

## **About the Interviewee**

When given a chance to interview a thought leader in the social media space, I picked **Shubhneet Jain**. We worked in the same company in the year 2018 but our domains were completely different. I always knew about him as a star performer of the marketing team in Times Internet - Internet company of India's most renowned media house Times of India similar to the New York Times. This was the first time got the opportunity to talk to him and understand the nitty-gritty of his work and thoughts on how he achieved so much at a such young age.



**Work Background:** Shubhneet is currently working in FinTech space i.e., an insurance aggregator startup - Yalla Insure in Dubai as Associate Marketing Director Marketing and Sales. At an age of 26, he heads the entire marketing and sales of the company including the online and offline marketing operations. Yalla Insure is a digital company where the customer can buy insurance digitally without any hassle to visit offices. As the digital presence is the main business model, therefore all the operations and marketing channels mostly contribute to the acquisition and retention of customers.

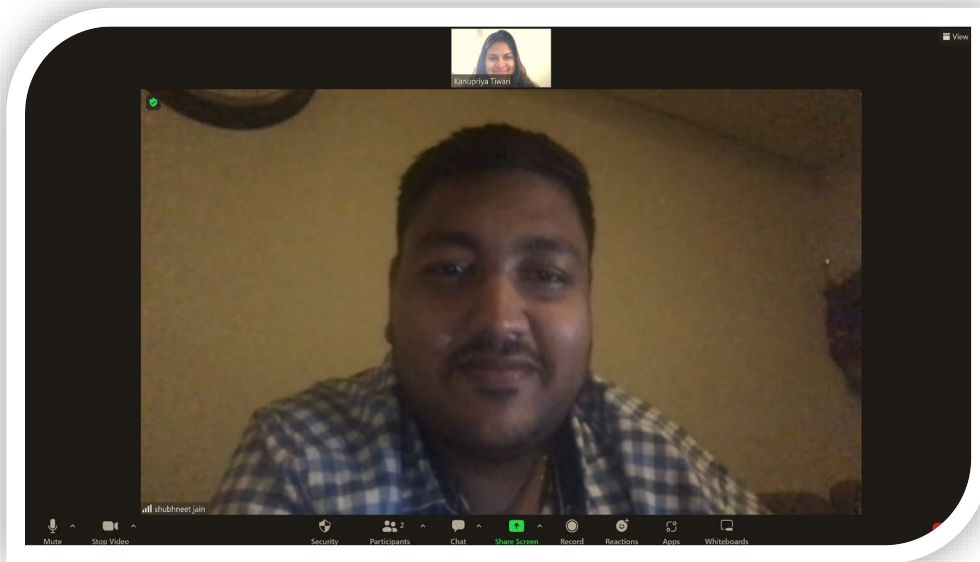


He started his career in 2017 as a digital marketing executive at Cognizant where he worked for clients such as Google and Samsung for managing their advertising business. In 2018, he worked in Times

Internet as the Community Manager and handled the social media operations as well. In 2020, pursued his Masters' from the University of Birmingham and worked for one year as a Marketing Manager in Boba Bar - London, United Kingdom. Apart from his job, he has started his own digital agency High Nova for advertisement and managing social handles.

**Beyond Work:** Shubhneet is an adventurous person and loves traveling. He has visited 40 countries and aims to travel to 5-10 countries by next year. After seeing the Indian, European, and Middle-east work styles and cultures he wants to have more global exposure. As he said, "Settling at a single place is not my cup of tea."

## **Summary of Our Interaction**



### **1) Find your Professional Passion**

He did a very generic/simple undergrad course from a very reputed college in India where his classes were not more than 3-4 hours. After his classes, he used to explore multiple restaurants and started his own Instagram channel v\_for\_veggie. He has worked on this account and gathered huge number of followers which resulted in invitations from different restaurants where restaurants paid him for food tasting, posting food images on account and posting a genuine review about the restaurant – food and ambience. Eventually, he started involving himself in the F&B business where he bagged some freelancing projects from restaurants and handled their influencer events and social media. Therefore, during the tenure of his undergrad, he realized that Marketing is his forte and he must pursue his career in that field.

