

THE

OCTOBER 2025 | ISSUE 03

GODDAM

OCTOBER
EDITION

REVIEW

BEYOND DISCOUNTS

The festive playbook for
brands that want hearts, not
just carts

CREATIVE FESTIVE CLICHÉS

Why it's time to swap
sameness for storytelling this
festive season

CRACKING THE FESTIVE CODE

Decoding the hidden
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THE INDIAN FESTIVE SEASON BEYOND DISCOUNTS

Festive discounts are everywhere, but real impact comes from offers that surprise and delight. This piece explores creative alternatives to price cuts that you can try this season.

FROM THE *EDITOR*

Welcome to the *third edition* of The Goddam Review. What a milestone this is turning out to be.

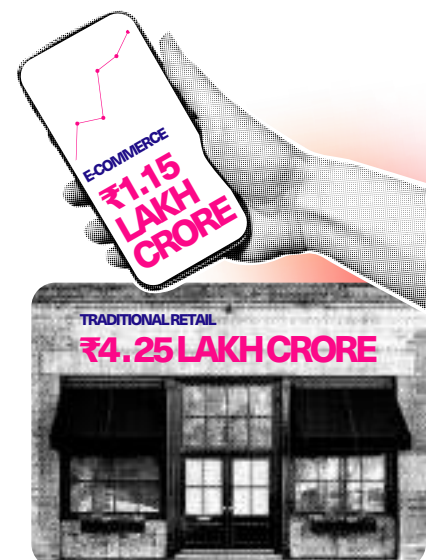
We're doing something different this time. You'll notice a fresh design approach that we've been experimenting with, and more importantly, *we're expanding our editorial coverage*. While we've always created with performance outcomes in mind, this edition dives deeper into the science and strategy behind what makes campaigns work.

Think of it as pulling back the curtain on the methodologies and data patterns that drive our creative decisions.

Why now? Because the lines between creative brilliance and marketing precision have never been more blurred. The brands winning today aren't just telling great stories; they're telling great stories that convert, engage, and drive measurable outcomes. And understanding the mechanics behind those wins is just as crucial as appreciating the creative execution.

This edition couldn't have come at a better time. We're diving deep into India's festive season, arguably the most crucial 60-90 days for Indian brands and marketers. It's when product launches hit overdrive, special offers flood every channel, and campaigns swing for the fences with everything from nostalgia to scarcity triggers.

The numbers reveal something fascinating about how India actually shops during festivals. E-commerce is projected to hit **₹1.15 lakh crore** this season. This sounds impressive until you realise traditional retail is expected to generate **₹4.25 lakh crore**. Despite all our digital-first conversations, offline retail commands nearly four times the market. But here's where it gets interesting—the behaviour patterns are shifting faster than the market share.



83% of shoppers plan to increase their festive spending this year, with households budgeting an average of ₹16,500 each. The real story isn't just how much they're spending, but how they're spending it.



Quick commerce, which was barely a concept three years ago, is now **surging at 150%** year-over-year and is **expected to cross 1 billion orders** by Diwali alone. It's moved beyond impulse buys for groceries into planned purchases of ghee, packaged sweets, and even electronics. Consumers are now getting iPhones delivered in 10 minutes during festive sales.

What makes this edition special is how we're dissecting not just what's happening, but why it works. Expect in-depth analyses of Ad breakdowns that reveal the psychology behind conversions, creative formats that actually drive results and yes, a much-needed conversation about the festive clichés we can finally retire.

We're also exploring how Google Ads' newest features intersect with holiday marketing strategies, because let's face it, the best creative idea means nothing if it can't navigate the complexities of modern ad tech. Our "Festive Time Capsule" will walk through standout campaigns from the past decade that didn't just win awards, but won consumers and drove business results.

This is more than just another magazine issue. It's our attempt to bridge the gap between the creative minds who dream up the ideas and the performance marketers who make them scale. Because the best campaigns aren't just creative or just data-driven- they're both. Hope you enjoy reading!

-Raveen

AD



BREAK



DOWN

By Prajwal Jaiprakash
Creative Strategist



WHEN SKINCARE ADS STOP SELLING AND START SAYING SOMETHING

How **Re'equil** Hijacked My Feed with Plot
Twists, Clinical Claims & Actually Good Writing



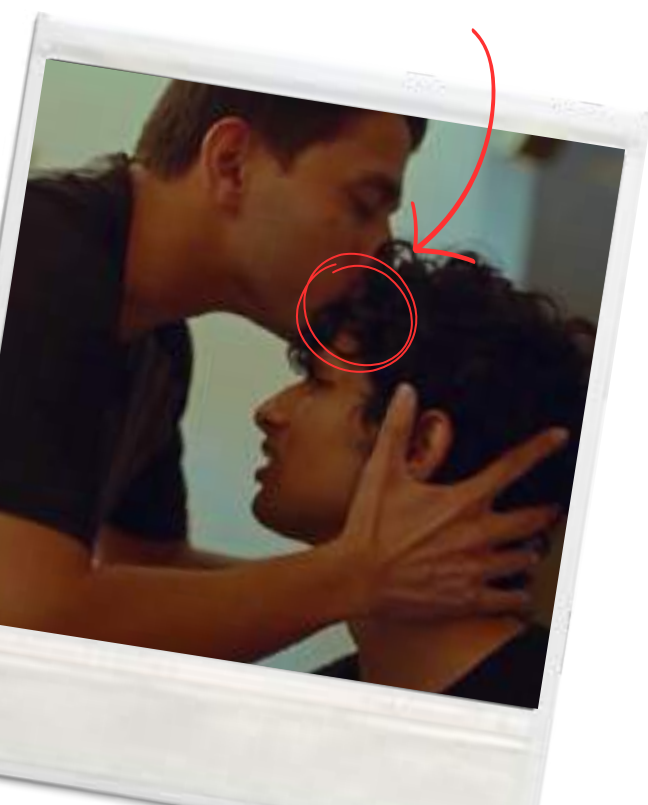
You know that feeling when you're scrolling through Instagram at 2 AM, half-asleep, and suddenly an ad makes you sit up and go, *"Wait, what...huh?"*

That happened to me with Re'equil.

Not because they showed me flawless skin or because a celebrity told me their retinol changed their life (mercifully, no).

But because two boys kissed on screen... and the ad immediately pivoted to:

"And it's non-sticky. It's talking about 0.1% Retinol Light Cream."



I had to replay it, just because of *how quickly* it went from soft intimacy (I thought it was a movie clip?) to skincare specs in the space of two seconds.

It wasn't trying to be inclusive or even waving a progressive flag.

It was just... *unexpected*.

A hook. A frame break. A blink-worthy "what did I just watch?" moment that made you pay attention before your brain had a chance to scroll past.

And that's what makes *Re'equil's* advertising approach so interesting: They don't waste time easing you into the message. They throw you in, confuse you a little, and then calmly hand you a retinol fact sheet. So let's break down what makes their ads *so sticky (pun intended)*, and why they've figured out how to speak human in a category drowning in filters and fluff.

01 The kiss that had nothing to do with the kiss

Let's get this out of the way:

As I mentioned before, the kiss wasn't about romance. Or inclusivity. Or representation.

It was about attention.

In a category where every other brand opens with product flatlays and white-lab-coat close-ups, *Re'equil* opened with intimacy. Stillness. A moment that made you tilt your head, even if just slightly.

And right when your brain went: "Oh what movie is this still from?"

Boom. Retinol.

"It's non-sticky."

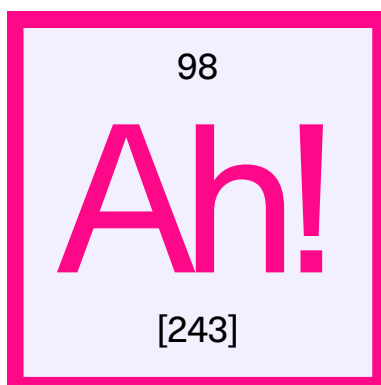
"0.1% Retinol Light Cream."

"Hydrating and creamy formula. No irritation."

That gear shift? *Intentional.*



[Watch it here](#)



**THE ELEMENT
OF SURPRISE**

Why it works:

Because your brain wasn't expecting a kiss in a skincare ad. And it definitely wasn't expecting it to transition so casually into product education.

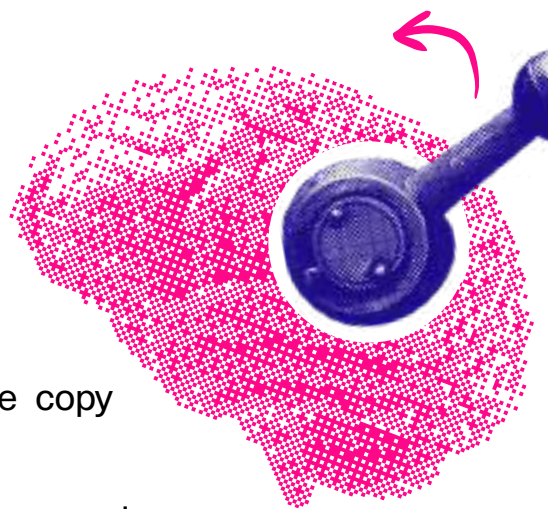
It's the digital equivalent of someone tapping your shoulder and saying "Hey! look over there." And when you turn, it's not drama. It's just a table with a really good product sitting on it.

The Psychological Lever: Pattern Disruption + Fluency Framing

- Pattern disruption breaks the scroll. The kiss is the pattern-break.
- Fluency framing makes the transition smooth. The copy doesn't pause to explain or justify. It just flows.

Your brain interprets that seamlessness as confidence. As normalcy. You don't need to sell hard when the structure of the ad tells me:

"We're not trying to be clever. We're just clear."



Bonus Move: The Unexpected = The Memorable

You don't remember this ad because it was controversial. You remember it because it was composed.

That's rare.

Especially in a space where most brands are shouting "formulated with 9 herbs and science!"

Re'equil just said:

"Yeah, they kissed. Anyway, this cream doesn't irritate."

And now you're listening.

(But honestly, how did this get approved!?) 🤔)



*Marketing team
at Re'equil



02



The stalker who just wants your skincare routine



Now let's talk about psychological thriller x skincare comedy.

The setup: You hear a story - A woman feels followed for days. Same girl. Every night. Lurking. *The tension builds.* You're thinking crime podcast material here. And then...

"How does your skin look so fresh and healthy always?"

