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Rishi Sharma
CMO, Bonito Designs



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Bonito Designs is one of the largest full-home-only interior design brands in India. It recently came up with the campaign 'World Designs', which blends international design aesthetics with localised ones, amalgamating global design with the Indian one, in collaboration with celebrity designers Gauri Khan and Manish Malhotra. Targeted at homeowners in the 25-40 age group, Bonito Designs is the brainchild of a group of young entrepreneurs straight out of college. Instead of opting for a catalogue-based approach, it adopted a personalised full-home interior design solution strategy.

One of the driving factors behind its success is its unique marketing approach, the creation of immersive home experiences that celebrate the precious moments of life along with the collaboration with celebrity designers Gauri Khan and Manish Malhotra, making luxury accessible to all through the campaign #MyCelebrityDesignedHome. The 'World Designs' campaign represents an all round approach to interior designing with thematic interiors which aligns with the brand vision of Bonito Designs, which is to add a personal touch to its designs. It incorporates the latest trends in pop culture, traditions, within home interior designing, making art a way of life, and merging it with the sensibilities of today's Indian homeowners.

According to Rishi Sharma, CMO, Bonito Designs, the home interior designing category is still at a very nascent stage in India and Bonito Designs leverages digital media and influencer marketing to optimise the number of conversations surrounding home interiors on social media, thereby connecting effectively with its target group, who are digital savvy and present on platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest. With a wealth of experience, Rishi Sharma's expertise includes crafting and executing impactful marketing



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In conversation with Adgully, Sharma said, “With a dedicated focus on full-home interior projects, we aim to craft cohesive design narratives that authentically tell each client’s unique story, besides transparency is a core value at Bonito Designs, evident in every phase of our service.”

Could you take us through the inception story of the brand – Bonito Designs – and your journey so far?

The inception story of Bonito Designs is rooted in our vision as a group of dynamic young entrepreneurs. With minimal work experience straight out of college, we saw an opportunity to revolutionise the interior design landscape by recognising the growing potential of the real estate market. Our focus was crystal clear – to cater to the specific needs of homeowners aged 25 to 40, aligning with a distinct income profile and lifestyle.

Our decision was strategic and centered around providing end-to-end interior design solutions covering everything from design conceptualization to meticulous execution. We set ourselves apart by steering clear of a catalogue-based approach, opting instead for personalised, full-home interior designs. This commitment to individuality and comprehensive service became the cornerstone of the Bonito Designs brand.

Operating initially as a proprietary firm, we navigated from humble beginnings to achieving a commendable milestone of around Rs 10 crore in valuation. The pivotal moment came in 2018 when Tomorrow Capital, backed by Lodha Ventures and chaired by Abhinandan Lodha, invested in our startup.

The year 2019 was then dedicated to fortifying various fronts of our business, from enhancing the customer experience to investing in cutting-edge technology. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic posed unique challenges to our business, deeply rooted in physical interactions and customer-facing processes. Despite the turbulence, Bonito Designs demonstrated resilience, adapting our operations and focusing on technological advancements.

Our journey showcases our ability to adapt, innovate, and strategically position ourselves in the dynamic interior design market. Today, Bonito Designs has not only captured the markets of Bangalore and Mumbai, but is poised for expansion. We are eyeing new

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working well for the brand? What is the story behind the recently launched campaign, 'World Designs', and how does it align with the overall brand strategy?

Bonito Designs' vision is to create immersive home experiences, showcased through bespoke interiors that celebrate life's cherished moments. Our brand's success stems from strategic collaborations with celebrities like Gauri Khan and Manish Malhotra, making luxury accessible to all with the hashtag #MyCelebrityDesignedHome.

Our most recent initiative, the 'World Designs' campaign, represents a holistic approach to full home thematic interiors aligning seamlessly with Bonito Designs' commitment to diverse, refined inspirations with a unique personal touch. World Design is a collection of limited-edition themes for your home interiors inspired by the latest trends, pop cultures, traditions, and art with Indian sensibilities and way of life because, at Bonito, we believe what Home means to you and your family.

