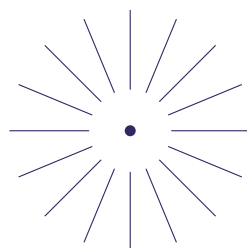
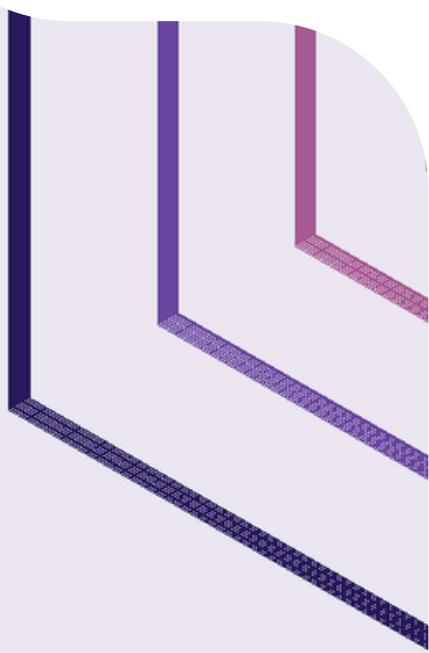


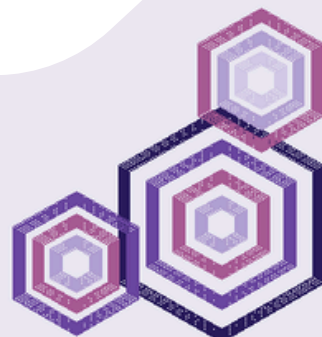


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Uber's 4 P's: To Increase Customer Base

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Abstract

This paper looks at the marketing strategies that have helped Uber grow in India. The growth of Uber in India is due to several factors, such as the presence of major cities, transportation advancements, and the growing tech-savvy nature of the population due to the increasing adoption of smartphones and LTE. India is the second-largest worldwide market for smartphone users and offers Uber a lot of opportunities to build a strong customer base.

This paper looks at how Uber has used technology innovations and their applications, like big data analysis, driverless cars, etc. The success of Uber in the Indian market is directly related to its product offerings, pricing strategies, special promotion campaigns, and user-friendly interfaces. Uber has successfully taken advantage of the Indian population's dependency on mobile phones and established itself as a major player in the Indian ride-hailing market.

Through the strategic use of different product offerings, pricing strategies, and marketing strategies, Uber has managed to expand its customer base. The purpose of this paper is to understand how these strategies are effective in driving growth in India. The main focus of this paper is on Uber's reputation among customers. The company's user-friendliness and competitive pricing strategies have contributed to the company's growth, even though the market shares of Uber and its main rival, Ola, have been fluctuating.

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Keywords: Marketing mix, Pricing policies, Promotional tactics, Dynamic pricing and Product offerings

Introduction

Uber's core business model is based on its smartphone app which allows you to book a cab to your GPS location by choosing your preferred taxi service and payment method, which is the basis of the company's business model. A cab is dispatched to your location to pick you up at the touch of a button, and it's important to note that Uber doesn't own the taxis, but rather the taxi drivers do. In addition to this, Uber also offers automotive solutions, such as partnerships and discounts, to help you buy a car and start your journey as a taxi driver. All Uber does is provide you with information about where you can find a taxi, and it takes a small percentage out of your fare. This service is known as taxi aggregation, and Uber offers a wide range of vehicles to meet the diverse requirements of its customers, from features to pricing to car size.

Uber's dynamic pricing system is much more transparent than other booking platforms, such as hotels and flights. This allows Uber to maintain its "one-tap" reputation even during times when demand is high and supply is limited.³ The ease of use and convenience of this type of service have made it more popular in recent times. This type of service is available in countries such as India where there are a large number of users of smartphones. According to the data collected, a large number of smartphone users have been attracted to Uber as well as Ola.

