BUSINESS PLAN · INDIA

Social Media Agency

Fewer posts, a real audience, honest numbers

AGENCIES & MARKETING-SERVICES FIRMS

AISEVAK.IN · BY ABL DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

August 2026

1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out a **Social Media Agency** in India — social strategy and account management, content production including creator-style and short-form video, community management and response, paid social amplification, and social listening and insight reporting.

> **The marketing vertical's convention is that the client cannot easily tell whether the work caused the result, and the agency both performs the work and reports on it. The anchor plan showed results that are hard to attribute; the performance plan showed results that are gameable. This plan is the extreme case, because social media is the one marketing service whose headline numbers can be PURCHASED OUTRIGHT.** Followers, likes, views and comments are available for a few thousand rupees from vendors who deliver within days. **Every other business in this library can flatter its results; a social media agency can simply fabricate them — and the client, looking at a screen showing the number they asked for, has no way to tell the difference.**

> **The industry's own standard metric offers no protection, because engagement rate is trivially manipulated by four practices that are widespread, cheap and entirely invisible in a report: bought followers and likes; engagement pods, where accounts agree to comment on one another's posts; giveaway campaigns that require a follow to enter; and follow-for-follow reciprocity.** All four raise the numbers. **None of them add a single person who will ever buy anything.** Giveaways deserve particular attention because they are the respectable-looking one — **a giveaway reliably produces a follower spike composed almost entirely of people who follow giveaway accounts for a living, and the follower count never goes back down, which is precisely why the tactic is popular: the damage is permanent and invisible, while the number is immediate and impressive.**

> **Beneath the measurement problem sits a harder commercial one: the asset this industry sells has been unilaterally devalued by the parties that issue it.** Organic reach on the major platforms has fallen to a low single-digit percentage of follower count. **An agency that spent three years building a client's following built an asset whose value is set entirely by a third party with opposite commercial interests — the platform benefits when reach must be bought.** Follower count is a stock; reach is a flow the platform controls and has progressively closed. **An agency still selling "growing your following" as the mechanism is selling something the platform has already withdrawn.**

> **The pricing model then compounds it: the billable unit is content volume — posts per month — while the actual constraint is attention. The agency is therefore paid to produce more of the thing that does not work.** This plan inverts it deliberately: **contracted posts per month fall from 24 to 14 while revenue per client rises from ₹53,800 to ₹66,300 a month**, which is the only honest form the correction can take. And the retainer's real justification is not the calendar at all — **community management is where the risk actually sits, because an agency holding a client's brand voice can end that client's week with a single reply. Escalation protocol and crisis response, not content schedules, are what a client is genuinely paying to have handled.**

This plan models an agency requiring **₹38 lakh** (₹22 lakh promoter + ₹8 lakh investor + ₹8 lakh working-capital finance), moving from **₹1.42 crore revenue and a ₹6 lakh loss** in Year 1 to **₹3.5 crore revenue and ₹34 lakh profit** by Year 3. *(Content- and people-intensive services business — figures illustrative.)*

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

Concept: A social agency organised around audience authenticity and business outcomes — fewer, better posts; verified audiences; community response under a written protocol; and reporting that leads with what appears in the client's P&L rather than what appears on the profile.

Vision: To be the agency whose follower numbers are smaller than its competitors' and real.

Mission: Never buy an audience; audit every account we inherit and tell the client what we find; report saves, shares and enquiries ahead of likes; publish nothing in the client's voice without the approval the client asked for; and reduce the number of posts when reducing them is right.

Legal structure options

- **Private Limited** — recommended: brand-voice liability, client contracting and team scale.
- **LLP** — workable for a small partner-led studio.
- **Proprietorship** — common at entry scale; weak for enterprise contracting.

> **Regulatory anchor:** the vertical's obligations apply, with three specific to this model. **ASCI's influencer and disclosure guidelines reach the agency directly**, because **an agency posting brand-controlled content through a creator's or employee's handle without disclosure is producing an advertisement that does not identify itself as one** — and the CCPA's dark-pattern rules reach the giveaway mechanics, false-urgency devices and undisclosed paid partnerships that social content routinely uses. **DPDP obligations bite harder here than anywhere else in the vertical**, because **community management means handling a stream of unsolicited personal information — customers post order numbers, phone numbers and complaints in public comments and in direct messages**, and the agency is processing all of it. And **platform terms of service explicitly prohibit purchased engagement and coordinated inauthentic behaviour**, which makes the practices above **not merely dishonest but a basis on which the client's own account can be restricted or removed**. Alongside these: client ownership of handles, business-manager assets and content; IP and model releases for produced content; and music licensing, since **the audio a short-form video uses is a licensing question that most agencies never ask.**

3. Promoter & Ownership

Led by a promoter with social, content or community background. Three competences decide outcomes: *content production capability*, since this is the one agency model where the deliverable is manufactured rather than managed; *community judgment*, because the highest-risk moment in the relationship is an unscripted reply; and *the willingness to lose pitches*, as the refusals below are commercially expensive and the discipline collapses the first time an exception is made. Ownership, equity & investor terms are editable inputs.

4. Market Analysis — India

Demand is broad, shallow-priced and highly competitive. Almost every consumer-facing business in India now needs social presence, which makes the addressable market enormous and the price floor extremely low. It is **volume-driven, commoditised at the entry level and reputationally fragile at the top.**

Demand drivers

- **Near-universal need** across retail, hospitality, D2C, healthcare, education and professional services.
- **Short-form video**, which has raised production requirements beyond what most in-house teams can sustain.