Every home designed by Bonito is not only thoughtfully tasteful, but also gives you an impressive identity. We make it happen with an exclusive partnership with none other than India's most revered/coveted designers Gauri Khan and Manish Malhotra only for our esteemed customers.

Visit our experience center, where we not only explain the process, but a first-hand experience of what we have to offer. There are limited slots for a limited period.

Our marketing brilliance is evidenced by our ability to foster genuine connections, setting us apart in the competitive landscape of interior design.

Who is the TG for Bonito Designs and what strategies does the company employ to reach the target audiences effectively?

At Bonito Designs, our target demographic comprises individuals aged 25 to 40, mainly in senior or middle management roles, and specific lifestyle preferences. Our approach is deeply personalised, offering end-to-end interior design solutions that span every aspect, from conceptualisation to flawless execution.

Geographically, we are currently catering to key real estate markets like Bangalore and Mumbai. In terms of strategies, we maintain high design and service

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...evident in every phase of our service. From after-sales service to manufacturer's warranty, and regular updates shared with customers throughout the design and execution process, we prioritise clear communication and customer satisfaction.

How did the collaboration with Gauri Khan and Manish Malhotra come about and what are the expectations from this collaboration?

Our collaboration with design experts Gauri Khan and Manish Malhotra was born out of a compelling vision – to deliver homes that epitomise exceptional design and uniqueness to our customers. This partnership strategically leverages their extraordinary expertise and skills for crafting Bonito's bespoke home décor designs.

While, the overarching goal of this collaboration is to democratise high-end designs, making celebrity-inspired homes accessible to a wider audience, it also sets us apart in the category, which is currently dominated by unorganised players. The association also helped us not only achieve a design-centric positioning, but also a credible and expert brand.

How is Bonito Designs leveraging digital and influencer marketing to reach the maximum number of consumers? What is the objective behind taking this route and how has the response been?

At Bonito Designs, we believe storytelling is the key, hence we have strategically employed digital and influencer marketing to maximise conversation around home interiors, which is still a very nascent category in India. Our audience is mobile-first and he is digital-savvy, particularly those seeking design inspiration on platforms like Pinterest and Instagram, Bonito Designs has crafted a unique strategy to engage with them.

This innovative approach has yielded impressive results, with 45% of the business now originating from the partner channel. What's even more remarkable is that this achievement comes at one-third of the cost compared to traditional digital acquisition methods. By successfully reducing our customer acquisition costs and aligning with our distinctive design offerings, we've gained a distinct competitive advantage.

What are the growth projections and outlook of Bonito Designs for 2024? How was 2023 in terms of revenue and profitability?

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Hebbal in Bangalore, anticipating significant construction and rapid development in the next three to five years. Our expansion radar extends to Pune, Hyderabad, NCR, and eventually Chennai.

Financially, Bonito Designs closed FY23 with a substantial topline revenue of Rs 200 crore. Our target for the current financial year is to achieve a topline of approximately Rs 310 crore. To fuel our growth, we've secured over Rs 150 crore in funding to date. Looking ahead, we are actively seeking funding, with a minimum check size ranging from Rs 25 crore to Rs 50 crore, placing a strong emphasis on creating value and synergy for the company's journey.

In terms of strategic partnerships, our recent collaboration with HDFC has already borne fruit with the introduction of tailor-made financing products for Bonito Designs customers.

What are the recent trends in the marketing space for interior designing and the consumer behaviour observed in the industry currently? How has it evolved over the years?

In the dynamic marketing landscape of interior design, recent trends have witnessed a notable surge of inspirational content, consumers visit more Pinterest as compared to Instagram for home interior ideas and inspirations.

This strategic move aims to broaden reach and build trust through personalised recommendations. Additionally, virtual experiences, powered by virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), would at some point revolutionize the customer journey, but it is still far from reality. This category still demands physical interventions and meetings.

On the consumer behaviour front, customers are more demanding than ever, they are well-traveled and have seen the world which has led to a discernible shift towards a preference for personalised design solutions that resonate with individual tastes and lifestyles.

Slowly, and still, a very nascent subject, Make in India and Sustainability is emerging as a significant driver, with consumers increasingly favouring eco-friendly design practices and materials.

What were the key lessons from the pandemic period for Bonito Designs?