

Joy of Giving: Marketing for a Cause

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Abstract

The Joy of Giving Week (JGW) organized by GiveIndia Foundation was a nation-wide movement. It engaged millions of people and more than 1500 institutions across India. The idea was to create a 'festival of philanthropy' and hence the name "Joy of Giving". Year 2009 was just the beginning and with JGW being celebrated every year, GiveIndia hopes that over the years, this 'act of giving' becomes a part of the Indian ethos. The "Joy of Giving Week" event stands for and aspires to achieve: "ways and means to reach out to someone less privileged – by donating money, volunteering time, providing your skills or even just saying a kind word to someone who may not have expected it from you." The movement was planned and rolled out in a big way during the week starting on September 27, 2009 and could integrate people from all walks of life in more than one way. It was able to reach the needy and poor this time but still has to go a long way to make it an everyday affair and getting itself integrated into the ethos of the well-to-do Indians.



The Joy of Giving Week is not just a token gesture, but a celebration of the goodness that each one of us has. - Nandita Das

As Usha, Lead of the Social Initiative Group for Managerial Assistance (SIGMA)¹, got down from the car that served as the mobile healthcare centre, the memory of the past week suddenly captured her thoughts and a smile of joy was clearly visible on her face. There was indeed Joy in Giving. And she was glad that the city of Jamshedpur, an otherwise reclusive city with little collectivism, experienced it – in various ways – through various channels. Spearheading the effort in the Jamshedpur Joyfest, Usha knew she had witnessed a mass movement which had touched many lives in Jamshedpur in ways more than one. She was not alone and expects that whole of India had experienced the Joy of Giving in the past week.

GiveIndia Foundation

"Joy of giving" was conceived and implemented by one of the renowned Indian NGO named GiveIndia. GiveIndia is a Mumbai based not for profit organisation whose mission is to promote 'giving'. They act as a channel between willing donors and needy poor of India. They give donors a choice of more than 100 grass root level projects to choose from. The donors are sent individual feedback about how their money is being spent. This brings accountability in the system and makes it very transparent. GiveIndia has initiated many public giving activities in India in last few years. It was the official charity partner for the Mumbai and Delhi marathons. It runs the largest Payroll Giving program in India. As part of this program employees of participating companies voluntarily donate a monthly amount directly from their salary and this money is used for the cause of less-privileged. GiveIndia takes the duty of mobilizing the funds so that it reaches the right target audience. This Payroll Giving program has been already implemented by 40 top companies and many more are joining. Many big corporate entities including some of the Fortune 500 companies are already part of this unique and innovative initiative. Some of the examples are: Aditya Birla Group, Deloitte, Eclipsys, HSBC Investdirect, Lintas, Onmobile, Religare and Vodafone.³ Overall the objective of GiveIndia Foundation is to bring people from all walks of life together to engage in acts of giving — money, time, skills or simple acts of kindness and thus making India a better place to live for one and all. In line with this objective GiveIndia initiated a never before initiative named 'Joy of Giving Week' or JGW.

The Origins of JGW

June 4th, 2009, amidst a huge media presence and a host of noted personalities from various fields, Mr. Venkat Krishnan, Director of the Give India Foundation, Mumbai, announced the plan of the "Joy of Giving Week" to be 'celebrated' across India from September 27th to October 3rd, 2009. The week, encompassing the birthday of the father of Indian nation, Mahatma Gandhi

was envisioned to fulfil his dream – a dream of a prosperous India where every man could live a life of dignity and purpose. The week was thus planned not as an event of charity but a celebration of JOY. There was a purpose in giving but no loss of dignity in taking. The first press conference was attended by Mr. Amit Chandra (MD, Bain Capital), Nandita Das (noted Film-maker), Imtiaz Ali (noted Hindi film-director) and Sachin Tendulkar⁴ amongst others.

From the outset, the initiative had the backing of the corporate India, eager to do their bit as a part of the corporate social responsibility and the film-world. With the two biggest earners of Mumbai, the industry and the Bollywood⁵ behind it, the initiative had all the makings of a mass movement. And that it became.

