

Solution to encourage Solo Attendees for Live Events

Launch a solution to encourage customers to try attending live events solo and highlight the opportunity to meet new people, socialise and network in such events.

Version 1, July 2024

Target Release: October 2024

Product Manager: Vojaswin A P

Engineering Lead: Jane Doe

Designer: John Doe

Document Status: [pending review by engineering]



Problem Definition

What is the problem?

Though users are discovering interesting live events to attend in their locality, they are hesitant to attend the event alone due to social anxiety, perceived boredom without company of people (friends and family) to share the experience, fear of judgement etc.

Who is facing the problem?

1) Users who do not have company to attend a live event they are interested in because of any of the following reasons

- They have shifted recently to a new city for work and yet to make new connections
- Their friends and family have other personal commitments and are not able to spend time with them on the event date or they do not share the same interest for the event, etc.

2) Users who are interested in experiencing events solo and meeting new people for the first time but need a push to make them come out of their comfort zones.

What is the business value that will be unlocked by solving the problem?

BookMyShow (BMS) generates significant income from live events through ticket sale commissions, convenience fees collected for each booking, and revenue sharing with partnered event organisers.

Encouraging more people to attend live events solo can **increase ticket sales and registrations**, thereby **boosting** the company's **revenue** from live events.

How will the target users benefit if the problem is solved?

- 1) Users become independent and need not wait for their friends and family to try events they like.
- 2) Users will be comforted by knowing that there are other solo attendees in the event as well.
- 3) The live events also serve as a stage for forming new connections with shared interests

Why is it urgent to solve this problem now?

In the [2023 year end summary](#), BMS reported that more than 13.5 Mn Users attended offline live events and among them close to 950,000 users were attending solo (7%).

This clearly highlights the growing trends of solo attendees for live events. It would be beneficial for BMS to latch on to this trend quickly and push users to not wait for company and attend the events solo

Validation of the problem

An article published by the [Journal of Customer Research \(JCR\)](#) reveals that the primary reason people hesitate to attend events alone is due to the **social stigma** and **fear of being judged**. The second major reason is the **desire to share the experience** with friends and family.

| Top Reasons | Approx. Percentage | Comments |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Social Stigma and Anxiety | 40% | Many popular articles and blogs [mentioned in Appendix] cite social stigma and fear of judgement as the top reasons inhibiting people from attending events alone. |
| Missing Out on Shared Experiences | 35% | |
| Practical Challenges | 25% | Other Challenges like Travel and Safety are common but not the top reason for opting out on going alone |

This is further substantiated by following multiple public threads and opinions on platforms like Reddit and Quora.

One Reddit user on a [thread](#) discussing why people fear going out alone stated:

"As someone with social anxiety and an introvert, I guess, it's seen as bad in society going alone somewhere."

Similarly, a Quora user, responding to a [question](#) about attending events alone, shared:

"I'm sure some do enjoy going alone but I don't think it's common. Cheering on your favourite team or rocking out to your favourite band probably isn't going to be as much fun all alone as it would be with at least one other person."

Goals

- 1) Validate the hypothesis that breaking the stigma around attending events solo, coupled with a slight nudge, will increase interest in solo attendance.
- 2) Determine the number of people interested in attending events with the intention of meeting new people.

Non-Goals

- 1) Collection feedback and testimonials of the overall experience from the solo attendees are not in scope. In this phase focus is only on getting potential solo attendees to book the event.

Understanding the target audience

| Demographics: 30 Million People in 650+ cities | |
|--|-------|
| Age | Split |
| 24-30 | 48% |
| 18-24 | 28% |
| Others | 24% |



Target Segment: We will be targeting **working-class youths aged between 23 - 30** living in metro cities (Bangalore, Mumbai etc) for the following reasons

- While live events are gaining popularity in smaller towns, **Tier 1 cities still dominate this market.**
- Live events attract both college students and the young working class. However, **college students**, being part of established communities, are **less likely to attend events alone.**
- In contrast, young **working professionals** who move to new cities for work are often seeking new connections and ways to spend their time, making them more likely to attend events solo.