- **Regional-language and creator-style content**, where India's diversity creates genuine specialist demand.
- **Community and customer service migrating to social**, making response capability a real operational need.
- **Declining organic reach**, which has pushed clients toward paid amplification and toward agencies who can operate both.

Market sizing (illustrative framing)

Layer	Definition	Indicative scale
TAM	Indian social media management & content services	Very large; extremely fragmented
SAM	Brands at retainer levels served	Ticket- and category-bounded
SOM (Yr 1–3)	**Retained clients × tenure × revenue per client**	22 → 44 active clients

> **Two facts about this market have to be stated plainly, because a plan that omits them is describing a business that no longer exists.** The first is that **organic reach has collapsed**: a brand page today typically reaches a small single-digit percentage of the people who explicitly chose to follow it. **The platforms did not announce this; they implemented it, and the effect is that "organic social" is now largely a content-production and community function while the reach itself is purchased.** The honest consequence for pricing is that **an agency selling organic follower growth as its mechanism is selling an outcome the platforms have structurally withdrawn**, and clients discover this at roughly month nine. The second is that **polished brand-produced content now systematically underperforms creator-style content** — vertical, unpolished, spoken-to-camera, made quickly. **This is uncomfortable for agencies because the expensive capability (studio, lighting, post-production) is the one losing relevance, while the cheap-looking output that wins requires something harder to hire for: people who are natively fluent in the format.** This plan staffs for volume and fluency rather than polish — **content creators are the largest function at 22 of 72 staff by Year 3** — and treats studio capability as supporting rather than central.

Target segments

- **D2C and consumer brands** needing sustained content volume.
- **Multi-outlet retail, F&B and hospitality**, where social is the primary discovery channel.
- **Healthcare, education and professional services**, where content is regulated and reputational risk is high.
- **Regional-language brands**, underserved by metro agencies.
- **Brands recovering from a social incident**, who buy protocol rather than creativity.

5. Competition & Competitive Advantage

Landscape: thousands of small agencies and freelancers, in-house social executives, creator-led content shops, and full-service agencies bundling social into larger retainers. **The price floor is set by operators charging a few tens of thousands a month for a fixed number of posts, and by the widespread availability of purchased engagement, which lets a weak agency show a strong graph.**

The business's edge

- **Audience authenticity auditing** at onboarding and continuously.
- **Reporting led by business outcomes** rather than audience size.
- **Saves, shares and enquiries** as primary engagement metrics rather than likes.
- **Written community protocol**, escalation matrix and response SLA.
- **Fewer, better posts** — with pricing restructured so that this is commercially survivable.

> **The audit is the entry product and also the most awkward conversation this agency has, because a bought audience is detectable and most agencies simply never look.** The signals are unambiguous: **a follower base whose geography does not match the client's market, engagement that arrived in step changes rather than curves, comment content that is generic across unrelated posts, and a follower-to-engagement ratio that has fallen steadily as purchased followers accumulate and never engage.** Running that audit on inherited accounts produces a finding the client does not want: **a meaningful proportion of what a previous agency delivered was purchased, the number cannot be undone, and the incoming agency has now inherited a metric it can never improve and will be blamed for failing to improve.** This plan discloses those findings rather than quietly absorbing them — **inherited accounts with purchased followers found and reported rises from 6 to 15**, which reads as a rising problem and is actually a rising rate of looking. **The commercial logic is simple: the alternative is to say nothing, adopt the previous agency's inflated baseline as your own starting point, and spend the entire relationship being measured against a number somebody else invented.**

6. Services, Pricing & the Volume Inversion

Line	Model	Basis
Social media management retainers	Monthly by scope	**~41–44% of revenue**
Content production (photo, video, creator-style)	Retained / per volume	**~31% — the real deliverable**
Community management & response	Retained with SLA	**~11% — where risk sits**
Paid social amplification	Flat management fee	Reach is now purchased
Social listening & insight	Retained / per report	Highest-margin line
Purchased followers, likes or engagement	**NIL — by policy**	**Costs pitches; stated openly**
Engagement pods, follow-for-follow, follower giveaways	**NIL — by policy**	**Permanent, invisible damage**

> **Selling posts per month is the industry's default and it is a straightforwardly bad unit, because it prices the input the client can count instead of the output they need — and it makes "we should post less" a sentence that costs the agency money to say.** The evidence in almost every account is that **a smaller number of well-made posts outperforms a larger number of filler ones, and that the filler exists to satisfy a contracted count rather than because anyone believed it would work.** This plan reduces contracted posts from **24 to 14 a month** while **revenue per client rises from ₹53,800 to ₹66,300** — and the mechanism is not persuasion but repricing: **the retainer is sold as strategy, community and outcomes, with content produced to a quality standard rather than a quantity target.** This is harder to sell than a menu, and it fails against a competitor quoting thirty posts for half the fee. **It is also the only structure under which the agency's advice about volume is worth listening to** — the same argument the anchor plan made about percentage-of-spend pricing, arriving at the same place from a different direction.

7. Go-to-Market — Competing Against Numbers You Refuse to Fake

Acquisition

- **Paid audience audits** as the entry product — concrete, uncomfortable and immediately valuable.
- **Category depth**, since content fluency does not transfer well across categories.
- **The agency's own accounts**, which in this category are the portfolio.
- **Referral**, strongest where a previous agency's numbers turned out to be purchased.

Retention

- **Outcome-led reporting from month one**, so expectations never anchor to follower count.
- **Community reliability** — response SLA met, escalations handled, nothing published unapproved.
- **Content freshness**, since format fatigue is the commonest cause of decline.
- **Listening insight**, which tells the client things no other supplier can.