The Mass-movement

Soon after the announcement, many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) were mobilised and many of them decided to put their weight behind the initiative. There have been movements in India asking for money for social causes many of which failed to gain the desired popularity or credibility. But JGW clearly wanted to make its mark by emphasizing the aspect of 'joy' in giving. The initiative spread across the country – bringing together the billionaire and the school student, the famous film star and the unknown *dabbawala*,⁶ the entrepreneur and the housewife, various NGOs and schools-colleges together with the singular mantra to 'give'. It was not only giving money or items like clothes etc, but giving what is needed, including time, effort, skills and other resources. In language of economics, it made the donor and the receiver meet at the point of need. It aimed at satisfying an existent but unfulfilled need – not just monetarily.

Other than satisfying the physical and temporal needs, it satisfied an important developmental need – the need for recognition of the task at hand. With a country spread over 1.3 million square miles, many real needs are ignored, or worse still unidentified. In a country where over 3000 kids die every day of hunger, millions of kids dream of a place called school; a country which ranks 134th on the HDI⁷ and where most of the populace has no clue of development, far less about HDI; where food, clothing and shelter are indeed luxuries, the task of establishing a civic and equitably developed society cannot be left to the NGOs. It requires the mainstream population of India to join in. One of the key achievements of the Joy of Giving Week was the attainment of a very high reach.

Planning the Events

JGW was planned much ahead of the start of actual events with the initial plans being rolled out on June 4, 2009 itself. There was a conscious effort on the part of GiveIndia to plan various events and spread the awareness about those to the public. They used online forums, social media sites, and blogs along with physical on ground activities like inaugural sessions on college campuses, launch event featuring celebrities, advertisements on national channels etc. to make people aware and interested about the JGW. As part of JGW many different events were also planned by various NGO's who voluntarily became part of this event to share the joy of giving.

Notable Events



The Campus Joyfest

88% of youth want to contribute to society and help the underprivileged 96% say they do not know how. JAM⁸ Magazine, India's largest youth magazine with a physical circulation of over 35,000 subscribers and online through www.jammag.com, held Campus Joyfests across 300 colleges across the country and reached students of over 3,000 schools and colleges and provided them ways to contribute to the society. For example, Symbiosis Institute of Operations Management launched a cleanliness drive in Nashik. SVNIT organised lunch and a movie screening for 300 specially-abled kids in Surat. The National Service Scheme of IIT-M, Chennai, organised a mass donation drive in the hostels collecting donations in cash and kind from individual rooms of students. MTV, the youth music and entertainment channel was associated with JAM and provided television coverage. With a Web 2.0 interface www.joyfest.in the initiative was able to reach to the tier-II cities of India where schools self-signed up with innovative ways to join in and contribute to the initiative. Campus Joyfest was held during the complete week of the Joy of Giving Week.

Vastra-Samman

Goonj, one of India's premier NGOs with its operations in over 21 states of India pioneered the concept of reusing used clothes. Anshu Gupta, an Ashoka fellow honoured by CNN-IBN⁹ in an Indian Television show "Real Heroes", led the mission to redistribute 10 million units of used clothes. Anshu believes that by solving the issue of providing clothing, we address a much bigger issue

of the hygiene, especially amongst the women. As part of Vastra-Samman, Goonj planned to collect old but usable clothes from donors and sort them according to sizes and utility and redistribute the same to the poor through innovative work-schemes like clothes-for-work. Thus, while it addresses the need for basic clothing, it does so without presupposition of a donor and receiver relationship. Each article of clothing is 'earned' and thus, is a source of dignity. Anshu started this initiative with 67 clothes and is now one of the most wide-spread networks amongst the NGOs with associations with many other government and non-government bodies working in this area. Through the Vastra-Samman programme, Goonj aimed to collect 10 million units of material from across 25 cities in India through 15 processing centres where this material would be sorted and distributed to the poor and needy.

