



FLAME
UNIVERSITY

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Business Lessons from the Streets of the World

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Igniting Minds.

Business Lessons from the Streets of the World



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Story Teller



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20+ years in academia (LBSNAA, IIM-Kashipur, SPJIMR, MICA, OP Jindal, and SP Jain Global) and industry.

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We idolise mavericks like Steve Jobs or Billionaires like Bill Gates, We get inspired by a Mukesh Ambani or dream to create enterprises like Anand Mahindra.

But business insights can be learnt from unlikeliest of the places and from complete strangers, unknown small entrepreneurs from the streets.

It is a story telling session and not a lecture on business acumen, grit, perseverance and inspiring stories from tremendous human whom we will not find a case at Harvard or their business models being discussed at IIMs.

Yet, for me they are as amazing as billion dollar worth unicorns who we talk about all the time in media.

I bring great examples, some cases and amazing stories from a Shoe Shine guy from Addis Ababa, a pavement book seller in South Africa, a legacy Gulab Jamun shop in Nagina, a Punjabi shop run by a Brit in Japan, and many such tales.

Welcome to BLSW

WHY?

- I love travelling, so much so that my students call me the Travelling Professor (*Jhola Wala Master*)
- I love talking to people too, especially strangers and off course business guys on the streets.
- I do retail anthropology : I observe how shoppers buy, what kind of shop it is and how does the shopkeeper sell.
- And I record all of this into field notes and photographs.
- I also try to learn from every interaction/observation.
- This is my story and stories of many of us who visit streets of the world

Why are they unique ?

Because

They always Think
Fresh



<https://www.thebetterindia.com/92195/street-vendors-india-walas/>

They are always on time: Whenever,
wherever



<https://www.thebetterindia.com/92195/street-vendors-india-walas/>

They Change with the Season



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www.thetap.in

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/92195/street-vendors-india-walas/>

I collected Stories from the Streets Around the World

Friends, family, students, colleagues, strangers, and Google too





Stories in all languages, shapes, sizes, colours and tastes too





Pic: Sukanto Roy



Pic: Sukanto Roy



Pic: Sukanto Roy



Pic: Sukanto Roy



Pic: Sukanto Roy

Some Useful Insights

The honey sellers

The honey sellers of Guanajuato, Mexico. They also carry grapes the source of the honey and the honeycomb to prove that they are the real bee keepers and it's a native product and not sourced from market

-Anupam Anand, Washinton DC

AUTHENTICITY SELLS





Pic by : Anupam Anand, Washinton DC

Hernandez

A few miles south of Los Angeles dreams production capital of the world that has over years given us the best of grad movies, music and animations is **Baja California**, a Mexican state that is drastically different in both its grandiose appeal and people.

Our street vendor 'Coke bottle magic man' Hernandez here holding a bottle of Coke with an elongated neck :)

Small city with small tricks keeps people engaged and amused

-Rituparn Dixit, SFO

KEEP FEW TRICKS UP YOUR SLEEVES



Hands that Make

It is a street market in Pittsburgh, US. They had a unique concept of all unique products such as hand watches, handmade jewelry, art and paintings. All unique handmade products.

-Khyati Jagani, Pune, India

HANDCRAFT NEVER GOES OUT OF FASHION



Koh Samui

Floating Market in Koh Samui, Thailand,
made on a artificial lake

-Khyati Jagani, pune, India



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION



Closer Home: Ram Bhai Ketli @ IIM Ahmedabad

<https://www.scoopwhoop.com/inothernews/chai-wallahs-of-india/>



Bubble Maker in Rome

He travels across the world making bubbles

-Jyoti Nautiyal, Delhi, India

IT DOES NOT TAKE MUCH TO CREATE
HAPPINESS



Naples

Christmas figurines

-Jyoti Nautiyal, Delhi, India

RELIGION IS THE BIGGEST COMMERCE IN
THE WORLD



Dil to Pagal Hai

In the remote interiors of the hilly Grasse, a quaint village in France, a short drive away from Cannes; while shopping for local outfits in this neighborhood boutique; I discovered the reach and impact of Bollywood. Looking at my bright clothes & almost dancing walk, the boutique owner understood that I'm an Indian with a 'Bollywood' heart as she promptly pulled out this DVD from her stash and happily posed for this picture!

-Devdatta Potnis, Mumbai, India

PASSION



Punjabi Soul-English Hat

So this is like 2 years ago, a friend and I had gone to Japan. We had gone to Okinawa because it had the best diving spots in the world. But a thing about Okinawa is an island that's very far from central Japan. One evening, we were roaming around near the main market where we came across this leather store which had a really English vibe. I can't recall the name but it had London in it. So we went into the shop and saw a British guy, around 40 or something. He saw us and he straight away asked if we were from India. And we were like yeah, and then he continued to speak with us in Hindi. Both of us wanted some backstory so we asked him. It turns out the real owner was a Punjabi from Amritsar. The shop sold products which had premium leather from India. Both of them had grown close to each other after 10 years of working together. So today, the owner is no more and his sons disinterested in the shop, this brit bought the store from his sons. He now runs the store in the same way the previous owner used to, sourcing all products from India. The reason it had a really English name is because the Punjabi wanted Britishers to come in and see a Punjabi at the cash counter.