### **2) Thoughts on the Impact of COVID-19 on Social Media**

#### **Community Building and Well Connected:**

The pandemic led to a great advancement in increasing social media presence. People connected globally through Facebook messenger, Instagram calls, WhatsApp, and whatnot. Although the families were not able to reunite at festivals but social media played a major role to connect virtually. He even mentioned the communities through social media helped a lot of people to find plasma and blood donors during the pandemic surge. Thousands of lives were saved with the initiative and the strong impact of social media.

**Increase in Content Creators:**

Another trend was observed that people started pursuing their hobbies and portraying their work in social media by becoming content creators. It can be either food blogging, parenting, art, music, dance, etc. but lockdown made people channel what they were good at and definitely social media was the medium to showcase their work.

**Tech Savvy:**

The older generation also started consuming content on social media and now are becoming tech savvy due to the lockdown.

**3) Pros and Cons of social media**

**Pros:** Social media is always going through transitions. Every month there are new features, new technologies, new applications, trends, etc. Therefore, being updated and trying something new excites Shubhneet.

**Cons:** This form of marketing is quite transparent and diverse which results in a lot of negative factors as well. It can lead to addiction and mental health issues. He believes the increase in usage of social media, the lines between real and reel life have blurred. People only see the glitters of celebrities and bloggers but not the struggle they have gone through to achieve that level. He mostly worries that the young generation is becoming very superficial and away from reality. He also talked about the cyberbullying, privacy issues that are taking place nowadays and raised his concern about the dangerous content the young generation is consuming, mentioning the TikTok blackout challenge that took the lives of two young kids.

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/jul/05/tiktok-girls-dead-blackout-challenge>

**4) Given a Chance to Become Marketing Head of Instagram /TikTok, Approach for the Betterment of Product and Users**

The core value for social platforms is customer obsession, the greater number of users on the platform, the more the product will survive. If given a chance to become marketing head of these companies, he emphasized working on better AI and ML for understanding the content preference of consumers. Short videos and unique features AR driven and gamification. He is very fond of Twitter and is focused on introducing a similar concept of a trending window of hashtags that keeps on changing on a real-time basis.

**5) Advice for the Budding Professionals in Social Media**

**Trust the Process:** He encouraged to understand the process. Most of the time we tend to not like a few things for example: writing blogs or SEO but for mastering the field always be open to learning more and never say NO to any work in that particular field.

**Stay Updated:** Updated and proactive to adapt to the changes in social media. This marketing keeps on evolving so always be adaptive to understand and learn more.

**Networking:** To pursue a career in social media, he emphasized making new contacts with people in the same field for recommendations for job search and joining LinkedIn groups to stay updated with the trends and new features.

**Key Takeaways and Learnings**

Shubhneet is a very energetic, proactive, and bold person. After interacting with him I realized it's important to be open and communicative. I have learned that our career would span across multiple

decades so be courageous and do not hesitate in taking bold moves and calculated risks. I also learned how reading newsletters, case studies that give the idea to deal with real-life situations, having mentors, communities such as LinkedIn groups make you aware of what's happening in your domain, and expanding the professional network for career growth are added perks apart from hanging between jobs. Visibility and a good skillset are the key to the professional path and keep on expanding your horizons as the world is evolving day by day to have an exponential growth curve, grab the opportunities instantly coming out of your comfort zone. Thanks to Shubhneet that my interest is growing more towards user behavior and I'm inclined to uncover the mystery behind user behavior and how it leads to the selection of content of their preference. All the latest trends in disruptions such as AI, machine learning, and metaverse will be linked with social media to make it better and personalized for customers. He also made me realize that never regret the wrong decisions as mistakes and failures are the stepping stones to success. Always learn from your failures and do things with the right attitude. When I asked him are you satisfied with whatever choices he made he clearly mentioned that he must have struggled initially but those struggles helped him to become a better person and polished professional. His Mantra of life inspires me a lot: Always work the smart way not the hard way!