

ANAAR

“Having written the text book on Strategic Management as well short and long case books for the same, along with research, case method and case analysis book the next challenge was how to take them to the target audience” said [Prof. Vinayak](#). A colleague suggested that he should contact some self-publication agency. Luckily he recollected a printer who was encouraging this. The promoters included the MBA topper of 2006 batch of IMX and her spouse. They helped in formatting the book for printing as well as E-Book.

The Hiccups

In the process of formatting Vinayak came across the issue of getting ISBN number. He did not know anything about its procedure. Luckily though search on Google, he landed up with address of ISBN office in New Delhi. An old batch mate of 1969, accompanied him to the office, as he was not able to go out alone due to severe bout of Vertigo and DISH (Diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis) ailments. The staff of ISBN office mesmerised Vinayak with their cooperation and support and he obtained ISBN for many of his books. He then started placed orders and things were going smoothly. But after a while, he started experiencing delays in delivery and occasionally no delivery. He just could not afford to launch an online MDP for Working Executive spread all over the length and breadth of the country, with this kind of uncertainty. In the meantime he had learnt to operate website deigned by a vendor in Bangalore.

Vinayak started checking whether he could print his E-books by downloading it from the website and succeed in that. But it was in A4 size, making the printed book bulky. Then it occurred to him whether he could reduce the size and print it like a typical 6”x 9” size paperback book. He consulted a printer friend in Gurgaon and who said it was possible and prepared some printed books. But it was costing as much as Vinayak’s regular printer in Bangalore. Additional problem was delivery of book. Vinayak was moving between Lucknow, Gurgaon and Bangalore and had to search such printers in nearby locality. A simpler method of spiral binding was the adopted. He could thus get the books printed and bind it himself. It reduced the cost a bit, but it could not resolve the issue of large scale production and delivery for online executive education.

It occurred to him that if he could explain to the users to print the book themselves or through any Xeroxing shop, by buying an E-Book. The cost will then reduce and postage will be saved, at the same time delivery time will reduce to one day and certainty increase to 100%.

Customer Centric Books

a) Flexi-Books

Another associated Idea caught his attention. If the E-books could be split in parts, chapter/ case wise, then one could make his/her own crisp books and reduce the cost further by selecting only parts of the book(s) as required (PDF version), merge them and spiral bind them to make the books, customised to MBA courses/ or Management Development programme. A technique called [Futkar Technology](#) was therefore developed for the purpose.

b) Participative Books

Indeed one could put a Xeroxing machine in public place alongside a spiral binding machine and let the participants of MBA Courses/ Management Development Programmes to print required parts and spiral bind the pieces, themselves leisurely.

c) **Gradual Books**

A further idea caught up. Instead of giving the whole material of a course or programme in form of bound books in the beginning itself, parts of the books could be released initially by the faculty members and balance in instalments as the programme/ course progresses. The participants could keep on adding the chapters/ cases at the end of a course/ programme and the full book gradually develops.

At the end of the course, the full spiral bound book could be converted into perfect bound books, if required.

e) **Refresher Books**

One more innovation was added to such customer centric books. After every chapter of the text book and cases, few blank pages could be inserted to allow participants take preparatory and class notes in the book. These notes could work as one's unique, homemade refresher book. Indeed, they could be separated from the main book(s) after incorporating cross references be used for ready reference.

f) **The Gutka Edition**

In May-June 2020 Vinayak, now 74+ faced locked down in Gurugram due to Corona pandemic. Vinayak used to take PreMix Low Sugar Girnar tea sachets. Since supply was interrupted, his son-in-brought him Wagh Bakri PreMix sachets, which was having an attractive plastic cover. The Cover drew his attention and he wondered whether he could have his books in Gutka size in container like that of Wagh Bakri tea pack. But it was not easy as reduction in size made text size illegible. He tried to improve but failed. But the idea persisted.



When he reached Lucknow, his hometown he thought over it all over again. As an experiment he changed the font size of a case study from regular 11 pts to 16 points and then printed 4 pages on one sheet. Now the text size was legible. But it required change of format and the book of 272 pages became 400 pages. Printing it with 4 pages per sheet command increased legibility, but the issue of how to print it in book form became difficult to handle. He then made Masters of 4 pages on each side of the sheet. It became clumsy, but it was possible to print it back to back. By folding it twice he had an A4/4 size book. But it could not be accommodated in Wagh Bakri Jacket. Making Master in softcopy is a ticklish and time consuming job. But once one has it, the books could be printed in auto-duplex printer in 5 minutes straight @ 25 sheets per minute. Spiral Binding would not take more than half an hour. Thus one could have a 400 pages book in A4/4 in just one hour.

The search for new design of Wagh Bakri type jacket then started, but it was held up till he modified a Memento received from IIM Ranchi for 22nd Annual Convention of the Strategic Management Forum, which he had created in 1997 at IIM Lucknow.

g) **The Pocket Edition of Strategic Management Text/ Case Book**

Although Gutka edition was ready, but jacket could not be made immediately. He then tried to split the book in 4 parts of roughly 100 pages, back to back. To his surprise, each part could be put independently in a pocket. Thus the whole book, be it text or cases, could be accommodated in 4 pockets of shirt and pant a person puts on while going to class. Indeed, since the entire book is not required on any day, pocket editions of 4 books of different subjects that may be required on any days class, (with blank pages for taking notes) could be carried by a participant in [his attire for class](#).

