



Affordable Luxury in the Digital Age: A Case Study of Bella Vita Organic's Brand Building, Marketing Strategy, and Customer Engagement in the Indian Beauty and Fragrance Industry

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Abstract

The Indian beauty and personal care market has witnessed the rapid rise of digitally native, direct-to-consumer (D2C) brands that combine affordability with a perception of premium quality. Bella Vita Organic (BVO), a Gurugram-headquartered beauty and fragrance company, exemplifies this shift through its “affordable luxury” positioning, marketplace-first distribution, and technology-enabled customer engagement. This paper presents a qualitative case study of Bella Vita Organic's marketing strategy, examining its product launch practices, social media and influencer marketing, website conversion rate optimization (CRO), pricing and bundling tactics, customer segmentation, omnichannel distribution, and customer relationship management (CRM) systems. Drawing on secondary data compiled from publicly available brand communications and industry commentary, the study identifies the strategic levers that enabled BVO to scale from a modest revenue base to a reported Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) of approximately ₹250 crore by FY23, while expanding into international markets such as the UAE and North America. The findings indicate that BVO's growth is attributable less to reliance on a single hero product or influencer-driven virality, and more to a performance-marketing-first execution model anchored in marketplace optimization, tiered pricing psychology, data-driven personalization, and a multi-tier influencer funnel. The paper concludes with managerial implications for D2C and beauty-sector marketers operating in emerging markets, and outlines the limitations of a single-case, secondary-data design together with directions for future empirical research.

Keywords

affordable luxury; direct-to-consumer (D2C) marketing; brand positioning; digital marketing; conversion rate optimization; customer relationship management; Bella Vita Organic; Indian beauty industry

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, India's beauty and personal care sector has been reshaped by digitally native brands that bypass traditional retail-led growth in favour of marketplace visibility, social-media-led storytelling, and data-driven customer acquisition. Within this landscape, Bella Vita Organic has positioned itself as a brand built on “affordable luxury” — offering organic skincare and, since 2021, fragrance products that are styled and marketed in the idiom of premium international brands while remaining priced for India's aspirational middle class. The brand's trajectory, from a modest monthly revenue base to a reported turnover approaching several hundred crore rupees within a few years, raises a set of questions that are of broader relevance to marketing scholarship: how do D2C brands in emerging markets construct a credible premium identity without premium pricing; which channel and pricing strategies most effectively convert browsing into purchase in price-sensitive markets; and how do such brands sustain customer loyalty once initial novelty fades.

This paper addresses these questions through a focused case study of Bella Vita Organic, synthesizing publicly available brand communications, product-launch practices, and reported performance indicators into a structured marketing analysis. The intent is not to evaluate BVO normatively, but to use its documented practices as an illustrative lens on contemporary D2C marketing strategy in an emerging-market context, with implications that extend to comparable beauty, wellness, and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the product launch, social media marketing, and digital advertising strategies that have driven Bella Vita Organic's brand visibility and customer engagement.
2. To evaluate the brand's pricing architecture, marketplace strategy, and website conversion rate optimization (CRO) techniques in driving customer acquisition and sales conversion.
3. To profile Bella Vita Organic's customer segments and assess its omnichannel distribution and geographic expansion strategy across domestic and international markets.
4. To identify the operational and marketing challenges faced by the brand, the strategic solutions adopted, and the resulting managerial implications for D2C and beauty-sector marketers.

3. Conceptual Background

The strategic practices examined in this study intersect with several established streams of marketing literature. First, the concept of “masstige” or “affordable luxury” marketing describes brand strategies that transfer the symbolic cues of premium goods — packaging, storytelling, and sensory cues — onto mass-market price points, thereby widening access to perceived prestige without diluting brand equity. Second, the D2C and performance-marketing literature emphasizes data-driven customer acquisition, marketplace optimization, and the use of short-form video and influencer ecosystems as substitutes for traditional above-the-line advertising. Third, conversion rate optimization (CRO) and digital experience research highlights the role of personalization, simplified checkout flows, and continuous experimentation (A/B testing) in reducing friction along the purchase funnel. Finally, relationship marketing and customer relationship management (CRM) theory underscores the