User Personas

| | |
|--|---|
|  |  |
| Name: Dia, 24, Female | Name: Farhan, 26, Male |
| Bio: Dia is a Graphic Designer who recently got a new job and shifted to Bangalore from Delhi. She likes to run for leisure and is a big time football enthusiast. | Bio: Farhan is a Banker and has spent all his life in Mumbai right from childhood. He likes cooking and trying new recipes from YouTube during weekends |
| Unmet Needs: Being new in town and not having much connections in Bangalore, She is extremely bored on the weekends with no one to socialise with. She recently noticed on BookMyShow that a ISL Football league match is happening in Bangalore and wants to go. But she is afraid that she will not enjoy it if she goes alone and is thinking of watching it on TV. | Unmet Needs: One of his two closest friends with whom he grew up moved abroad for studies and the other friend got married recently. Farhan decides to spend this time trying out new activities in the city. One day, he noticed in BookMyShow that a new pastry workshop is happening near his home but he thinks he might be an odd one out if he is alone in the workshop |
| Goal: She wishes to meet people who share similar interests and gain connections in the town | Goal: He wishes to try activities by himself but he needs a final push to try it out alone as he has not done it before |
| Key Value: New Friendship and Connections | Key Value: Embrace trying out new activities in the city by himself |

Solution

User research indicates that the **primary challenge** to address is the **psychological barrier associated with the stigma of attending events alone**. This barrier can be overcome by demonstrating that many others are also willing and open to attend events solo. Additionally, providing a platform for solo attendees to connect with each other would enhance their chances of socialising and networking, leading to a more positive experience.

Proposed Solution: **Soulo Events: For all the indie souls in the city!**

Key Features

i) New Section in Live Events Page

- A dedicated section on the Live Events page specifically for solo attendees.
- This section highlights the benefits of attending events alone, such as personal growth, independence, and the opportunity to meet new people.