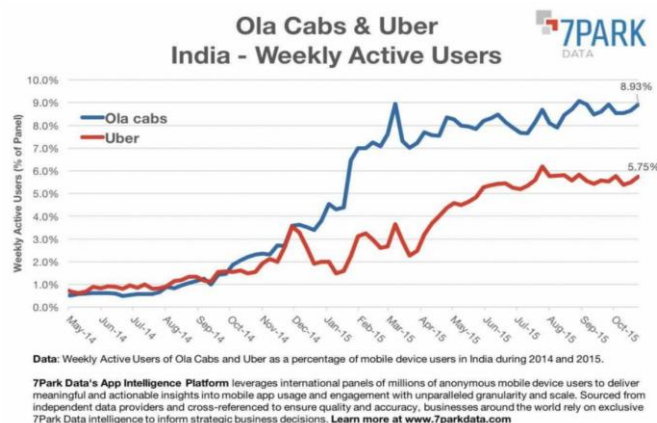


Figure 1. Ola Cabs & Uber

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A cab is just a click away, picks you up at your exact location, and accepts a wide range of payment methods. Uber also collects user feedback about drivers in the app to ensure that the client's point of view is taken into account. To maintain equity and give more influence to taxi drivers, Uber allows them to rate their patrons.

This is not a new concept; other companies around the world have adopted this model. While Uber has local competitors in the taxi aggregating space, few of them are capable of dominating the global industry. Among Uber's competitors in India are local auto rickshaws and taxi aggregators Ola Cabs. In the period of January-June 2017, Uber increased its market share to more than 50% in online taxi aggregators, while Ola Cabs had a market share of 44.2%, and other companies had a much lower market share. According to the number of apps downloaded in sixty cities, these numbers

Uber has completely transformed the transport sector by acquiring a large customer base and offering services that are more cost-effective and target specific market segments. Uber has not only managed to survive in the highly competitive transportation market but has also grown in it. According to Crunchbase, Uber has raised approximately \$8.81 Billion in 15 fundraising rounds. The success of Uber can be attributed to its pricing, product and promotion strategies. So, how does Uber grow its customer base effectively in the Indian market using pricing, product and promotional strategies?

Review of literature

Numerous research papers have examined different facets of Uber's promotional tactics and its expansion in India. While there is research on related subjects like ride-hailing services, competition in the transportation sector, and the effects of technology on the market, there is a noticeable lack of studies that thoroughly examine the particular methods Uber uses to increase the number of its customers in the Indian market while accounting for product offerings, pricing policies, and marketing tactics. The summary of important research publications that follows gives

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a broad overview of the body of knowledge and draws attention to the issues that remain unresolved:

In a study by Sain et al. (2019), the authors investigated consumer motivations for using ride-sharing services (Sain et al., 2019). While this study provides insights into customer preferences, it does not offer a detailed examination of Uber's specific marketing strategies in India.

A study by Sierzchula et al. (2018) investigated factors affecting the adoption of ride-sharing services (Sierzchula et al., 2018). While the study provides insights into factors influencing user adoption, it does not specifically focus on Uber's strategies for growth in India.

Taylor et al. (2017) delved into the pricing strategies employed by Uber (Taylor et al., 2017). However, this research primarily discusses the global perspective and economic aspects without providing a detailed analysis of Uber's specific pricing strategies in India.

A study by R. Ramachandran (2017) analyzed the political and regulatory aspects of Uber's operations (Ramachandran, 2017). While it discusses the challenges Uber has faced in India, it does not extensively explore Uber's strategies in terms of product offerings and promotions specific to the Indian market.

Zervas et al. (2017) focused on the sharing economy and technology's role (Zervas et al., 2017). Although it does not address Uber, it discusses the broader context of the sharing economy, highlighting the importance of technology, a relevant aspect for understanding Uber's strategies.

In a paper by Gautam et al. (2017), the authors discussed the disruptive nature of ride-sharing services (Gautam et al., 2017). While it talks about disruption, it doesn't go into detail on the precise tactics Uber uses to grow in the Indian market.

Edelman and Luca (2014) discussed digital discrimination in the sharing economy (Edelman & Luca, 2014). Although unrelated to Uber, it offers perspectives on the difficulties encountered by sharing economy platforms, which may have bearing on Uber's operations in India.

