

# Drive Into The Big League

A CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

## Jury Insights



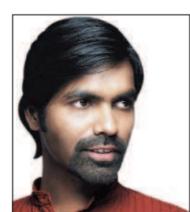
**Rajeev Karwal**  
Founder & CEO  
Milagrow

I think this platform will make SMEs reconsider their business strategies. Drive into the Big League has a wonderful format with a huge potential of changing the fortunes of many SMEs in the country. Having a logo along with Vodafone will inspire many entrepreneurs to aim bigger and bet bolder.



**Raman Roy**  
CMD  
Quattro BPO Solutions

Drive into the Big League is a fascinating platform that creates awareness. It even takes you to a global platform. And what has been done over these eight episodes-the excitement that has been created; the sheer learning and mentorship that has come in its wake-is fascinating.



**Satya Narayan R**  
Founder & Chairman  
IWSB & CL Educate

An interesting similarity between running a SME and racing on the fast track is the attribute of being agile,

which is extremely important to be successful in today's era where everything is changing very quickly. Getting ones logo on a Vodafone McLaren Mercedes car is a once in a lifetime opportunity for a SME and it cannot get bigger than this.



**Vani Kola,**  
MD  
IndoUS Venture Partners

Speed and focus are hallmarks of success in racing as they are in business. The ET Now challenge was quite gripping and closely contested. It discovered the aspirations of many worthy enterprises and celebrated their growth. This initiative will encourage fence-sitters contemplating new ideas to make the leap and chase their dreams.

# Vodafone Writes a Fairy-Tale SME Branding Story

A whopping 80,000 entries received; and one SME walks away with the enviable branding opportunity of a lifetime

From October 28-30, 2011, Indian sports enthusiasts had ample reason to cheer since Indian Grand Prix saw its maiden run at Delhi's Buddh International Circuit. Built in the nick of time, this fabulous new track has received huge praise for its design from sporting bigwigs such as Formula One guru Bernie Ecclestone. The course which is built by the private sector has even been compared to the one at Bahrain. This acclaim was not only the result of good media support, but also the large number of Formula One enthusiasts it attracted from all over India. They arrived in droves to watch India's historic debut at the FIA Formula One World Championship.

This proud time for India, however, meant additional celebration for one lucky Indian SME. Vodafone, the 'Total Communications Partner' of Indian SMEs as well as the title sponsor of the Vodafone McLaren Mercedes team, organised 'Drive into the Big League' to enable one deserving SME to brand its corporate identity the way the big boys in the industry do. Vodafone is already hands-on in the SME sector and provides SMEs with effective tech and



From Left to Right: Marten Pieters, MD & CEO, Vodafone India; F1 champions Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button; as well as 'Drive into the Big League' winner Shiv Agarwal, CEO, ABC Consultants

“80,000 SMEs, across various industry verticals from all over India participated in the Vodafone Drive into the Big League contest. The 21 best short-listed entries featured in Drive into the Big League episodes aired on ET NOW received an invaluable branding opportunity.”

telecom services such as Machine to Machine solutions; leased lines (NPLC, MPLS, VPN, IPLC, ILL); office wire-line voice (EI DID); toll free services; audio conferencing; mobilisation of enterprise applications; email and connectivity; customised 3G solutions as well as other productivity-enhancing tools.

### The Opportunity

Besides finance, marketing is a major difficulty faced by Indian SMEs. With limited advertising budgets, SMEs are able to create minimal brand awareness. The leap of going global or even national entails monumental marketing cost hike and is unviable without steady financial backing. If the problem of cost was alleviated, SMEs would gain unlimited benefits of branding. Today SMEs have started utilising the tools of online marketing to achieve this end. Increasingly, trade requirements are being searched on the internet, and having a web-presence provides a company with a 24-hour reception desk for inquiries. Still, traditional media such as TV and print provide a more powerful means of branding, which is invaluable.

Acknowledging this significance of branding for SMEs, Vodafone's Drive into

the Big League attempted to provide deserving SMEs, from all over India, a chance to make their mark in the world market. Vodafone offered a worthy SME a chance to display its brand logo on the two McLaren Mercedes cars driven by Formula One-champions, Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button, and shine beside global brands such as Vodafone, Mercedes Benz, Johnnie Walker and Mobil 1. Additionally, the winner was awarded exclusive Paddock Club passes that entitled its holders a mini-tour of the pit garage, meet both the champion drivers and got the chance to participate in a press-meet flanked by the cars and their drivers on October 27, 2011 in Delhi.