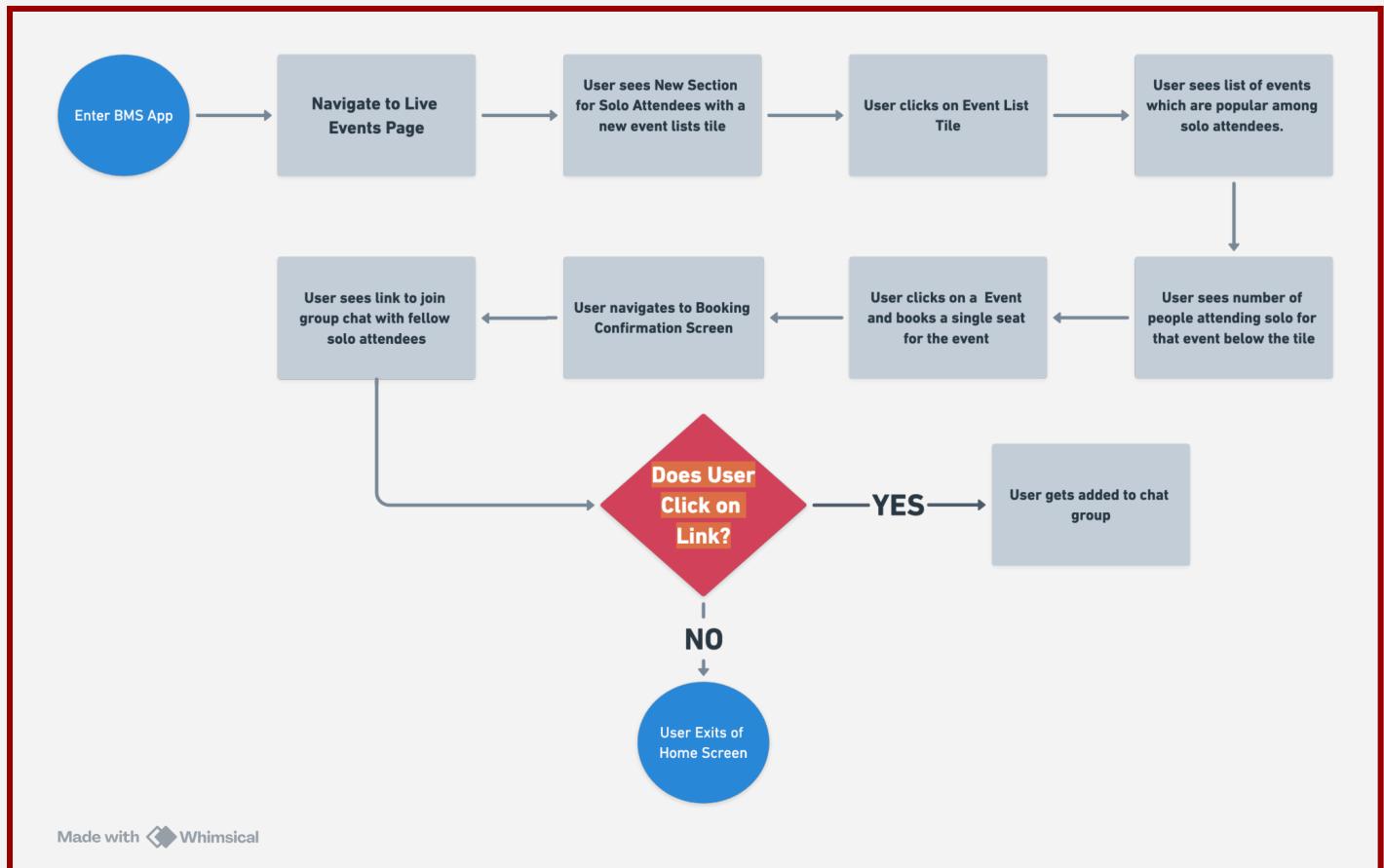
ii) Highlighting Popular Solo Events

- The section lists events that have been popular among solo attendees in the past and present.
- Each event banner prominently displays the number of solo registrations, creating a sense of community and encouraging more solo attendees.

iii) Group Chat for Solo Attendees

- A new link for solo attendees to join a group chat associated with their chosen event.
- This group chat allows solo attendees to interact, share plans, and coordinate their outing together, making the experience more enjoyable and less intimidating.

User Journey ([WHIMSICAL LINK](#))



Prioritised Features for Phase 1 (FIGMA PROTOTYPE)

i) New section in Live Events screen highlighting the benefits of attending events alone

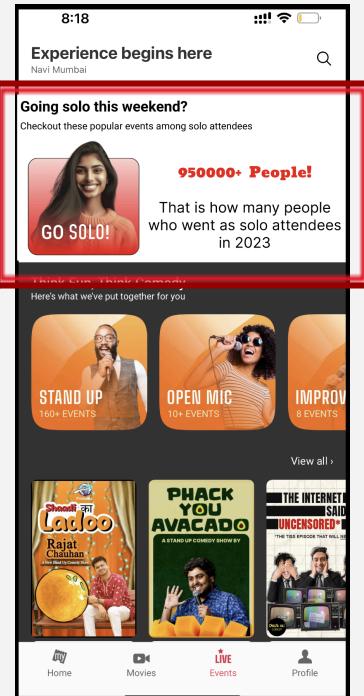
Customer Experience:

- As a user when I navigate to the live events screen I should see a new section with the banner “**Going Solo this weekend?**”
- The Section should include a tile which on clicking should show me the list of events popular among solo attendees in the present and past.
- Beside the tile, I should see multiple facts highlighting the benefits of trying out going to live events alone.

Technical Acceptance Criteria

- The Feature should be behind a toggle and available only for certain identified users (User List to be shared by Data Team)
- The facts must slide and change every 3 seconds.

Key Value Generated: Normalising going out to events alone (Breaks Stigma)



ii) New text under events denoting count of people are attending the event solo

Customer Experience:

- As a User when I click on the tile under the solo events section, I should navigate to a page listing all events popular among solo attendees.
- Under each event, a text should be available informing how many solo attendees have booked for the event currently or in the past.