Christensen and Raynor (2013) conducted a study on disruptive innovation in the context of Uber (Christensen & Raynor, 2013). Although this research sheds light on Uber's creative strategy, it mostly concentrates on how disruptive the service is, which leaves opportunity for a more in-depth analysis of the company's tactics in India.

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Even though all of these research papers have contributed to the advancement of knowledge about the ride-hailing industry and the impact of technology on transportation, none of them have looked in-depth at Uber's distinctive marketing mix, pricing strategies, and promotional tactics in the Indian market to increase its customer base. By focusing on the company's expansion strategy in India, this study aims to bridge this research gap with particular research objectives focused on Uber's marketing strategies.

Specific Research Objectives

1. To investigate into, using the results of the perception mapping analysis, how customers view Uber's services in relation to Ola, with a particular emphasis on perceived quality and price.
2. To implement the Ansoff Matrix to analyse Uber's product portfolio and determine the growth tactics used, especially with regard to market penetration, product creation (like UberMoto), and possible market extension (like working with Hero MotoCorp).
3. To apply the BCG Matrix to evaluate Uber's product lineup, especially UberX, in terms of market share, growth potential, and overall contribution to the company's success.
4. To investigate into how Uber's pricing tactics—such as competitive and dynamic pricing—have affected its capacity to draw in and keep users in India.

Research Methodology

An organised questionnaire about pricing strategies, marketing tactics, and perceptions of Uber was used to collect primary data from respondents in India. Secondary data was obtained from reputable publications, government reports, news articles, and industry-specific sources. In order to comprehend Uber's marketing strategies in India and to offer insights into the efficacy of its product offerings, pricing strategies, and promotional techniques, the analysis comprised a review of the literature, content analysis, and qualitative interpretation.

Analysis and Discussion

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A company's collection of components used to effectively sell a product is called the marketing mix. It serves as the cornerstone for the creation of marketing strategy. The four Ps of a marketing mix are typically product, pricing, promotion, and location. Three components make up Uber's marketing mix, and these will be covered in this essay: product, price, and promotion.

Any good or service that fulfills the demands or desires of consumers is considered a product. Uber offers a variety of taxi services at varying pricing points within its product portfolio. UberPool, for instance, is a shared taxi service that is more affordable than a standard cab. Uber offers a range of items at the same price point to accommodate different types of occasions, families, and so on. Uber has taken care to avoid leaving any market sector that Ola Cabs has targeted in order to fight with its primary opponent in the Indian market.

By identifying any gaps in its portfolio, we may use position (perception) mapping to analyse how Uber has catered to the demands of various clients. Ola has provided its services to comparable market segments as well, thus comparisons may also be made using this tool. You can use this tool to evaluate products according to two criteria: price and perceived quality. My contacts' perceptions were used to generate the perception maps. This came in the shape of a scorecard. The constraints will probably reveal that the sample is restricted to those that I was able to get in touch with due to convenience sampling. This implies that my friends and family make up the majority of it. The findings might indicate that most people in my group have comparable financial backgrounds and, thus, similar opinions about various things. Nevertheless, since this was the quickest option to get public opinion, I went ahead and used it.

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Figure 2. Uber Cab Graph

Perception Map for Ola:



Figure 3. Ola Cab Graph

Perception mapping allows us to determine that both businesses have largely shied away from Cowboy products because they give the image of being low-quality products. These goods are typically employed as a temporary ploy to trick clients and make money. Thirteen But it's evident that both businesses have stayed away from this because of their long-term goals. SUVs have been classified as Cowboy vehicles by the poll. Nonetheless, the fact that both Uber and Ola are still operating this service may suggest that the survey was performed among a population with largely comparable viewpoints, which is a drawback of this sample technique.

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An additional drawback is that participant values are entirely arbitrary; actual averages may typically be obtained from sufficiently large a sample. Uber has made an attempt to replicate Ola's portfolio in every other category. For instance, Uber introduced UberMoto right after Ola Bike started. The cost is the only distinction between the two services. Professor Michael Porter states that in order to succeed in market positioning, there are three general competitive strategies to consider:

- **Cost leadership:** Uber offers comparable services at marginally lower costs, making its economy products more competitive
- **Differentiation:** Since Ola and Uber's products are largely similar, there isn't much difference between them
- **Focus:** Ola and Uber have identical market segments in mind.