Participation was simple. SMEs with less than 1,000 employees had to simply fill out a contest form, mentioning an innovative idea they used to increase business efficiency. Based on these submissions, a panel of TiE judges short-listed the 21 best entries that went on to present their stories in the contest shows aired on ET NOW. Over the course of seven episodes, participants answered a series of questions asked by a distinguished jury comprising Rajeev Karwal, Founder & CEO, Milagrow; Satya Narayan R, Founder &

Chairman, IWSB & CL Educate; Vani Kola, MD, IndoUS Venture Partners, as well as Raman Roy, CMD, Quattro BPO Solutions, who was present in the finale. The winner was chosen among six other finalists based on their answers.



Appearance in the nomination and award shows aired on ET NOW, has provided visibility to these SMEs among their peers and stakeholders in India Inc, which will no doubt open up several more business avenues for them. This optimism is compounded by the fact that the Indian Grand Prix was expected to attract 527 million sets of eye-balls internationally. This means instant brand recognition all over the world. The prospect of branding on a global-scale is immensely desirable for any SME looking to extend its business beyond borders.

### The Achievers

Drive into the Big League saw a plethora of entries from SMEs in various industry verticals and from across India. For instance, a finalist Krishan Gupta, MD and CEO, Organic India, spoke of his company's unique efforts in organic farming, his thriving export business and taking the fruits of success back to the farmers. Kabir Suri, Joint CEO, Mamagoto Restaurant spoke about the significance of innovations and expansion in the food industry. Similarly, Siddharth Puri, Business Head of Tyroo Direct, a self-serve ad marketplace platform for website advertising, spoke of how his closest competitor is none other than Google and explained his ambition to

encash this opportunity. Other finalists included Samit Jain, Director of Pluss Polymers; Sonny Cabherwal, Co-founder and COO of Exclusively.in (fashion retail) and Dileep Baid, Founder & CEO, Dileep Industries (design innovations).

Out of all these commendable players, emerged the winner - Delhi-based, 42-year old ABC Consultants, an organised recruitment service provider. The company acers in the area of senior-level recruitment and is basing growth on opportunities in lower level recruitments as well. Its managerial competence was evident in its growth plans and business objectives as conveyed by Shiv Agarwal, CEO, ABC Consultants. By winning the Drive into the Big League contest, ABC Consultants shares a branding platform with several international giants, effectively taking its brand global in a colossal way.

### The Reward

The participants of the Drive into the Big League episodes aired on ET NOW have

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received an invaluable opportunity for branding; which will hopefully spell more trade, financial or partnership-opportunities for them. Similarly, by having a global audience acquainted with their brand logo, ABC Consultants can be a formidable player in the recruitment space, which is attracting increasing competition. Identifying the growth potential in such a favourable branding initiative, 80,000 SMEs from all over India participated in the Vodafone Drive into the Big League contest, vindicating its fundamental intent.

## One Victory, Many Winners

Every battle has one winner; yet, the ones that almost made it, cannot be discounted. Here's a look at the gems Vodafone discovered in its quest to take one lucky SME into the big league

Although simply watching the Vodafone 'Drive into the Big League' series on ET NOW was thoroughly enjoyable, it is safe to assume that judging such a competitive event would have been far from easy. From the heaps of entries received to the tune of 80,000-selecting even the most deserving semi-finalists was no easy task. On the other hand, being selected among such a diverse range of entries and satisfying the selectors'/knowledge-partners' intricate criteria is a clear indicator of the capabilities possessed by the short-listed and winning SME participants.