Sales approach

Audit first → reset the baseline honestly → contract on outcomes and community rather than post count → produce for fluency, not polish → report saves, shares and enquiries. **The hardest commercial fact in this plan is that the refusals lose pitches, and lose them to a specific, predictable competitor: the agency promising ten thousand followers in ninety days.** That agency can deliver exactly what it promised, on time, for a low fee. **This one cannot, and saying so out loud in a pitch sounds like an excuse.** The only workable counter is to make the audit the first thing sold rather than the last thing explained — **because a client who has seen the geography of their own follower base does not need the difference described to them, and a client who has not will believe the number.**

8. Operations Plan (audit, produce, publish, respond, report)

- **Onboarding audit: audience authenticity, engagement pattern, historical baseline and inherited-account findings disclosed in writing.**
- **Content production:** volume and fluency over polish; creator-style and short-form as the default format.
- **Approval workflow:** content approved before publication; **brand-voice replies approved where the client has required approval.**
- **Community management: written response protocol, escalation matrix, defined SLA, and a stated policy on comment deletion.**
- **Paid amplification:** operated on flat management fee, with organic and paid reach reported separately.
- **Listening:** sentiment, complaint themes and competitor activity reported as insight, not as a metric dump.
- **Crisis:** named contacts, out-of-hours escalation, and **a pre-agreed hold position for the first hour.**
- **Asset control:** client-owned handles and business manager; agency access granted, never held.

Account operating rhythm

Stage	Activity	Control point
Audit	**Audience authenticity & inherited baseline**	**Audit at onboarding: 100%**
Plan	Fewer, better posts against outcomes	Contracted posts 24 → 14/month
Produce	Creator-style volume, category fluency	Fluency over polish
Respond	**Protocol, SLA, escalation matrix**	**SLA met 82% → 96%; unapproved replies NIL**
Amplify	Paid on flat fee; organic and paid split	Reach reported by source
Report	**Business outcomes ahead of audience size**	**Outcome-led packs 28% → 84%**

> **Community management is mispriced across this entire industry, and the mispricing is not about effort — it is about risk.** A brand's social account is the one place where **a junior employee of a supplier can publish, instantly**

and irrevocably, in the client's own voice, to the client's entire public. Nothing else in the marketing vertical carries that: a bad ad can be paused, a bad email can be apologised for, **but a bad reply is a screenshot within four minutes and a news item within four hours.** The controls that matter are unglamorous — **a written protocol covering what may be answered directly and what must be escalated, a named out-of-hours contact on both sides, and an agreed first-hour hold position so that the person on duty at 11pm has something correct to say rather than something improvised.** The deletion policy deserves its own line, because it is where agencies most often make things worse: **deleting a negative comment is what converts a complaint into a grievance and a grievance into a campaign, since the customer who was merely annoyed is now annoyed AND censored, and they have the screenshot.** This plan deletes only per written policy — abuse, doxxing, spam — and **records deletions outside that policy as nil rather than assuming they do not happen.**

9. Advertising, Platform & Data Compliance (India)

- **ASCI influencer and disclosure guidelines** — **brand-controlled content published through a creator's or employee's handle without disclosure is an advertisement that does not identify itself as one**, and the agency produced it.
- **CCPA dark-pattern rules** reaching giveaway mechanics, false scarcity and undisclosed paid partnerships.
- **Platform terms of service** — **purchased engagement and coordinated inauthentic behaviour are prohibited, making the practice not merely dishonest but a basis for restricting or removing the client's own account.**
- **DPDP obligations**, which bite hardest here: **community management means processing a continuous stream of unsolicited personal data — order numbers, phone numbers, health and financial details posted in public comments and DMs.**
- **IP, model releases and licensing** for produced content, including **music rights on short-form video, a licensing question most agencies never ask.**
- **Client ownership** of handles, business manager, pixels and content library, with documented exit handover.
- Category rules in health, financial services, alcohol, tobacco and education advertising.
- GST on services; separate treatment of pass-through paid media.

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Role	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Promoter / managing partner	1	1	2
Content creators (video, photo, edit)	**10**	**15**	**22**
Community managers	**6**	**9**	**12**
Social strategists & account management	5	7	11
Designers	4	6	8
Paid social operators	2	3	5
Listening & analytics	2	3	4
Business development	2	3	4
Operations & admin	2	3	4
Total	**34**	**50**	**72**

Content creators and community managers together are half the organisation — 34 of 72 by Year 3 — which is the plan's honest description of what this business actually is: **a content factory with a customer-service desk attached, sold as a marketing service.**

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Setup	Month 0–3	Team, production capability, listening stack, community protocol written
Launch	Month 3–12	22 clients; ₹1.42cr revenue, ₹6L loss; audit on 100% of onboardings
Build	Year 2	Outcome-led packs 58%, posts down to 18, tenure 14 months; ₹2.28cr, ₹13L profit
Scale	Year 3	44 clients; ₹3.5cr, ₹34L profit; **posts 14/month, revenue per client ₹66,300**

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

All figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian context, shown so the promoter can replace them with live rates. ***Revenue per client, tenure, utilisation and scope control are the levers — and the volume inversion (fewer contracted posts at a higher fee) is the single most important commercial mechanism in the plan.***

12.1 Project cost & means of finance

Capital requirement	₹
Working capital (salaries against client credit periods)	**14,00,000**
Content production capability (camera, audio, lighting, edit)	**8,00,000**
Team recruitment & training	6,00,000
Listening, scheduling & analytics tooling	4,00,000
Office setup & deposits	3,00,000
Business development	2,00,000
Legal, compliance & registrations	1,00,000
Total project cost	**38,00,000**
Promoter contribution	22,00,000
Investor funding	8,00,000
Working-capital finance	8,00,000

