

Navigating the Niche: Riya Mehta's Strategic Overhaul at Custom Elements

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Introduction

In the heart of Bangalore, the first rays of sunlight streamed through the windows of Custom Elements' office, highlighting a space brimming with creativity and ambition. It was 2017, a pivotal year when **Arbaaz Sha Muzawer** and **Wasim Shaikh**, two visionary entrepreneurs, embarked on a mission to redefine the motorcycle accessories market. Their goal was not just to launch another e-commerce platform but to create an engaging ecosystem where motorcycle enthusiasts could access premium, customizable accessories tailored to their needs.

Custom Elements rapidly carved a niche by addressing a critical gap in the industry—a lack of reliable, high-quality accessories that seamlessly blended functionality and style. By implementing a drop shipping model, the founders sidestepped the financial constraints of inventory management, enabling them to offer a diverse and carefully curated product range (**see Exhibit 1**). This innovative approach positioned Custom Elements as a go-to destination for professional riders and passionate enthusiasts, setting a new benchmark in the motorcycle accessories market.

Company Background

Founders and Vision

Custom Elements was created by Wasim Shaikh, and Arbaaz Muzawer. Drawing on their shared passion for motorcycles and the stunning scenery of rugged Karnataka, Arbaaz Sha Muzawer and Wasim Shaikh decided to turn their hobby into a profitable startup. Seeing a marked opportunity within the motorcycle accessories segment—chiefly that of easy to wear and consumer specific—it was decided they would provide a solution. Thus was born Custom Elements: a brand specialized to solve the accessory needs of every motorcycle user.

Custom Elements was intended not just as a traditional online store but instead as a community-based ecosystem, as it emerged. As the founders sought to create high-end accessories for motorcycles tailored to very particular use cases, they were also concerned about developing a sense of community for their customers. Seeing the advantages of drop shipping in minimizing operational risks and controlling high market expenses, they decided to work with vetted importers. This confluence of strategy ensured the company remained nimble and responsive to changes in the marketplace and the needs of its clients.

Through constantly delivering quality products, personalizing, and maintaining customer satisfaction, Custom Elements managed to build a loyal customer base rapidly. Their combination of tailored solutions and dependable services was the reason that they positioned the brand at the Forefront of the motorcycle accessories market.

Protagonist Introduction: Riya Mehta

On a quiet morning in Bangalore, Riya Mehta settled in her apartment, a freshly made cup of piping hot chai by her side. At just 32, she had already earned her stripes as an innovator in digital marketing, being one of those who turn brands from rejects into stars. Thanks to her IIM Bangalore MBA and a few stints with several startups, she had a tremendous understanding of digital marketing. Brilliant as a strategist, she was awfully good at transforming brands into personalities with whom audiences could relate.

As Arbaaz Sha Muzawer and Wasim Shaikh laid out their vision for Custom Elements, Riya saw an avenue for experiencing how her skills could apply to a mission very close to her heart—community building. Their vision fits in very well with her philosophy that digital marketing should aim for deeper relationships with its audiences, beyond mere numbers sales.

"We need someone who can do more than market—we need someone who can connect," Arbaaz noted upon their first meeting. For Riya, it was certainly more than a professional job; it was a compelling challenge fitting perfectly with her vision of storytelling that would make an impact in terms of involving the audience. She embraced the opportunity with renewed zest and conviction.

Digital Marketing Strategy and Initial Outcomes

On arriving at Custom Elements, Riya Mehta first focused on assessing the company's current digital marketing efforts. Despite an investment of INR 20,00,000 spread over multiple digital media (**see Exhibit 2**), the outcome had been less than impressive. Key performance indicators showed huge gaps: Google Ads click-through rates were below industry standards, social media interaction had not caught on with the biking community, and incremental growth in Instagram followers and attendance at promotional events highlighted the overall underperformance of the campaigns.

Riya immediately sensed a glaring disconnect between the strategies being used and their capacity to translate interest into substantial customer interactions and purchases. It was obvious that the marketing efforts of the company needed to be thoroughly revamped. In order to get out of stagnation and achieve sustainable growth, Riya saw that what the company needed was a strategic change, one that emphasized real engagement, accurate targeting, and an improved customer journey.

The Marketing Challenge: Bridging the Gap

On that chilly afternoon, the founders of Custom Elements gathered in what was to be a critical meeting for their strategizing. The room was charged with tense anticipation as Arbaaz Sha Muzawer and Wasim Shaikh introduced their growing frustration. Arbaaz uttered with furrowed brows, "Our marketing initiatives are not working for the core audience. We are casting our net too wide and missing the community of biking enthusiasts we wish to serve."

