dedicated account manager which includes technology coordinator, operations coordinator, customers service coordinator and finance coordinator. Even though E-mail was easy way to communicate the information, I used to call them and explain all details which helps in building relationships.

### ❖ **Research -**

Research is the 1<sup>st</sup> and most important part of process when any company is trying to enter in new segment. For sports365 it was very important to understand the industry of school supplies. I researched about 1) Market / Industry Assessment 2) Major Competitors 3) Products and services. This secondary research was done using commercial sources, public sources and internal sources. As a part of competitors analysis, I studied about design of their E-commerce website and its interface, their social media presence, their rating/reviews, products/offering, marketing strategies, positioning and sales channel. Research helped me to understand that market is still unsaturated and governed by local retailers. It is good opportunity for company to enter in this space.

### ❖ **Strategy building -**

Being curious about business and its growth, I explored some of the other aspects of marketing which were not the objectives of our internship. I learned about digital marketing strategies, Sales strategies that boost E-commerce business. I have used Leslie's compass - Framework for Go-to-Market strategy. We as team used to discuss these strategies while having virtual meetings.



### C) Trends / Patterns for school365 -

- The school supply industry have struggled with low demand but now the trend towards E-commerce is pronounced in this industry, leading most of customers bypassing retailers and wholesalers supplying them.
- The sales from brick-and-mortar are shifting to big departmental and discounted stores. Like in India many of consumers buy from D-mart or other well-known brands. These stores have huge purchasing power to buy directly from manufacturers which reduces cost for end customers. This eliminates independent wholesalers from supply chain. So big departmental stores can create competition for school365.
- Uniform and small school accessories for K-12 will continue to have more share in school supplies category. With the trend electronic gadgets including phones, computers, hardware and smart watches will be included as part of this industry.
- Now a days, parents also search for products online before buying. The search includes retailers website, promotions details and product information. Different studies from Deloitte indicate the 60% search are through Mobile and very less through desktop/laptop. This indicates the E-commerce website for school365 has to be mobile friendly.
- Now a days awareness of environment friendly products is increasing. It has changed the way products are manufactured and disposed off. For example a company named Wescott manufactures a pair of scissors made from recycled materials. Crayon manufacturers are using soy instead of paraffin to produce products as soy is a renewable and decomposes more quickly. A company named Pilot makes a gel roller pen from recycled plastic bottles.
- Adoption of E-learning and mobile devices for educational content is likely to hamper the growth of stationary products which includes paper based stationary and traditional writing equipment.

## **4. IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL ISSUES & KEY PROBLEM AREAS**

- Critical issues will be product return and refund policy. School supplies includes bags, uniform, shoes and other accessories. When we talk of Uniform and shoes the size and look matter alot. It general psyche of parents to buy from dedicated retailer from their city. This problem will create issues and lead to less sales of these products. There is not standardization in uniform formats even in single city. Company need to give proper product specifications including size and school name.
- The company is not spending too much on marketing activities. The low awareness of the company sports365 brand makes it difficult to convince manufacturers to get partnership with company.
- Margin are very low for school supply product and switching cost is also low. Bulk buying from suppliers and manufacturer can lead to save some of bucks.
- Many manufactures argued that why would they like to partner with school365 instead of Amazon,flipkart and other well-known e-commerce. These argument will continue till school365 become well-know brand dedicated just for school related products.
- Products like toys and kids theme based bags are imported from china. Now with ban on china based products will lead to increase in prices and reduce in supply.
- Issues related to sports Industry like lack of strong brand in India, Low level of sports participation, Stereotype thinking of no career option in sports, Low government budget for sports (Less than 1% whereas small country Cuba has 13%) this all are key areas that need to work upon. Company can organize the tournaments, campaigns and endorse teams, events and young talents.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

