

AJVC SLACK CHANNEL

**AMA#29 WITH SANNA VOHRA DATED
11TH FEBRUARY**

SNEAK PEEK



Sanna Vohra is an alumni of Brown University, where she completed her BA in Economics and Business Development.

She's worked with various consulting firms including Morgan Stanley for an extended period of time, before starting The Wedding Bridge in 2016.

She has been instrumental in The Wedding Bridge's success since it's inception, and is currently leading the charge as well.

if you're Looking for bridal outfits or a designer trousseau collection at competitive prices, you're in luck because at The Wedding Brigade they have a huge collection of Lehengas, Sarees, Anarkalis, Trendy Kurtas, etc. And if you're running short of ideas & want inspiration on what to wear when, head to The Wedding Brigade Blog. We cover everything from fashion & accessories to the latest trends & a lot more.

You can also book all wedding-related services through us, from Venue to Make-up & Mehendi artists to Photographers. We handpick every single vendor on our platform to ensure you are only getting the best. Also, our expert (and free!) wedding concierge will find you EXACTLY what you're looking for within your budget & help you score the best deals in town!

SANNA VOHRA



AJVC SLACK CHANNEL

As your firm, bridges the gaps in the marriage function, by providing the management services. How do you think about scaling this business, How kind of a product can drive such a very ad-hoc processes. Or can just the service/ops handle this in scale?

We actually don't do on the ground management at all. We are a tech platform where people can find and book what they need for their wedding. We have thousands of vendors connected to us and once the booking is done, they take the process forward (with us checking in). Hence, as long as you have reliable supply, there are no issues in scaling.

The Wedding market might be different across countries. are you planning to expand to more countries?

Not anytime soon. Weddings are so different from state to state (or even village to village) in India, that there is still so much scope to grow and provide all Indians with everything they need for their weddings.

How do you manage manpower issues/ vendors / quality delivery pan India?

We are really selective with the vendors and brands we work with. They go through a vetting process and we are also very diligent about quality checks and gathering customer feedback. Hence, based on this information we are able to work with vendors and partners that we believe will uphold the level of quality we want to deliver.

When you started your company what did the startup space for weddings looked like? If there were many other startups doing the same thing how do you decide whether to follow that idea?

When I started there were very few platforms in the wedding space in India, and most of them just had a vendor directory - where there was not a strong vetting process before allowing vendors to register. I felt that the right starting point was actually content - to aggregate the best trends and ideas in one place and become a trusted source for brides. It was the right place to start as our customers themselves told us what more they wanted on our platform (actual transactions). To this day, we are the only online wedding company with a marketplace for fashion, jewelry, gifts and favours, great content, and a marketplace for services.

What is your process of curation of vendors before listing them on the platform?

So on the e-commerce front we receive a lot of inquiries from brands that want to sell on our platform and we choose which ones to onboard based on quality, design, and price. We also proactively reach out to brands that we think fit our criteria. On the services side we know that we need to have a very broad range of vendors across cities and price points so we typically look at information we can find online and/or speak to customers before listing them on our platform.

What have been your learnings on the Indian wedding market during the pandemic in terms of behaviour? Do you expect any changes after things become normal again?

At the beginning of the pandemic there was a lot of hype around purely digital weddings, but I honestly knew that 100% digital weddings were just a fad, because at the end of the day the fun and joy of a wedding is celebrating and having your close family and friends around you. That said, we do feel that streaming weddings will continue even post the pandemic as it allows you to share the wedding with a larger group of people / people who can't travel and attend. Over the next few months we still expect to see a lot of emphasis on safety too. Longer term, we think that wedding will continue to be a little more intimate than they were before, more unique with people really choosing events that speak to them and skipping traditions that don't, and we expect to see the planning process becoming more digital too as people get more comfortable online

What are some interesting and surprising consumer behaviors Insights you got to know?

I think in this generation the bride and groom are much more involved in planning their wedding than before - and hence we are seeing their personalities and interests really come through in the wedding. The importance of creating buzz on social media was also really surprising - creating "instagrammable corners" have become a wedding essential!

What do investors want from an wedding startup? According to your experience of raising funding.

It is not a heavily funded space as I think not too many investors have a clear thesis on it yet, but I think they want to see heavy traction and solid revenues- that helps alleviate doubts regardless of industry!

An average Indian parents spend around 14-20% of their life wealth in wedding, still due to high demand why there are less startups in this space?

I think the reason there aren't too many start-ups in this space is because its overwhelming - where exactly do you start when there are so many variables around culture, religion, pricing, geography? Our approach on the vendor side was to focus on a few cities and do them well, and on the e-commerce side to focus first on ethnic wear and jewellery and do that well. With time we will keep adding cities / categories - balancing width and depth are important.

What are some of the most important heuristics you have formulated/deployed while building your company?

To spend some time everyday dedicated to the bigger picture - it is very easy to get caught up in putting out little fires everyday. However to really move forward and build something meaningful, you have to keep focus on your larger goal.

How important is meta discourse and knowledge management? What are some of the methods you employ for the same?

I think it is important to exchange ideas and keep a pulse of what is happening - but what is more important is execution and measurement, and we really try to stress that internally.

Several startups in this space are targeting different customer segments. Which customer segment wedding brigade is targetting? What customer wants when it comes to use your services?

We look at the urban middle class and upper middle class. they come to us to make the wedding planning process easier, which in turn allows them to have more fun.

When it comes to weddings, there are a lot of different people/vendors involved, and they have to function in tandem. How do you solve for the trust issues in this, I suppose that would be a pretty herculean task!

We verify the vendors / brands on our platform before listing them which I think goes a long way in solving trust issues. We also have a concierge team that can step in and help all our customers if ever an issue was to arise.

Do you find the service providers wherever the wedding is happening or do you have pre-set service providers ?

We focus on a few cities to make sure we have depth of offerings, and have a list of pre-verified vendors. If someone is getting married outside of those cities, they could still hire someone from our list and pay for their travel, but if they want to go local we may not be able to get involved.

Many wedding venues in South India are auctioned/tied up to specific decorators, caterers, photographers etc.

We are tied up with all of those venues / vendors - so when someone makes a booking because they discover them through us, we make a commission.

What was wedding brigade GTM strategy? How much you guys spend to earn 1 rs.?

We started by creating a community around our content which lead to having an established customer base when we decided to enable transactions. Most of our traffic is organic, and we are unit-economic positive - we make money on all orders and bookings

What differentiates wedding brigade from their competitors?

That we are the only true one-stop wedding platform in India by offering wedding content, products, and vendors all in one place.

How do you handle the highs and lows of business, especially when it gets terrifying sometimes?

I think you think back to times where you have been faced with what seemed like insurmountable situations and got through it. and you hold the faith that you can do it again. but in general developing a thick skin is really important.

The Indian wedding market is projected to be at 40b USD. How different is the actual TAM in your case for it. What are some strategies you're deploying to bridge that gap?

So we look at TAM in terms of number of customers. of the 10-12 million weddings per year in India, we believe our products / services are a great fit for 20% as the market currently stands (as most of the weddings are very low budget and rural). however, that 20% is the biggest contributor to the \$50 billion market.

As gdp per capita grows and internet penetration grows, our TAM will grow as well. We are still just scratching the surface of that 20%!

How important is founder market fit for running a business?

I think it depends on the industry. I didn't have a background in weddings but it was not too difficult to understand the inner workings of the space. However, in more technical fields I am sure a relevant background is much more important.
