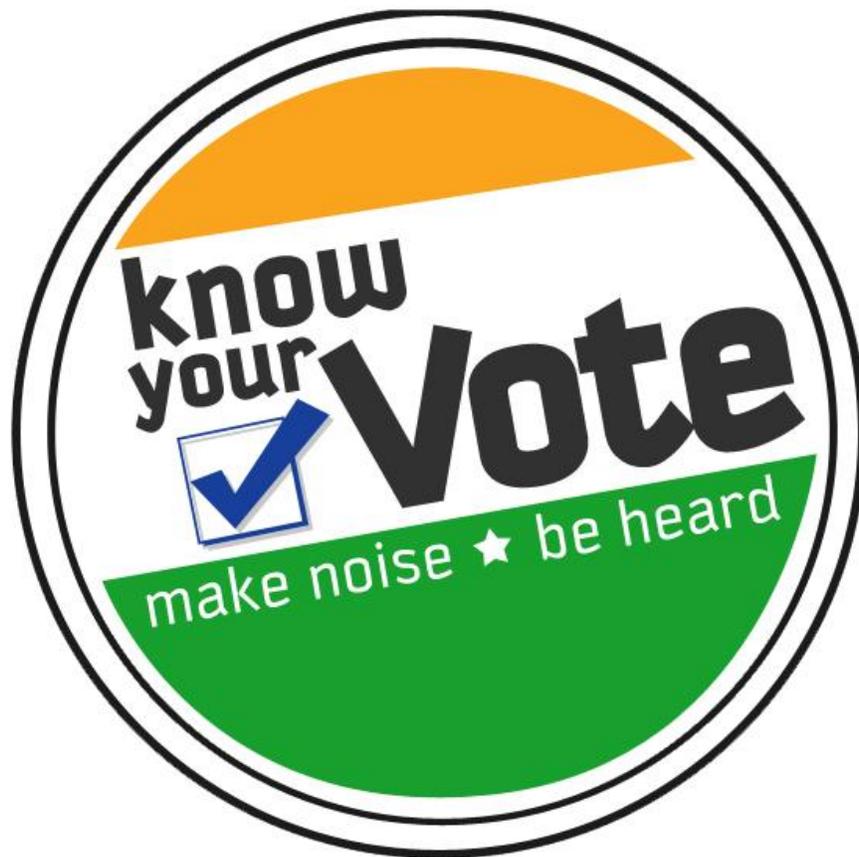


2011

Know Your Vote  
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# [KNOW YOUR VOTE]

## BUSINESS PLAN

Know Your Vote is a non-partisan non-profit organization aiming to reduce voter apathy within the Indian youth. This document provides the business plan for the upcoming organization.



# Executive Summary

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Know Your Vote is a non-partisan grassroots political awareness organization that seeks to get India's youth actively involved within the political process overcoming the existing problems of voter apathy and corrupt officials within the government. It seeks to go beyond achieving short term increases in youth voter turnout and actually change the mindset of India's future generations.

Know Your Vote seeks to achieve these results through its unique business model and unconventional negative information campaign to capture the target markets interest that set it apart from other similar campaigns.

While funding may prove to be a challenge, Know Your Vote plans to raise required funds through a multi-layered strategy.

The campaign is expected to launch a beta model in Mumbai, India in 2011 and if successful, will expand its operations first to a larger number of institutions within the city and eventually across India. Once, successful with its primary goal, Know Your Vote will seek to further diversify its operations to make today's youth, tomorrow's leaders.

## Management Team

**Dhruv Sarin,**  
*Founder & CEO*

**Tarini Kumar,**  
*VP Communications*

**Sanjay Bhatia,**  
*VP Development*

**Sravya Darse,**  
*VP Operations*

**Mahika Parikh,**  
*VP Programming*

**Rhea Tibrewala,**  
*VP Outreach*

**Trishla Selarka**  
*VP Research Team*



# The Campaign

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## Concept Statement:

Know Your Vote (KYV) is a non-partisan grassroots political awareness campaign targeted specifically towards making the 15 to 24 age group more politically active and getting them to make educated voting decisions.

## Target Market:

### *Location*

Initially, KYV will be based out of Mumbai, India which is the home base for most of the founding team. However, in the long run, similar campaigns are expected to be launched in cities and towns across the Indian sub-continent depending on the performance of the initial campaign.

