

# Individual Assignment Cover Sheet

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## Nishtya Infotech vs Naukri.com vs Unacademy

### Introduction

Nishtya Infotech is an education-job platform targeted toward early to mid-career finance graduates and employees. Nishtya operates a two sides model focusing on Ed-Tech at one and the Job portal and assistance on another. Being the new entrant into the Indian market, the competition was evident with the giants across EdTech and the Job assistance space.

Naukri.com is one of India's most prominent players in the job assistance market, with an active user base of about 22.5Mn users(*Naukri recruitment India – The Network member profile*, no date). Naukri has dominated the Indian market for multiple decades ranging his product offering from job posting on the recruiter side to premium profiling on the candidate side. Moreover, through this journey, Naukri.com faced competition from multiple global players, such as monster.com and indeed.com, trying to enter the Indian markets. But, over these years, Naukri managed to beat these international competitions multiple times and emerge as one of the biggest job-portal in India, with the current holding of about 62% market share(*Naukri recruitment India – The Network member profile*, no date).

On the other side, Nishtya faced intense competition from the Ed-tech players(global and local) trying to get a significant chunk of exploding online education pie in India. Compared to the job portal market, the EdTech market in India is relatively new; the potential advantage of the global brand hook has helped some players take an initial lead in the market. On the other side, some local players, such as Unacademy, relied on low prices, lean cost structure and high volumes to gather the remaining big chunk of the pie.

Given the very different industry dynamics across both the offerings for Nishtya Infotech, the company had to think of a very dynamic strategy on various fronts to counter the potential actions and make a possible significant dent into the current market. As highlighted in the Judo Strategy, the plan was to form a solid positioning to tackle the job assistance market competition. On the other side, Nishtya entered the EdTech market through a mix of judo and innovative

strategies. This essay discusses how these strategies were implemented across multiple fronts in line with the above theoretical approaches.

But before we deep dive into the details, let's do a quick deep dive into what is a Judo strategy and why it was a necessary move for Nishtya Infotech.

### **What is business Judo Strategy and Why Judo?**

The Judo strategy is aimed to tackle current prominent market leaders by playing small and building on agility as reflected in Judo sport by mastering the skills of Movement, Balance and Leverage(Yoffie and Kwak, 2002).

As highlighted earlier, Naukri.com has been super successful in beating the past significant entrant into the market, trying to erode its positioning. Thus, the only possible route is to play small and be agile to address the need through the criticality of Judo.

### **How Nishtya mastered the art of Movement**

The Judo strategy of mastering the art of movement revolves around utilising the company's small size over the big giant player in the market. The small size helps the new entrant maintain the agility and, in a sense, creates the flexibility for the small player to move faster and efficiently, making it hard for the incumbent to copy, establishing a potential sustainable foot in the industry. This strategy of mastering the movement could be based on the dimensions of being defensive and creating an offensive system simultaneously.

#### *Nishtya Infotech's Puppy Dog Ploy(Fudenberg and Tirole, 1984)*

One of Nishtya Infotech's defensive moves was to create a puppy dog play while positioning itself in the market. The classic technique of the puppy dog play is based on the critical skills of playing small, pretending to be an unharmed puppy.

This play was done by establishing a highly targeted product line, making it very difficult for this incumbent player(Naukri.com) to imitate and engage in a

possible head-lock. Moreover, the founders of Nishtya Infotech came from a Finance background. Thus, they planned on playing on their skills by focusing the job portal on early and mid-career finance graduates. This helped ensure that Nishtya maintained its small identity while at the same time establishing a focused niche in the growing market.

Another move that solidified Nishtya infotech's position of creating a sustainable puppy play was differential branding across the offering. The overall offering of addressing the end-to-end ecosystem of education and job was unique to a market such as India. Thus, to ensure its puppy play identity, Nishtya established a strong brand differentiation with Jobaaj.com(an arm of Nishtya Infotech), specifically focussing on the job portal, separating itself from the EdTech offering.

#### *Nishtya's plan to master movement through complemented offensive strategy*

While puppy play ensured strong defensive positioning, Nishtya complemented this move with solid product differentiation, adding offensiveness to the movement mix. With COVID hitting the market, fresh graduates were looking for not just a portal but also a personalised solution that could help them understand the market and prepare them for the journey. Thus, Nishtya differentiated the offering by assisting individuals with job applications, interview prep, and mock tests. On the other side, Nishtya helped companies pre-screen and filter the solid initial volume of candidates. This helped establish a concrete offensive move in a defensive niche market.

On the other side of a more fragmented and relatively new EdTech market, being offensive through agility and innovation was the only feasible play. In COVID, job losses were at their peaks, and fresh graduates struggled to put relevant experience on their CVs to fill the increasing gap. Thus Nishtya infotech launched a dedicated online batch complemented with a guaranteed two-month internship alongside the learning program. This program served two essential purposes - first, enabling this young generation the practical way of learning by applying the online concepts and second, establishing a solid

industry differentiation. To absorb interns from these programs, Nishtya initially started self-interning into its research arm([procapitas.com](http://procapitas.com)), making it hard for current players to replicate it. Replicating the same model would require broad knowledge, a solid operational funnel and agility to run parallel organisations - limiting any current big player to imitate the offering.

### *Reflection on Nishtya's Movement Strategy*

Nishtya's strong movement strategy and a compelling combination of the defensive and offensive strategies were crucial in ensuring steady growth. The argument further strengthens this that in the past, the current market leader has eliminated competition every time it came into a direct headlock with other companies. But as Nishtya grows, one of the critical elements to success would remain around ensuring agility and building on current defensive and offensive strategies across both the offerings.