Technical Acceptance Criteria

- The **Events listed should have at least one solo attendee**
- The **Events should be listed in descending order of number of solo attendees**.
- The **Text denoting number of solo attendees should be available below the event only if the user has navigated through the solo attendees section**

Key Value Generated: Awareness of popularity of solo attendees (Breaks Stigma)



iii) Link to join a group chat for all solo attendees of the event

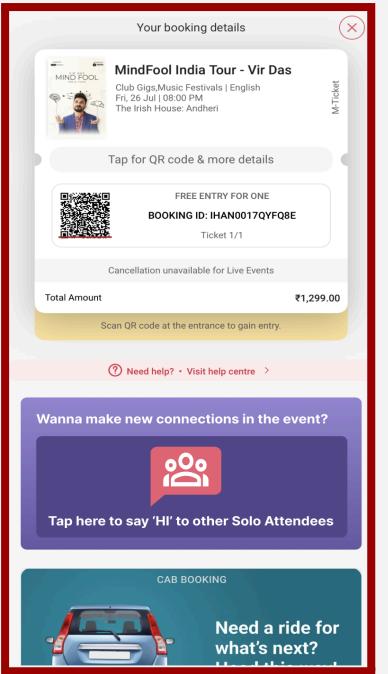
Customer Experience:

- Once the user has booked a single ticket for the event and navigated to the ticket confirmation page, the User should see a new section to join a chat group to connect with all solo attendees of the event.
- Clicking on the icon should add the user to a group chat through which they can socialise with fellow solo attendees.

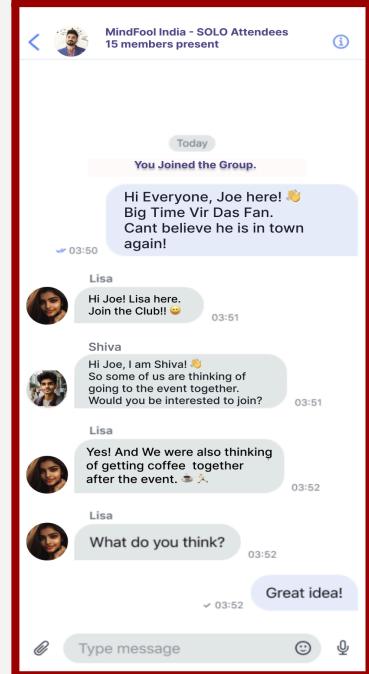
Technical Acceptance Criteria

- Navigation to the external chat group must happen within 3 seconds of the user clicking the link
- For Safety concerns, no details other than the username of the user must be shared with the rest of the members in the chat group.

Key Value Generated: Ease up the process of socialising and networking with people



(Ticket confirmation screen)



(New Group Chat Page for solo attendees)

Launch Readiness

Key Milestones in Phase 1 (5th August 2024 - 10th Oct 2024)

| Phases\Week | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W5 | W6 | W7 | W8 | W9 | W10 |
|-----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Data | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design | | | | | | | | | | |
| Development | | | | | | | | | | |
| QA Testing | | | | | | | | | | |
| Staging Release | | | | | | | | | | |
| NFR Testing | | | | | | | | | | |
| UAT Testing | | | | | | | | | | |
| Prod Release | | | | | | | | | | |

Week 1 starting on: 5th August 2024
Staging Release Date: 19th September 2024 (Tentative)
Production Release Date: 8th Oct 2024 (Tentative)

Success Metrics

1) Increase % of Solo Attendees to 10% by 2025 (North Star Metric)

The live event market in India is expected to grow at a CAGR of 17% [\[Source\]](#).

Let us take the number of event attendees to grow at ~12% (Adjusting for inflation and Repeat Users).

We are targeting to increase the % of solo attendees from 7% to 10%.

| Year | No of live event attendees | % of Solo Event Attendees | No of Solo Event Attendees |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2023 Report | 13.5 Mn | 7% | 950,000 |
| 2024 Goal | 15.1 Mn | 8% | 1,208,000 |
| 2025 Goal | 17 Mn* (calc with 12% CAGR) | 10% | 1,700,000 |

2) Increase Number of users attending live events solo for the first time (L1 Metric)

Many people are hesitant to attend events solo if they haven't done so before. Since our feature aims to eliminate this barrier, it is crucial to monitor the cohort of first-time attendees. *[Current data needs to be analysed to set a goal for this metric.]*

3) % of Users clicking the link to join group chat (L2 Metric)

This metric will determine how many people view live events as an opportunity to connect with new people. This data will be valuable for developing features in subsequent phases. *[Current data needs to be analysed to set a goal for this metric.]*