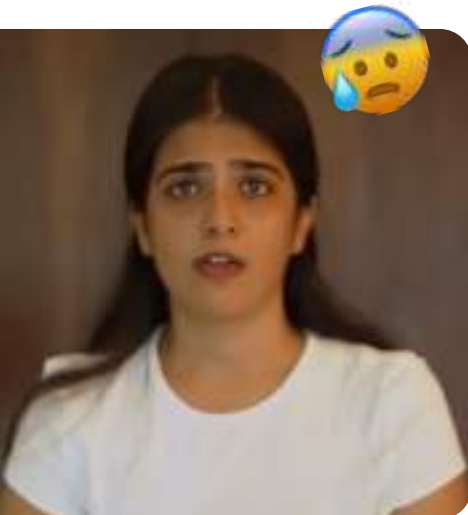
Oh. 🤔

[Watch it here](#)



Here's the play:

Re'equil took a genuine female fear (being followed at night) and subverted it into commentary about our collective obsession with good skin. It's clever, but it's also risky. One wrong beat and this ad becomes tone-deaf. But they nail it because:



1. *The tension is real.* They don't mock the fear. They use it.
2. *The relief is genuine.* When you realise it's just about skincare, you laugh—but you also remember the feeling.
3. *The product becomes the answer to obsession.* Not your obsession. Other people's obsession with YOUR skin.

The ad is doing something sneaky here: it's positioning *Re'equil* not as something you need because you're insecure, but as something others notice because it works. That's social proof wrapped in a thriller narrative.

The Psychological Lever: Emotional Rollercoaster + Payoff



Your brain releases *dopamine* when tension resolves unexpectedly. That feel-good chemical? Now associated with *Re'equil 0.1% Retinol Night Cream*. Congratulations, you've been emotionally conditioned.



The Laundry Metaphor

OR: When skincare brands get brutally honest

"If my skin were laundry, it would be this shirt—washed a million times, still stained."

Okay. Pause.

Most skincare brands would never say this. Because they are selling you hope in a bottle. They're selling transformation and "you'll be beautiful after using this." So they never want a negative association attached to the brand so even the frustration will be masked in a golden wrapper.

But *Re'equil* is selling you frustration as raw as it comes

And that's genius.



[Watch it here](#)



Here's why it works:

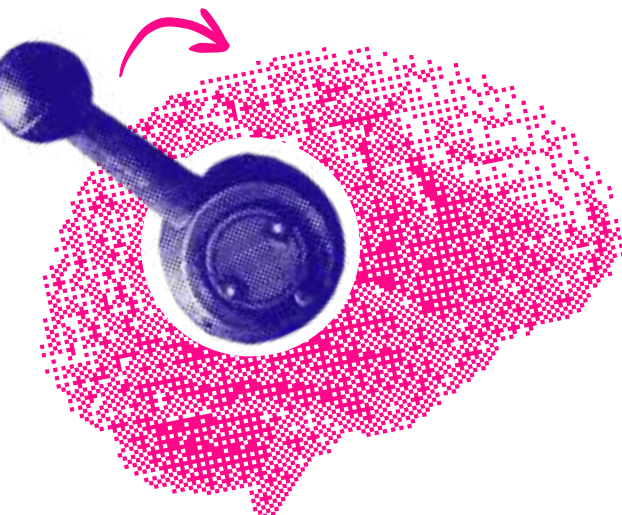
Because we've ALL been that stained shirt. We've tried everything. Scrubbed harder. Bought more products. Felt defeated when nothing worked. And most brands respond to that feeling with: "But try THIS one! It's different!"

Re'equil says: "Yeah, scrubbing doesn't work. Here's why. Here's the science. Here's what actually works."

The ad then goes *full nerd mode*:

- Speeds up cell renewal
- Removes dead, damaged cells
- Regulates melanin production
- Clinical data: 100% reduction in age spots in 30 days
- 16% less pigmentation in 60 days

Notice what they're doing? They're not dumbing it down. They're respecting your intelligence. They're saying: "You're smart enough to understand cell renewal and melanin regulation. Let's talk science."



The Psychological Lever: Competence signalling

When a brand talks to you like an adult and backs claims with data, your brain codes it as "credible" and "trustworthy." You're not buying a miracle. You're buying chemistry that happens to work on skin.

Also: specificity bias. "100% reduction in 30 days" sounds way more believable than "transforms your skin." Our brains trust specific numbers over vague promises.

04 The alarm that is actually your skin screaming

A girl wakes up. Alarm ringing. She searches everywhere- under the bed, in drawers, behind curtains. Finally, she looks in the mirror: **"CHECK YOUR SKIN"** is written there.

This ad externalises internal anxiety. Your skin has been trying to tell you something, but you've been ignoring it. Breakouts, dullness, ageing signs- they're not just cosmetic issues. They're alarms.



[Watch it here](#)

Here's the psychology:

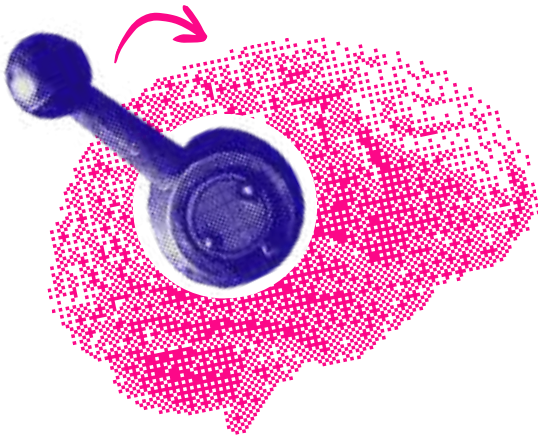
Re'equil is positioning their retinol as the response to an ignored warning. Not as a luxury. Not as vanity. As the thing you should have done earlier but didn't because you were busy looking everywhere else.

And then they remove all the barriers:

- Dermatologically tested
- Beginner friendly
- No purging
- Zero panic



See what they did? They anticipated every excuse you have for not trying retinol and pre-emptively killed it. Your brain has no defense mechanism left. The alarm is going off. The solution is safe. What are you waiting for?



The Psychological Lever: **Problem awareness +** **solution accessibility**

Most people know they should take care of their skin. They just don't because they're scared of the process. *Re'equil* makes the process sound less scary than doing nothing.

05

The 'People of Re'equil' Ad **(Or: When brand content feels like therapy)**

This is the ad that probably shouldn't work. Employees talking about acne, beauty standards, not wearing concealer anymore, learning to accept themselves.

It's corporate content. It could so easily feel like HR-approved propaganda. But it doesn't.



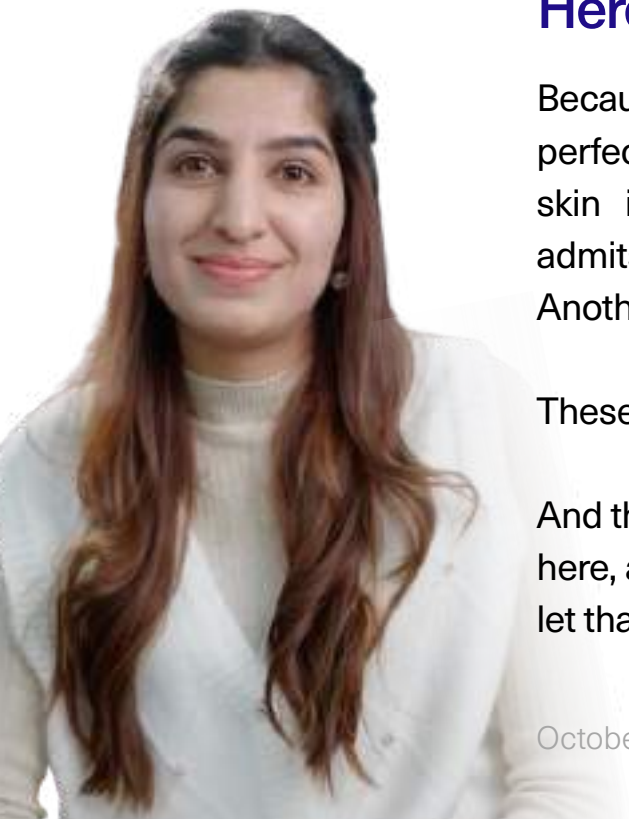
[Watch it here](#)

Here's why:

Because it's uncomfortable. The people on screen aren't perfectly lit influencers. They're real employees with real skin issues talking about real struggles. One woman admits she used to wear concealer to hide her acne. Another says she used to think beauty meant flawless skin.

These aren't Instagram captions. *These are confessions.*

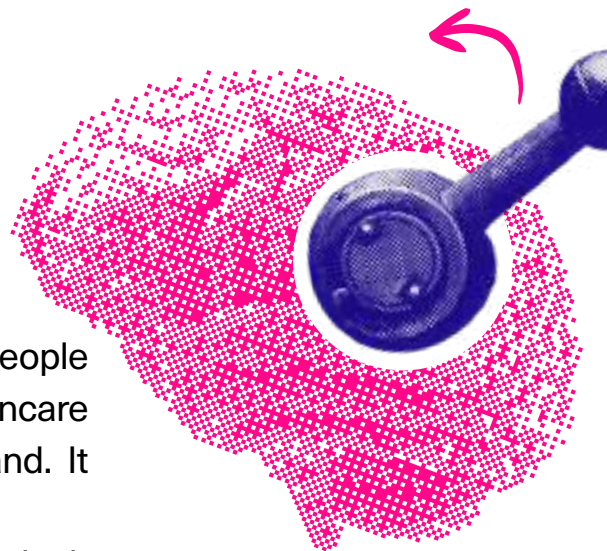
And the message isn't "our products fixed us." It's "we work here, and we still have skin issues, but we've learned not to let that define us."



The Psychological Lever: Authenticity signaling through vulnerability

We trust people who admit imperfection more than people who claim perfection. When an employee of a skincare brand says "I still get acne," it doesn't hurt the brand. It makes the brand human.

Also: in-group bias. When you hear "the people here don't judge me for my skin," you think, "I want to be around people like that." And suddenly, buying *Re'equil* isn't just buying a product. *It's buying into a value system.*



WHAT RE'EQUIL GETS RIGHT



Let me be clear: Re'equil isn't perfect. Their ads won't work for everyone. But they've cracked something that most Indian skincare brands are still afraid to touch:

01 They trust their audience.

They assume you can handle two men kissing. They assume you can understand clinical data. They assume you care more about honesty than aspiration.



02 They don't treat good skin as the end goal.

Most skincare ads sell beauty. *Re'equil* sells comfort. The comfort of not worrying about your skin. The comfort of not being defined by acne. The comfort of just... existing in your face without constant anxiety.

03 They normalize before they monetize.

Whether it's representation or acne or dark spots, they don't treat these things as problems to be solved. They treat them as realities to be acknowledged. And then they offer a product.



04 They use narrative, not prescription.

Most skincare ads follow a formula: problem → product → transformation. *Re'equil* disrupts this by introducing story first. The kiss. The stalker. The alarm. You're hooked by the narrative before you even know what they're selling.