### *Age Group*

The campaign will be primarily geared toward individuals between ages 15-24 age, as they will comprise the future leaders and politicians of the nation. In addition, they are young enough to be influenced but old enough to understand the importance of the right to vote.

### *Demographics*

At the outset, the campaign will work with upper middle class students as these are the most apathetic towards voting and the easiest to contact through schools and college institutions.

## Mission Statement:

*“ To create long term and sustainable change in the mindset of India’s youth by increasing political awareness and stimulating those individuals to make educated voting decisions. ”*



# The Motivation and Opportunity

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## The Idea:

The idea for Know Your Vote was first conceived in 2008. The terrorist attacks in Mumbai which took place in November of that year resulted in citizens being more aware of the gaping security gaps across the country which could be attributed largely to the corruption and incompetence of the government. In the aftermath of the attacks, citizens united against the ineptitude of the government and showed their disapproval through rallies and demonstrations where they demanded more accountability from their elected government officials<sup>1</sup>.

The next set of local elections saw a spate of Independent candidates run for positions in local governments. While most independent candidates lost the elections, they were able to draw significant support from locals including youths who helped with their campaigns. However, this momentum soon dissipated and the apathy which existed prior to the attacks seemed to return.

The Know Your Vote team noticed this return of apathy toward voting among the youth in particular and realized that this had to change. The future of India rests largely in the hands of the youth and their involvement in the selection process for our country's leaders could play a vital role. This thought process resulted in the formation of Know Your Vote.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1864035,00.html>,  
[http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1862893,00.html?imw=Y&loomia\\_si=t0:a16:g2:r3:c0.0724085:b19949147&xid=Loomia](http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1862893,00.html?imw=Y&loomia_si=t0:a16:g2:r3:c0.0724085:b19949147&xid=Loomia)



# Proposed Social Benefits and Measures

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Know Your Vote seeks to go beyond a short term solution to the current problem of voter apathy. Our campaign looks to revolutionize the Indian youth's mindset regarding politics. By tackling the issue at a grassroots level, we can bring out long term sustainable change in the political arena. Furthermore, since the campaign targets young individuals, it influences the future generation that will represent us as the leaders of tomorrow. By making these individuals politically aware, they will be more willing to run for elected posts within the government thereby bringing about change on a macro level and reducing issues like corruption and incompetence within our Government. The success of the Know Your Vote campaign will also foster a sense of youth empowerment and open a window to change that is both credible and inclusive. Thus, as mentioned earlier, Know Your Vote will not only increase youth voter turnout but will also result in improving the overall conditions present within the government.

Voter turn-out will be relatively easier to measure as it is quantitative, as opposed to a lot of the other social benefits that Know Your Vote aims to achieve. In order to measure some of the other short term goals, the campaign can take into consideration the rate of expansion of the campaign, both in terms of participating colleges and students, turnout to events and the brand image and recognition of the campaign.

For the long term goals, surveys can be used to gauge changing attitudes and perceptions towards politics. Surveys can be distributed to both colleges participating and not participating in the campaign and the results can be compared to gain an in-depth understanding of the impacts of the campaign. Lastly, the long term goal of bringing about national change on a governmental level can be measured by noting the number of younger individuals running for elected posts.

# Competition

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A number of other campaigns have attempted to boost youth involvement within the political realm in India. The following list highlights some of the key competitors we've identified in this area of non-profit mobilizations:

## **Jaago Re** ([www.jaagore.com](http://www.jaagore.com))

A campaign sponsored by the Tata Tea Company, 'Jaago Re' serves as a source of information on current issues across India, information on registering for voting cards and a forum for individuals to discuss issues. However, while the campaign's website is a rich source of information and has strong funding support from a corporation, they aren't very actively reaching out to students and individuals.

## **Mumbai Votes** ([www.mumbaivotes.com](http://www.mumbaivotes.com))

The Mumbai Votes campaign seeks to inform people about the various candidates and their election platforms. According to the website, the campaign provides a "comprehensive portal for reliable, unbiased, perceptive and performance-based information on your local elected representatives." Again, while this campaign provides a lot of information towards making informed votes, has a number of partnerships and plans for sustainability, it does not have first hand involvement with the target population.