importance of segmentation, loyalty programmes, and replenishment-based retention strategies in sustaining customer lifetime value once initial acquisition costs have been incurred. This study draws loosely on these frameworks to organize and interpret Bella Vita Organic's documented marketing practices, rather than to test formal hypotheses derived from them.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, single-case research design, which is well suited to exploring a contemporary phenomenon — D2C affordable-luxury branding — within its real-world context. Data were compiled from secondary sources, including brand-published content, publicly reported business metrics, and industry commentary on Bella Vita Organic's marketing and growth strategy. The analysis follows a thematic approach, in which recurring strategic themes (product launches, social media campaigns, advertising, CRO, pricing, segmentation, distribution, and retention) were identified, categorized, and interpreted against the conceptual background outlined above. As the study relies on secondary, brand-disclosed and brand-adjacent data rather than independently audited financial statements or primary survey data, the findings should be read as descriptive and interpretive rather than statistically generalizable; this limitation is discussed further in Section 8.

5. Company Overview: Bella Vita Organic

Bella Vita Organic began as a skincare brand emphasizing organic and natural formulations before diversifying into the fragrance category in 2021. The brand is headquartered in Gurugram, Haryana, and has since grown into a multi-category beauty and wellness company spanning skincare, personal care, and luxury perfumes. Its fragrance line, in particular, has been positioned as an accessible alternative to international luxury perfume houses, with products formulated for longevity (8–10 hours) and Indian olfactory preferences, sourced from suppliers in France, Spain, and Italy, and certified by the International Fragrance Association (IFRA). By FY23 the brand reported a Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) of approximately ₹250 crore, with an internally stated ambition to reach ₹750 crore in revenue by FY25.

6. Findings and Discussion

6.1 Product Launch and Pre-Launch Strategy

Bella Vita Organic structures its product launches around three recurring tactics. First, teaser campaigns and sneak peeks — typically short-form videos and Instagram stories that reveal packaging or key ingredients without disclosing full product details — are used to build anticipation ahead of a formal launch. Second, the brand collaborates with influencers and celebrities to co-create or endorse new lines, leveraging their existing audiences and credibility within the beauty space; limited-edition releases tied to such collaborations have reportedly sold out quickly, creating purchase urgency. Third, rather than launching single products in isolation, BVO frequently introduces bundles or curated skincare kits, which increase the perceived value of a purchase while simultaneously raising average order value (AOV).

6.2 Social Media Marketing and Campaign Architecture

Social media, particularly Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, forms the centre of Bella Vita Organic's brand-building activity. Three campaign formats illustrate the brand's approach. The #BellaGlow campaign mobilized influencer-generated before-and-after content to demonstrate product efficacy and encouraged user-generated participation through a branded hashtag. The #GoNaturalWithBellaVita campaign took an educational approach, using posts, videos, and infographics — often developed in collaboration with dermatologists — to communicate the risks of synthetic ingredients and the rationale for natural formulations. The #SelfCareWithBella campaign tied the brand to the broader self-care and wellness movement, using calming visual and audio cues to position BVO products as accessible indulgence. Collectively, these campaigns indicate a deliberate mix of social-proof-driven, educational, and lifestyle-oriented content designed to serve different stages of the customer journey.

6.3 Paid Advertising and Retargeting

BVO's paid social strategy centres on three mechanisms: shoppable advertisements on Instagram and Facebook that reduce purchase friction by enabling in-ad transactions; influencer-led sponsored content, which is reported to outperform brand-authored advertising on engagement and conversion metrics due to its perceived authenticity; and dynamic retargeting campaigns aimed at recovering abandoned carts through personalized discounts and stock-scarcity messaging. The brand's 2024 AI-driven "Smell Good, Feel Good" personalization initiative, which tailored landing-page recommendations to individual visitors, is reported to have produced an approximately 15 percent uplift in first-time visitor conversion, illustrating the increasing role of algorithmic personalization in the brand's acquisition funnel.