The Great Fall and Recovery

Before he could proceed to forward these innovative books to the potential users, both of his websites started malfunctioning and finally collapsed. He was shattered. The entire 3 years' effort came to nought. One of the websites started working but the entire data was lost. He had to start all over again, picking up pieces from here and there. He gradually learnt how to design the websites and upload files as per his will. He resumed the first website with its domain and then bought 8 more domain names to have multiple backups from 3 different vendors, with their servers in 3 different countries. But still Vinayak was not sure, because anyone of them could let down any time.

He thought of having a webserver at his home but it was a costly proposition, which he, as a retired person could not afford. Also it involved the issue of who would maintain it, if Vinayak was not at my home town and how would he get a webserver in three different locations. Also at everyplace he would need to have 2-3 wi-fi connections of 100 mbps, because none of them could give uninterrupted service despite all tall claims. Also even this was a costly proposition. Still he bought one new desktop with high speed processor. But it was Corona period now and he could not get a web designer who could develop a web server. The wi-fi service provider also could not provide fixed IP required for the purpose.

Launch of Online Management Teachers Programme

In the meantime some faculty members who had undergone MTP of SMF, requested him some new faculty development programme. By July 2020, Zoom had become available and Vinayak could organise family meetings. It occurred to him that perhaps he could design and conduct a 15 hrs. Online programme all by himself without any office. This was to be followed by similar format online programme for Working Executives. The registration fee was kept low at 100 per session of 90 minutes every Sunday for 12 weeks. The fee was returnable, if any participants did not find any session(s) useful to them. The number of participants was limited to a dozen, only one from a state. They promised to translate course case material in 12 different regional languages. Gradually they were to forge a team and start conducting collectively one programme each. This could have trained over 100 teachers for teaching SM course in other management schools, benefitting 10000 students every year.

But the whole dream got shattered. It started with great enthusiasm, but soon attendance started falling. It was quite strenuous for a 74 years old person to prepare unique session every Sunday, which started pushing his blood sugar level up due to working whole night for 1-2 days before the class. Fasting sugar crossed 200 and PP touched 300 and Hb1ac touching 8.5. Still he was persisting, but one day when attendance fell to 50% without any prior information he lost his heart and cancelled the programme, returning the balance of fees to everyone. His sacrifice was not fetching any results and he was running the risk of serious health problems due to overstrain.

Alongside the process of spreading unique Indian experience based Strategic Management input also collapsed. The initiative of having multilingual SM literature for the country also faced premature death. The efforts to revive the initiative did not succeed. "This was biggest failure of my life" said Prof. Vinayak.

VINAYAK's Dhaba

Dispirited by the experience Vinayak lost all energy and enthusiasm. Gradually he started coming back to normalcy and thought of getting back to composing music of some 10 songs of Lata Mangeshkar to complete her album of songs from 1948 to 2009, which he had put on hold due to FDP. Slowly he started doing the same and composed 2-3 songs. But it was halted when he received intimation for speaking in the Inaugural ceremony of 22nd Annual Convention of Strategic Management Forum, towards end November, whose theme was on Entrepreneurship and Strategic Management. Vinayak wondered what all he could speak on the topic, when he never had been a typical entrepreneur himself in a physical sense.

He then thought of developing a Dhaba that he had been dreaming for students of IMX since 1988, which did not materialise for various reasons. But how to create it with no money, skilled workers and even land?

On December 1st, 2020, it occurred to Vinayak that he had a 5'X8' balcony in his apartment. Could he use the same to design the kitchen and use attached drawing room for entertaining up to 10 guests? At 10' O clock he started sketching a 3' x 8' wooden box, in which an OTG, a small refrigerator, a hot plate and a chimney could be accommodated. The sketch was ready by 13.00 hrs.

By 6'O clock in the evening the first three items were purchased. Search for Chimney led to a shop where a person, who looked like a customer, started explaining which chimney was better. On questioning how did he know it, his reply was that he had designed the display kitchen in the shop. On enquiry with owner about whether he can get a carpenter to estimate the cost of making box, the person was quietly scribbling something. When the owner expressed his inability to answer, this person said it will cost about INR 24500. "We were surprised and then learnt he was a skilled carpenter", said Vinayak. But he refused to accept the order as he was too busy. On being challenged he agreed to finish it in next 5 days. Vinayak tendered an advance of INR 20,000, which the owner wondered how to accept it without supply of any material. On 7th December, the kitchen box with all the fittings was mounted on the wall.

But the balcony was open and had to be covered. Search for a glass fitter started and a party was located on 2nd December. The work started on 5th December but was suck when technician asked that the A/C has to be disconnected to fix the glass. An AC wallah was called. He came within two hours with another colleague, who said that the orientation of the AC has to be changed to another wall, because if in future was any repair or topping up of gas was required, it would be necessary to call the glass panes fitter again. Next day the AC was moved to wall at right angles. But now the fellow technician said an Exhaust Fan would be required else AC exhaust air would create back pressure and trip AC as soon as it starts, as there was no ventilation because the balcony was now closed with glass shutters.