THE BREAKDOWN

■ Why This Matters ■

Re'equil's advertising works because it doesn't feel like advertising. It feels like someone finally saying what we've all been thinking:

Skincare is personal, messy, anxiety-inducing, and maybe—*just maybe*—doesn't need to be so damn performative all the time.

They've built a brand voice that's **equal parts clinical and confessional**. They cite melanin regulation in one sentence and talk about acne acceptance in the next. They show you two boys kissing and then sell you retinol. They acknowledge your fear of trying new products and then remove every excuse you have. And in an industry drowning in filtered perfection and celebrity endorsements and "this changed my life" testimonials, that kind of honesty is revolutionary.



YOUR Re'equil STYLE

CAMPAIGN CHEAT SHEET

(Steal responsibly)

Approach	What it Does	Best For
Normalize First, Sell Second	Makes your product feel like a natural part of diverse lives, not a statement	Brands wanting authentic representation
Subvert Expectations	Hook with story, deliver with product	Creating memorable, shareable content
Clinical + Conversational	Respect intelligence while staying accessible	Science-backed products, educated audiences
Acknowledge, Don't Fix	Position product as support, not salvation	Wellness, mental health, self-care
Remove Friction	Pre-emptively address every reason NOT to buy	First-time user acquisition
Vulnerability Over Perfection	Real people, real struggles, real trust	Building brand authenticity and loyalty

THE FINAL LAYER

The beauty of Re'equil's approach is that it doesn't announce itself. You're not sitting there thinking "wow, what progressive advertising." You're thinking "huh, that was honest" or "that was funny" or "that was relatable."

And then you buy the retinol.

That's not manipulation. That's just understanding that people are tired of being sold perfect lives they don't have. They want brands that exist in the world as it is, not as Instagram pretends it to be.

Re'equil gets this. And whether it's two boys kissing, a stalker asking about skincare, or an employee admitting she still gets acne- every ad whispers the same thing:

"Your skin is yours. Your life is yours. We're just here with good formulas and honest conversations."

And honestly? In a world of filtered selfies and miracle creams, *that's the real revolution.*

Now if you'll excuse me, I need to go check if I've been ignoring my skin's alarm. And maybe add that 0.1% retinol to cart. For science.

P.S. No, Re'equil didn't pay me to write this. But if they're reading: my skin could use some help. Just saying.





AD FORMATS THAT

PART TWO **ACTUALLY WORK**

Why the best-performing ads in 2025 look less like marketing and more like your friend's workout montage

By Prajwal Jaiprakash | Creative Strategist

Remember when we could all agree on what an ad looked like? There was a product shot. A headline that screamed benefits. Maybe a celebrity if the budget allowed it. A logo. A "Shop Now" button that might as well have been invisible.

Simple times.

Now? I don't even know what I'm looking at half the time. Is this a workout tutorial? Is this someone's ChatGPT screenshot? Is this my friend's Instagram Story or is Glossier trying to sell me something?



And that confusion?
That's exactly the point.

Because the ads that are working right now aren't trying to look like ads. They're trying to look like everything else on your phone. The stuff you actually stop scrolling for. The content you screenshot. The videos you send to your group chat with "lol this is so us."

In Part 1, we covered the Instagram Story aesthetic, the Notes app confessional, and the Google search hack. Formats that camouflaged themselves as content you already trusted.

But formats evolve fast. What worked six months ago is already getting the scroll-past treatment because everyone's creative team discovered the same hack.

So what's cutting through the noise now?

Four new formats that aren't just blending into your feed—they're making you stop and think "wait, is this even an ad?"

Let's dissect them.

01 THE GRID

a.k.a. The “Here’s Everything You Need to Know—Right Now” Frame

We’ve officially moved past “you have 3 seconds to hook the user.”

Now?

You’ve got one frame.

And nothing’s doing that better than a multi-tile grid video or image.

At first glance, it looks chaotic.

At second glance, it’s everything your brain didn’t know it wanted. All. At. Once.

Why this format’s blowing up in Q3/Q4 of 2025:

Because it does what 5 different videos try to do in a single scroll-stopping second.

You’re not showing one use case. You’re showing possibility.

Depending on the brand, that could mean:

- *Multiple angles* of the same product (for those who want “real” before clicking)
- *Multiple products* in one family (“here’s the whole system”)
- *Multiple contexts* for use (office, gym bag, nightstand, travel pouch)
- *Multiple mental triggers* like routine, convenience, social proof, and performance, all firing together

FORMAT



And all this hits the user in the first second, before they've even decided if they care.



Why it works:

✓ Cognitive Load = Efficiently Managed

Instead of making them swipe, tap, or rewatch, you serve everything upfront. Their brain goes “wow, this feels rich.”

✓ Range → Relevance Bias

The more ways a product can be used, the more users believe it will work for them. You're not selling the product. You're selling fit.

✓ Unskippable by design

It creates that rare “wait, what's going on here” pause in an otherwise autopilot scroll.

Case in Point 1: The Fitness Grid

You've seen it.

9 squares.

One guy.

Different exercises.

Each tile says “2x15” and shows a move.

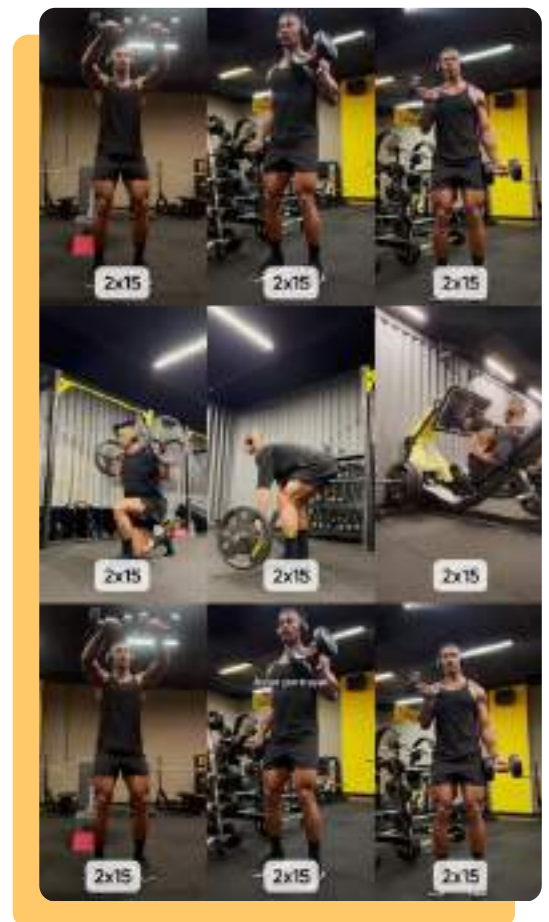
No voiceover. No transitions. Just pure clarity.

That video didn't say “this is a great workout.”

It showed 9 reasons why it is—visually, spatially, simultaneously.

You pause. You scan. You save.

Boom. Performance.



[Click here to watch](#)

Other examples:



[Click here to watch](#)



[Click here to watch](#)



[Click here to watch](#)



PRO TIP

Use a mix of macro (product in action) and micro (close-up textures, real usage) shots in your tiles.

You want depth and range.

Also, if it looks too polished, it flops.

The best grid ads feel like someone dumped their camera roll and accidentally made a banger.

02

THE GPT SCROLL-STOPPER

aka: When Your Ad Pretends to Be a Search and the Viewer Pretends They're Not Already Sold

If last year's scroll-breaker was the Google Search Screenshot, this year's is definitely its cooler, chattier cousin: *the ChatGPT-style ad*.

Because let's face it: we're all doing it. We're no longer just googling "best gift for mom Diwali under 1000" and clicking on random blog lists.



We're typing stuff like:

"What's a unique but affordable gift I can give that doesn't feel like a compromise?"



...and fully expecting life-changing answers from ChatGPT.

**AND THAT'S EXACTLY
WHAT SMART BRANDS ARE
HUACKING RIGHT NOW.**

Why this format works so well:

It feels like your own question.

You see the prompt and think, “Damn, I was literally about to ask that.”

That moment of recognition creates buy-in before the brand even reveals itself.

It's calm, not pushy.

This isn't an ad yelling “10% OFF – BUY NOW!”

It's an answer. From a bot you trust. With a solution that just... makes sense.

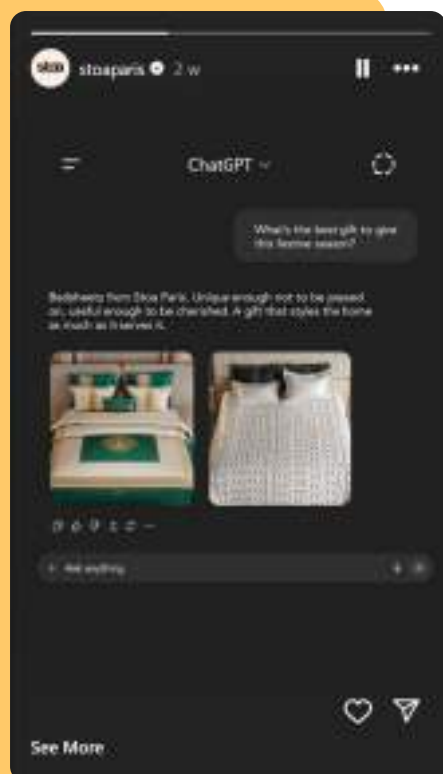
It matches modern discovery.

We've shifted from keywords to context.

Users are searching smarter now—through real conversations, not robotic phrases.



At least this article doesn't talk about how I share everything with ChatGPT instead of making real friends



Case in Point: Stoa Paris

One of the cleanest executions of this format.

Prompt: “What’s the best gift to give this festive season?”

Answer: Bedsheets from Stoa Paris.

Reason: Unique enough not to be passed on, useful enough to be cherished. A gift that styles the home as much as it serves it.

No jargon. No screaming SALE. No influencer face.

Just a calm, elegant suggestion. Like a friend (or AI) gently nudging you toward the right choice.

And because it's styled exactly like ChatGPT, your brain doesn't go “ad!”—it goes, “wait, I want to know the answer too.”

Use This Format When You Want To:

- Show product utility or gifting logic
- Educate the buyer in a chill, conversational tone
- Tap into high-intent queries without feeling keyword-stuffed
- Break through the noise with something familiar-but-new



HOT TIP FOR BRANDS

Don't just mock the UI—mimic the user's brain.

Think of what your consumer would genuinely ask a friend or an AI assistant:

- “What’s the difference between whey isolate and concentrate?”
- “Is it worth upgrading from a 2k to 10k mattress?”
- “What does SPF 50 PA++++ even mean?”

Your ad should be the answer they didn't know they were looking for, but are relieved to find.

03

THE PATTERN DISRUPTOR

aka: When the Story Hooks You & Then Flips the Script, Hard.