6.4 Website Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)

On its owned D2C website, Bella Vita Organic applies three principal CRO techniques: AI-powered personalized product recommendations based on browsing history; a one-click checkout flow designed to minimize cart abandonment; and continuous A/B testing of product pages, landing pages, and calls-to-action. These practices reflect a broader industry shift toward treating the D2C website as a continuously optimized conversion system rather than a static digital storefront.

6.5 Pricing Architecture and Marketplace Strategy

A distinctive feature of Bella Vita Organic's growth narrative is its departure from the influencer-virality-led playbook common to many Indian D2C brands. Instead, the brand pursued an Amazon-first marketplace strategy, optimizing product listings for high-intent search terms such as "long lasting perfume" and "affordable luxury fragrance" to capture buyers further along the purchase funnel rather than relying primarily on awareness-stage traffic. This was paired with a bundle and entry-price strategy: rather than leading with premium-priced stock-keeping units (SKUs) above ₹999, the brand introduced low-friction trial price points (₹199–₹299) and combination kits, which lowered the barrier to first purchase and supported repeat-purchase behaviour. Rapid SKU expansion — launching multiple product variants in parallel rather than over-optimizing a single hero product — allowed the brand to test demand at scale and occupy greater shelf space across marketplaces. Pricing for the broader portfolio is reported to centre on a ₹299–₹899 band, intended to

deliver premium sensory cues (packaging, fragrance composition) without prestige-level pricing.

6.6 Customer Segmentation and Demographic Profile

Bella Vita Organic's primary customer base sits within the business-to-consumer (B2C) space, with Gen Z and Millennial consumers (approximately 18–35 years) reported to account for roughly 70 percent of revenue. The brand's positioning has also shifted from a female-first orientation toward broader gender appeal, with male customers reported to represent approximately 45 percent of the customer base, a shift attributed largely to the growth of the luxury perfume range. Income targeting centres on aspirational middle-class households (annual income of approximately ₹5–15 lakh) seeking premium-feel products without prestige pricing. A secondary segment of skincare enthusiasts and conscious consumers — typically metropolitan, well-educated, and highly active on Instagram and YouTube — values ingredient transparency and Ayurvedic formulation claims. A further fast-growing cohort identified by the brand is a “gift-giver” segment (approximately 25–45 years), responding to curated festival and corporate gifting sets following the brand's identification of an organized-gifting gap in the market.

6.7 Distribution Footprint and Geographic Reach

Bella Vita Organic operates an omnichannel distribution model combining its own D2C website, major e-commerce marketplaces (including Amazon and Flipkart), and a growing offline footprint of kiosks and shop-in-shop formats in malls and retail chains. By 2025, Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities are reported to account for roughly 55 percent of total sales, reflecting deep penetration beyond India's metropolitan centres, even as metros such as Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, and Bengaluru continue to supply high transaction volumes. Emerging urban centres such as Jaipur, Lucknow, and Ahmedabad are identified as the fastest-growing markets within the brand's “masstige” category. Internationally, the brand sells through Amazon Global into the United Arab Emirates and North America, where diaspora demand and clean-beauty positioning are reported to contribute approximately 12 percent of annual turnover, with stated ambitions to expand into Southeast Asia.

6.8 Customer Acquisition and Retention Architecture

Bella Vita Organic is reported to allocate approximately 25–30 percent of revenue to marketing, reflecting an aggressive growth-investment posture typical of venture-backed D2C brands. Acquisition activity has shifted toward short-form video commerce on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts, supported by a tiered influencer funnel that combines mega-influencers for reach with large numbers of nano-influencers for authentic, conversion-oriented content. On the retention side, the brand operates a CRM system that segments customers by “Beauty Profile” and purchase cadence, powering a loyalty programme (“Bella Rewards”) and personalized replenishment messaging via WhatsApp. A sample-to-full-size cross-sell programme — including perfume miniatures with skincare orders — is used to migrate single-category buyers into multi-category customers. These retention mechanisms are reported to have contributed to an approximately 30 percent year-on-year increase in customer lifetime value (LTV).

