

ONEPLUS

World over, the mobile phone market is constantly in a state of flux and is highly competitive. India is no different with many international brands vying for attention. It is one of the most popular destinations for smartphone companies with as many mobile users as the entire population of the United States. The number of smartphone users in India is estimated to increase to about 442 million by 2022. The luxury segment with feature-rich handsets priced at over ₹50,000 – will see the biggest jump. OnePlus has amply understood this and all their product offerings are of high quality with premium features but at reasonable prices.

Market

The electronics industry had its emergence as a key driver of the global economy towards the beginning of the 20th century. Mobile communication came to the fore, transforming itself as a necessity first and a luxury second. With many well-established players dominating the market, there was a hint of oligarchical intimidation for new brands, to step-up and challenge the norms. People grew up with most brands, but it

without compromise and willing to spend a little more if the pricing is justified. Today OnePlus and its vision of “Never Settle” exhibits ubiquity, with a promise to grow in alignment with customer wants. The mobile market was one of the few markets immune to economic slowdown, and it continues to grow.

Achievements

OnePlus has successfully launched thirteen flagship phones across 38 regions worldwide. Currently, OnePlus phones are sold in more than 50 countries and achieved 95% YoY growth in sales. The company grew faster than the overall segment (+66%) and remained the fastest-growing brand, driven by strong performances of both its 7 and 7T series. With OnePlus 7T and OnePlus 7T Pro, OnePlus witnessed its highest ever recorded shipment sales – 0.74 million – in Q3 of 2019. Another significant high would be the fact that over 1 million units of the OnePlus 6 phone were sold in a single month (within 22 days) in India. After OnePlus 6T was launched, the brand set a new Guinness World Record for ‘Most people unboxing simultaneously’, with 559 community members coming together for the event in Mumbai. OnePlus is also the number one premium phone in India, with a fast-growing community. The pop-up events held across 26 cities saw an attendance of over 15,000 people. By the end of 2019, OnePlus had over 5 million community members in India alone, the largest of its kind for a smartphone, in such a short period, since its launch. The brand showed its support to the Indian Government’s initiative of Make in India, by manufacturing the devices within the country. Making India the benchmark for their global products, OnePlus also launched its R&D facility in Hyderabad in 2019.

History

OnePlus was founded on 16th December 2013 by Pete Lau and Carl Pei, both formerly employed by Oppo Electronics. OnePlus became the answer to its founders’ pursuit of building a global brand in the mobile device industry. Both Pete and Carl wanted to create an android device that would answer to the actual needs of consumers, without any compromise. For a long time, users had to make choices between flagship products that were high in features but limited by quality, or devices that were built with amazing quality

is the understanding of what people seek today, that led OnePlus to become a success story. In Q3 of 2019, the Indian smartphone shipments reached a record-high of 49 million units defying the economic slowdown trends in other sectors and also became the second largest globally.

Understanding this shift in the market sentiment, paving the way for a much younger brand, does not require much speculation. The leaders at OnePlus understood that the factors that mainly influence Indians are premium quality and features at a reasonable price tag. When many major brands offered feature-rich products, extremely heavy on the pocket, this new brand offered similar features at a more justifiable pricing. Market segmentation plays a key role for any product company to gather its share. Similarly, OnePlus’s products had a target segment too, but the approach was different. The brand aimed to create a product for young adults seeking quality,

standards but low on features. And then comes the pricing perspective, which discouraged many from purchasing high-end products due to lack of affordability. The objective for the team was to build a device that was feature-rich, designed with focus on their core competencies of hardware,

OVER 1 MILLION UNITS OF ONEPLUS 6 PHONE WERE SOLD WITHIN 22 DAYS IN INDIA

and one that cost much lower than other flagships. A device that felt just right in the hands of a young adult in search of quality, at a price that could be justified. This made the company adopt the vision – Never Settle, because they didn’t want their consumers to settle for anything less than what they wanted.

Hardware is considered the most critical aspect for the success of a phone in its early years. Keeping this in mind, brilliant hardware was integrated with the right software to create the brand’s distinctiveness. Built on the Android platform, with specifications comparative to, and sometimes better, than the other flagship devices. The brand was unique with its sales and marketing strategy too. The team focused on an invitation-only and an internet-only model to cut costs. These savings were partly shared with consumers, which allowed them to keep the price of the devices low. The invite-only model allowed them



to control their inventory and cut costs of production and sales, while the online sales ensured cost savings from retailer cuts.

To be a truly customer-centric brand, OnePlus ensured that its partners were aligned with the company's philosophy. The idea was never to be a one-hit-wonder but create a global product that lasts. Since the internet offers speed, convenience, and efficiency, leveraging it to build the brand was intrinsic. Using the power of social media, its team of developers created a community and listened to what its users were saying. And that became the market research they needed in each phase [of development].