You're halfway through the reel. The plot is juicy. Tension is real. And just when you're bracing for a punchline or climax...Boom. Product drop. What looked like a story is actually an ad. What felt like content is now commerce. And you? You're too invested to back out. Welcome to the pattern disruptor format Where the brand is the plot twist.

Why This Format Works So **DAM** Well?

It hijacks your mental model.

You think you know what's coming. Your brain starts filling in the blanks. But the twist breaks the loop instantly resetting your attention. It's the equivalent of throwing a cold glass of water on someone mid-scroll.



It plays with social tension.

There's a moment of shock or taboo ("Is this going where I think it's going?") followed by release ("Ohhh okay, that's funny"). That emotional swing—from discomfort to humour—creates a memorable imprint.



It earns the next 3 seconds.

And in ad land, 3 seconds is all you need. "Wait, how did I not see that coming?" That replay = more engagement = better delivery = cheaper CPCs. Math, but make it magic.



XYXX AD:

Man opens his coat like he's about to do something wildly illegal in public. Girl screams. Your finger hovers over "report"...And then—Cut to his chest where a massive blue price card is stuck:

5 COTTON UNDIES – JUST ₹999 The comedy lands. The product lands. The price lands. You laugh, you remember it, and you low-key consider ordering. It's absurd. But it works because it's absurd with purpose.

Use This Format When You Want To:

- Reclaim scroll attention from passive scrollers
- Lean into humour without needing heavy production
- Sell basics in unexpected ways
- Build brand recall through narrative, not just visuals



HOT TIP FOR BRANDS

To disrupt, you first need to build a believable pattern. It could be:

- An awkward date setup
- A thriller-style voiceover
- A nostalgic family scene

Then break it. Flip expectations. Subvert the genre. And when you land that punchline (with your product as the payoff), your viewer is already hooked.

Remember: tension first, then transition. That's how you pattern-break like a pro.

04

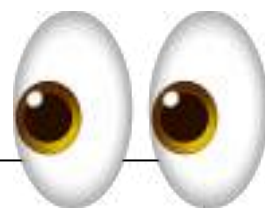
THE TEXT EXPLOSION



aka: Closed Captions Just Went to the Gym

You know that reel where a guy is talking casually, and every 3rd word is suddenly **SCREAMING** at you in giant block letters across the screen? Yeah. That's the format. This is what we call the Text Explosion edit a visual style where the script is the visual. It's part kinetic typography, part captions, and part content hypnosis. And it works. Really, really well.

Why This Format Works So **DAM** Well?



It forces your eyes to follow.

Big bold words—dropped in perfect sync with the voiceover—force your brain to process in real time. You can't zone out, because the text keeps dragging you back in.



It's scroll-stopper even on mute.

With 85%+ users watching without sound, this format gives them everything they need—without needing audio. It's subtitles on steroids.

It's memory glue.

The words don't just appear. They slam, stretch, fade, or vibrate in ways that emphasize meaning. This makes it stick. (Ever find yourself replaying that one word animation in your head? Yep.)



It adds drama without actors.

You don't need 10 people on set or a celebrity VO. With great copy and a smart motion designer, you can turn a monologue into a whole-ass experience.





XYXX

Guy sitting on a chair, reading. Calm vibes. Voiceover begins: "The world... asks you... of many... things." Each word appears exactly as it's spoken. Not in tiny captions. But in big, bold, dynamic yellow text, layered on the video—on the wall, over his knees, across the table. You're not just hearing the script. You're watching it unfold—one word at a time. And now you're locked in for the rest of the video, just to see where the next word will land.

Use This Format When You Want To:

- Maximize retention on a low-motion video
- Add pace and punch to an otherwise soft-spoken ad
- Speak directly to Gen Z or hyper-online audiences
- Reinforce key words and phrases that drive conversion



HOT TIP FOR BRANDS

Make sure your script is rhythmic and punchy. This style works best when sentences are designed to land like drum beats.

One word.

Then another.

Then a pause.

Then... *boom*.

If your script sounds like a WhatsApp voice note your best friend sent at 3am—rambling, unclear, unscripted—this format will fail.

But if it sounds like a line from an A24 trailer? You're golden.

Also: resist the urge to over-style. Too many fonts and colors kill the clarity. Stick to your brand voice, stay consistent, and let the motion do the talking.

WHY THESE WORK

(And Your Perfectly Polished Brand Video Doesn't)

Notice what all four formats have in common?

They don't look like traditional ads.

The Grid Workout looks like tutorial content.

The ChatGPT Screenshot looks like a help forum.

The Pattern Disruptor looks like a short film.

The Text Explosion looks like a friend's Instagram Story.

They've camouflaged themselves as content you already consume. And that's the entire game in 2025.

Because here's the truth:

People don't hate ads. They hate being advertised TO.

These formats don't advertise. They share. They inform. They entertain. And somewhere in that process, they also happen to mention a product.

TL;DR

(Because We Know You Scrolled Here First)

◆ Grid Workout = tutorial vibes, multiple angles, feels real ◆ ChatGPT Screenshot = AI as credibility hack ◆ Pattern Disruptor = story first, sell second ◆ Text Explosion = words on screen you can't ignore

All four = ads that don't announce themselves as ads.

Try them. Test them. Track your metrics. And when your ROAS jumps, you're welcome.

Now if you'll excuse me, I need to go convince our design team that "just make it look like ChatGPT" is, in fact, a complete creative brief.

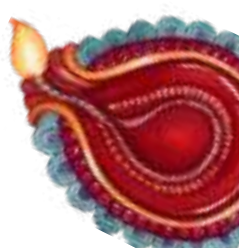
~ Prajwal

P.S. If you skimmed this whole article and only read the parts with bold text, congratulations —you just experienced the Text Explosion format in article form. See? It works.





CREATIVE FESTIVE CLICHÉS



▪ THAT WE CAN RETIRE ▪

By Tanvi Kothari | Sr. Account Manager

Festivals light up our feeds. Clichés just burn budgets.

India's festive season is a goldmine. For many online brands, it accounts for **30–40% of annual sales**, because it's when new customers are actively looking for products. For consumers, it's also when **~30% of annual discretionary income** gets spent. But here's the danger: if your festive creatives look like everyone else's, you're not just blending in, you're burning budget.

The brands that win in 2025 will be the ones that swap templates for truths. Campaigns that people share, not scroll past.

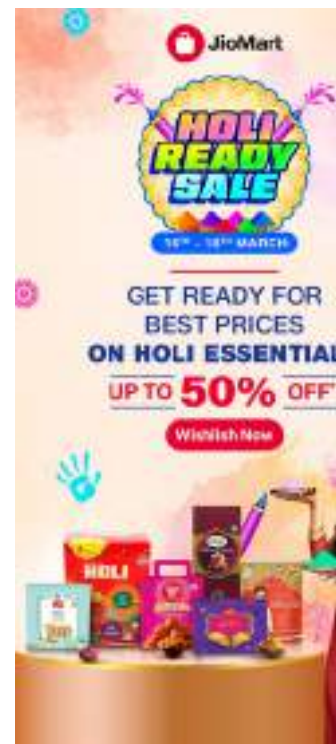


INDIA'S FESTIVE SZN IS A GOLDMINE



THE PROBLEM WITH TOO TACKY & MAINSTREAM — FESTIVE ADS

Let's be honest: festive ads have become a déjà vu reel.



Diwali? Sparkler fonts.

Christmas? A Santa hat slapped on the logo.

Independence Day? Tricolour gradients- as if patriotism were a hex code.

Holi? Powder splashes behind pack shots.

It's festive fatigue.

And in 2025, clichés don't just look lazy, they make your brand invisible. In a season where attention is more expensive than ever, *invisibility is the most costly mistake you can make.*

INVISIBLE



WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS IN 2025

So how do you stand out in a sea of sameness?
By leaning into culture, not copy-paste.

Creators are leading the way. Festive shoppers want real stories- the chaos of Diwali prep vlogs, Holi humour, a vernacular language quirk that feels like home. It works: *62% of Indians trust creators more for authenticity* (Kantar).



Humour is another superpower. Memes and playful reels aren't fluff, *they get 3-5x more shares* (YouGov). With Meta's AI now able to turn a single reel into catalog ads, the line between entertainment and performance is blurring fast.



Regional nuance also wins. A Diwali in Bengaluru ≠ a Diwali in Lucknow. *Local cues drive 1.5x higher engagement (Meta)*. Small tweaks can make a big lift.



And then there's video. Meta India says festive video ads see *3x higher engagement* than statics. Plus, Instagram's Creative Reuse Dashboard makes it easier to refresh past winners instead of recycling "Happy [Festival]" posters.

Put simply:

What works is *what feels true, relatable, and shareable*. Content shared by friends and family is 2.4x more memorable than anything brands push themselves. Shareability isn't vanity. It's ROI.

THE *SHIFT* >>> FROM TEMPLATES TO TRUTHS

This year, the stakes are higher than ever. GST cuts have dropped prices across FMCG and durables. Retailers are predicting a *27% surge in festive sales*. Consumers will walk into this season with more money to spend than before. That's both an opportunity and a trap. More demand also means more clutter. If your brand falls back on clichés, you'll disappear in the noise.

The 2025 playbook is clear:

FROM GENERIC TO PERSONAS

Heritage shoppers, weekend explorers, premium browsers.

FROM CLICHÉS TO CULTURE

Real quirks, not clip-art diyas.

FROM POSTERS TO PLAY

Reels, memes, polls, creator collabs.

FROM ASSUMPTIONS TO EXPERIMENTS

Weekly tests to see what actually converts.

Festivals aren't about glossy posters. They're about chaos, humour, and lived truths. Tap into that, and your campaign won't just be seen- it'll be shared.



FROM NOISE



TO NOTICED

In 2025, the winners won't be the ones shouting the loudest.
They'll be the ones that feel the most real.

So here's your festive checklist:



Because the future of festive marketing isn't about being seen, *it's about being shared, remembered, and chosen when it matters most.*

CRACKING THE FESTIVE CODE

How Indian Ads Win Hearts (and Wallets)

★★★★★

From nostalgia drops to urgency bombs, here's how brands psychologically hijack our Diwali dopamine.

By Prajwal Jaiprakash

Creative Strategist & Chief Analyst of
My Own Impulse Purchases



NOT SURE IF YOU READ THE LAST ISSUE

If you didn't, you definitely should! There was a **50% off coupon** inside for a **2-night stay at the Marriott** for the lucky 100 people who read it till the last. You still have time as the offer ends in December. Please go back and refer to the previous edition for the same.

50% OFF
FOR 2 NIGHTS STAY



Hehe, I was just kidding.