Wasim corroborated this by pulling up some elaborate spreadsheets, which indicated falling engagement rates and stagnant sales numbers (**see Exhibit 3**). "We're losing touch with our core audience," he pointed out, showing numbers to support a real sense of urgency.

Riya Mehta, her mind analytical and ruthless with dissection of the problem, noted at this instantly that the solution lay with realigning the marketing methods of the company with the fine-grained nuances of the needs of that niche market. Custom Elements circulated on extremely specific segments of the motorcycle enthusiasts and would, thus, seem to be limited in its possibilities of growing the customer base. The loyalty of customers arose to be a vital thing towards revenue growth sustenance. The competition from the established riders like Moto Central, Bikester Global, and LRL Motors put some pressure on Custom Elements' marketing tactics because of the aggressive marketing moves these competitors made, and they often engage in price wars to protect profit margins (**see Exhibit 4**).

This was complicated by the fact that the small value-added motorcycle accessories market was highly susceptible to shifts in consumer preferences and trends. To stay ahead, the company was required to continually adjust the products offered while remaining in touch with consumer tastes as they evolved. However, Custom Elements' marketing efforts were hindered by generic messaging that could not deeply connect with its target audience which compromised brand loyalty and customer retention efforts.

Challenges skiing at first shone basic that by considering short-term digital marketing initiatives in isolation from other things—the marketing strategy—cast a challenge. Undeveloped branding, customer relationship management, and generic quality were thus allowed to fall off the agenda. Nor did the company have any idea of how to design marketing campaigns for the biker community and thus resorted to launching poorly effective marketing that failed to form an intimate connection.

Riya cited clear branding and target-focused messaging as top priorities. The brand's non-discriminatory and generic communication watered down its perceived worth, thus creating challenges for differentiation in a slowly saturated market. Navigating to solve these challenges would need a very thorough restructuring of the marketing functions. This included redefining the brand, customer engagement, and an agile data-driven marketing approach backed up with dynamic marketing.

Strategic Overhaul: Riya Mehta's Approach

Back in her office, Riya Mehta sank deep into thought over the challenges outlined by the founders. She knew, of certainty, that there was more to be done than changing resource allocation. Custom Elements needed a deep transformation in how it did business with its audience. She balanced the two: remain true to the organization's core values but don't rattle the convenience and comfort of a very specialized niche market that had to constantly evolve.

With this thought in mind, Riya started envisioning a series of innovative ways to form a much deeper emotional connection with the biking community. She contemplated formal partnerships with local biking clubs, sponsoring events consistent with the passions of the biking enthusiasts and producing exclusive compelling content communicating the culture and lifestyle of motorcycle riders. Each of these ventures presented an opportunity to position Custom Elements not merely as a retailer but as a contributor of worth to the biking experience.

Riya's plan rested on developing a loyal customer base that considered Custom Elements as an indispensable part of the biking experience-rather than mere transactional relationships. By positioning the brand in alignment with the community's passions, Riya quite saw that the company had a chance to graduate from being a business to becoming a key player in the biking world, thus creating lasting engagement and trust in an increasingly competitive space.

Advanced Audience Understanding

Recognizing the need for a cohesive approach, Riya shifted her attention toward creating a detailed comprehension of Custom Elements' specialized customer base. Using thorough market research methods, she studied professional bikers' distinct needs collectively with the specific characteristics of enthusiast riders (**see Exhibit 5**). Driven by data analysis these strategy-built marketing campaigns specifically hit their audience by producing deep connections that fueled effective audience engagements.

Resource Optimization and Strategic Reallocation

Riya worked with limited marketing funds while searching for optimal resource distribution and placement. She advocated for transferring significant budget allocations from ineffective channels to active platforms where the target audience demonstrated high engagement activity levels (**Exhibit 2 displayed this analysis**). Her systematic resource distribution strategy focused on boosting performance while achieving better engagement results in essential participant demographics. Custom Elements enhanced conversion rates significantly and produced superior ROI when they focused their resources on channels that connected directly with their core audience.

Fostering Meaningful Engagement

Effective niche marketing is about building meaningful relationships with customers and Riya understood that. She took a community focused strategy that didn't just focus on promoting Custom Elements products but instead shouted from the rooftop about the culture and living passion of the biking community. The ambition was to set up interactive online forums, exclusive events and agree partnerships with key influencers in the biking world. They were launched with goals of reinforcing brand loyalty and organic growth, so Custom Elements became part of the community's identity (**see Exhibit 6**).