## **iVote - Wear the Mark** ([www.wearthemark.org](http://www.wearthemark.org))

iVote's 'Wear the Mark' campaign reached out to over 8000 youth before the 2009 elections through social networking websites, poster campaigns, personal meetings and guerilla marketing to get students out to register to vote. In addition, the campaign successfully lobbied the Election



committee to accept college IDs as the only identification students need to register themselves to vote. While this campaign successfully got youth out to register for voting IDs, it was not successful in bringing about long term change or assuring informed votes.

**Empowering India** ([www.empoweringindia.org](http://www.empoweringindia.org))

Empowering India is a campaign funded by Liberty Institute, a non-profit non-partisan liberal think tank based out of New Delhi, India. Similar to some of the previously mentioned organizations, it seeks to inform “citizens and civil society groups to access data about their elected representatives and the political parties.” While the website has a lot of useful information and data, the data is more statistical and is not easy to interpret. Furthermore, the website does not seem that attractive and seems to be focusing on already elected representatives as opposed to candidates.

**Praja** ([www.praja.org](http://www.praja.org))

Praja seeks to re-establish accountability and transparency in governance in India. It aims to bring about more communication between citizens and their elected representatives. The organization also provides information about local politicians their wards. However, the organization is focuses on local politics and is not directly competing with our goals.

Being in the non-profit industry, these competitors can also be used as resources or potential strategic partnerships. One can work with these organizations to further both organizations goals and objectives while benefitting the community. Furthermore, studying the operations of these organizations can help provide us with a better understanding of our market as well as compensate for the shortcomings of some of the other organizations.



# Business Model

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The business model for our campaign evolved over time as we studied various other organizations and campaigns with similar objectives and their subsequent results. Combining this information, we were able to develop a set of best practices and success factors that could bolster the chances of the campaigns success.

Some of the **key success factors** we identified were:

- ✓ Using peer-to-peer outreach programs
- ✓ Actively pursuing diversity within the organization
- ✓ Creating voter education materials locally
- ✓ Maintaining non-partisan reputation and high levels of transparency
- ✓ Partnering with a wide variety of organizations

Taking all these factors into consideration, we developed a business model that resembles a hub-and-spoke system wherein individual schools and colleges would have their own chapters or clubs that would be overseen by a national organization.

This model would enable us to meet a number of the key success factors as mentioned earlier. It would empower youth to become active members within the organization and spread the message among their peers. It would also allow for grassroots involvement within the organization and setting up locally relevant education materials and events. It would also allow for increased transparency as the smaller chapters would be able to document their operations in more detail and therefore develop a larger information bank. Lastly, we would be able to partner with a wider range of organizations not just on a national level but even smaller local levels.

**CASE STUDY:** The success of such a model has been previously seen in the Rotaract Club, an international organization interested in bringing global peace and international understanding. Today, they have over 8,200 clubs in 170 countries and geographic areas and almost a 150,000 members between the 18 to 30 age group. [[www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)]



# Go-to-Market Strategy

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Prior to launching a fully fledged campaign, Know Your Vote plans on beta testing the business model to gauge student demand and the success of the model.

Before beta-testing the model, Know Your Vote is first going to evaluate the various schools in the area and identify a list of key schools and universities to target. The institutions must be appropriately sized and not have a strong political studies program as that may inflate the success measures of our venture since students studying political science are more inclined to be interested.

Once this is done, the next step will be to go to these institutions and give presentations to the students. The presentations will focus largely on the negatives that exist in our country today and how being actively involved in the political process can reduce these negatives through lowering corruption and incompetence within the government. This strategy works on the principle that the human mind is likely to respond more strongly to negative information as compared to positive information<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, the information provided will be able to demonstrate positive change that can be brought about simply by voting, which will increase a sense of duty and accountability – and this should galvanize the student population into action.

After the information session, interested students will proceed to the next stage. Depending on the number of people interested, the KYV operations team will then either put them on the executive board of the newly formed chapter or conduct interviews to figure out who will be best suited for that position. There will then be an intensive training where the new team will be transitioned into their new positions and taught what we expect.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://psychology.uchicago.edu/people/faculty/cacioppo/jtcreprints/ilsc98.pdf>



# Funding

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Know Your Vote currently has a three pronged strategy on how it plans to raise funds to finance its plans. Initially, Know Your Vote will rely on contributions from the friends and family of the co-founders as well as investing limited personal funds. While this form of fundraising will be not be sustainable in the long term, it should be able to raise substantial funding to cover initial expenses like setting up the website and formally registering the organization.