12.2 Projected Profit & Loss (3 years)

Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Social media management retainers	62,00,000	96,00,000	1,42,00,000
Content production (photo, video, creator-style)	**44,00,000**	**70,00,000**	**1,08,00,000**
Community management & response	**16,00,000**	**26,00,000**	**40,00,000**

Paid social amplification management	12,00,000	22,00,000	36,00,000
Social listening & insight reporting	8,00,000	14,00,000	24,00,000
Purchased followers, likes or engagement	**NIL**	**NIL**	**NIL**
Total revenue	**1,42,00,000**	**2,28,00,000**	**3,50,00,000**
Salaries (content, community, strategy, design, admin)	88,00,000	1,32,00,000	1,96,00,000
Content production costs (talent, locations, props, music)	16,00,000	24,00,000	36,00,000
Unbilled scope creep & absorbed revisions	**12,00,000**	**15,00,000**	**18,00,000**
Business development & marketing	9,00,000	13,00,000	20,00,000
Technology, listening & scheduling tools	8,00,000	11,00,000	16,00,000
Office, overheads & admin	8,00,000	11,00,000	16,00,000
Training & development	3,00,000	4,00,000	7,00,000
Depreciation, interest & other	4,00,000	5,00,000	7,00,000
Total expenses	**1,48,00,000**	**2,15,00,000**	**3,16,00,000**
Net profit / (loss) before tax	**(6,00,000)**	**13,00,000**	**34,00,000**
Net margin	(4.2%)	5.7%	9.7%
PURCHASED FOLLOWERS, LIKES OR ENGAGEMENT	**NIL**	**NIL**	**NIL**
Engagement pods, follow-for-follow or follower giveaways	**NIL**	**NIL**	**NIL**
Audience authenticity audit completed at onboarding	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Inherited accounts where purchased followers were found & disclosed	**6**	**11**	**15**
Clients on a reporting pack led by business outcomes, not audience size	**28%**	**58%**	**84%**
Saves, shares & enquiries reported ahead of likes	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
CONTRACTED POSTS PER CLIENT PER MONTH	**24**	**18**	**14**
REVENUE PER CLIENT PER MONTH (₹)	**53,800**	**59,400**	**66,300**
Community response within agreed SLA	**82%**	**91%**	**96%**
Replies published without approval where approval was required	**NIL**	**NIL**	**NIL**
Negative comments deleted outside written policy	**NIL**	**NIL**	**NIL**
Average client tenure (months)	9	14	19
Billable utilisation / Scope creep absorbed	58% / 21%	67% / 14%	74% / 8%
Client concentration / Revenue per billable head (₹ lakh)	16% / 4.9	11% / 5.3	8% / 5.6
Active clients	22	32	44

12.3 Unit economics & break-even

- **The volume inversion is the whole plan in two rows:** contracted posts fall **24 → 14** while revenue per client rises **₹53,800 → ₹66,300. Either row alone is unremarkable; together they are the only evidence that the**

repricing worked rather than the agency merely doing less.

- **Revenue per billable head is the lowest in the vertical** — ₹4.9 to ₹5.6 lakh against a performance agency's far higher figure — **because content is manufactured hour by hour and cannot be leveraged the way media management can.** That is the structural reason margins here are thin.
- **Community management carries risk out of all proportion to its 11% revenue share** and should be priced for the exposure, not the effort.
- **Scope creep is the largest controllable leak** — 21% of billable capacity in Year 1, because "one more post" is the easiest request in this industry to say yes to.
- **Break-even:** Year 2. **Margins are the thinnest in the vertical (−4.2% → 9.7%), which is honest: social is the most commoditised marketing service, competing against freelancers, interns and agencies willing to buy the numbers.**

12.4 Projected Cash Flow — Year 1 (quarterly, illustrative)

Particulars (₹)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Opening balance	14,00,000	7,00,000	3,00,000	2,00,000
Collections	30,00,000	33,00,000	36,00,000	38,00,000
Salaries, production, technology, business development & overheads	37,00,000	37,00,000	37,00,000	37,00,000
Closing balance	**7,00,000**	**3,00,000**	**2,00,000**	**3,00,000**

> **Cash here is tighter than the plan's modest size suggests, for a reason specific to content businesses: production costs are incurred before the content is approved, and approval is the client's to delay.** A shoot happens, talent and location are paid, the edit is done — **and then the content sits in a review queue for three weeks because the client's marketing head is travelling.** The invoice cannot go out, the credit period has not started, **and the agency has funded a month of production against a deliverable that technically has not been delivered.** Three controls follow: **production milestones billed on completion of production rather than on approval**; **a written approval SLA with content deemed approved after a stated period**, which is standard in film and rare in social; and **advance billing on retainers**, which is defensible in this category and is the difference between a positive and negative cash cycle. The ordinary agency mismatch also applies — **salaries are 62% of costs and are paid monthly against 45–60 day settlement, so a quiet month is felt immediately with almost nothing that can be reduced.**

12.5 Key Performance Indicators to Monitor

- **Audience integrity: purchased engagement (must be nil)**; audit completion at onboarding; **inherited-account findings disclosed**; follower-to-engagement trend.
- **Commercial discipline: contracted posts per client against revenue per client**; outcome-led reporting share; scope absorbed; billable utilisation.
- **Community & risk: SLA compliance; unapproved replies (nil); deletions outside policy (nil)**; escalations and time-to-escalate; crisis rehearsals completed.
- **Retention:** tenure; renewal rate; departure reasons; concentration; content fatigue indicators.