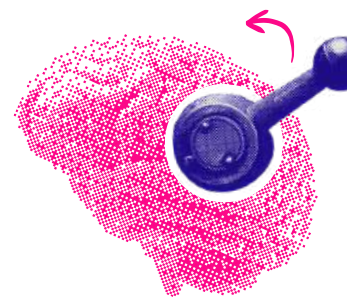
There's no coupon. But admit it, you almost paused (or you went and looked for it still) didn't you?



That's not magic. That's **cognitive bias** at work, specifically: the

“SCARCITY EFFECT”

(a.k.a. "Oh crap, I'm gonna miss out"). And you didn't even blink. lol.



See? Festive marketers do this to us all the time. I just did it in one sentence. They do it over 3 weeks, 14 ad formats, and 2,000 rupee discounts that magically appear at 11:59 PM.

But here's the twist: they're not just selling you something, they're telling your brain a story it wants to hear. And every story is rigged with carefully engineered triggers designed to bypass logic and go straight for your emotions, instincts, and most vulnerable mental shortcuts.

So let's dissect them like the post-Diwali samosa your office fridge forgot. Here are the *six hidden psychological levers* that make festive ads in India unreasonably effective.

01

NOSTALGIA

Because Diwali isn't complete without a steel dabba and Lata Mangeshkar's ghost humming softly in the background



You've seen this ad a hundred times, in a hundred different ways:

A child lights a diya. Grandma's in a crisp cotton saree. Homemade laddoos are passed around while warm yellow fairy lights sparkle in slow-mo. There's flute music in the background. A man who hasn't spoken in two decades smiles at someone. Somewhere, someone forgives someone. You're not even sure what the brand is, but you're already two seconds away from tearing up.

And that's the point.

It's not selling you a product. It's selling you a feeling. You think: "This feels like my childhood Diwali..."

Let's be honest—no, it doesn't. Your Diwali had 40 relatives in one 2BHK, one burnt fuljhari, one cousin vomiting laddoos, and your daadi yelling that the mithai was "too modern." & "humare zamane mein aisa nahi hua karta tha"

But your brain? It doesn't care about accuracy. ***It's just chasing that warm, fuzzy, nostalgic dopamine hit.***



Here's what's actually happening inside your head:



Rosy retrospection bias is running the show. You remember the past as way better than it actually was. That Diwali when you were eight? You remember the sparklers and the sweets. Your brain conveniently deleted the part where your cousin got more gifts and you sulked for three days straight.



Then comes **affective priming**—those warm feelings you're having about the past? Your brain starts associating them with whatever brand just triggered the memory. The brand becomes the emotional bridge to those good times.



And finally, the **fluency effect** seals the deal. Familiar visuals feel "easier to process," and our brains translate "easy" as "safe" and "right."

So when you're standing in that supermarket aisle looking at a ₹200 Dairy Milk, you're not thinking about cocoa percentages or comparing prices. You're thinking, "This feels like home."

[Watch it here](#) ▶

Let's take the brand that absolutely nails this:
Cadbury's "Iss Diwali, Jam Ke Manaye" Campaign



Watch it if you haven't. There's barely any chocolate in it. It's all about families, that childhood-like excitement of coming home, the anticipation of sharing something sweet with someone you love.

Notice what they don't do? They don't spend even five seconds talking about taste, quality, or cocoa content.

Because when nostalgia is driving the bus, logic isn't even allowed on board. You're not buying chocolate. You're buying the feeling of being the person who makes others happy. And that, my friend, is priceless. (But also costs ₹200 or more)

02

SOCIAL PROOF



AKA "Everyone else is buying it, so it must be good... right?"



Quick question: When you're at a new restaurant, do you ever glance at what other tables are ordering before making your choice?

Of course you do. We all do. It's called the **bandwagon effect**, and it's deeply, deeply human.

We look around and think, "If everyone else is doing it, it must be the right choice." It's a mental shortcut that usually works pretty well—except when brands weaponize it.

HERE'S WHAT FESTIVE ADS SAY

"Over 2 million customers celebrated with us last year!" "India's #1 gifting choice!"
"Join thousands who've already made the switch!"

Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought

			
Magnesium Fire Starter ★★★★★ (1,423) \$0.01 - \$10.99	Potable Aqua Water Treatment Tablets ★★★★★ (548) \$5.99	15-Pc. Emergency Survival Fishing Kit ★★★★★ (35) \$13.58	Level One Emergency Tent ★★★★★ (26) \$8.99

But wait—there's more.

Indian brands don't just throw big numbers at you. They get personal. Ever seen those little pop-up notifications that say "4 people near you bought this in the last hour"?

Yeah. That's not random.

That's **micro-social proof**—and it works brilliantly because suddenly it's not about millions of faceless strangers. It's about people just like you, probably living in the next building, making the exact same choice you're considering.

Here's why it works so well in India:

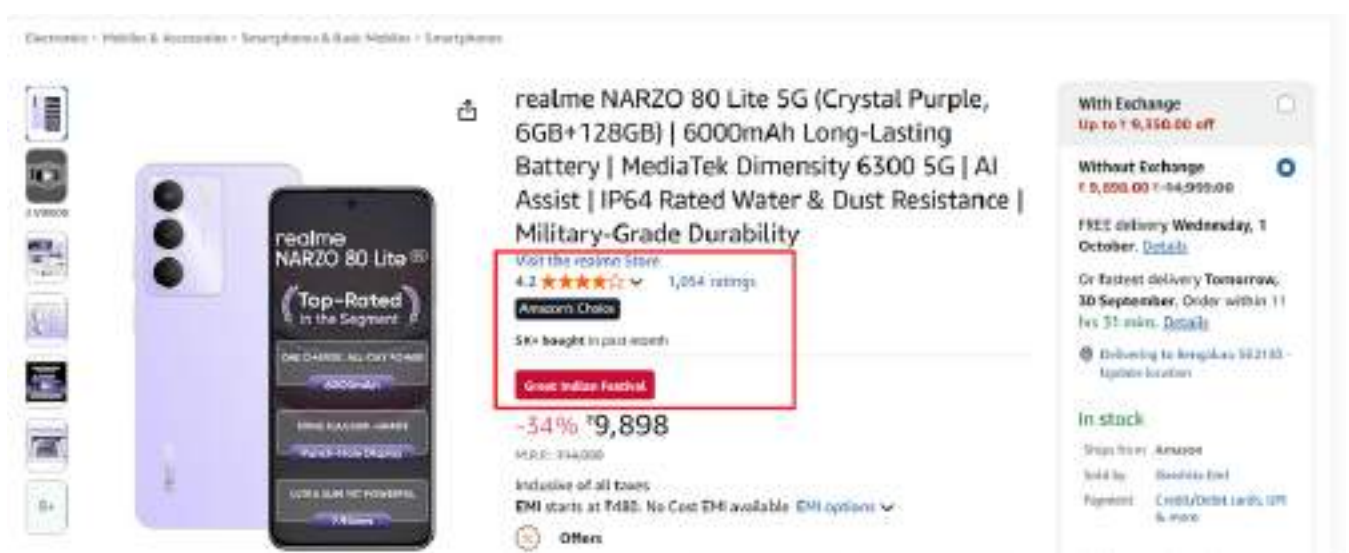
Diwali gifting isn't just personal. It's performative. You're not just buying a gift, you're buying social credibility. You want something that feels universally "correct," something that won't have aunties quietly questioning your taste at the next family function.

Nobody wants to be the person who shows up with that gift. *You know the one.*



Brands crushing this:

Flipkart's Big Billion Days and **Amazon's Great Indian Festival** basically run on this principle. Those "bestseller" badges? The trending items section? The user reviews prominently displayed at the top?



They're all saying the same thing: "Don't worry, people like you already vetted this. You're not taking a risk. You're making a safe choice." And just like that, you're adding to cart.

SCARCITY & URGENCY



The ticking clock that turns you into an impulse buyer

"Offer ends at midnight!"

"Only 2 hours left!"

"Limited stock—hurry!"

Be honest. Have you ever added something to your cart purely because the countdown timer was running out? I definitely did, because I love me some good offers and Air Jordans don't always sell at

~~₹16,718~~ **₹10,215** if you buy within 2:05:01 s"

Don't feel bad if you've done the same. You just got **cognitively hijacked**.

Here's what happens in your brain:

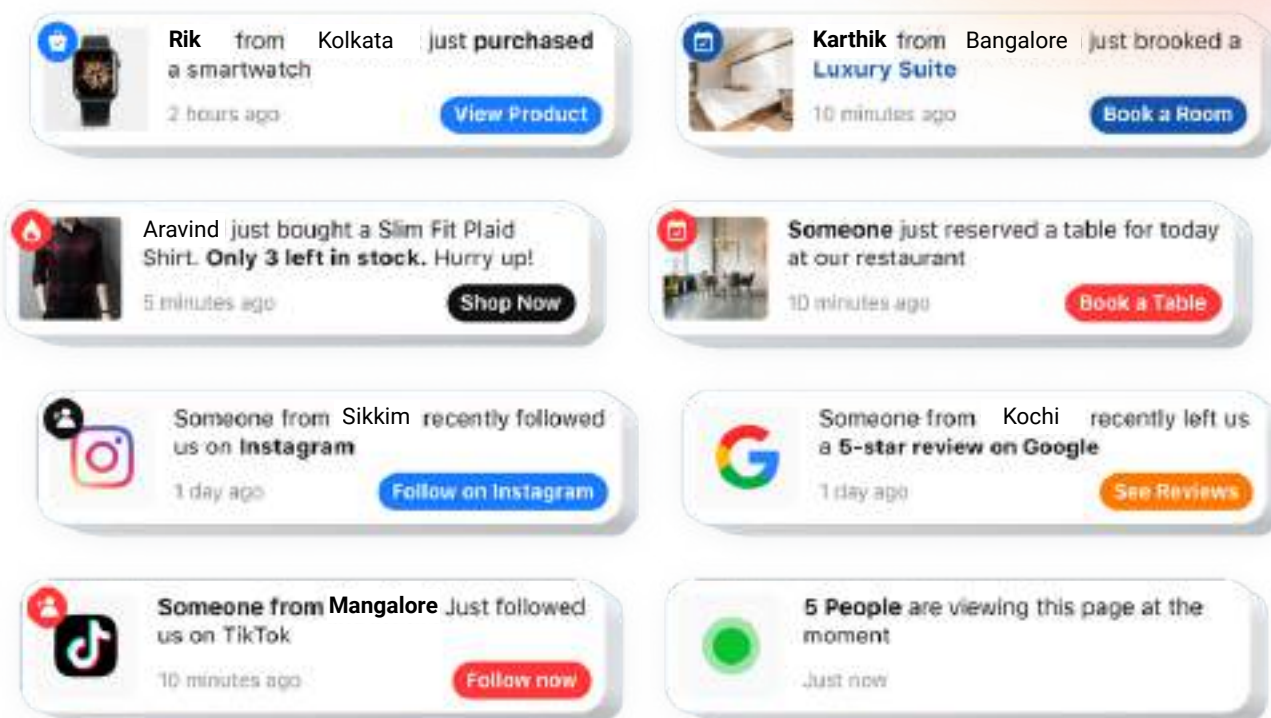
You have this thing called **loss aversion**. Psychologically, the pain of losing something is about twice as strong as the pleasure of gaining it. So when that countdown timer is ticking, you're not just thinking about getting a good deal, you're panicking about missing it.