The second stage for funding would be to build strong relationships with other organizations and seek resources and assistance, both monetary and otherwise from large corporations trying to fulfill their social responsibilities in addition to government agencies and NGOs. The tricky part about this funding strategy would be to maintain our non-partisan position and transparency in the eyes of the public. We should be able to do this by openly disclosing the sources of our funds, and ensuring that we seek funds from all types of organizations.

Simultaneously, Know Your Vote will also apply for grants and endowments from both government agencies as well as other NGOs that provide funding opportunities for local non-profits. Preparing these applications will help better establish our own organizational vision and the funds can be used to cover a portion of our expenses. Currently, Know Your Vote has received a \$1000 in seed money from Ashoka Youth Venture.

The last prong of our financing strategy would be to issue members discount cards at a low price. These discount cards would enable our members to get discounts at retailers around the city while Know Your Vote would earn money through selling the card and a small percentage of all purchases. Know Your Vote has identified a few discount card distributors in Mumbai and is looking to build a partnership by leveraging its potential to acquire a large member base.



# Challenges and Mitigating Strategies

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We identified the following key challenges Know Your Vote will face and have discussed how we can attempt to mitigate them:

**1. The youth in India is apathetic to voting and getting individuals involved can prove to be difficult.**

This is going to be one of the primary challenges the campaign will face. However, we have developed a two- point strategy to help overcome this issue. First, our involvement on the grassroots level is conducive to promotion through word of mouth by peers. Second, our strategy to focus on drawing the youth's attention on the negatives will help bring about interest.

**2. Raising the capital needed to establish such a venture**

Know Your Vote will initially require some capital to help set it up and get it off the ground and at later stages when it's trying to expand to other regions. While we will try to mitigate this challenge by having a three pronged approach to financing our operations and developing a fundraising plan, there is no guarantee that we will be able to raise enough money.

**3. Cultural and language barrier between KYV representatives and student audience.**

India is a very diverse country with over 400 existing languages and a mix of many different cultures. The KYV representatives presenting at a particular school or college may not be on the same wavelength as the audience resulting in miscommunication. Our grassroots model will mitigate this issue on some level as we can try and have more students actually involved



in the planning process as we go and members of the local chapters holding information sessions at their respective schools.

#### **4. Hub-and-spoke system may cause quality control issues**

The hub-and-spoke business model will make it harder for a centralized body to control the quality and non-partisan nature of each of the chapters. However, this will be mitigated by having regular meetings and web-conferences with the leaders of these chapters and making sure everything is conforming to predetermined and strictly maintained quality conditions.

#### **5. Students will be unable to make enough of a time commitment to the campaign**

Since most of our workforce as well as our customer base comprises largely of students, it is important to take into consideration the fact that their priority will be their academics and, as they get older, they will have less time to give to the campaign. However, this concern will be mitigated to some extent as only the most motivated individuals will be selected to lead the campaign. Furthermore, the introduction of a small membership fee will weed out unmotivated and inactive members.

#### **6. New information is constantly available**

The political realm is dynamic and constantly changing. New information is made available on an everyday basis. This may create an information lag between the data we present and what is out there. Nevertheless, as the number of chapters increases, we are likely to have more human resources which we can utilize to keep our information up to date. In addition, we can set up a forum and a database wherein other members can send in relevant updates.



## Future Plans

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In the long run, Know Your Vote aims to expand out of Mumbai and to other cities, towns and villages across the subcontinent. It seeks to serve as a platform where not only can the youth learn to be proactive about making a change in their community but also breed creativity by serving as a forum where our young leaders can share their thoughts and ideas.

Once successful, Know Your Vote would also consider expanding its operations to include voter registration drives and community service initiatives. It will harness the amassed resources of the organization to bring about change even outside the boundaries of the political realm and will try to tackle specific issues within the country by empowering the youth.

In conclusion, the only way to truly attain long lasting change within the government is to bring about widespread change in the mindsets of our youth -- tomorrows future leaders. This is ideally what Know Your Vote seeks to achieve by generating a new wave of patriotic and driven citizens who are truly running the world's largest Democracy.