-Kavish, Mumbai, India



The eyewear street, Saigon



Most of the youth in Saigon usually shop for stylish eyeglass frames on this street instead of visiting optical shops. Thousands of glasses that come in different shapes, sizes, and colors hung on the display boards. The price fluctuates from 40,000 – 60,000 VND for a pair of glasses and 60,000 – 120,000 VND for sunglasses, depending on bargaining.

In Streets the Fashion Trends

Indian streets/markets

Sharon Tea Stall

Domlur, Bengaluru

Iconic Tea Stall For A Whopping 140 Varieties Of Tea

At the beginning of the bustling Thippasandra market (right across the Bata showroom), lies a tiny tea stall that opens shop at 6 am and fuels the daily lives of nearly 500 people everyday. The buzzing tea stall, owned by A Daniel, serves about 140 different kinds of teas! Their most sought-after tea, according to Daniel, is the Ginger Elaichi variety.



-Internet Images

Ima Keithel, Manipur

Manipuri mothers or Imas from all religions come together at this market, the only market organised and run completely by women. Around 3000 women congregate, sitting in rows, to sell different kinds of food, handicrafts and various other day-to-day household items.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT
ANYONE?



-Internet Images

Floating Market, Kashmir

It is one of a kind floating market in India and second of its kind in the world and is at least two centuries old. It is learned from the locals, that the fruits and vegetables sold in the Shikaras are cultivated on the banks of the Dal Lake and cultivated no more than 2 hours before market sales time



-Internet Images

Indian GPS: our pan wala

How in India, almost everywhere, it is a given, that the local corner panwala will give the right directions to any place.

Others may or may not, but there is this easy credibility associated with panwalas that they would know.

Maybe it is because they have a lot of fixed clients and that gives them a good mental map of the locality, or is it because most of their clients like their particular product customised and this makes them particularly alert in general and this ability in giving precise directions is a spillover effect.

Or is it because quite a few raasta poochne wale also buy tidbits as a token.

I don't know, but this is something very unique about Indian streets. Baaqiyon ke muqable the directions given by a panwala always seem to carry a wee bit more weight than any other direction giver.

This may be trivial, or this may be useful, but this does point to some kinda affinity/trust that they get.

-Ashish Pandey, Delhi, India



-Internet Images

And the inspiring stories

The story of Johny Hot Dog

Johny hot dog is a small shop on 'Chappan Dukan' a street which is famous for food and got its name because of the 56 small shops that were here.

This place started almost 50 years back and hasn't changed much. It still sells the same three things – the iconic veg hot dog, the benjo, and a mutton hot dog.

He took his inspiration of cooking from his mother and started johny hot dog. He thought of the name after watching English movies as the bun is not something which was eaten in India.

It is a very small shop of 120 sq. feet but clocks an annual revenue of 3 crores.

Technology has a big part to play in this. In 2018, they partnered with uber eats and this gave a major boost to its sales.

The place is always crowded since 9am to 9pm till it shuts. You will always find a big que outside. Now the only difference is that before there were customers waiting but now, the delivery boys have replaced them.

It had an annual revenue of 1 cr in 2017 but after using uber eats they jumped to 3 cr in 2019.

The owner still cooks himself and everyone calls him 'dadu'. His son went to the UK to do his masters, and quit his engineering job to return to join his father in the business. He believes serving people with food is a noble deed. He doesn't want to work for some company abroad but instead contribute to India's economy.

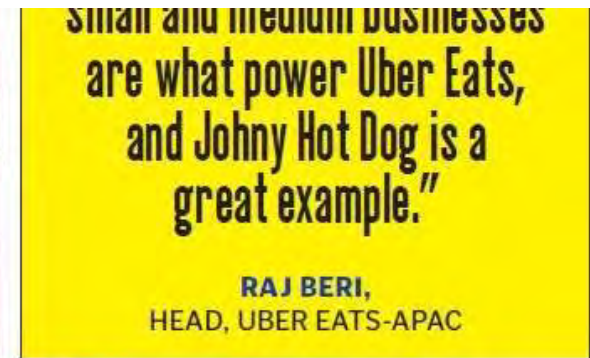
He was given the Uber eats APAC annual award, or most popular item in Asia pacific. He sells an average of 3500 hot dogs on uber eats in a day.

When it started, JHD would open only at 4 pm, but now work begins at 5 am and the outlet opens at about 9 am.

More than 75% business comes from Uber eats.

Now they have shifted to Zomato since Uber got acquired by it. So, the number of offers has reduced significantly.

On uber I have always seen either a 50% off or 1 hot dog free, so even if you wanted 1 hot dog you ended up getting two. But this is not the case on Zomato, which might cause a decrease in sales.