City-wide initiatives **Jamshedpur JoyFest¹⁰**

The city of Jamshedpur decided to contribute to the initiative as a collective unit. In a well-publicised launch on August 21st, 2009, many of the who's who of the city pledged their support to the initiative. Anchored by the XLRI School of Business and Human Resources, the Jamshedpur Joyfest under the leadership of Prof. Madhukar Shukla was launched by Imtiaz Ali and attended by the big names from the house of TATAs. The challenge was taken up by SIGMA and the local chapter of the Confederation of Indian Industries - Young Indians (CII-YI). XLRI announced a target of collecting 400,000 units of clothes from the city itself and in the launch function alone, many regional communities pledged contributions to the cause.

The event was promised support by the city administration (JUSCO) and the TATA industrial units. The media personnel present there promised support by providing widespread coverage to events being held under the banner.

A bike rally was organised on the 27th September to create awareness for the cause and distribute the clothes collected so far. There were street shows performed by the dramatics association. The music band of the college played in local clubs to generate money and awareness. Usha and her team visited Nirmal Hriday, an old age home. Even the professors joined in with a car rally christened "Badhte Kadam", leading to Bodh Gaya distributing clothes along the way. The final day saw a medical camp being organised for a village close to Jamshedpur. The doctors from the current batch of management students themselves volunteered for the

initiative and conducted free health check-ups. Over all the event could touch upon the children, old age people and also the specially-abled people.

Celebrity Auctions

The initiative was supported in spirit and action by many celebrities across India. Sachin Tendulkar auctioned a cricket coaching camp in Mumbai. Industrialists Narayan Murthy (Ex-CEO, Infosys Ltd.), KV Kamath (Ex-CEO, ICICI Bank) and Kumar Birla auctioned one day of their time on eBay.¹¹ eBay provided support to the auctions without charge. Noted film actor Saif Ali Khan auctioned his sunglasses and bag. Imtiaz Ali auctioned a self-autographed script of his super-hit Hindi film, *Jab We Met*. The Indian School of Business, Hyderabad conducted a shadow-a-CEO auction with an opportunity of shadowing a CEO as the auction object.

'I am the Change' Film Project

101 hours, 101 filmmakers, 101 change-makers – that's what this event was all about. Simply put as part of this event 101 filmmakers had to make a one hour film each on a topic relevant to social causes in India. It was held in Ahmedabad, India during October 1 to October 5, 2009.

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Chennai Marathon

This was a sporting event to launch the Joy of Giving Week. It was to be held in Chennai on 27th September at 6 AM. The marathon event was named GiveLife and wanted to spread the message of "true essence of human spirit and existence:

Freedom, grit, compassion, reason and being a beautiful community".

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Green Initiatives

The event was not limited to just social donations. It also became an opportunity to create awareness for environment and hygiene. The Directorate of Social Forestry, through its National Green Corps (NGC) eco clubs aimed at spreading awareness and action towards environmental cleansing and sustainability. Close to 4 crore castor seeds were targeted to be sowed across the state as castor is believed to control air pollution. The NGCs made notebooks and bags from waste/recycled paper which was then distributed amongst the poor. www.MakemyTrip.com promised to plant a tree for every ticket sold through the portal to offset the carbon damage caused by people travelling by air.

Online Presence

The initiative was publicised through its website <http://www.joyofgivingweek.org/> and its blog <http://joyofgivingweek.blogspot.com>. The official blog could generate only 35 followers and had a total post count of 38 (including the post-event post) over a two month period. As Mr. Venkat Krishnan asserted, the initiative was more in the physical form and thus online was not a focus area. Other than the official blog and the website, the event was promoted by individual participants in the movement. For example, a group of volunteers from New Delhi started the "7 days 7 Gifts" initiative and popularised it through <http://7days7gifts.ning.com/>. The portal had over 350 followers. Jam Magazine promoted the initiative through its widespread "JoyFest" which could be accessed at <http://www.joyfest.in>. The portal had just over a 120 members and covered activities of various "JoyFest" initiatives of the participating colleges. The Joy of Giving Week group on Facebook¹⁴ had over 3,000 members, many of whom were part of individual organisations that had pledged support to the initiative. The ad film for the Joy of Giving Week 2009 made by the noted south Indian film-maker Jayendra and hosted on YouTube¹⁵ generated 2,500 views. In all, there were 68 videos uploaded on YouTube with the viewers totalling 14,000.