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Total ask: **₹8 lakh investor funding plus ₹8 lakh working-capital finance** against ₹22 lakh promoter contribution. Four points. **First, this is the least capital-intensive and thinnest-margin model in the vertical** — the ask is small because the business is small, and the risk is competitive rather than operational. **Second, underwrite revenue per**

client alongside client count, because a social agency can add clients indefinitely at declining fees and show growth all the way into insolvency. Third, and specific to this category, ask what the agency does about purchased engagement — **a social agency that has never found a bought follower in an inherited account has never looked, and one that promises rapid follower growth is either buying it or about to. Fourth, the concentrated risk is reputational and arrives without warning: a single reply published in a client's voice can cost the relationship and, if it becomes a news item, several relationships at once** — so the diligence question is not whether the agency is creative but **whether it has a written community protocol, an escalation matrix and a named out-of-hours contact, which most do not.**

13.1 Funding utilisation

Use of funds	₹	% of total
Working capital (salaries against client credit periods)	14,00,000	36.8%
Content production capability (camera, audio, lighting, edit)	8,00,000	21.1%
Team recruitment & training	6,00,000	15.8%
Listening, scheduling & analytics tooling	4,00,000	10.5%
Office setup & deposits	3,00,000	7.9%
Business development	2,00,000	5.3%
Legal, compliance & registrations	1,00,000	2.6%
Total	**38,00,000**	**100%**

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
The results can be BOUGHT, not merely flattered	**Followers, likes, views and comments are available for a few thousand rupees and delivered in days — every other business in this library can flatter its results; a social agency can FABRICATE them, and the client looking at a screen showing the number they asked for cannot tell the difference.** Purchased engagement NIL; **authenticity audit on 100% of onboardings**
Engagement rate offers no protection	Manipulated by four widespread, cheap and invisible practices: **bought followers and likes; engagement pods; giveaway campaigns requiring a follow; and follow-for-follow reciprocity — ALL raise the numbers and NONE add a single person who will ever buy.** All NIL. Giveaways are the respectable-looking one: **a follower spike composed almost entirely of people who follow giveaway accounts for a living, AND THE COUNT NEVER GOES BACK DOWN — which is exactly why the tactic is popular: the damage is permanent and invisible while the number is immediate and impressive**
Inheriting somebody else's fake baseline	A bought audience is detectable — **follower geography that does not match the client's market, engagement arriving in step changes rather than curves, generic comment content across unrelated posts, and a follower-to-engagement ratio falling steadily as purchased followers accumulate and never engage.** Disclosed rather than absorbed (6→15 found and reported), because **the alternative is to say nothing, adopt the previous agency's inflated baseline as your own, and spend the entire relationship being measured against a number somebody else invented**

The asset has been devalued by its issuer	**Organic reach has collapsed to a low single-digit percentage of follower count — the platforms did not announce it, they implemented it — so an agency that spent three years building a following built an asset whose value is set by a third party with OPPOSITE commercial interests, since the platform benefits when reach must be bought.** Follower count is a stock; reach is a flow the platform controls. **Selling organic growth as the mechanism is selling an outcome the platforms have structurally withdrawn** — clients discover this around month nine
The billable unit is the wrong unit	**Posts per month prices the input the client can count instead of the output they need, and makes "we should post less" a sentence that costs the agency money to say — so the filler exists to satisfy a contracted count rather than because anyone believed it would work.** Inversion: **posts 24→14 while revenue per client rises ₹53,800→₹66,300**, achieved by repricing rather than persuasion. Harder to sell; fails against thirty posts at half the fee; **and the only structure under which the agency's advice about volume is worth listening to**
Community management is the real exposure	**A junior employee of a supplier can publish, instantly and irrevocably, in the client's own voice, to the client's entire public — a bad ad can be paused and a bad email apologised for, BUT A BAD REPLY IS A SCREENSHOT WITHIN FOUR MINUTES AND A NEWS ITEM WITHIN FOUR HOURS.** Written protocol, escalation matrix, named out-of-hours contacts, **and an agreed first-hour hold position so the person on duty at 11pm has something CORRECT to say rather than something improvised** (SLA 82%→96%; unapproved replies NIL)
Deleting negative comments	**Deletion converts a complaint into a grievance and a grievance into a campaign — the customer who was merely annoyed is now annoyed AND censored, and they have the screenshot.** Deletion only per written policy (abuse, doxxing, spam), with **deletions outside policy RECORDED as nil rather than assumed to be nil**
Production capability aimed at the wrong thing	**Polished brand-produced content now systematically underperforms creator-style content, which is uncomfortable because the EXPENSIVE capability (studio, lighting, post-production) is the one losing relevance while the cheap-LOOKING output that wins requires something harder to hire for: people natively fluent in the format.** Staffed for volume and fluency (content creators 22 of 72 by Y3); studio capability supporting rather than central
Regulatory & platform	**Purchased engagement and coordinated inauthentic behaviour breach platform terms, making the practice a basis for restricting or removing THE CLIENT'S OWN ACCOUNT.** ASCI disclosure — **brand-controlled content through a creator's or employee's handle without disclosure is an advertisement that does not identify itself as one. DPDP bites hardest here: community management processes a continuous stream of unsolicited personal data — order numbers, phone numbers, health and financial details in public comments and DMs.** Plus music licensing on short-form video, which most agencies never ask about
Commoditisation & cash	Thinnest margins in the vertical against freelancers, interns and number-buyers; **lowest revenue per billable head (₹4.9–5.6L) because content is manufactured hour by hour and cannot be leveraged.** Cash: **production is paid for BEFORE approval and approval is the client's to delay — a shoot happens, talent and location are paid, the edit is done, then it sits in a review queue for three weeks** → milestone billing on production completion, **a written approval SLA with content deemed approved after a stated period**, and advance retainer billing