The businesses make the greatest money from their economy and clearance merchandise. Budget-conscious buyers may find economy products appealing despite their subpar quality. Bargain products are those with cheaper price tags and better quality. While this strategy is unsustainable, it can temporarily boost sales significantly.

When compared to Uber's economy goods, Ola's prices may seem like a bad deal, even though they are still competitive when compared to the majority of other services. This presents Uber with the chance to damage Ola by disparaging its products. For instance, with the launch of its motorcycles, Ola's customer ride choice index score was over 70% in the March quarter of 2016. But in the December quarter of 2016, the score fell to less than 60% with the introduction of UberMoto. Other marketing tactics in addition to the introduction of UberMoto may be to blame for this.

Uber launched its premium offering, UberX, as its first product. This black, high-end vehicle was available for 1.5 times the cost of a taxi. Uber benefited from first-mover advantage due to its premium pricing for high-quality services. Being the first in a market gives companies the opportunity to build market share, a solid reputation, and a devoted clientele before other companies have a chance to introduce their goods. This is known as the "first-mover advantage."

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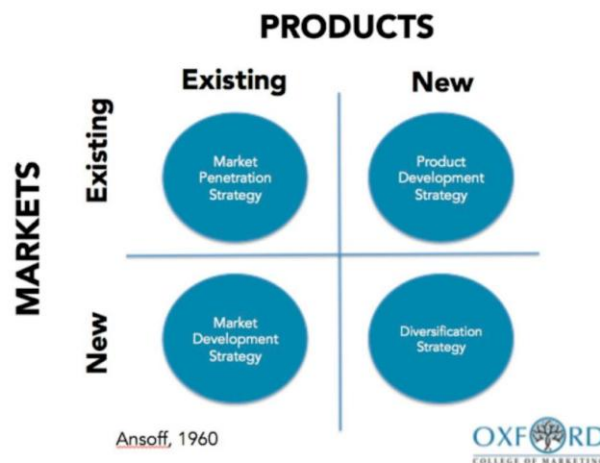
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Pricing in this market is unimportant since consumers who purchase high-end goods are typically not attentive to price.

Differentiation is the primary means by which premium products succeed in their market placement. Ola Prime's Wi-Fi-enabled taxis were its unique selling proposition till May 2016. A distinctive selling proposition is an attribute that makes a product stand out from the competitors. Uber has teamed with Airtel to introduce Wi-Fi linked cabs, making the two options virtually comparable. Uber realised that Ola Prime's competitive advantages could be a danger, so it overhauled UberX, turning it from a Cowboy product to a premium one.

By introducing the Uber car, Uber has shown that it wants to meet the expectations of Indian customers. Uber is aware that most Indian cities have auto rickshaws as a common sight. This type of transport is usually the most popular and reasonably priced way to move around a city. Uber Auto was cancelled in April 2015 because it was only a test project.

Uber promised to bring it back after making a few changes to their strategy. The research and development stage of their product's life cycle included this kind of testing. For the purpose of the test marketing effort, the service was only tested on a small group of customers in one city. According to David Ogilvy, a product will have a considerably higher probability of success if it is tested on real customers. Uber's users were already aware with the concept, thus there was a good possibility Uber would be successful in this experiment.



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Figure 4. Products & Markets

Based on the Ansoff matrix, the Uber auto service is an established product in a new market. In the new market, customers would rather book auto rickshaws using applications in order to go where they're going. Uber has to employ market expansion techniques, a medium risk growth approach.

However, Uber's success in Delhi does not guarantee success elsewhere. In major cities, auto rickshaws may be becoming less common; in 2014, they were implicated in 6,300 of India's 140,000 road fatalities. Uber has improved its product strategy through strategic partnerships and other external foreign marketing techniques²⁹. Uber has expressed interest in collaborating strategically with India's largest two-wheeler company, Hero MotoCorp.

