



## The New Age Biz: FMCS

### Shaadi.com Centre leads the Fast Moving Consumer Services category

A young wannabe entrepreneur often faces the question; In India, which is the key market segment & the consumer service category to be in? Well answer wouldn't come easy - but when we talk "India", the most fascinating response has been "Pick the area you want to enter & the opportunity is there". A burgeoning economy with 8 to 9 % growth per annum & never heard of splurging Indian consumer, the service industry walks away with a clean chit for the future. Service industry contributing over 60% to the GDP of our nation & serves a young India. When we declare India young, it symbolize a population of over 1.2 billion heartbeats - 65% of those constitute the young & the restless consumer who is located all across the country.

In the ever-growing Indian middle class we can identify the conservative discerning buyer who has varied needs during the course of his life cycle ranging from education, health & the most importantly matrimony. In India where the concept of 'arranged' marriage is still pervasive, individuals also look forward to different channels so that they have a 'choice.' The old age & conventional matchmaking...

systems did not evolve with the need of the hour. They offered little or no respite to a restless parent wanting to marry his offspring. Moreover, the improving participation of the brood in the matchmaking decision, Parents found the conventional matchmaking information system incompetent in providing a holistic solution. From resorting to the local pundits, relatives, newspapers and marriage bureaus, Indians have found a foothold in the online sites and their offline centres.

The demand was evident: Educated urbane youngsters contemplating matrimony was looking for his space to find a match was increasingly using the power of the Web if not to find "the one" but at least to get a few referrals that they can vet. According to The economist magazine the market is estimated to be around \$11 billion with a growth rate of about 25 percent per annum. The Matrimony industry has found its place in the Fast Moving Consumer Service category "FMCS", the reason being the billions of dollars it is grossing every year. Matrimony services are slotted in this category due to its rapid consumption across all segments of the market. Shaadi.com has indisputably become the face to propagate FMSC's depth & future. Like in most cases technology cut through the traditional avenues of matchmaking for Indians. Indian matrimonial companies have created a successful business model by blending technology with personal touch.

Over a decade back in 1997, an aware organisation like Shaadi.com took to the pressing need of the consumer & created a matrimonial website. Today it is one of the world's largest online matrimonial sites with over 10 million members & 1 million matches to its credit & serves south East Asians across the globe. Shaadi.com runs on a simple model of period based subscription. The online format's key strength lies in the convenience of time, space & the choice of prospects it offers its users at a click of the mouse.

While giving validation & opportunity to the offspring of choosing his partner, the customary approval of the parent in the matchmaking process didn't fade away. In fact, it gave an equal opportunity where both could mutually decide.

Although, the Indian Diaspora has evolved on its views of marriage, still over 67% of youth seeks the approval of the parents on any decision related to matrimony. To address the need for the parent who is not comfortable dealing with the online interface shaadi.com initiated an retail model that provides matchmaking services.

The retail business model was created to deliver the advantages of technology with a personal interface to a parent seeking matrimony for his loved ones.

Shaadi.com Centre was launched in 2004 post extensive research on consumer need and psychographics & is lead by Mr. Omprakash Hassanandani. While grappling with the inconsistencies of the match making industry he conceptualised a blueprint for a standardized, accessible, transparent matchmaking service being offered through a retail outlet.

Shaadi.com Centre chose franchising as their distribution model. Mr. Omprakash comments, "The size of the Indian market and demography makes franchising model a perfect way of conducting business, particularly in the service sector of the economy. Franchising allows larger organizations to actually penetrate the tier II and tier III cities, which is not only an arduous task but also difficult to execute through branch office". For a service like matchmaking that needs personalised care and attention to meet the consumer's needs, franchising is an ideal model where in the franchisee plays a key role in the value creation

**Company Highlights :**

**No of Centres: 151**  
**Presence : 87 cities**  
**Franchisor for the year 2005 & 2006**

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The popularity of organised matchmaking services has grown phenomenally making Shaadi.com Centre the 1st national network of centres providing one-stop matchmaking service through retail outlets. It has launched 151 centres and has made its presence felt in 87 cities and is able to offer services to over a million members. It has pioneered the concept of using proprietary technology to revolutionize the traditional method of matchmaking. They are presently leaders in the industry of retail matchmaking services and they aim to continue to lead in this space as competition heats up. Shaadi.com Centre has enriched the consumer experience by offering a scalable, economically viable service delivered at the doorstep.

This service allows you to sit in the comfort of your own city and search for prospective matches nationally as well as internationally according to your specific criterion. At a Shaadi.com Centre you will be well received by a Relationship Advisor who would assist you through the search process. While adding your profile to the large pool of database she will also help you search biodata's based on the your requirement brief. You can walk away with the detailed biodata & the candidates contact details. The Relationship Advisor would also assist you in aligning meeting with prospective candidates you wish to contact.



Some of the related services offered at the Shaadi.com Centre include detailed astrology services, matrimonial classifieds, matrimonial events and expert advice among others.

At present they are targeting at improving their depth in the TIER I & TIER II cities. The business of matchmaking requires ability to empathize & sensitivity towards client's specific requirement. Keeping these attributes in mind women entrepreneurs are preferred due to their natural finesse of customer management and communication skills.

The unique thing about owning a Shaadi.com franchisee is the average break-even period for a franchisee is mere 6 months. Also there are high returns of investments compared to other business prospects. Shaadi.com Centre improving your social standing, it's a business venture where any member of your family can be involved. Since it doesn't require any technical knowledge, it can be easily handed over from one member of the clan to another.

Kiran Chawla, a franchisee of Shaadi.com Centre at Allahabad discovered that business opportunities are unlimited in this field. Entrepreneur at heart, Kiran was impatiently looking for a business opportunity that would give her independence. Most franchising model required lot of technical knowledge & heavy investments. As destiny had it she took up Shaadi.com Centre 2yrs years ago, when the idea struck her while surfing the net.

Kiran Chawla says " The best part of the business is the personal satisfaction of doing community service while running a profitable business"

Highly satisfied of her newfound independence she comments, "Right from the third month we broke even and project costs were also recovered subsequently. The best part of the business is the personal satisfaction of doing community service while running a profitable business. The support being provided by Shaadi.com Centre is the know-how, planning and training imparted by the franchisor and they are there to ensure that you



have a smooth start. Hence its business with clarity and satisfaction." She further adds, "I am a people oriented person & I found my true expression through my work. I patiently listen to and understand every clients needs, as they have specific demands, which require careful handling. I enjoy interacting and meeting new people from different strata of society and Shaadi.com has helped me fulfil my wish."

### **Want to be a Franchisee?**

1. Area required : 400 tp 500 sq ft
2. Investment requirement : up to 7 to 8 Lakhs
3. Franchise present : 150
4. Expected Franchisees : 500 by end of 2008

### **Franchisor Support**

1. Brand Equity
2. Product Training
3. Technical & operation training
4. Mass media & Advertising
5. Recruitment
6. Access to Central Database

With a large chunk of Indians residing abroad, Shaadi.com centres are going global. As there is a lot of untapped potential on foreign shores, overseas opportunities have been identified and they would be starting operations in the month of April 2008. Work is in progress to start operations in UK, UAE & USA.

Internet has expanded the opportunity of finding a match from local search through a newspaper to a global search. Website creates a single search platform for members across nations, such that your perfect better half is just a click away

**For Business Enquiries: Mr. Devang Udeshi - 9324089704**