Integrating Data-Driven Insights

Riya believed that advanced data analytics should be part of the core of marketing strategy, to drive informed decision making and elevate the performance of the campaign. She hoped to empower data driven refinements to marketing initiatives through deployment of tools that helped her gain real time insights about customer behavior and market trends (**see Exhibit 7**). By consistently updating these variables through this adaptive approach, campaigns stayed both relevant and effective, giving Custom Elements the ability to sense what consumers wanted and adapt quickly to different market conditions.

Authentic Branding and Clear Messaging

To establish a distinct presence in an increasingly competitive market, Riya Mehta led the charge in redefining Custom Elements' brand identity. Collaborating closely with the creative team, she developed a messaging strategy that clearly communicated the brand's unique value proposition—harmonizing personalized customization with a strong, unwavering commitment to the biking community (see **Exhibit 8**). This refined narrative was crafted not just to differentiate Custom Elements but to position it as a symbol of innovation and meaningful connection within the industry.

Riya's approach was rooted in more than just tactical adjustments; it served as a strategic framework for building customer loyalty and ensuring sustainable growth. By placing adaptability and customer insights at the heart of the brand, she ensured that Custom Elements remained agile and responsive to the dynamic needs of its audience. This thoughtful realignment transformed the company's marketing efforts into a cohesive, integrated force—one that not only enhanced the brand's image but also cultivated genuine, lasting engagement with the biking community.

Analytical Deep Dive

Determined to uncover the root causes of stagnation, Riya Mehta conducted an in-depth analysis of Custom Elements' performance metrics. The results show that quarterly sales figures showed only modest growth—from INR 4,000,000 in Q1 2022 to INR 4,300,000 in Q3 2022. Website traffic plateaued, averaging just 25,500 monthly visitors, while the conversion rate remained static at 1.7% (see **Exhibit 2**).

Despite the slight increase in online sales, the stagnant website traffic and unchanging conversion rates pointed to a critical issue: the company's digital marketing strategies were struggling to translate interest into actual purchases.

Key Insights from Riya's Analysis

- **Misalignment with Target Audience:** Broad and generic marketing campaigns failed to connect with the unique needs of the niche motorcycle community.
- **Inefficient Resource Allocation:** A significant portion of the marketing budget was being spent on underperforming channels, resulting in fragmented efforts and suboptimal return on investment (ROI).
- **Superficial Messaging:** The absence of authentic, community-focused messaging hindered Custom Elements' ability to build meaningful relationships with its audience and foster brand loyalty.
- **Limited Understanding of the Niche Market:** There was a noticeable gap in understanding the behaviors and preferences of motorcycle enthusiasts, weakening the effectiveness of marketing initiatives.

These insights underscored the necessity for a strategic realignment aimed at enhancing target audience understanding, refining marketing messages, and optimizing resource allocation to deliver higher engagement and conversion rates.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Initial Drop shipping Model Overview

Aspect	Details
Model Type	Dropshipping
Advantages	Reduced inventory costs, flexibility in product offerings
Challenges	Dependence on suppliers, limited control over shipping times
Key Partners	Major importers, reliable suppliers

Exhibit 2: Initial Digital Marketing Allocation and Outcomes

Marketing Channel	Investment (INR)	Engagement Metrics
Google Ads	800,000	Click-Through Rate (CTR): 2.2%
Facebook Promotions	500,000	Engagement Rate: 1.5%
Instagram Campaigns	300,000	Follower Growth: 4%
Promotional Stalls	400,000	Event Attendance: 300 per stall
Total Investment	2,000,000	Overall Engagement: 2.3%

Exhibit 3: Quarterly Sales and Website Traffic Trends

Quarter	Online Sales (INR)	Website Traffic (Monthly)	Conversion Rate (%)
Q1 2022	4,000,000	25,000	1.6%
Q2 2022	4,200,000	25,500	1.7%
Q3 2022	4,300,000	26,000	1.7%
Average	4,166,667	25,500	1.7%

Exhibit 4: Competitive Analysis Overview

Competitor	Market Share (%)	Key Strengths	Weaknesses
MotoCentral	30%	Extensive product range, strong online presence	Higher pricing
Bikester Global	25%	Aggressive marketing, influencer partnerships	Limited customization options
LRL Motors	20%	Established brand, loyal customer base	Slower to innovate
Custom Elements	25%	Customizable products, community focus	Limited digital engagement
Total	100%		