Technical Metrics and GuardRails

i) The Client side **UI performance** of the new features introduced must be **within agreed SLAs**

- Navigation to new pages introduced < 1 sec
- First Contentful Paint (FCP) < 1 sec
- Time to Interactive (TTI) < 3 secs

ii) Performance of **APIs** has to **meet required benchmarks** accommodative of expected increase in user count.

iii) Any **PII** collected has to be maintained with protocols **compliant** with "**The India Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023**" (**DPDPA**)

Risks & Mitigations

| Risks | Mitigation |
|---|---|
| Opportunity Cost: Introducing the New Solo Events Section comes at the cost of promoting other happening events in the city. This can cut down status quo group bookings . | The New User journey will be behind a feature toggle and available to only certain users. Rest of the users will see the regular events being promoted |
| Data Leak Risk: By Bringing users to a group chat filled with strangers, we risk exposing PII data to a larger group | The Group Chat should only expose only the username of the user to others. All other data is kept confidential. |

Open Questions

i) Should we build an in-house chat service or outsource it to a third-party provider? If we outsource, which company should we choose (e.g., Twilio, Sendbird)?

For Now, the known requirements are:

1. Clicking on a link in the BookMyShow app should add users to a group chat with fellow solo attendees.
2. We don't want to force users to install any third-party app.
3. We want to ensure users' information (other than usernames) is not shared with others in the group.

ii) How to Identify and target specific users for the new user journey using a feature toggle?

Known Filters:

- Users located in Tier 1 cities.
- Age group between 23-29 years.

Unknown Filters:

- Collaborate with the Data Team to discover any unknown patterns in demographics among past solo attendees. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Behavioural patterns.
 - Purchase history.
 - Event preferences.
 - Engagement metrics.

iii) What are all the facts and slogans we are going to be including in the new section to nudge more users to click on the new tile introduced?

[All Open Questions can be tracked here]

Appendix

BMS Reports on increasing trends of solo attendance:

- <https://in.bookmyshow.com/best-of-the-year/2023/>

Resources on Validation of Problem

- https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/jack-peat/why-is-there-a-social-sti_b_11991550.html
- <https://www.succeedsocially.com/goingoutalone>
- <https://theeverygirl.com/we-need-to-talk-about-the-stigma-of-doing-things-alone/>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/from-both-sides-of-the-couch/202309/we-miss-out-on-events-when-we-dont-like-to-go-alone>
- <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/pros-and-cons-of-going-to-concert-by-yourself>
- <https://www.aconsciousrethink.com/25957/reasons-introverts-dont-enjoy-large-social-gatherings/>
- <https://vibewithade.com/blog/how-to-go-to-an-event-by-yourself-why-you-should>

Resources on narrowing down User Base

- <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/live-events-come-alive-with-small-towns-as-new-patrons-11707063740660.html>
 - BookMyShow: Demographics Source:
[https://www.themediaant.com/blog/bookmyshow-advertising-types-targeting-options-facts/#:~:text=Top%20BookMyShow%20Advertising%20Facts,-The%20average%20monthly&text=The%20user%20demographics%20\(India\)%20of,Sept%202022%20to%20Sept%202023\)](https://www.themediaant.com/blog/bookmyshow-advertising-types-targeting-options-facts/#:~:text=Top%20BookMyShow%20Advertising%20Facts,-The%20average%20monthly&text=The%20user%20demographics%20(India)%20of,Sept%202022%20to%20Sept%202023))
-

Alternative Solutions and Deprioritized Features

- 1) **Build feature to foster a community of solo attendees** composed of people who are active solo attendees and those who are interested to try out this in the future. (discussion rooms, community walls etc)

Note: At present, People do not maintain a profile in BookMyShow like a social networking site profile like Instagram or Whatsapp which makes it challenging to position the app as a networking platform. Instead, the focus should be on live events where people can make new connections.

- 2) **Display Testimonials from Past Attendees:** This idea is deprioritized as we first need feedback from the initial users who have used this feature to understand what worked for them. Once we have clarity in subsequent phases, we can select the most relevant testimonials to display and encourage others to try attending events solo.