### **Nishtya's Second Challenge of Mastering Balance**

The second key aspect of business Judo strategy revolves around striking a balance with the current players to achieve a sustainable advantage in the field. For example, as Nishtya infotech achieved its initial milestones, it worked closely to engage with different industry competitors(opponents) to eliminate competitive feelings and ensure a vital win in the market(Yoffie and Cusumano, 1999).

On the first side, Nishtya infotech partnered with [Naukri.com](http://Naukri.com) to generate potential leads for their recruiting clients. [Naukri.com](http://Naukri.com) is the conventional platform that earns core money from job listing by recruiters and hands over the list of candidates to the company with minimalist filtering options. While Nishtya infotech was catering for the relatively small market where delivering customised solutions is one of the key value propositions. But at this early stage, Nishtya Infotech is limited in attracting enough job seekers to the platform and ensuring sufficient submissions on client requests. Thus to potentially mitigate this issue, Nishtya partnered with [Naukri.com](http://Naukri.com) to use their

job listing features to list the requirement of their clients and gather an initial list of potential candidates. Later Nishtya used this data in combination with their in-house filtering and pre-screening options to enhance the offering and deliver end value to the clients. In this small process, Nishtya Infotech partnered with one of the biggest giants in the market, potentially eliminating the threat of competitive action. Moreover, Nishtya infotech built on the extra capability to deliver sophisticated solutions to clients, which is nearly impossible for big giants to incorporate into their offerings, further ensuring solid offensive positioning.

On the other side, Nishtya infotech partnered with Unacademy(India's leading EdTech platform) to launch their program courses onto their platform in exchange for a small commission fee per enrollment. Over the years, Unacademy has focused its earning model on bringing more and more lessons and teachers across any domain onto its platform. Thus, this potential opportunity to partner with Nishtya infotech and deliver an additional range of courses seemed ideal. At the same time, very similar to the job portal, it was challenging for the small and new EdTech company - Nishtya Infotech, to attract sufficient and meaningful organic traffic to the new website. Thus, listing on Unacademy provided nishtya infotech with the much-needed platform to gather initial traction and an influx of customers. Moreover, build on partnership instead of hitting a headlock with one of India's leading EdTech players.

### *Reflection on Nishtya's Balance Mastering Strategies*

As Nishtya grew in size, the company needed to ensure limited competitive action. Thus the action of a potential partnership with key leaders across the offerings highlights the critical elements of the Judo strategy. But as the company continues to grow and aims to build on individuals' identities alongside a strong brand, it needs to think deeply about balancing the current partnership model and potential standalone offerings. The one option offers sustainability to limited competitive reaction while the other builds on the brand image, which could be potentially used to make a sustainable competitive advantage.

### **Nishtya's future in building sustainable leverage**

Upon mastering movement, one can increase the probability of developing strong positioning without facing a solid competitive reaction. On the other side, the art of mastering balance allows engaging more prominent players without getting knocked out. Though these two elements are crucial to building an initial sustainable advantage roadmap, adding leverage to the mix further solidifies the positioning of the company - reflecting one of the old sayings by judo master: "If one is not fallen, that means one is not beaten; it does not mean that you have won" (Yoffie and Kwak, 2002).

Leveraging in the Judo strategy refers to leveraging competitors' assets, partners and rivals against them. For example, one can leverage competitor assets to turn its strength into weaknesses.

The same could be observed in Nishtya Infotech's roadmap strategy across both the offering and broad ecosystem offerings. As Nishtya emerges with a complete ecosystem offering, it plans to leverage Naukri.com's critical assets against it to ensure sustained advantage in the space. Over decades Naukri.com has built a firm foot in the job portal and assistance market, building a varied range of services around job solutions. Thus, transforming their business offering into an ecosystem of education and job would deviate from their core offering of providing job facilitation. Moreover, it would mean strong efforts to emerge victorious in good integration and strong brand execution of the EdTech offering. Thus, leveraging Naukri.com's huge assets of job solutions to limit its agility highlights the possibility of maintaining a sustainable growth advantage.

On the other side, a similar case is observed with the EdTech offering, where Unacademy has been in the EdTech space consistently focusing on building a brand image as a platform that delivers online education. Thus a similar transition from education only to a complete education-job ecosystem would demand a substantial shift in focus from the core business. Thus, limiting the future possibility of Unacademy entering the space of this entire education-job

ecosystem. This instance again highlights the positioning of the Judo strategy where using Unacademy assets of robust EdTech solution against them provides Nishtya infotech tech with a much more sustainable advantage.

### *Reflection on Nishtya's leverage Roadmap*

Over the years, as Nishtya grows, it would be crucial to build on leverage offering to ensure a decisive advantage and enhance its key-value prop - complete education to job solution. In addition, these plans to engage competitors and limit their agility because of their strong foot in one offering could potentially help Nishtya Infotech establish barriers to building an ecosystem similar to their offering. But, as Nishtya Infotech grows its potential offering, it needs to check on these big players and ensure not being playing a similar Judo strategy as they possibly establish complementary secondary offerings.

### **Conclusion**

The Jodo strategy has played a crucial role for Nishtya infotech in establishing a solid foot in the market, avoiding any head to head fight with industry leaders. The right strategy to build master movement, balance and leverage has helped the company establish a decisive advantage. But, as the company grows in size, it would be relatively difficult to maintain its current positioning across different Judo strategy categories. One of the possible solutions is to ensure strong brand differentiation and simultaneously build a robust ecosystem funnelling one side of customers to another.

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