Businesses hoping to expand overseas face the risk of legal issues. For example, different states have varied regulations and rules. One example is the requirements for commercial usage licences under the Motor Vehicles Act. Uber can overcome this challenge and outperform Ola in the market with the aid of this strategic collaboration. Hero MotoCorp's sales will increase as a consequence. This is an example of a synergy where both parties can work together to achieve a win-win situation

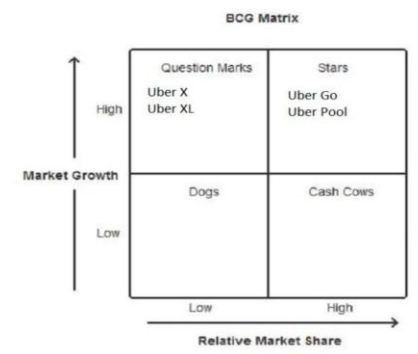


Figure 5. BCG Matrix

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Uber and Tata Motors have cooperated in a similar way to provide insurance and fuel-efficient vehicles together with flexible financing options. This increased Uber's market dominance by allowing over 20,000 drivers throughout India to sign up.

Uber may have an advantage over Ola if it uses self-driving cars in India in the future. Uber's ability to collect money will allow them to use technology to provide a greater range of products, establishing them as the industry leaders of the new era in transportation. Uber's product assortment can be evaluated to see if it is well-balanced using the BCG matrix. This tool is used to regularly assess a product's potential in relation to its market share and growth. Question marks have a limited market share, but they are expanding swiftly. UberX is a question mark because it is not commonly used, but if Uber can alter people's perceptions of its value for money, it has potential.

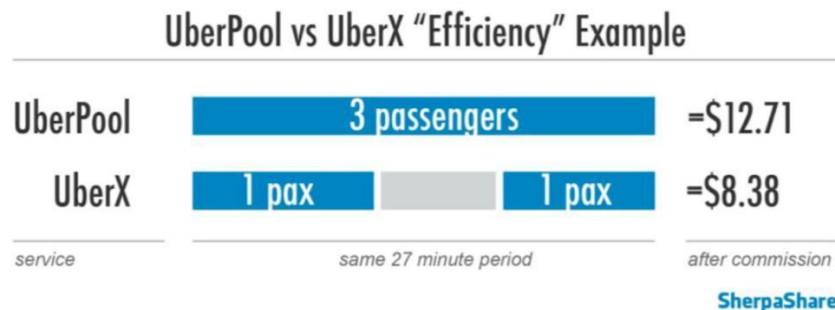


Figure 6. UberPool vs UberX Efficiency

The BCG matrix analysis indicates that a significant contributing element to Uber's success in India has been the company's star products.

Price: The amount of money required of customers to purchase an item or service is referred to as the price. Pricing decisions are important since a high price may attract customers while increasing profits per sale, and a cheap price may attract customers but lower profits per sale.

Because of its aggressive price strategy, Uber is able to attract a significant number of users in India. Uber is the loss leader in the market. In an attempt to attract customers, they undercut their true cost and offer their services as a loss leader. Uber received \$1.2 billion in capital in 2014, but

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due to losses, the company had already spent \$1 billion in less than six months. This enables them to vigorously grow throughout Asia, concentrating especially on India.

Uber has to incur losses on its own capital while continuing to raise money from a variety of sources since the cab drivers are unwilling to accept wage reductions and would quit if that were to occur. Uber also provides a lot of exclusive discounts. Uber provides referral coupons in exchange for free trips. Businesses employ this tactic to attract new clients by offering incentives to existing ones. Additionally, it enables users to test the service out before committing to a monthly plan. Their trust in the service is bolstered by this. Given that it engages in price wars with Ola, Uber's pricing strategy is often referred to as predatory pricing or destroyer pricing.