### The Process

The first step for participating SMEs towards qualifying for this big opportunity was being chosen among the 21 semi-finalists for the ET NOW show. A team of experts fostering competitive entrepreneurship from The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) were assigned the task of selecting these semi-finalists out of thousands of applicants. TiE had defined some SME prerequisites/selection criteria to ease the selection process for the Drive

### The Victor

The winner, ABC Consultants (Delhi), was founded in 1969 and is among the pioneers of organised recruitment services in India. Over the years, and under the present leadership of Mr Shiv Agarwal, its CEO, the company has gained a leading position in the area of senior-level recruitment for MNCs and large Indian businesses. As ABC Consultants' focus remains rooted in this unique area of recruitment, it has consistently built expertise across 16 industry verticals and shaped the careers of over 1.15 lakh professionals. Spread across seven major Indian cities as well as Dubai, the company has more than 350 consultants and 2,100 man-years of experience. About 75% of its revenue comes from existing clients, emphasising the success of its domain-specialist teams that provide customised recruitment solutions successfully. After the show, Mr Agarwal had the opportunity to meet with F1 champion Lewis Hamilton.

### SMEs with Winning Streaks

Like most competitions that see neck-and-neck outcomes, the winner was just a cut above the other participants. Those trailing were a distinguished group of SMEs that have made giant strides in their own right and are also winners for all practical reasons. A little about these extremely innovative companies and their visionaries are as below.

❖ **Kabir Suri, Joint CEO of Mamagoto Restaurant (Delhi):** Kabir Suri and Rahul Khanna created Mamagoto on being impressed by a Japanese phenomenon of the same name, involving infants that play with food to comprehend and appreciate their textures and shapes. With their innovation stemming from experiment and self-expression, they remain true to their credo of playing with food.

❖ **Siddharth Puri, Business Head of Tyroo Direct (Delhi):** Tyroo Media is a 2006-born advertising network that offers a self-serve ad marketplace platform for website advertising. This year Tyroo was named among India's top 25 start-ups by Proto.

❖ **Samit Jain, Director of Pluss Polymers (Gurgaon):** Pluss Polymers was established with an intent to develop and market new technologies and products especially in the

space of grafted modified polymers, alloys and blends. In 1996, the company pioneered the OPTIM® brand of grafted polymers.

❖ **Sonny Cabherwal, Co-founder & COO of Exclusively.in (Delhi and New York):** Backed by some of the world's leading investors, the company was established in 2010 as an e-commerce and fashion retailer to put Indian fashion on the global map. Its latest launch is the Sher Singh line, which is said to be inspired by cricket. This line has met with unprecedented success.

❖ **Krishan Gupta, MD & CEO of Organic India (Lucknow and USA):** Organic India has a novel business philosophy that encourages farmers to grow organic products with a promise of purchase at premium prices. A unique institution, its

innovations are reflected in its employee policies as well as a strict no-pesticide policy, and evinced further by their world-class wellness products.

### ❖ Dileep Baid, Founder & CEO of Dileep Industries:

Since 1981, Mr Baid's team has pulled together a handful of handcraft artisans and international designers to produce creative design innovations for some of the world's most popular lifestyle retail brands, such as IE, Pier 1, Ralph Lauren, Zara Home, Portico, Tesco, Pottery Barn and IKEA. It is presently the largest Indian exporter of lifestyle products and has garnered international recognition by bagging numerous national-level awards for export since 1994-95.

### Way Forward

Having generated immense market exposure for such diverse and compelling entities, Vodafone has successfully achieved its objective of providing these SMEs with a mass media platform that will augur their business prospects. Having discussed their unique strengths and ideologies on the show, Vodafone hoped to generate interest among their stakeholders and channel their popularity for further growth.

## Moment of Profound Happiness

This is an absolute dream-come-true. On behalf of my entire organisation, I would like to compliment Vodafone for this wonderful initiative and thank them for providing us such a fabulous branding opportunity. The inaugural Indian Grand Prix is a wonderful platform for us to 'drive into the big league' and we look forward to derive benefits from this international association in the near future.

Shiv Agarwal, CEO  
ABC Consultants



into the Big League episodes, which was aimed at singling out seven truly innovative SME finalists, and among them, one worthy winner.

The semi-finalists then appeared on the said ET NOW show in groups of three over seven episodes, where they were asked a series of questions over four rounds or 'laps' and were voted for by the audience as well as the eminent jury. These questions ranged between topics like business ideas, scalability, customer acquisition, insights on competition and technology. Thus, seven finalists were chosen to battle it out in the eighth instalment of the series or the finale.