Success Features

The Joy of Giving Week was described as a "fascinating cultural phenomenon" by Perry Garfinkel¹⁶ in his post on The Huffington Post.¹⁷ However, it is just loosely held together by GiveIndia Foundation¹⁸ and micromanaged at the implementation level by individual partners and organisations (NGOs, schools, colleges, Rotary Clubs etc.). There was no single owner of the initiative.

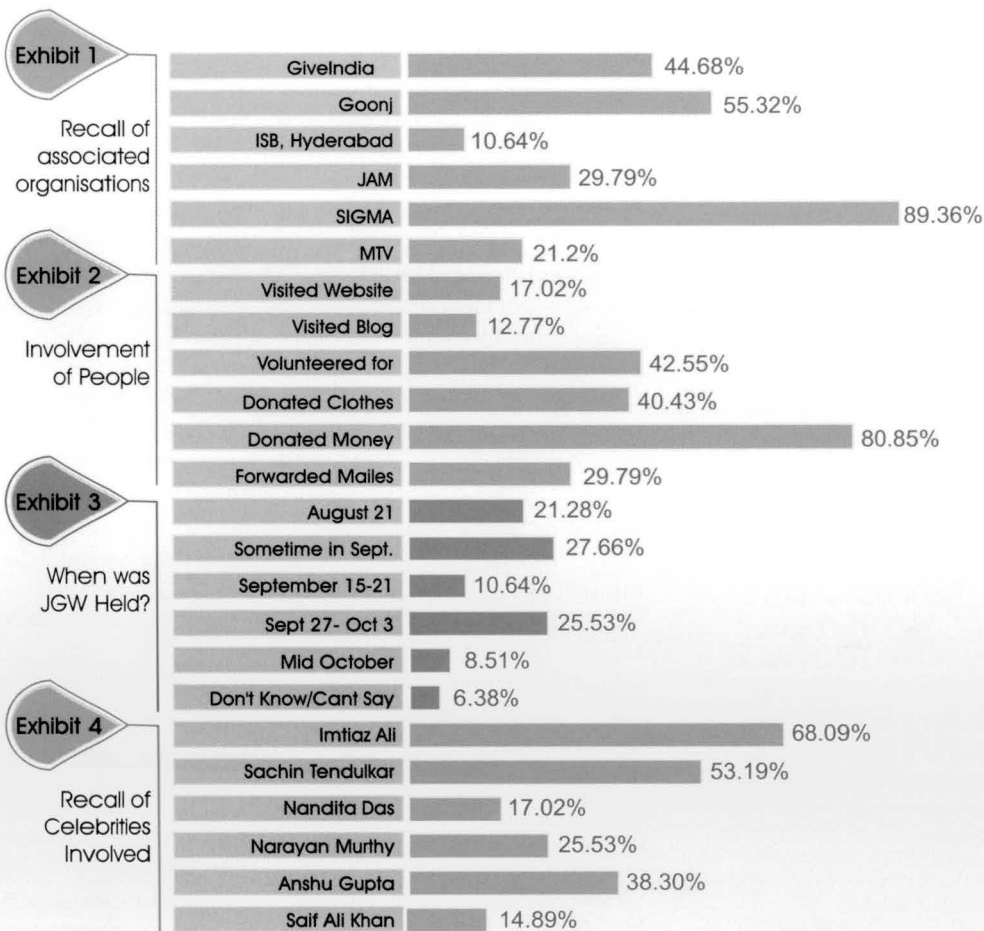
Thus, the overall success of the event could only be gauged by the success of the individual events and organisations who participated in the Joy of Giving Week. At individual levels, most participants claimed a hugely successful organisation of their main event. The bids in ISB for shadowing a CEO reached well above INR 25,000. XLRI could generate more than the targeted 400,000 units of clothing though the distribution supply chain was still an unsolved puzzle. The 'CEO-Walk the Ramp' in the Taj Hotels got the biggest names in the Indian corporate world including Y Deosthalee (CFO, L&T), Nitin Paranjpe (CEO & MD, Hindustan Unilever), Jean-Christophe Babin (CEO, Tag Heuer) and Manisha Girotra (CEO, UBS India) to walk the ramp in designer clothes in order to support a charity of their choice.

