



Digital native BhaDiPa engages young people in news and current affairs through live stream town halls and infotainment formats

Bharatiya Digital Party (BhaDiPa) is an Indian content creation company with multiple brands. It makes digital video content in the language of Marathi across comedy and entertainment, travel and lifestyle, and news and infotainment.

OPPORTUNITY

BhaDiPa wanted to produce content to help Marathi-speaking youth more easily engage with news and politics leading up to the 2019 Indian parliamentary elections. It saw an opportunity to create a YouTube news and infotainment channel called Vishay Khol (which translates to 'in-depth topic') and experiment with a live stream 'town hall' format to help connect young voters with politicians.

APPROACH

BhaDiPa built up the team, developed and launched the [Vishay Khol channel](#), and published a new live stream 'town hall' series. The success of the series captured the attention of a major broadcaster who replayed it on TV. Vishay Khol then expanded the offerings on its YouTube channel to broaden its audience further.

The centerpiece of the new Vishay Khol channel was an [innovative series called "LokManch"](#) ('people's platform'), which would include live and online content. The team planned six live town hall events, where leaders from different political parties would be interviewed prior to the 2019 elections. The live events were organized for different locations around Maharashtra, and would also be streamed via YouTube. A combination of on-the-ground research and digital polling would be used to help create a suite of video formats to appeal to youth across Maharashtra.

Establishing the brand: New creators with a knowledge of politics and journalism were hired. The team built up a library of three videos (a vox-pop, case study, and teaser for the "LokManch" series) to launch the Vishay Khol channel. They leveraged existing audiences by creating a video for BhaDiPa's main YouTube channel (which had 350K+ subscribers) with a call to action to visit Vishay Khol. This helped Vishay Khol gain 35K subscribers within a week.

Driving audience engagement: Prior to the first "LokManch" town hall event the team conducted an online poll in which they had the audience vote on questions to ask during the event. The shortlisted questions were put forward at the live event, in addition to screened questions from the live stream audience.

Expanding the audience: To reach more viewers, the "LokManch" live streams were edited into segments and published on social media platforms. Highlights were played on other BhaDiPa YouTube channels directing people to the full video on Vishay Khol. The live stream and edited videos were subtitled in English and Hindi.

Cross-platform publication: The success of this first event caught the attention of a prominent TV broadcaster in the

Marathi language, ABP Majha, and the live stream was edited into 30-minute segments and aired on TV. Because of this, Vishay Khol was able to reach more deeply into areas that had limited or no internet — ultimately, it reached millions of Maharashtrians across TV and social media.

Broadening channel focus: Beyond the "LokManch" town hall series Vishay Khol wanted to expand its content offerings, so it started to include more current affairs and infotainment on the channel. The team also experimented with a new explainer format for the state elections and revised their content strategy to include branded corporate social responsibility campaigns. Staff were given additional training for these new types of video storytelling. Concurrently, Vishay Khol evolved the political 'town hall' format into an online-only 'ask an expert' live stream, where guests from different fields, which were selected by looking at trending topics (e.g., economics), answered audience questions.

Building collabs: In addition, Vishay Khol forged relationships with other platforms and creators to create meaningful content. For example, the team collaborated with YouTube creator Prajakta Koli for a video about [AIDS awareness](#). They have also formed partnerships with policy experts, TV broadcasters such as ABP, and other YouTube creators and influencers.

RESULTS

BhaDiPa successfully launched a new YouTube channel (Vishay Khol), which helped engage young people in politics and significantly grow its audience.

- **Reached millions of Maharashtrians** during the lead up to the elections.
- **Over 93K new subscribers** to the channel.
- **220K+ hours of watch time** for content on the new channel.

LEARNINGS

Lean into your current audiences: If you have existing audiences on other platforms or channels, find ways to promote your new YouTube channel to them. For example, prior to the launch of Vishay Khol, the team created a video with a cliffhanger ending and posted it on BhaDiPa's most popular existing channel — if audiences wanted to find out the ending they had to head over to Vishay Khol. This

strategy helped Vishay Khol drive traffic and grow subscriber numbers.

Keep experimenting with content: If your channel becomes stagnant, then your audience will look for new places to consume content. A way to avoid this is to keep evolving offerings. While BhaDiPa started with one type of content on its new channel (political live streams) it quickly grew to incorporate other formats and topics — and it plans to keep evolving with its audience well into the future.

Maximize your reach with multiple platforms and tools:

You've got a much better chance of reaching more viewers if you can engage people in different ways. For example, you can post live streams on YouTube then clip that footage into evergreen content for publication across other platforms (e.g., YouTube, broadcast TV). Vishay Khol went one step further and held physical events to coincide with its live streams. But if you can't host a physical event, don't worry — you can still give your audience the sense of being in the room by implementing live chat.

“ With this project, we wanted to create a destination for Marathi youth to engage with politics and current affairs beyond the mainstream media conversations. We also wanted to create a brand that would give feed-based, fact-checked video content on current affairs and hot topics. ”

***Paula McGlynn,
Co-Founder of BhaDiPa***