Add **temporal discounting** to the mix (the closer we get to a deadline, the more valuable something seems), and boom! your emotional brain takes the wheel while your rational brain is locked in the trunk, screaming.



But here's where Indian brands get really clever:

They localize the urgency.



Zomato doesn't just say "Offer ends soon."

They say: "Only 3 Diwali thalis left near you" or "Last delivery slot before 7 PM puja time."

See what they did?

They took universal urgency and made it specifically about your life- your neighborhood, your festival timing, your rituals. That's not just smart marketing. That's psychological warfare.

Quick pause, purchased anything in the 'Great Indian Festival' or 'Big Billion Day Sale'? No judgment. Just noting.



04

ASPIRATION & BELONGING

Selling you the person
you wish you were

Let me paint you a pretty picture.

You're scrolling Instagram. Suddenly, there's a **Pepperfry ad**. Perfect living room. Perfectly coordinated ethnic wear. People laughing at exactly the right volume—not too loud, not awkward. Everyone looks like they just stepped out of a lifestyle magazine, but also somehow like a *real* family.



Now. Does your living room look like that?

Probably not.

Does your family coordinate outfits for Diwali without at least one person complaining?

Maybe. But probably not without threats.

But for a few seconds there, you imagined what it would feel like to be the person who does live in that perfect space, hosting those perfect gatherings, radiating that effortless togetherness.

That's **self-congruity bias**—we buy products that align with who we want to be, not who we currently are.

So when you're looking at that ₹15,000 coffee table, you're not buying furniture. You're buying the fantasy of being the person who has friends over for coffee, whose home is always guest-ready, who has their life together enough to own a coffee table that doesn't double as a dining table/laptop stand/laundry folding station.



Brands doing this beautifully:



Croma doesn't show families fighting over the remote. They show household joy, togetherness, the warm glow of being the parent who gave their family the best.

Boat targets young achievers. Their ads whisper:

"You're young, you work hard, you deserve this."



Wakefit shows pristine bedrooms that look nothing like your actual bedroom but everything like the bedroom you wish you had, while softly saying:

"You deserve better sleep."

And just like that, aspiration becomes transaction.



05

HABIT FORMATION

Training you to spend, one festival at a time

October rolls around.

Suddenly, you're thinking about **Haldiram's gift boxes** again. (*soanpapdi box that doesn't get eaten but passes on from one family to another as a gift, anyone?*)

And Diwali cleaning begins. You find yourself buying Fevikwik because "something always breaks."



December arrives, and you're browsing life insurance policies "for the family's future."

This isn't a coincidence, my friend.

This is seasonal conditioning.

Brands spend years training you to associate certain times with certain purchases. They create these little rituals where their product becomes the default choice, the thing you don't even think twice about.

Here's the genius part:

Haldiram's doesn't need to convince you their namkeen is the best every Diwali. They just need to exist in October with those familiar namkeen gift boxes stacked at every store entrance. (kyunki tyohar matlab guests aur guests matlab chai aur namkeen and namkeen matlab? You-know-who)

You see them. You remember. You buy.



Why?

Because for the last decade, those boxes have been sitting on your relatives' coffee tables every Diwali. Your brain has filed "Haldiram's gift box" under "socially acceptable Diwali gift that won't get you judged."



Kyunki socially acceptable gifts hi toh layega apno ko paas?

You're not making a choice. You're following a script you didn't even know you memorized.

06

EMOTIONAL GUILT (THE WHOLESOME KIND)



Making you feel like a good person who just needs to... buy something

Here's where Indian festive advertising reaches peak sophistication:

The art of making you feel guilty while also making you feel like a caring, thoughtful person.

"You couldn't make it home this year, but you can still make mom smile."

"Distance doesn't matter when love finds a way."

"This Diwali, secure their future."

Notice something?

None of these make you feel like a bad person. They make you feel like a good person who just needs to express that goodness through a purchase.

It's **emotional debt** wrapped in festival paper.



Again, I'll give you a **Haldiram's** example, a masterful, understanding ad! They're not saying you're a terrible son/daughter for not visiting. They're saying you're a thoughtful child who's found a modern way to show love. (Cadbury does this too!)



Zomato shows delivery agents receiving sweets from customers. Suddenly, ordering food isn't lazy; it's participating in the festival economy.

And honestly? Sometimes it feels good to pay that emotional debt. Even if it costs ₹2,000.



THE FINAL TRICK ✨

Making you think it was all your idea

You know what's really impressive about the best festive campaigns? They don't feel like someone's trying to sell you something.

They feel like gentle reminders of things you already wanted to do. Buy gifts for family? Of course—you love them. Treat yourself this Diwali? Obviously, you work hard all year. Make this festival extra special? Absolutely, life's too short.

The brands just happen to be standing there with exactly what you need when you reach for your wallet, having already done the psychological heavy lifting of making spending feel like the most natural, right thing in the world.

So the next time you find yourself with a cart full of things you didn't plan to buy, take a moment.

Appreciate what just happened.



IT'S JUST BUSINESS



You've experienced some seriously sophisticated psychology in action. And honestly? Part of me is impressed. Part of me is slightly concerned. But mostly, I'm just fascinated by how well they understand us.

YOUR FESTIVE CAMPAIGN

CHEATSHEET

aka TL; DR (because we're all meeting in hell)

use responsibly

Trigger	What it Does	Best For
Nostalgia	Associates your brand with good memories and safety	Food, traditional products, family services
Social Proof	"Everyone's doing it, so should you"	E-commerce, tech, anything with choice anxiety
Scarcity/Urgency	Fear of missing out drives immediate action	Flash sales, limited stock, seasonal offers
Aspiration	Sells the lifestyle people want, not what they have	Home decor, electronics, wellness
Habit	Makes your product the automatic choice	Seasonal products, routine purchases
Emotional Guilt	Motivates through love and responsibility	Gifting, insurance, family products

Alright, that's it from me. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to resist the urge to buy that smart TV I definitely don't need but suddenly feel like I deserve. See you in the next issue (no fake coupons, I promise).

P.S. If you nodded along to any of these tactics, welcome to the club. We're all just humans navigating a world designed to separate us from our money. The trick? Being aware it's happening. That's half the battle.

WHEN AI



MEETS MITHAI

By Karthik Raju
Co-Founder & CEO



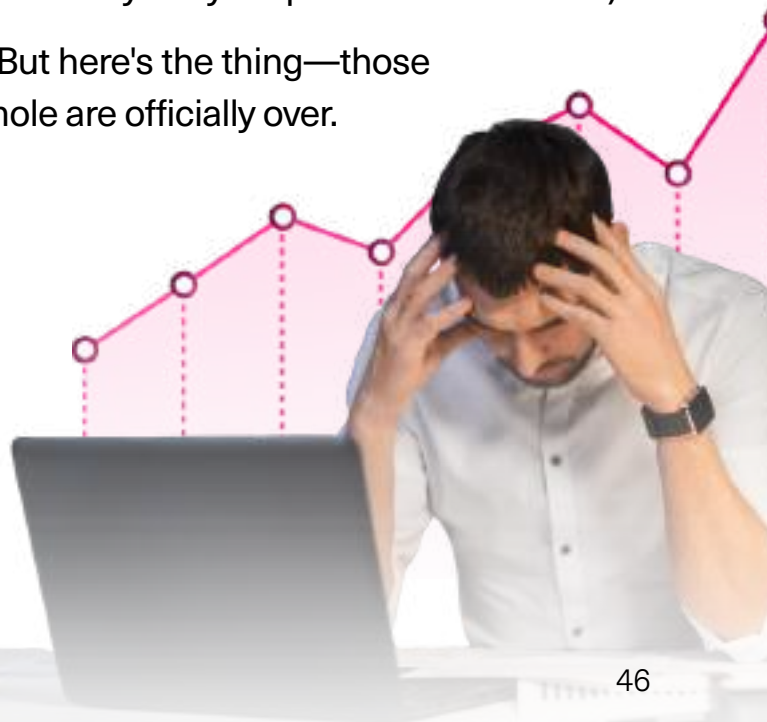
Google's New Features Are
About to Make Your Festive
Campaigns Legendary
(Or at Least Less Stressful)



Picture this: It's 2 AM, three days before Dhanteras, and you're frantically adjusting bids because your "gold jewelry" campaign is burning through budget faster than diyas burn through oil. Your search terms report looks like a nightmare—half the clicks are from people searching for "gold rate today" (not buyers) and the other half from folks looking for "gold plated jewelry" (definitely not your premium customers).

Sound familiar? Yeah, we've all been there. But here's the thing—those days of playing festive campaign whack-a-mole are officially over.

Google just dropped a suite of AI features that don't just promise to make your holiday campaigns better; they promise to make them actually understand what the hell Indian consumers are really looking for when they type "something special for Diwali."



The problem with playing guessing games

Let's be honest about the current state of festive advertising in India. We've been operating on educated guesswork for years. You'd bid on "Diwali gifts" and hope for the best, competing with everyone from street vendors to luxury brands, watching your CPCs climb higher than property prices in Gurgaon.



The smarter among us tried long-tail keywords like "Diwali gifts for mother-in-law," but even that felt like throwing darts blindfolded. Because here's what we never admitted out loud: Indian consumers don't think in keywords. They think in relationships, occasions, budgets, family dynamics, and a dozen other layers of context that make every purchase decision incredibly personal.

When your bhabhi searches for "something for my first Karva Chauth as a working woman," she's not just looking for products. She's navigating tradition, personal identity, family expectations, and time constraints. Traditional keyword targeting?

It's like bringing a butter knife to a Swiss Army knife fight.



Traditional Keyword Targeting

ENTER AI MAX:

The mind-reader we've been waiting for

Google's AI Max for Search campaigns (now in global beta) doesn't just match keywords—it understands context. And not just surface-level context, but the deep, cultural, emotional context that drives Indian purchase decisions.

Here's how it works

Instead of showing ads based purely on keyword matching, AI Max promotes products alongside AI-generated responses to complex searches. So when someone asks, "How do I choose the perfect gift for my husband's grandmother who's very traditional but also practical," your carefully crafted ad doesn't just appear—it appears as part of a helpful, contextual response.