-Samyak Jain, Indore, India

Naha Harbor Diner

Located in Okinawa, Japan

It is a banyan treehouse café which is a life-size rendition of a banyan tree (they call it gajumaru)

twenty foot tall tree with a pan-Asian restaurant nestled amid its branches

Accessible by a spiral staircase around back and an in-trunk elevator

Also tries to boost sustainability by using native and local foods and cutting down on shipping and packaging; hence reducing carbon and plastic footprints.



-Internet Images

Freitag's container shop

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JozTEAlZX9s>

Swiss company

Responsible for making some of the most fashionable bags in the market which are made from recycled materials

Opened a shop in 2006 in Zurich from 17 rusty shipping containers

This is how they stuck to their environmentally friendly stance

At 26 metres in height, the store offers quite a view from the top, so the Freitag brothers decided to install a telescope at the summit in order for customers to take in the scenery around the store.



-Internet Images

Benaras

घाट घाट के हैं बनारस
भांग भांग के हैं कई रस !
कोई मरने को खोजता कोना
कोई एक कश में जी जाता बस !!



-PICS BY : Anuja Singh, Bangalore,
India



अनोखा बनारस
कभी गदौलिया में होर हल्ला
गिरता पड़ता,
जीता डोम मोहल्ला
मलइयों की भोर
ताम्बूल का ज़ोर

ठठेरी की चाट पाट
सोनू की अढी के ठाठ
गंगा आरती की शान
पर बनारसी परेशान !



-PICS BY : Anuja Singh, Bangalore,
India





Neoteny by S Ram Kumar, Bopal,
Ahmedabad

You make it so Good that they will come



Keeping the Heritage Alive

Charleville Book Café , Mussorie

-Ashish Uniyal



All it takes is Hello

Winter Night in Mussorie

Hot Maggie

Conversations with strangers

Friendship on the Go

Collaboration in the Future

-Sanjay Tamta



Shining shoes and making millions

- Abbas and his GUTU SHOE SHINE venture made me realize that it's not the greatness of the idea that matters, but commitment to that idea, diligence, looking for opportunity to innovate even if it looks small and ordinary innovation.
- <http://www.retail4growth.com/viewpoints/little-big-ideas-351>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJFiMY0-T1w>



Learnings from Gutu Shoe Shine

- Commitment to that idea, diligence, looking for opportunity to innovate even if it looks small and ordinary innovation
- Understanding customers and have empathy towards them in real sense,
- To give everything to that venture and believe in it.
- Being happy and cheerful while doing your job
- Shining shoes might look mundane to us, but for Abbas it's almost a million \$ business in years to come
- **You don't get Million \$ ideas, you make your Idea worth Million \$**

Go Beyond



- Ababu Abbas is my close friend now
- Every time any of my friends passes through Addis Ababa Airport, they gift him business books
- Last year he completed his MBA from the University
- He is seeking guidance from me on his Phd
- He has been featured in many Ethiopian TV Shows
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsoQUkirBj8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpfkiq5ic8I>

“You don’t have to be rich to save the world,”
– Philani Dladla, The Pavement Bookworm

- <http://www.pavementbookworm.co.za/>



-Story by Deepak Ramola, Project FUEL

Learnings from Pavement Bookworm

- Life always gives you a second chance
- Don't give what you have, instead re-imagine what would customer want and then rework your offerings
- Education is not limited to Schools and Colleges, we can learn on the streets too
- Be the biggest hero you want to become
- Own your STORY
- You are your biggest Brand Ambassador

Making Sweet Little Ideas Big

- <http://www.retail4growth.com/viewpoints/making-sweet-little-ideas-big-373>



Few learnings for me from this amazing example of **#BusinessOnTheStreet**

- **Be proud of your legacy** (Each and every piece of advertisement talks about it starting in 1945)
- **Build on what you inherited:** Three generations expanding and creating more wealth
- Experiment, explore and learn from competition
- Treat your customers with love
- Don't be ashamed of your origins/city/place, instead make it your high point as everyone loves an underdog
- **Embrace technology and embed it into current business model**
- **See the world as your market and not just the location one is in**

Summing up the lessons

Speak the language of your customer

Adjust the price to your customer

Embrace the power of free products

Personal connection matters

Convince your customer to buy more



-Internet Images

Streets to Corner Offices

- Streets are like our workplace—challenging, ever changing, and pushing us to be flexible and resilient.
- The trick is to observe things around us, to cope with these constant changes, and reinventing ourselves to stay relevant.
- That's what the street vendors do—
- Adapt-Evolve-Overcome Barriers-REPAT

Adapt

- Like the Vada Pav Guy

Evolve

- Like Fashion Street in Mumbai

Overcome and Rebound

- They Face Uncertainties and adversities every day

Yet

They are back next day

Thank you

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 - Mr. Gupta of Tularam

Other Lessons

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hd4l3-TXvxc&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12eD3K5Peu8&feature=youtu.be>



Thank you.

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