6.9 Challenges and Strategic Responses

Despite its growth, Bella Vita Organic has faced several operational and strategic challenges. Rising customer acquisition costs (CAC) and the difficulty of efficiently converting paid-advertising leads have placed pressure on marketing efficiency. Scaling an offline presence proved difficult given entrenched retail buying habits and competition for shelf space. Early marketplace selling also limited the brand's direct control over customer data and targeting precision. In the fragrance category specifically, the brand competes against established international players such as Calvin Klein, Gucci, and Dior, and must continually educate Indian consumers — many of whom are unfamiliar with niche fragrance categories — on product differentiation. In response, the brand has pursued niche product focus, granular customer segmentation (using platforms such as MoEngage), influencer-led education and content marketing, pre-launch demand-building, and a multichannel distribution strategy intended to balance reach with margin and data control.

6.10 Reported Performance Indicators

Publicly cited performance indicators illustrate the scale of Bella Vita Organic's growth: monthly revenue is reported to have grown from approximately ₹25 lakh to ₹45 crore within eighteen months of the brand's entry into the fragrance category; by FY23 the brand reported a Gross Merchandise Value of approximately ₹250 crore; and the brand has stated an ambition to reach ₹750 crore in revenue by FY25. While these figures are brand-reported rather than independently audited, they are broadly consistent with the scale of marketing investment, SKU expansion, and distribution growth documented elsewhere in this case.

7. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

The Bella Vita Organic case offers several implications for marketing theory and practice. Theoretically, it illustrates how “affordable luxury” or *masstige* positioning can be operationalized not merely through pricing, but through a coordinated bundle of sensory cues (packaging, fragrance longevity), narrative cues (comparison-driven messaging against international luxury brands), and channel cues (marketplace and retail presence) that jointly construct perceived premiumness at accessible price points. Managerially, the case suggests that D2C brands in price-sensitive, high-growth markets may benefit from prioritizing marketplace and search-intent optimization alongside, rather than instead of, social-media brand building; from using low-friction entry price points and bundling to accelerate trial before introducing premium SKUs; from investing early in CRM infrastructure and tiered influencer networks to manage CAC as paid-media costs rise; and from treating Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities as primary growth markets rather than secondary ones. The brand's use of AI-driven personalization and WhatsApp-based replenishment further suggests that retention technology is becoming as central to D2C competitiveness as acquisition-stage advertising.

8. Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to several limitations. First, it relies on a single case, which limits the generalizability of findings to other brands, categories, or markets; comparative multi-case designs would strengthen external validity. Second, the data are secondary and largely brand-disclosed, meaning that performance metrics (revenue, GMV, conversion uplifts, LTV growth)

could not be independently verified through audited financial statements or primary data collection, and may reflect selective or promotional disclosure. Third, the study does not incorporate primary consumer research (e.g., surveys or interviews with BVO customers), and therefore cannot empirically validate the consumer motivations attributed to different segments. Future research could address these limitations through comparative case studies of multiple D2C beauty brands, primary survey-based testing of the masstige positioning construct among Indian consumers, and longitudinal analysis of customer lifetime value using transaction-level data.

9. Conclusion

Bella Vita Organic's growth illustrates a distinctive pathway within India's D2C beauty and fragrance landscape — one driven less by single-product virality than by coordinated execution across marketplace optimization, tiered pricing, omnichannel distribution, and data-driven retention. By combining affordable price architecture with premium sensory and narrative cues, the brand has constructed a credible “affordable luxury” identity that resonates with aspirational, value-conscious consumers across India's metro and non-metro markets, while extending into international diaspora markets. For scholars, the case offers a grounded illustration of masstige branding and performance-marketing theory in an emerging-market context; for practitioners, it offers a transferable template for building scalable, technology-enabled D2C brands in price-sensitive categories. As Bella Vita Organic pursues further international expansion and category diversification, its continued performance will offer a useful longitudinal case for future marketing research.

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