Why this changes everything for Indian brands:

Indian consumers ask Google the kinds of questions they'd ask a trusted friend. "Best outfit for office Diwali party that won't make me look overdressed," or "Traditional sweets that won't upset diabetic father-in-law." AI Max lets you be part of those conversations instead of interrupting them.

Best outfit for Diwali party



Traditional sweets



Perfect gift for grandma



What

THE CREATIVE REVOLUTION

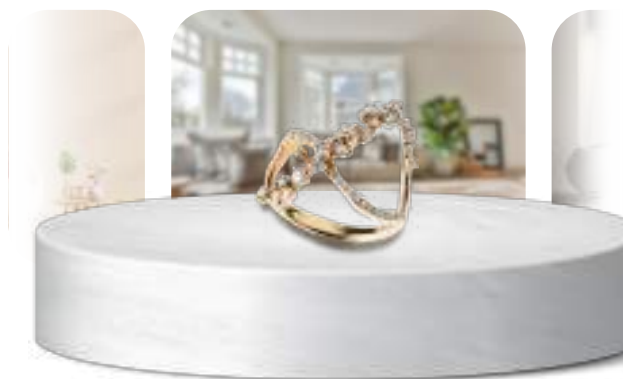
(finally)

Remember the pain of creating 50 different versions of the same product image for different festivals? Those days are done.

Google's enhanced Product Studio now lets you:

01 Swap backgrounds at scale

Transform your entire jewelry collection from studio shots to traditional home settings with one click



02 Generate festival-specific variations

Use Google's Imagen 4 to create Navratri-themed, Diwali-appropriate, or Karva Chauth-elegant versions of the same product



03 Automate seasonal updates

No more last-minute photoshoot panic when you realise your Diwali campaign images still show Holi colours

But here's the kicker—the AI doesn't just change backgrounds randomly. It learns from what works. If festive home settings perform better than studio shots for your saree collection, it'll automatically prioritize those variations.

YOUTUBE: WHERE FESTIVALS ACTUALLY HAPPEN



Let's face it, YouTube is where Indian festivals live. From rangoli tutorials to Navratri dance performances, consumers are already there, already engaged, already in a festive mindset.

Google's new YouTube features are built for this reality:



Shoppable Masthead Ads: Your Diwali decoration haul video can now let viewers shop directly from the video. No more hoping they'll remember your brand name and search for it later.



Creator Partnership Hub: Finally, a systematic way to find creators who align with your brand values instead of just following whoever has the most followers. Quality over quantity, cultural fit over vanity metrics.

Loyalty features that make sense:

Here's something Google got right: Indian consumers are incredibly loyal to brands that treat them well, especially during festivals. The new loyalty features in Performance Max and Standard Shopping campaigns let you:



Set Retention Goals: Focus on acquiring customers who'll return next festive season



Offer member-exclusive benefits: Early access to Diwali collections, express delivery during peak days, festival-specific discounts



Reward repeat behavior: Because the customer who bought from you last Diwali is worth 10x more than a random click

BIDDING STRATEGIES THAT ACTUALLY WORK

Stop bidding like it's 2019. Here's how to use Google's smart bidding features for Indian festive seasons:

Day-of-Week Intelligence:

Tuesdays and Saturdays: Increase bids by 15-20% (auspicious shopping days)

Fridays before major festivals: Boost budgets by 25-30% (last-minute panic shoppers are high-value)

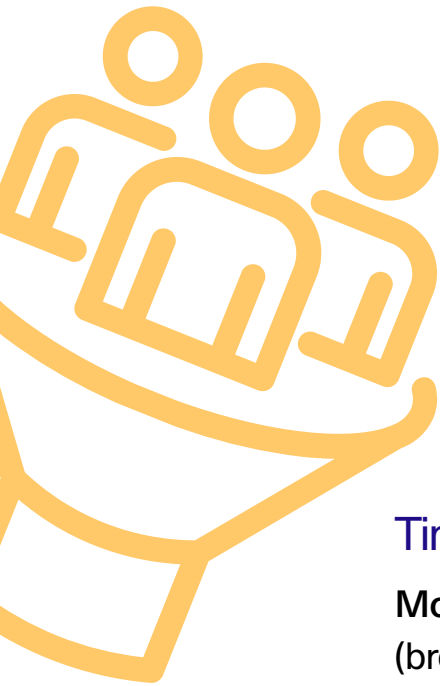
Sundays during Navratri: Reduce bids by 10% (families are at garba, not shopping)



Conversion-Focused Strategies That Make Sense:

Maximize Conversions: Perfect for new festive campaigns when you're still learning optimal CPA during high-competition periods

Target ROAS: Use historical data smartly—jewelry brands during Dhanteras should aim for 400% ROAS, clothing during Navratri works at 300% due to higher competition



Time-Based Budget Adjustments:

Morning commute (6-9 AM): +20% budget (browsing during travel)

Evening peak (7-10 PM): +35% budget (prime festive shopping window)

Late night (11 PM-1 AM): -40% budget but don't pause (working professionals shop after family time)



THE KEYWORD EVOLUTION (FROM STUPID TO SMART)

Forget everything you thought you knew about festive keyword strategy. Google's AI has moved beyond simple matching to understanding the layers of intent behind every search.

The Old Way (Generic and Expensive):

"Diwali gifts" (competing with 50,000 other advertisers)

"Navratri outfits" (zero context, maximum competition)

"gold jewelry" (broad as the ocean, expensive as property)



The New Way (Context-Rich and Effective):

"Traditional Gujarati chaniya choli for working women under 3000"

"Meaningful Diwali gifts for new daughter-in-law first festival"

"Lightweight daily wear gold earrings after Dhanteras investment"

"Budget-friendly home decoration small apartment Diwali"

"Organic sweets same-day delivery Mumbai Karva Chauth"

Here's why this works:

Google's AI now understands intent layers. When someone searches "gifts for wife's first Karva Chauth," it recognizes this isn't just product research—it's a husband trying to honor tradition while showing thoughtfulness. Your contextually-targeted ad for "traditional Karva Chauth gift sets with modern touch" will outperform generic "jewelry for festivals" every time.

The AI learns & adapts:

You don't need to predict every search variation. If your "working mother festive wear" campaign performs well, AI automatically shows your ads for related searches like "comfortable ethnic wear office Diwali party" or "easy traditional outfits busy professional."

MEASUREMENT THAT TELLS THE REAL STORY



Google's enhanced measurement tools finally account for how Indians actually shop during festivals:

Cross-device tracking:

Essential when customers research on mobile during commute but purchase on desktop at home

Omnichannel attribution:

Track online research leading to offline store visits (crucial during festivals when people want to touch expensive items)

Lifetime value optimization:

Focus on customers who'll return for next year's festivals, not just this season's revenue



THE REALITY CHECK

Here's what Google won't tell you in their official announcements: these AI features are powerful, but they're not magic. They work best when you feed them quality data, clear objectives, and realistic expectations.



What You Need to Succeed:

Clean conversion tracking: AI can't optimize what it can't measure

Sufficient budget: Smart bidding needs volume to learn effectively

Patience: Allow 2-3 weeks for AI to find its groove during festive seasons

Cultural intelligence: AI amplifies your strategy; it doesn't create cultural understanding

THE PRACTICAL FESTIVE CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Start Early:** Begin campaigns by August. Indian consumers start festive shopping earlier each year, and AI needs time to learn.
- ✓ **Think Mobile-First:** 70% of Indian festive shopping happens on mobile. If your landing pages suck on mobile, even the smartest AI can't save you.
- ✓ **Cultural Context Matters:** Ensure your campaigns understand regional differences. Diwali in Chennai should feel different from Diwali in Mumbai.
- ✓ **Trust Signals:** Include reviews, ratings, return policies prominently. Festival purchases are emotional investments.
- ✓ **Payment Intelligence:** Highlight EMI options, digital payment offers, cash-on-delivery for high-value purchases.

The Bottom Line:

Google's new AI features aren't just technological upgrades—they're the first advertising tools that actually understand the complexity of Indian consumer behavior during festivals. The brands that will dominate this festive season won't just be those with the biggest budgets, but those who use these AI capabilities to participate meaningfully in India's cultural celebrations.

The question isn't whether these features work. The question is whether you'll use them before your competitors do.

Because while you're still manually adjusting bids at 2 AM, wondering why "Diwali gifts" is costing you a fortune, some smart marketer is already using AI Max to show up in searches for "thoughtful presents for joint family Diwali celebration within middle-class budget."

Guess who's getting better results and more sleep?

Time to level up. The festivals wait for no one, but with AI on your side, you'll finally be ahead of the game instead of chasing it.





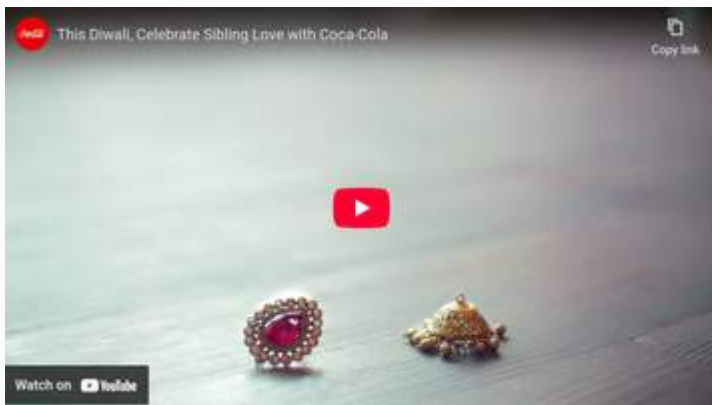
WATCH *LIST*

A “**Festive Time Capsule**” of standout ads from the past decade

By Sanjith | Social Media Manager

WATCHLIST

A “Festive Time Capsule” of standout ads from the past decade



COCA COLA

USibling Love, Banter & Truce

Brother-sister rivalry ends with warm hugs- classic family feeling.

1



KIT KAT

Home Is Where Heart Is

An astronaut reminds us Diwali feels like family, no matter the distance.

2



CADBURY

Who Will You Cheer Up?

A chocolate box breaks barriers and brings generations together.

3



BRITANNIA GOOD DAY

Celebrate with Smiles

Joy goes beyond boundaries spreading happiness every Diwali.

4

Click the video to watch

Click the video to watch



VODAFONE

Look Up and Connect

Disconnect and rediscover festive warmth with family- phones down, hearts open.

5



PAYTM

A #ThoughtfulDiwali

Son hosts Diwali bash; dad gifts Rs 2100 for the electricity bill- unexpected but timely.

6



PEPPERFRY

This Diwali, Care for Elders

Small gestures for seniors brighten up the festivities- compassion beyond family

7



GHADI DETERGENT

Prejudices Washed Away

A dad's assumptions disappear- true Diwali is free of bias.

8



Click the video to watch



BIGBASKET

Sweets from Everywhere

Pan-India sweets make Diwali easier (and tastier) to celebrate.