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths **Audience authenticity auditing as an entry product competitors cannot match without indicting themselves**; outcome-led reporting; **volume inversion proven by revenue per client rising as posts fall**; written community protocol and SLA; very low capital intensity; broad addressable market.	**Weaknesses** **Thinnest margins and lowest revenue per head in the vertical**; content manufactured hour by hour with no leverage; **refusals lose pitches to agencies that can deliver the promised numbers**; heavy scope-creep exposure; **production cash spent before approval.**
Opportunities Short-form and creator-style content demand; **regional-language and category-fluent production, underserved by metro agencies**; community and customer service migrating to social; social listening as genuine insight; **brands recovering from an incident, who buy protocol rather than creativity.**	**Threats** **Competitors who buy the numbers and show a better graph**; freelancers and in-house executives at a fraction of the cost; **further platform reach restrictions**; algorithm and format churn; **a single unapproved reply becoming a public incident.**

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

This social media agency would use AiSevak's Marketing vertical tools in operations:

- **Audience integrity: authenticity audit workflow (geography match, engagement step-change detection, follower-to-engagement trend)**, inherited-account findings register, onboarding baseline record.
- **Content operations:** production pipeline and approval workflow, **approval-SLA clock with deemed-approved trigger**, format performance library, music and model-release tracking.
- **Community & risk: response SLA monitoring, escalation matrix, approval-required flagging, deletion log against written policy**, crisis contact sheet and first-hour hold positions.
- **Reporting: outcome-led pack builder (saves, shares, enquiries ahead of likes)**, organic vs paid reach separation, listening and sentiment digest.
- **Commercials: contracted posts against revenue per client**, scope-creep capture, tenure cohorts, milestone billing and receivable ageing.

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- Social media agency: strategy and account management, content production including creator-style and short-form video, community management and response, paid social amplification, and social listening and insight.
- **⚠ THE VERTICAL'S CONVENTION TAKEN TO ITS EXTREME. The anchor plan showed results that are HARD TO ATTRIBUTE; performance-ads-agency showed results that are GAMEABLE; THIS IS THE ONE MARKETING SERVICE WHOSE HEADLINE NUMBERS CAN BE PURCHASED OUTRIGHT — FOLLOWERS, LIKES, VIEWS AND COMMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR A FEW THOUSAND RUPEES FROM VENDORS WHO DELIVER WITHIN DAYS. EVERY OTHER BUSINESS IN THIS LIBRARY CAN FLATTER ITS RESULTS; A SOCIAL MEDIA AGENCY CAN SIMPLY FABRICATE THEM — AND THE CLIENT, LOOKING AT A SCREEN SHOWING THE NUMBER THEY ASKED FOR, HAS NO WAY TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE. THE INDUSTRY'S OWN STANDARD METRIC OFFERS NO PROTECTION, BECAUSE ENGAGEMENT RATE IS TRIVIALLY MANIPULATED BY FOUR PRACTICES THAT ARE WIDESPREAD, CHEAP AND ENTIRELY INVISIBLE IN A REPORT: BOUGHT FOLLOWERS AND LIKES;**

ENGAGEMENT PODS (accounts agreeing to comment on one another's posts); GIVEAWAY CAMPAIGNS REQUIRING A FOLLOW TO ENTER; AND FOLLOW-FOR-FOLLOW RECIPROCITY — ALL FOUR RAISE THE NUMBERS AND NONE OF THEM ADD A SINGLE PERSON WHO WILL EVER BUY ANYTHING. Giveaways deserve particular attention as **THE RESPECTABLE-LOOKING ONE: A GIVEAWAY RELIABLY PRODUCES A FOLLOWER SPIKE COMPOSED ALMOST ENTIRELY OF PEOPLE WHO FOLLOW GIVEAWAY ACCOUNTS FOR A LIVING, AND THE FOLLOWER COUNT NEVER GOES BACK DOWN — WHICH IS PRECISELY WHY THE TACTIC IS POPULAR: THE DAMAGE IS PERMANENT AND INVISIBLE, WHILE THE NUMBER IS IMMEDIATE AND IMPRESSIVE.** All NIL; **AUTHENTICITY AUDIT ON 100% OF ONBOARDINGS**.