Exhibit 5: Market Research Findings

Aspect	Findings
Demographics	Predominantly male, aged 25-45, middle to upper-middle income
Preferences	High value on customization, quality, and brand authenticity
Behavior	Active in online biking forums, frequent event participants
Pain Points	Difficulty finding reliable, customizable accessories
Engagement Channels	Instagram, Facebook, biking community forums, local events

Exhibit 6: Community Engagement Initiatives

Initiative	Description	Impact Metrics
Biking Club Partnerships	Collaborations with local biking clubs for events and promotions	Increased event attendance by 20%
Exclusive Content Creation	Developing behind-the-scenes content and customer stories	Enhanced social media engagement

Initiative	Description	Impact Metrics
Influencer Collaborations	Partnering with biking influencers for authentic endorsements	15% increase in follower growth
Interactive Online Forums	Launching a dedicated online platform for community interaction	Higher brand loyalty metrics

Exhibit 7: Data Analytics Integration

Tool	Purpose	Outcome
Google Analytics	Track website traffic, user behavior, and conversion funnels	Identified drop-off points
Social Media Insights	Analyze engagement, reach, and audience demographics	Optimized content strategy
CRM System	Manage customer interactions and feedback	Improved customer relationship management
A/B Testing Platforms	Test different marketing messages and strategies	Enhanced campaign effectiveness

Exhibit 8: Branding and Messaging Framework

Element	Description
Core Values	Community, Customization, Quality
Brand Voice	Authentic, Engaging, Passionate
Unique Selling Propositions (USPs)	High customization options, strong community focus
Messaging Channels	Social media, email marketing, event sponsorships
Visual Branding	Consistent color schemes, logo prominence, lifestyle imagery

Exhibit 9: Organization Structure

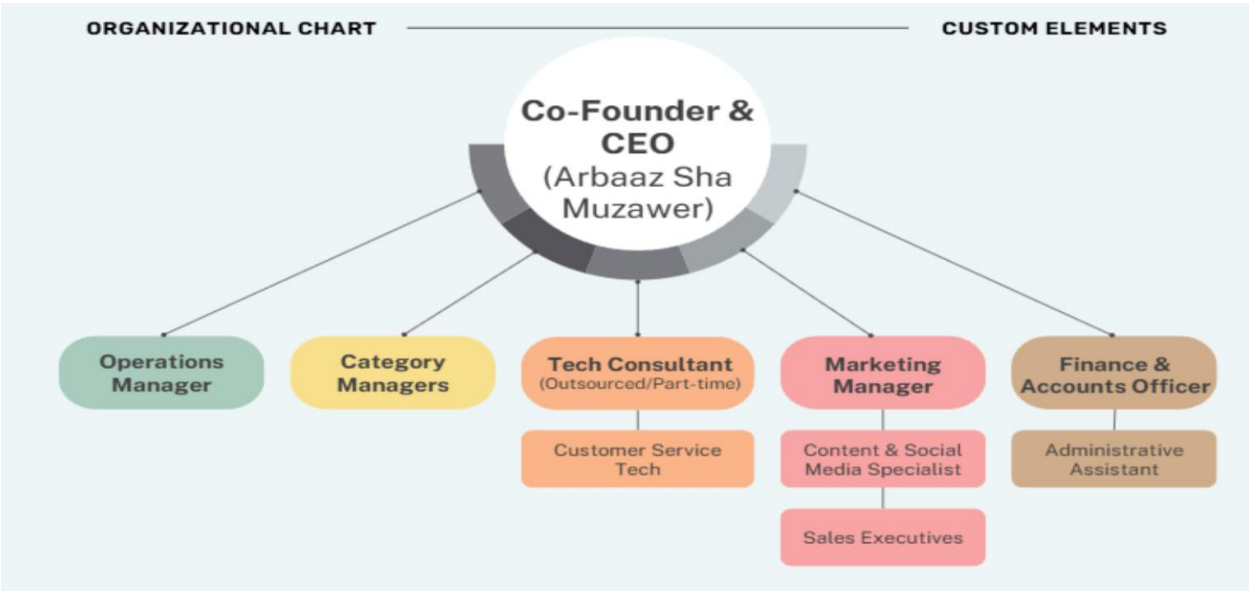


Exhibit 10: Custom Elements Website