9

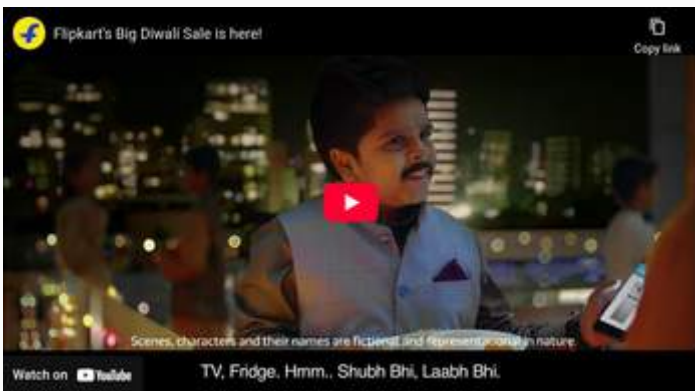


NOKIA

Gift Your Time

A son puts away his phone for uninterrupted time with his mom.

10



FLIPKART

Kids Reimagine Diwali Sales

Witty stories told by kids playing adult roles—classic Flipkart fun.

11



TANISHQ

Rituals that Shine

Deepika Padukone's family rituals bring alive the Diwali spirit.

12



Click the video to watch



AMAZON INDIA

One Wish at a Time

Dad puts others first- this time, his own wish is celebrated.

13



ASIAN PAINTS

Changed Family, Unchanged Heart.

Paying guest replaces son in festive chores, bringing smiles.

14



BAJAJ ELECTRICALS

Mom Deserves the Celebration

Why cook alone on festivals?
Everyone deserves to celebrate together.

15



VIVO

#PhotoOfYourLife

A daughter transforms her father's grief into song and smiles- moving and uplifting

16

Click the video to watch



SWIGGY

Nobody Goes Empty-handed

A thoughtful gesture from a child leaves everyone touched- generosity is the theme.

17



COCA COLA

Share A Coke This Diwali

Ayushmann's Delhi nostalgia turns brighter thanks to caring neighbors.

18



BAJAJ ELECTRICALS

Families Closer Than Ever

Witty celebration of advanced TV services- Diwali brings families together.

19



CADBURY

Surachand's Solar Diwali

A Rajasthan village gets electricity; the villagers who light Diwali for others finally get their own lights.

20

Click the video to watch



NETFLIX INDIA

Ad Spoof

Anurag Kashyap pokes fun at generic Diwali ads- only entertainment stands out.

21



RELIANCE FRESH

Guest of Honor

Househelp finds out she's the 'special guest'- surprise and delight blend with social message

22



ONEPLUS

Diwali Across Borders

A sister helps her brother celebrate in Amsterdam, uniting global communities.

23



AMAZON

Fitwali-Diwali

An Amazon seller's order comes with a twist- unexpected, fun, and memorable.

24

Click the video to watch



SBI LIFE

Female Firefighters: Real Heroes

Anurag Kashyap pokes fun at generic Diwali ads- only entertainment stands out.

25



HITACHI

Diwali for the Planet

Househelp finds out she's the 'special guest'- surprise and delight blend with social message

26



LENOVO

Cab Dreams

Ambitious cab driver inspired by passengers' work and presentations.

27



RADIO CITY

Airwave Burst

Kids rebel against a cranky uncle- Radio City brings Diwali crackers to life.

28



Click the video to watch



HAVELLS

LEDiwalli

Out-of-the-box promotion for LED lights; simplicity wins.

29



KURKURE

Sweetness With a Twist

When polite hosting meets 'chattpatta' snacks- humor flips expectations.

30

THE INDIAN FESTIVE SEASON

BEYOND DISCOUNTS

By Raveen Anand | Co-Founder & COO

India's festive season is a *wild spectacle* for brands and consumers alike. Walk down any street, open the newspaper or scroll through your favourite app, and you'll see offers everywhere- discounts, bundles, vouchers, you name it. The market is hyperactive, retailers are in overdrive and consumers have become experts at finding the best deal. In a *price-sensitive country* like ours, variety can be dizzying, but here's the kicker- discounts, though tempting, aren't the only way to win over buyers. Let's dig deeper.

Timing: Is This Your Moment?

It's tempting to join the festival rush, but not every brand fits the seasonal mould. Before launching an offer consider if your product/ service is relevant during the festive season. Let's look at some examples:

- When it comes to *education-related products or grassroots sports coaching*, parents may not make big decisions during the festive period, choosing instead to focus on family and celebrations.
- Young professionals often travel home during Diwali. So if you are in the business of *coliving*, think about whether your target audience is around to interact with your campaign, or are they just passing through?



- *Real estate and hospitality brands* may find a spike in family visits looking for a getaway together or an auspicious time to make a buying decision.
- For *fashion and skincare*, the festive period may be the perfect opportunity, as people want to look and feel their best with celebrations in full swing.

Evaluating seasonality and audience priorities can save you from pouring resources into offers that won't move the needle.



Rethinking Offers: Monetary or Something More?

Discounts are appetising, but relentless price-cutting can shrink margins and erode brand value. Ask yourself: does lowering my price enhance my brand, or does it turn my product into a commodity? *Now's the time to get creative.*

Non-monetary offers help brands foster loyalty and stand out, without sacrificing reputation or profitability. The most successful festive offers today are seamless, mobile-first, and instantly rewarding. Digital engagement, emotion-rich storytelling, and gamification now outperform plain discounts. Consumers crave quick, engaging experiences, surprise perks, easy redemptions, and meaningful connections. In India's festive market, blending creativity with genuine value is the best way to win hearts and build lasting loyalty.



Here are **seven proven ways** larger brands have captured attention without slashing prices:

EXCLUSIVE ACCESS: Early previews, private launches, closed-door events and invitation-only product demos.

01

PERSONALISATION: Customisation options, monogrammed products, curated gift boxes, or personalised digital messages.

02

GAMIFIED REWARDS: Spin-the-wheel, scratch cards, social media challenges, or in-app games that unlock instant, experiential rewards.

03

CONSULTATIVE VALUE-ADD: Free styling consultations, skincare/health check-ups, skill workshops, or expert Q&As.

04

LOYALTY PROGRAMS: Points, tiered membership, festival badges, and unlockable exclusive benefits (not directly tied to spend).

05

CONVENIENCE SERVICES: Gift wrapping, express delivery, hassle-free returns, doorstep trials, festival concierge or “try at home” experiences.

06

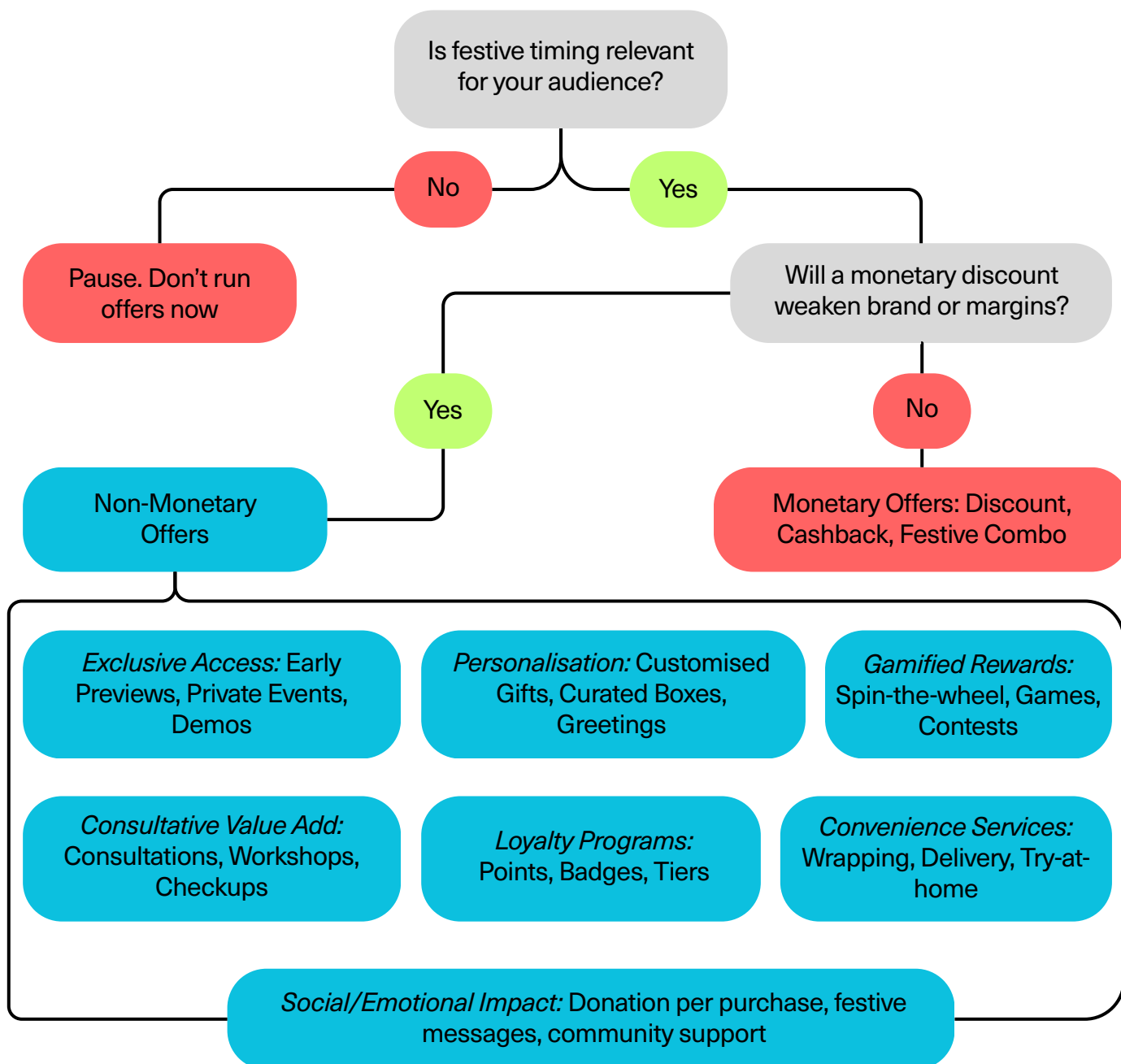
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL IMPACT: Every purchase creates a social good (like donations) or lets buyers share a festive message with their community.

07

Creative, context-rich offers have proven to boost perception, engagement and sales- often more effectively than sheer discounts.

Offer Selection: Decision Table

Below is a simple framework to help founders decide whether and how to launch festive offers.



For founders and brand leaders, playing the festive season right means more than following the crowd. With smart timing and the right mix of monetary and non-monetary offers, brands can win wallets and hearts without losing themselves in endless price wars.



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