Uber's operations in India have been impacted by its global marketing efforts. A company may utilize mergers and acquisitions as one strategy to penetrate foreign markets. Didi Chuxing, a Chinese cab aggregator firm, purchased Uber. Uber used to invest a minimum of \$1 billion annually in China expansion and Didi competition. Given that Uber has already ceded its market share to Didi, it has a much stronger hold on the Indian market. 2016 saw Uber India the president declared that India would receive a substantial amount of funding. Due to Ola's forced increase in financial burn, Uber is now able to compete with it

head-on. However, as they have also lost a sizable potential revenue source, this also restricts Uber's capacity to utilize economies of scale. This made me question whether or not this adjustment was actually for the better.

Right now, Uber beats Ola taxis' rates in practically every product area. Using the information on their respective mobile apps and websites, we may compare the costs of a trip in Ola taxis and Uber. Every app has different costs in different cities. The base fare for Uber varies depending on the city. The information below relates to Hyderabad.

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Price comparison chart

	Ola	Uber
Premium (UberX vs. Ola Prime)	₹50 + ₹10 per km till 15 km	₹47.25 + ₹9.45 per km
Cowboy (Uber SUV vs Ola Prime SUV)	₹150 for first 5 km + ₹18 per km	₹126 + ₹21 per km
Bargain (UberGo vs Ola Micro)	₹35 + ₹6 per km till 15 km	₹28.25 + ₹7.5 per km
Economy (UberPool vs Ola Share)	NA	₹28.25 + ₹7.5 per km

Figure 7. Price Comparison Chart

Uber first employed predatory pricing, temporarily lowering the cost of its services in order to drive away rivals TaxiForSure and Meru Cabs. This tactic is prohibited in several nations (such as the USA and EU). Uber hasn't yet been found legally liable for any anti-competitive business practices, though. Meru Cabs has made accusations, but Uber has refuted them.

Like its rivals in the taxi aggregation market, Uber bases its pricing strategy on a dynamic framework. The rates of the rides are set by this dynamic pricing technique, known as surge pricing, which takes demand and time into account. Uber has chosen to be clear about their pricing method, which is similar to the dynamic pricing of rooms and airlines. Uber has defended this strategy by saying that their surge pricing enables them to meet consumer demands on demand, despite criticism that it causes inconveniences during emergencies. Uber can reward its drivers and meet the requirements of a greater number of clients by using this pricing structure. Additionally, it enables them to profit from periods of high demand without significantly altering their rate card. Uber's pricing system, which bases taxi fares on a customer's willingness to pay, has also generated some controversy. The way Uber uses big data analysis to accomplish this. In order to forecast trends and draw broad conclusions, this type of data collection entails the analysis of substantial

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volumes of data. Uber has noticed that customers commonly select surge-priced taxis based on factors like where they reside, how often they book cabs there, etc. Uber can use this data to identify consumers who are prepared to pay extra, which boosts profit margins. Rumour has it that the drivers aren't informed in full about the higher fees for specific clients. Customers may become skeptical of this and think it is unethical.

Uber most likely employs this pricing method in order to maintain its aggressive pricing model, as they lose a significant amount of money and must turn a profit even in tiny sums.

Promotion: Generally speaking, promotion is the process of bringing the company's goods to the attention of the public with the goal of making a sale. 51 Uber relies heavily on promotion to grow its customer base by bringing attention to its offerings and competitive pricing.

Uber uses the referral system as a primary marketing tactic. Customers can receive free trips by providing the Uber referral code. This serves as a motivator for word-of-mouth advertising. A. Milligan and S. Smith claim that this approach is substantially faster and far more efficient than pricey above-the-line marketing techniques.

Customers who are pleased with the service are likely to tell friends and relatives about it if they share similar tastes. However, one drawback is that Uber would have to provide a significant number of free rides to users, which will increase their losses. Poor service can result in bad press spreading far more quickly through word-of-mouth than it would through established media outlets. Furthermore, word-of-mouth could not provide as much information about the service as a thorough advertisement would. This may cause new clients to have misconceptions about what to anticipate from the service.

Uber employs a lot of publicity gimmicks. These ploys can include giving passengers the opportunity to seat next to well-known celebrities or providing a complimentary upgrade to an upscale luxury vehicle. These thrilling revelations have the potential to improve the company's reputation and draw new customers. An infomercial that follows the rules won't get nearly as much attention as one that follows them.