- **A BOUGHT AUDIENCE IS DETECTABLE AND MOST AGENCIES SIMPLY NEVER LOOK — THE SIGNALS ARE UNAMBIGUOUS: FOLLOWER GEOGRAPHY THAT DOES NOT MATCH THE CLIENT'S MARKET, ENGAGEMENT THAT ARRIVED IN STEP CHANGES RATHER THAN CURVES, GENERIC COMMENT CONTENT ACROSS UNRELATED POSTS, AND A FOLLOWER-TO-ENGAGEMENT RATIO FALLING STEADILY AS PURCHASED FOLLOWERS ACCUMULATE AND NEVER ENGAGE** → running the audit on inherited accounts produces a finding the client does not want (**a meaningful proportion of what the PREVIOUS agency delivered was purchased, the number CANNOT BE UNDONE, and the incoming agency has inherited a metric it can never improve and will be blamed for failing to improve**) → disclosed rather than absorbed (6→11→15), because **THE ALTERNATIVE IS TO SAY NOTHING, ADOPT THE PREVIOUS AGENCY'S INFLATED BASELINE AS YOUR OWN STARTING POINT, AND SPEND THE ENTIRE RELATIONSHIP BEING MEASURED AGAINST A NUMBER SOMEBODY ELSE INVENTED.** Commercially expensive: **THE REFUSALS LOSE PITCHES TO A SPECIFIC, PREDICTABLE COMPETITOR — THE AGENCY PROMISING TEN THOUSAND FOLLOWERS IN NINETY DAYS, WHICH CAN DELIVER EXACTLY WHAT IT PROMISED, ON TIME, FOR A LOW FEE, WHILE THIS ONE CANNOT — AND SAYING SO IN A PITCH SOUNDS LIKE AN EXCUSE** → only workable counter is **SELLING THE AUDIT FIRST RATHER THAN EXPLAINING THE DIFFERENCE LAST, BECAUSE A CLIENT WHO HAS SEEN THE GEOGRAPHY OF THEIR OWN FOLLOWER BASE DOES NOT NEED IT DESCRIBED TO THEM, AND ONE WHO HAS NOT WILL BELIEVE THE NUMBER.**
- **BENEATH THE MEASUREMENT PROBLEM SITS A HARDER COMMERCIAL ONE: THE ASSET THIS INDUSTRY SELLS HAS BEEN UNILATERALLY DEVALUED BY THE PARTIES THAT ISSUE IT. ORGANIC REACH HAS COLLAPSED TO A LOW SINGLE-DIGIT PERCENTAGE OF FOLLOWER COUNT — THE PLATFORMS DID NOT ANNOUNCE THIS, THEY IMPLEMENTED IT — SO AN AGENCY THAT SPENT THREE YEARS BUILDING A CLIENT'S FOLLOWING BUILT AN ASSET WHOSE VALUE IS SET ENTIRELY BY A THIRD PARTY WITH OPPOSITE COMMERCIAL INTERESTS, SINCE THE PLATFORM BENEFITS WHEN REACH MUST BE BOUGHT. FOLLOWER COUNT IS A STOCK; REACH IS A FLOW THE PLATFORM CONTROLS AND HAS PROGRESSIVELY CLOSED — AN AGENCY STILL SELLING "GROWING YOUR FOLLOWING" AS THE MECHANISM IS SELLING SOMETHING THE PLATFORM HAS ALREADY WITHDRAWN**, and clients discover it at roughly month nine. Second structural change: **POLISHED BRAND-PRODUCED CONTENT NOW SYSTEMATICALLY UNDERPERFORMS CREATOR-STYLE CONTENT (vertical, unpolished, spoken-to-camera, made quickly), WHICH IS UNCOMFORTABLE FOR AGENCIES BECAUSE THE EXPENSIVE CAPABILITY — STUDIO, LIGHTING, POST-PRODUCTION — IS THE ONE LOSING RELEVANCE, WHILE THE CHEAP-LOOKING OUTPUT THAT WINS REQUIRES SOMETHING HARDER TO HIRE FOR: PEOPLE NATIVELY FLUENT IN THE FORMAT** → staffed for volume and fluency rather than polish (content creators 22 of 72 by Y3, **content creators + community managers = HALF the organisation, 34 of 72, this business being honestly A CONTENT FACTORY WITH A CUSTOMER-SERVICE DESK ATTACHED, SOLD AS A MARKETING SERVICE**).
- **THE PRICING MODEL COMPOUNDS EVERYTHING: THE BILLABLE UNIT IS CONTENT VOLUME (POSTS PER MONTH) WHILE THE ACTUAL CONSTRAINT IS ATTENTION, SO THE AGENCY IS PAID TO PRODUCE MORE OF THE THING THAT DOES NOT WORK — POSTS PER MONTH PRICES THE INPUT THE CLIENT CAN COUNT INSTEAD OF THE OUTPUT THEY NEED, AND MAKES "WE SHOULD POST LESS" A SENTENCE THAT COSTS THE AGENCY MONEY TO SAY; THE FILLER EXISTS TO SATISFY A CONTRACTED COUNT RATHER THAN BECAUSE**

ANYONE BELIEVED IT WOULD WORK → deliberate inversion: **CONTRACTED POSTS 24→18→14 A MONTH WHILE REVENUE PER CLIENT RISES ₹53,800→₹59,400→₹66,300, ACHIEVED BY REPRICING (retainer sold as strategy, community and outcomes, with content produced to a QUALITY STANDARD rather than a QUANTITY TARGET) RATHER THAN BY PERSUASION — EITHER ROW ALONE IS UNREMARKABLE; TOGETHER THEY ARE THE ONLY EVIDENCE THAT THE REPRICING WORKED RATHER THAN THE AGENCY MERELY DOING LESS.** Harder to sell, fails against thirty posts at half the fee, **and the only structure under which the agency's advice about volume is worth listening to** — the anchor plan's argument about percentage-of-spend pricing arriving at the same place from a different direction. Reporting discipline: **outcome-led packs 28%→58%→84%; saves, shares and enquiries reported AHEAD of likes 100%, because saves and shares indicate genuine value while a like is free to give.**