India became OnePlus's largest market, which led to the OnePlus One launch, exclusively on Amazon in 2014. Though the target market for the company was North America and Europe, India happened by chance. The huge organic growth within the country made the OnePlus team take notice of the potential of the Indian flagship smartphone market. OnePlus became a brand that changed the perspective of the consumers regarding the quality of Chinese products. The immense popularity of the brand in India subsequently resulted in expansion. Bengaluru became the headquarters for the India market, with an R&D centre in Hyderabad that followed later. Not only is India OnePlus's largest market in the world but OnePlus happens to be the top flagship phone within India, becoming a market leader with 35% market share in third quarter of 2019. (Source: Counterpoint Research India)

Product

OnePlus has one of the largest online communities with over six million members. Going the unconventional way by starting off with an invite-only sales model, the company has grown with a strong following. OnePlus One was launched on 22nd April 2014 and was immediately deemed as the '2014 flagship killer', due to its design with feature-rich offering and highly appreciated hardware. From there the brand grew with genuine appreciation, launching OnePlus 2 in 2015, which was again called the '2016 flagship killer'. With specifications comparable to other flagship phones, but at a much lower pricing, the brand cemented its status as a game-changer in the mobile industry's premium smartphone segment. During this period, the brand realised the significance of the Indian market for its growth. The popularity and the



community of OnePlus grew two-fold and made other industry players uncomfortable. Analysing the Indian market, the team decided to foray into the budget phone segment with the OnePlus X. However, this was not what the Indian consumers were looking for. OnePlus X was not unpopular by any means, and it did do good business, but the company decided to solidify their foundation by focusing on the one 'true flagship'. This led to the launch of two new phones in 2016, the OnePlus 3 and OnePlus 3T. These were the company's earliest metal unibody phones, once again offering good specifications at a comparatively low price. Sticking to the modus operandi the company launched OnePlus 5 and OnePlus 5T in 2017 and OnePlus 6 and OnePlus 6T in 2018.

In May 2019, the company did something different and launched both OnePlus 7 and OnePlus 7 Pro together at Bengaluru, New York, and London simultaneously. With the OnePlus 7 Pro, the brand marked its entry into the ultra-premium segment, and these launches immediately captured 26% of the market. (Source: Counterpoint Research). In congruence to India's focus on localisation, the new R&D facility at Hyderabad will work on innovation in line with the Make in India strategy. OnePlus also began its research in 5G and joined forces with Qualcomm for its development.

Recent Developments

In September 2018, the company also announced its plans to venture into the smart TVs market with the OnePlus TV. This became a reality in September 2019 when the brand officially forayed into a new category with the India-first launch of the OnePlus TV along with the OnePlus 7T. The OnePlus 7T Pro was launched in London in October 2019. Propelled by the success of its latest launches, OnePlus has emerged as one of the fastest growing brands in India. More recently, OnePlus unveiled its first ever concept phone, the OnePlus Concept One, at CES 2020. The OnePlus Concept One is the first phone ever to use colour-shifting glass technology (electrochromic glass technology), allowing it to change transparency and giving it an 'invisible camera.' The device marks a breakthrough exploration in smartphone CMF (colour, material, finish) design and lays the foundation for future smartphones with radically new designs and capabilities. The device was designed in collaboration with McLaren and drew from the brand's unparalleled design ethos and approach.

Promotion

OnePlus is a brand that is built on the strength of its products and the community. Always being vocal about listening to the community, OnePlus is focused on delivering a product that would make a difference to its user. The brand's focus is not to be the first, but to be the best, by creating a product of excellence, leveraging the social connect it has with its community members. Between 2017 to 2018 the legendary Indian actor Amitabh Bachchan was associated with the brand. More recently, 'Iron Man', Robert Downey Jr endorsed

the brand, for its values. The Guinness World Record set in Mumbai for the most unboxing is part of the promotional campaign that involves the community deeply. The pop-up stores, which see participation of close to 15,000 people have become a major hit across the globe. The #shotononeplus had the National Geographic magazine release its first ever cover shot taken on the OnePlus 7 Pro. Harper's Bazaar and GQ followed suit, in addition to the many influencers and photography enthusiasts, part of the OnePlus community. OnePlus has also recently partnered with Netflix to create an HDR supported immersive experience on the OnePlus 7 Pro. The Back to College campaign, the Tic Tac Share & Win campaign and the OnePlus X Snapchat Diwali campaign focused on the much younger community members.

To further their engagement with the larger community, OnePlus hosted the first edition of the OnePlus Music Festival, a first of its kind, multi-genre music festival in India that brought together some of the best national and international artists. Headlined by Katy Perry and Dua Lipa with performances by Amit Trivedi, Ritviz, The Local Train and Aswekeepsearching, this event, witnessed by over 25,000 attendees created a niche space for its community and music enthusiasts to come together on a different platform to see their favourite acts and discover new music. The brand unveiled the OnePlus Red Cable Club in December 2019 to celebrate six years of OnePlus as an act of gratitude to its community for their continued support over the years. As a part of this programme, OnePlus users are offered exclusive benefits and experiences. The name for this new initiative was inspired by the distinctive red charging cable that has always set OnePlus users apart from the crowd.

Brand Values

OnePlus is a brand that speaks for its customer, recognising their needs and offering them something that is just perfect. The Never Settle vision of the brand emphasises on this philosophy. The founders Pete Lau and Carl Pei created the brand with a vision to have an Android device that is simple, feature-rich, with best-in-class specifications, and light on the pocket. OnePlus stands out to its users worldwide due to this unique offering. Launching only two phones per year, is a brand strategy that reflects on the commitment to quality. By creating a product of excellence, the brand adds value to its customers' needs for an ideal flagship smartphone.

Things you didn't know about ONEPLUS

- * The founders of OnePlus communicate directly with the fans of the brand through the community forums and even on Twitter
- * OnePlus was the first phone to be deemed 'flagship-killer', due its amazing impact within the premium phone market
- * OnePlus uses the OxygenOS, a customised version of the Android OS

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