In an unaided recall test conducted on resident students of XLRI Jamshedpur, the highest number of

respondents identified Imtiaz ali as being associated with the initiative while only a sixth of them identified Nandita Das being associated. XLRI being a Goonj collection centre, Anshu Gupta had a higher recall (Exhibit 1). A similar recall test conducted on organisations associated revealed that SIGMA and Goonj generated a high recall but others were not recalled by the respondents (Exhibit 2). The participation (Exhibit 3) was spread across activities. Many of them volunteered for one or the other of the SIGMA initiatives while others donated clothes. However, the majority of respondents contributed through monetary donations. Interestingly, among respondents, 25% could recall the exact dates of the Joy of Giving Week with almost an equal number associating the event with just its launch on August 21 (Exhibit 4).

Now the big question plaguing Usha's mind was the following year. The media accepted it in 2009 as a brainchild of GiveIndia and international reporters reported it as an Indian "innovation". The CEOs accepted it as a day of giving something. Even in Jamshedpur, the novelty of experiencing joy in giving was one factor that she had used to mobilise volunteers. Joy of Giving Week was planned as an annual event and would be held in 2010 from September 26 to October 2. With the novelty factor gone in the following year, would the enthusiasm remain? She wondered how GiveIndia was seeing it. SIGMA gained credibility and recognition in XLRI and Jamshedpur but was that the case for other organisations too? Would GiveIndia have benefitted from this initiative? The bigger worry was the motivation behind the participation witnessed in 2009.

She was wondering whether the event has been able to connect at the emotional front (the joy of giving) or did it work out because of guilt component on which most of the donation and social campaigns are based. When her friends had discarded the event as a "publicity stunt", she wondered if there was an actual joy generated in giving. She knew the answer to that was the organisation of the Joy of Giving Week annually as was planned. But what could GiveIndia do to ensure that event did not remain a one-off and generated a real joy year on year? Did they underestimate and underutilise the power of media (and Social Media)? As also she was wondering what has SIGMA and Give India foundation done good in terms of its communication strategy to generate enthusiasm and ensure involvement. A quick analysis and learning's from this year can certainly be used to ensure success year after year. Key challenges for Give India foundation will be maintaining enthusiasm, innovation, involvement, sustainability and emotional connect.



References

1. SIGMA is a voluntary student group from XLRI School of Business and Human Resources who are involved in spreading socially responsible behavior amongst students through activities that help the society.
2. www.giveindia.org
3. <http://blog.giveindia.org/2009/11/update-from-payroll-giving.html>
4. Sachin Tendulkar is an Indian cricketer widely regarded as one of the best batsmen in history of cricket.
5. Bollywood is the collective name given to the film industry based in Mumbai, India
6. Dabbawalla is a person who transports lunch/dinner from home to place of work. They are very popular in Mumbai, India.
7. The Human Development Index (HDI) is an index used by the United Nations to rank countries by level of "human development".
8. Source: www.joyfest.in
9. <http://www.cnnibnrealheroes.com/womenwelfare.html>
10. Details can be found here: <http://jamshedpurjoyfest.blogspot.com/>
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17. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/perry-garfinkel/another-india-innovation_b_298497.html
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