

Xoxoday's journey of motivating 2+ mn humans

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They say the best things in life are destiny's gift. In the case of [XOXODAY](#), the maxim panned out quite literally.

After all, gifting was how I (former-Flipkart) and Sumit Khandelwal (former Metro Cash & Carry) - both from business families - came together,

throwing our hats into the entrepreneurial ring. The big goal? Change the way India gifts. Yes, the gifting sector - a spectacular manifestation of a timeless culture steeped in the magic of give-and-take - was ripe for innovation. We decided to add the touch of tech. In walked Abhishek as our tech co-founder, and with our name as GIFTXOXO, we waded into the Social & Group gifting space - celebrating our first online customer on 20 July 2012. Not long after, Kushal joined us as the youngest co-founder, completing a foursome that perfectly complemented each other with a cumulative skill-set that addressed every aspect of a large business.



When there are gifts and ribbons, can roses be far behind? And with roses came the thorns. The linear, manual and highly price sensitive nature of the corporate & product gifting market - which wasn't letting our Tech disruptions shine - was beginning to leave a bitter aftertaste. We had to find a sweeter spot. It arrived in the avatar of 'Experience Gifting' - the act of gifting experiences, memories and moments instead of products, assets and things.

In a sea of ME-TOO, experience gifting was memorably ME-ONLY, and finally lent the competitive differentiation and edge every brand needs to cut the clutter. Realizing we have hit our Zen, we discontinued product gifting in early 2014. The heady feeling of finding our 'big purpose', so to speak, was taken to the Cloud as we migrated transaction billings to a subscription format with XOXOENGAGE - A Rewards and Recognition SaaS platform that enhanced our LTV while allowing our clients to handle rewards, recognition and engagement seamlessly. We had come a long way from the day of box gifting (and have several uncharted peaks to explore), and it was time our name reflected both our yesterday and our tomorrow. It found perfect articulation in XOXODAY, the name we gifted ourselves in the Diwali of 2016.

We had closed our first seed round in May 2013. 2015-16 saw us engaging in aggressive alliance

formation, signing up with large corporate deals and acquiring Yipeedo, Actizone, Bookmyinterest and Fundoo.io. 2012 to 2016 was a period of horizontal expansion in the reward category with merchandise, experiences and gift cards. In 2018, we went international by launching operations in Dubai and Singapore, running into some early wins. We have subsequently added more geographies to our map across the USA, Europe, SEA and GCC.

2018 on, our growth curve took on a distinctly 3-D favor. The first dimension saw a 360 degree tech makeover that turned the system faster and smoother with a robust architecture and solid user experience. The second dimension was about trifurcating our portfolio into three distinct BU's ([EMPULS - employee engagement](#), COMPASS - channel, sales and gig workforce engagement and [PLUM - tech rewards platform](#)), each with its independent P&L mandates. This was a milestone in the industry. After all, when deployed in unison, EMPULS, COMPASS and PULSE had the power to synchronize a scattered, silo-fied and under-optimized workforce, in the process amplifying career curves, unlocking hidden growth pools and driving exponential business.

If the second dimension shook up the space, it is the third dimension that truly upended the category. Till this time, the industry was pivoted largely around extrinsic motivation which worked on an important, but linear, reward and punishment narrative. We engineered a paradigm shift by balancing the extrinsic equation with intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation deals with deeper passions and inherent knacks, and spur individuals to act out of 'sheer pleasure of the job', as opposed to external rewards. Intrinsically motivated people tend to be happier, and exhibit greater personal growth, aligned and more fulfilling ambitions. We empowered CXOs, sales leaders, HR, employees, channel partners and gig workforce with a novel product suite that, when deployed strategically, could extract the best out of these different stakeholders with a bespoke brew of extrinsic and intrinsic motivational triggers.

They say a journey is its own reward. We were lucky to have our own fair share of awards and recognition along the way as well - from being featured on CNBC Young Turks (2015-16) to being awarded the PeopleMatters HR Tech Award (2016-17) to being ranked in Deloitte's Fast 50 (2017-18) to being a SaaS finalist 2019 to being ranked on FT top 100 tech companies 2020. We also built a team around a truly unique culture code - one that still lunches and launches together.

Several new hurrahs beckon, such as the innate desire every founder nurtures to elevate a fundamentally solid organization into truly a great institution. And despite the life-changing odyssey, many things haven't changed. We are still as restive, curious and hungry as we were on Day One. To fill new gaps and address new demands - be it for employees, customers, sales stars, dealers, distributors, gig workers, delivery execs, backend support folks or, indeed, anyone who needs the magic of motivation to bring out the rockstar inside. As for brand XOXODAY, well, the story has just begun. If the human mind has no limits, why should a mission to max it, be saddled with one?

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