- **COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT IS MISPRICED ACROSS THE ENTIRE INDUSTRY, AND THE MISPRICING IS NOT ABOUT EFFORT BUT ABOUT RISK: A BRAND'S SOCIAL ACCOUNT IS THE ONE PLACE WHERE A JUNIOR EMPLOYEE OF A SUPPLIER CAN PUBLISH, INSTANTLY AND IRREVOCABLY, IN THE CLIENT'S OWN VOICE, TO THE CLIENT'S ENTIRE PUBLIC — NOTHING ELSE IN THE MARKETING VERTICAL CARRIES THAT. A BAD AD CAN BE PAUSED, A BAD EMAIL CAN BE APOLOGISED FOR, BUT A BAD REPLY IS A SCREENSHOT WITHIN FOUR MINUTES AND A NEWS ITEM WITHIN FOUR HOURS** → controls are unglamorous: **a WRITTEN PROTOCOL covering what may be answered directly and what must be escalated, NAMED OUT-OF-HOURS CONTACTS ON BOTH SIDES, and AN AGREED FIRST-HOUR HOLD POSITION SO THE PERSON ON DUTY AT 11PM HAS SOMETHING CORRECT TO SAY RATHER THAN SOMETHING IMPROVISED** (SLA 82%→91%→96%; **replies published without required approval: NIL**); and the deletion policy gets its own line because it is where agencies most often make things worse — **DELETING A NEGATIVE COMMENT CONVERTS A COMPLAINT INTO A GRIEVANCE AND A GRIEVANCE INTO A CAMPAIGN, SINCE THE CUSTOMER WHO WAS MERELY ANNOYED IS NOW ANNOYED AND CENSORED, AND THEY HAVE THE SCREENSHOT** → deletion only per written policy (abuse, doxxing, spam), with **deletions outside policy RECORDED AS NIL RATHER THAN ASSUMED TO BE NIL.**
- Cash — **tighter than the plan's modest size suggests, for a reason specific to content businesses: PRODUCTION COSTS ARE INCURRED BEFORE THE CONTENT IS APPROVED, AND APPROVAL IS THE CLIENT'S TO DELAY. A shoot happens, talent and location are paid, the edit is done — AND THEN IT SITS IN A REVIEW QUEUE FOR THREE WEEKS BECAUSE THE CLIENT'S MARKETING HEAD IS TRAVELLING; THE INVOICE CANNOT GO OUT, THE CREDIT PERIOD HAS NOT STARTED, AND THE AGENCY HAS FUNDED A MONTH OF PRODUCTION AGAINST A DELIVERABLE THAT TECHNICALLY HAS NOT BEEN DELIVERED** → **milestone billing on completion of PRODUCTION rather than APPROVAL; a WRITTEN APPROVAL SLA WITH CONTENT DEEMED APPROVED AFTER A STATED PERIOD (standard in film, rare in social); and ADVANCE RETAINER BILLING, which is defensible in this category and is the difference between a positive and a negative cash cycle**; salaries 62% of costs against 45-60 day settlement. **Margins are the THINNEST IN THE VERTICAL (−4.2%→5.7%→9.7%) and revenue per billable head the LOWEST (₹4.9→5.6L, against a performance agency's far higher figure) BECAUSE CONTENT IS MANUFACTURED HOUR BY HOUR AND CANNOT BE LEVERAGED THE WAY MEDIA MANAGEMENT CAN — that is the structural reason, and social is also the most commoditised marketing service, competing against freelancers, interns and agencies willing to buy the numbers.** Regulatory: **PLATFORM TERMS PROHIBIT PURCHASED ENGAGEMENT AND COORDINATED INAUTHENTIC BEHAVIOUR, MAKING IT NOT MERELY DISHONEST BUT A BASIS ON WHICH THE CLIENT'S OWN ACCOUNT CAN BE RESTRICTED OR REMOVED**; ASCI influencer/disclosure rules, since **BRAND-CONTROLLED CONTENT PUBLISHED THROUGH A CREATOR'S OR EMPLOYEE'S HANDLE WITHOUT DISCLOSURE IS AN ADVERTISEMENT THAT DOES NOT IDENTIFY ITSELF AS ONE**; CCPA dark-pattern rules reaching giveaway mechanics and false urgency; **DPDP BITES HARDER HERE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE VERTICAL, BECAUSE COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT MEANS PROCESSING A CONTINUOUS STREAM OF UNSOLICITED PERSONAL DATA — ORDER NUMBERS, PHONE NUMBERS, HEALTH AND FINANCIAL DETAILS POSTED IN PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DMs**; IP/model releases and

MUSIC LICENSING ON SHORT-FORM VIDEO, A QUESTION MOST AGENCIES NEVER ASK; client ownership of handles and business manager. Lender note: least capital-intensive and thinnest-margin model in the vertical; **UNDERWRITE REVENUE PER CLIENT ALONGSIDE CLIENT COUNT, BECAUSE A SOCIAL AGENCY CAN ADD CLIENTS INDEFINITELY AT DECLINING FEES AND SHOW GROWTH ALL THE WAY INTO INSOLVENCY**; **ASK WHAT IT DOES ABOUT PURCHASED ENGAGEMENT — AN AGENCY THAT HAS NEVER FOUND A BOUGHT FOLLOWER IN AN INHERITED ACCOUNT HAS NEVER LOOKED, AND ONE THAT PROMISES RAPID FOLLOWER GROWTH IS EITHER BUYING IT OR ABOUT TO**; and note that **THE CONCENTRATED RISK IS REPUTATIONAL AND ARRIVES WITHOUT WARNING — A SINGLE REPLY PUBLISHED IN A CLIENT'S VOICE CAN COST THE RELATIONSHIP AND, IF IT BECOMES A NEWS ITEM, SEVERAL RELATIONSHIPS AT ONCE — SO THE DILIGENCE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER THE AGENCY IS CREATIVE BUT WHETHER IT HAS A WRITTEN COMMUNITY PROTOCOL, AN ESCALATION MATRIX AND A NAMED OUT-OF-HOURS CONTACT, WHICH MOST DO NOT.** ₹38L, 22→44 clients, 34→72 staff, rev 1.42→3.5cr, Y1 −₹6L → Y3 ₹34L. Figures illustrative, exclude GST.

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