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Uber employs sponsorship strategies in a novel way. They provide transport for event attendees in addition to financial packages to assist events. This serves as a sample of the service for all attendees, which is far more convincing than just having a logo at the event's advertising area.

Uber passes that visitors can use to get a ride to the event or back home can be given out by the event manager. Additionally, Uber makes sure that its visitors get home safely, which gives its clients more confidence. In addition to being less expensive than other kinds of advertising, this service provides a practical example of the product. Uber has been able to enhance its promotional approach through external means such as strategic relationships in foreign marketing. By combining resources and sharing risks, a corporation can access international markets by forming strategic partnerships with foreign businesses.

Uber has a strategic partnership with Times Internet, the internet division of the Times of India Group, which aids in its comprehension of regional markets and customer trends. Thanks to this collaboration, Uber is able to market and distribute its services more widely. Reputable partner Times Global Partners has already assisted in the founding of multiple other Indian businesses. Times Internet's print, radio, OOH, and digital marketing platforms—which reach more than 200 million Indians—would be extremely beneficial to Uber's India expansion.

Marketing objectives are the specific marketing goals that an organisation intends to achieve. A suitable strategy is required to achieve these goals. The marketing mix of the business determines this.

Among the objectives Uber has met are:

1. A bigger market share: In 2017, Uber finally overtook Ola as the industry leader, with an approximately 50% market share, following months of intense competition (44.2%).

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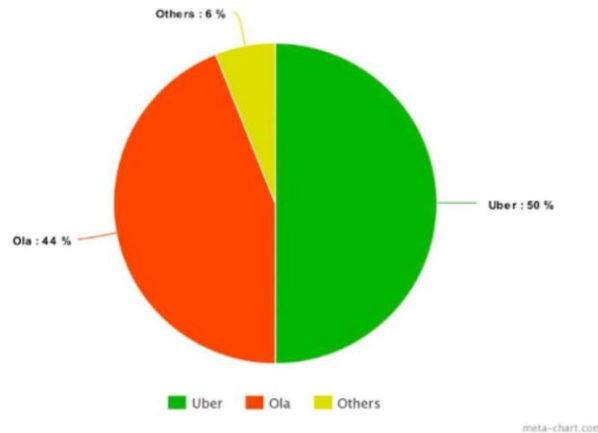


Figure 8. Pie Chart Uber, Ola, Others

2. Enhanced awareness of the brand, product, and perception: Since measuring consumer loyalty and perception is challenging, a survey was utilised to illustrate these points.
3. Developing new products: Due to its dominant market position, Uber is able to devote a significant amount of time and resources to innovation in order to surpass rivals. For example, Uber has launched uberAccess, a wheelchair service for those with disabilities.

Conclusion

This thorough investigation has looked at a number of Uber's marketing tactics that have helped the company grow its clientele in India. Since the main cities in India are expanding annually, transport technology is also evolving to meet the demands of the populace. India presents Uber with an opportunity to develop a robust customer base because of the nation's growing emphasis on technology, which is being driven by increased LTE use and smartphone popularity. India has the second-highest percentage of smartphone users worldwide. Uber's usage of technological breakthroughs must be examined in order to fully comprehend the company's prospects. Even though the most of this is still theoretical, it raises questions about the use of big data analysis and autonomous vehicles for profit.

The previously cited analysis underscores the apparent association between Uber's range of products, pricing strategies, marketing campaigns, and its debut into the Indian market. Uber's

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success can be attributed to a variety of factors, including its user-friendly platform, flexible pricing structures, and distinctive promotions that cater to diverse market segments. Uber has made its app one of the most popular among all ride-sharing services by taking advantage of the Indian population's strong reliance on mobile devices. It is clear from the research objective—which examined how Uber's product, pricing, and promotional strategies effectively increase its customer base in the Indian market—that Uber's user-friendly interface and competitive pricing have strengthened its reputation among customers, even in the face of occasional changes in Ola's market share. The Indian transportation industry has seen a radical change as a result of Uber's disruptive influence and relentless innovation. As a result, Uber's skillful client acquisition marketing techniques are responsible for its sustained leadership in the Indian market.

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