The glass was cut to make a window to fit an exhaust fan. And all this work was over by 9th December. In the meantime the carpenter was requested to hinge a small table on the wall, so that two persons could sit, chat, eat and drink with a natural view of greenery outside balcony.

In the meantime VINAYAK also learned making Idlis, Dhoklas, 3 varieties of Dhakha and 5 different kinds of Paraonthas and Veg. Pilao, to serve up to 10 persons every Sunday, free of any charge, along with hot Ginar tea of 5 varieties, which are served in flights

A fishing stick was procured to hang a bucket, containing the food prepared in the kitchen to people who could stop beneath the balcony, open the car window, pick the stuff and move on to park the vehicle wherever they found a place.

VINAYAK's Academic Dhaba

In the meantime Zoom facility was subscribed and a Curtain Raising Event for 22nd Annual Convention was conducted on 20th December with the theme **“Seeing rather than Seeking Resources”**, a kind of path breaking seminar on Strategic Management.

Later the Dhaba, emerged as VINAYAK's Academic Dhaba, which started seminars, panel discussion, and talks by Alumni on various untouched topics in the SM discipline. In 4 months' time **it had organised 9 such events**. These events were broadcast live on Zoom, Facebook and Youtube.

The Memento

The next day the 22nd Annual Convention was held. At the end of the event VINAYAK received a nice memento. Unfortunately it was found broken into pieces when courier delivered it to him. He learnt that the cost of memento was about INR 850 and courier charge of INR 108, all now rendered worthless. He could not bear the shock of waste, which was funded from the registration fee he had paid.

Restless, he searched for a photo frame maker, who suggested that it would have been better if a fibre sheet material was used instead of glass. VINAYAK located a photo frame maker who made similar size of frame using fibre sheet given by VINAYAK and charged INR 150. It cost Vinayak INR 225, but an impressive, unbreakable memento was ready.

While returning from the photo frame maker, he went to a small electric shop to get a small fan repaired. He saw a small external speaker which had Blue Tooth and USB ports along with socket for headphone. He thought if the recorded inaugural session was loaded on a SD card and inserted in the slot, one could listen the inaugural session. Stretching further he thought that recorded version of all the presentation were loaded in the SD card, one could see the entire conference by inserting the memory card in his mobile and mirror it to see the same on the television.

He started working towards the same and developed a low cost mounting mechanism for attaching the external speaker to the memento, which worked as a stand for the photo frame.

Literature on Mobile

The idea appealed him so much that he started working to upload all the softcopies of all his works, some 200 odd pieces, published in a dozen books. Thus emerged the idea of Vanity edition of his books.

The Vanity Edition of Books

Since females often do not have pockets in their attire, it was thought to put the 4- part text book and case book in a small ladies purse which they could put on their shoulder and carry. In the meantime a jacket for the book was designed along with an audio system designed by Vinay and his young friend Padam, with blue tooth, USM and SD Card ports. It became Vanity edition of the book.

A preloaded SD card was kept in the audio system, with audio/ video and pdf versions of the books. This card could be removed and inserted in one's mobile and the text and cases could be read/ listened

in class room, hostel, airport waiting lounge and while on the move. With mirroring the same could be read on one's TV also.

New Product Development: The Missing Agenda in Management Education Curriculum

How so many new products came out in a span of just one year, baffled VINAYAK a lot. What triggered all this? The answer to this emerged in three sessions of VINAYAK's Academic Dhaba on January 10, March 7, and March 14. The bursting ideas emerge while developing the product after crossing the idea of need for a new product based upon observations of emerging needs of society and design of the product. The problems encountered in finding the source of supply of critical items for development of a designed product, which triggered new applications of a new solution found. All this plays a critical role before the product enters into scaling up stage.

Poor appreciation of the four different stages in the management of embryonic stage of product life cycle (see the diagram below) and main focus of management curriculum being only on subsequent stages has led to only few instances of new product development in our country at large scale, which one witnesses in western developed countries and China.

Perhaps managements of management and engineering institutions have to bring this point to attention of every functional area of management and more so in the strategic management subject.

Questions

1. How many Innovations have been described in this Case? How many of them qualify for being called real Innovations?
2. In the light of data given in the [Exhibit 2](#), assess the cost benefit of each.
3. How managing Embryonic stage of Product Life Cycle is of strategic significance in India?
4. The Author of Case [The 4th Idiot](#), called VINAYAK as the 5th Idiot. Do you agree? Why?
5. After these experiments VINAYAK announced that he is going to design and develop a kit for a low cost Oxygen Concentrator to fight the potential threat of 3rd Corona Wave (forecasted in July by many medical experts) for use in [small and far flung areas of the country](#). Is he the 6th Idiot in the making?

Exhibit 1

Modified Product Life Cycle Relevant for Indian Managers/ Technical and Management Education