### **A) Summary of feedback given to organization -**

- India's first professionally run sports & fitness company sports365 has huge potential for its business. Dedicated E-commerce website, backed by Yuraj singh, varied range of products, presence in metro cities and dedicated team are some of the USPs of this company. The best part I liked for this company is its team and their passion towards the sports which has ultimately helped in business growth.
- The businesses that company is trying to cover are still unorganized. We don't have dedicated platform for sports & school related products. This indicate company is trying to innovate with its business strategies. Company has good network with leading firms and sports persons which help in creating brand awareness and funding.
- The online presence of company is very less. I observed that company is not working on social media marketing and digital marketing. The company is trying to target millennial who are on phone most of time. So it is very important to have online presence.
- For sports365, company can create the relevant content related to sports for social media marketing. They can upload stories and testimonials of customers. Different quiz and campaign will increase their engagement with audience. They can tag star sports which will help in promoting content.
- For school365, they can upload content that can engage kids. E-learning videos which will drive attention of parents for our company. Even schoolkart don't have much online presence. So this is good time for company to take over.
- If possible company can arrange the data of parent's contact details like e-mails and contact Nos. This data will be useful in various campaigns. Outbound marketing will be efficient if company try to get these details. The company can initiate the referral program. Referral program will offer low customer acquisition cost. Later they need to promote program proactively. This can



be achieved by sending push notifications to existing users, promoting referral program on main page, sharing details on social media.

- Company can put banners and ads in schools during various events and competitions. Same thing can be done while conducting tournaments of big companies.
- Search is the No.1 source currently used before making any decision or buying anything. So website is actually a real estate for company. Website has to be mobile friendly. Website should include all the details that customer can seek during awareness state.

#### **Feedback for Marketing Analytics -**

- There are many bad reviews on E-commerce website of sports365. This need to be resolve. Reviews can be used as data in marketing analytics process. This reviews can be programmed in R-studio (R programming) and later can be used in predictive analysis in regression. The results will indicate the factors that lead to dissatisfaction for customers. Company should work on these problems so that same are not replicate for school365.
- If I talk about the internship training provided to us, it was a great experience overall start from the challenging work given to us to guidance provided by respective mentors throughout the internship.

## B) Summary of Self Learning -

- This internship helped me understand how E-commerce business work. I am confident on my knowledge for E-commerce with its importance and challenges. I learned about different ways of product taxonomy on E-commerce website
- During submission of Phase I report, I learned about sports industry, SWOT analysis, Competitors Analysis and trends. This improved my research abilities. I learned about different sources and topics which are critical for conducting research and how we can draw inferences from it.
- I understood that it is very important to know our business, products and services. I should be aware of company's USP before talking to partners. So I made outreach plan and proper pitch before connecting partners. I made list of pointers for why anyone should have partnership with school365 and what kind of benefits we will provide. This made me realized it is very important for us to share details which are backed by some data. Proper pitch helped me to communicate details effectively.
- I learned that it is very important to know the business and brand strategy to make effective outreach plan. Business strategy includes mission, objectives, value proposition and elevator pitch. Brand strategy includes business goals, target audience, shared values.
- Already times were hard and everyone was losing business, so it was very important to create the trust with partners. It was hard for me in initial days to do this on calls, but slowly I learned about it.
- I learned about different ways of finding suppliers and manufactures for E-commerce. I used data available on Indiamart and justdail. Before calling, I used to go through their website to understand product range and details like brands, its presence etc. I learned that it is very important to have their background research otherwise its waste of time in calling.



- Follow-ups on right time were very important. Lack of interest in 1<sup>st</sup> call doesn't mean "No" for deal. Following up and understanding their problem was key factor in building relationship with partners.
  
- The most important aspect I learned is Time management. It was very important to ask the correct time from manufactures for having discussions. There was no time bound like 9:00am to 5:00pm. It was very important to have proper discussion on convenient time given by them to convert these manufactures to partners.
  
- Another important thing I learned was how to prioritize work, I was also having internship with Tata Steel in month of may. At times it was difficult to work on two internships but I learn to prioritize my tasks. I realized that in these hard times where students are losing internship and if have got opportunity than I need to make best out of it.





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