

BUSINESS PLAN: SOUTH ASIAN ARTS

by

**Sabrina Saran
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Approval

Name: Sabrina Saran
Degree: Master of Business Administration
Title of Project: Business Plan: South Asian Arts

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Sudheer Gupta
Senior Supervisor
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Business Administration

Dr. Andrew von Nordenflycht
Second Reader
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Business Administration

Date Approved: _____

Abstract

The intention of this paper is to provide an understanding of South Asian Arts as an organization in the Arts industry in Vancouver. Elements of the company and the industry are explored in order to further comprehend the potential target markets and why they are as such. Due to the current surge in popularity of South Asian arts within mainstream culture, there is great potential in this company. Discussion segues into marketing initiatives that are necessary to compete with key players that are emerging as a result of a growing industry. A portfolio and an assistant are minor but significant operational adjustments, necessary to fulfil demand and maximize opportunities to expand to new potential markets.

Executive Summary

Business Opportunity/Benefit to Consumers

South Asian Arts has been effectively filling a great demand for arts needs in the city of Vancouver since 2005. The company captures the diverse essence of South Asian as well as North American arts and culture to deliver a plethora of products and services that cater to the diaspora of Vancouverites who enjoy a wide range of entertainment. The company has been recognized for providing a level of South Asian art that is considered high calibre and authentic as well as modern and innovative. The organization is comprised of the following 5 categories of business activities: Education/Touring, Bookings as Agents, Dance Studio/Workshops, (Performance Arts) Productions, Camp Dosti. Consumers of South Asian Arts can learn art forms from established artists; as artists, they can perform, as well as use the studio space; parents have the option of registering their children in the summer camp that runs July through August. This provides a holistic forum for consumers to artistically express themselves through a variety of means.

Our Customers

Although originally, our customers were mostly of South Asian origin, there has been increasing demand within the non-South Asian population. Our products and services are offered in a manner that is universal in language and appeal. Our customers include the actively-immersed, who partake in the art form as a performer, as well as the passively-

immersed, who assume the audience-member role—both are integral to customer experience.

Value Proposition

We make efforts to ensure the quality of art is professional and creative. Theatre and performance art productions are held in prestigious venues while ticket prices are kept affordable. With the advent of our non-profit society, we offer products and services at no cost to the customer—allowing for the community to freely enjoy the arts.

How We Will Make Money

We make money by performing, teaching and summer camp enrolment. A typical performance showcase offers approximately \$500 for a 15-minute set; teaching at public schools pays \$650 - \$800 per day; a 25-children group brings in over \$13,000 per month.

Growth Prospects

Funding for South Asian arts and culture ventures is on a steady-rise. The current fascination with Slumdog Millionaire and Bollywood only increases the growth prospects for this industry due to its expansion into mainstream and non-South Asian culture.

The Competition and Our Competitive Advantage

Our competition lies in the various sections of business activities we engage in. In effect, we have a few competitors that either perform, teach or provide summer camps, but ours is an arts company. We are not limited to one or two art forms. Rather, we keep up with the community wants, needs and trends to customize our products and services according to the ever-evolving demands of the arts industry.

The Risk

Risk is low to moderate. When risk is relatively higher than normal, the company engages in precautionary methods to offset risk. For instance, productions are kept at modest capacities until a greater-than-expected response warrants encore presentations for extra show times to be arranged for and added. Fixed costs are also minimal.

Financing

Funding is required for the non-profit sector of the company to expand and develop. Financing is required on a project-to-project basis.

Why Invest in South Asian Arts

The South Asian Arts Society provides avenues of arts consumption and expression at no cost to the consumer; this will help increase awareness and in effect, demand of South Asian arts within the general community. The company is diverse and dynamic, following trends and raising the standard of South Asian arts products and services in Vancouver. There is a great and increasing demand for these products, and South Asian Arts has the capability of maximizing these opportunities.

Dedication

To my father, my mother and my brother, all of whom have given me extraordinary heights to live up to—academically and professionally, as well as the example of integrity and respect with which they conduct their lives.

To Raakhi and Gopi for allowing me to use their ‘baby’ as my final project.

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Glossary

Bollywood	Moniker assigned to the Indian film industry; a colloquial definition of the term has been derived to include a genre of dance that is synonymous with the stylized dance numbers in these films
Bhangra	A music and/or dance originated in the state of Punjab, India. Bhangra has evolved to include Western instruments and rhythms.
Golden Temple	Formally known as Harmandir Sahib, located in Amritsar, Punjab. It is considered the holiest and most culturally significant of Sikh temples.
Punjabi	Refers to those things which originated from the Northern Indian state known as Punjab.
Slumdog Millionaire	British film that was set and shot in Mumbai and earned 8 Academy Awards; the film created a mainstream fascination with Bollywood culture.
South Asian	That which pertains to people or objects originating from South Asia, which is comprised of the following core countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.

1: Business Concept

1.1 Introduction/Company Description

In 2005, two members of an illustrious dance team established a partnership to create South Asian Arts—an arts company based in Vancouver, BC, promoting South Asian arts culture. The dance team performed a folk dance of the state of Punjab, India, known as Bhangra. When people immigrated to other parts of the world, they brought their arts and cultures along with them. The fusion of the arts and culture from one's native country with the arts and culture of a new country gave rise to a globalization effect whereby people around the world were being introduced to a variety of cultural arts. As a result, Bhangra as a dance form had reached a status of national and international competitions to which teams from different countries would travel and participate in, getting to know each other throughout the circuit. Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian gained exposure to the North American Bhangra community as members of a competitive team that participated and travelled to these competitions and was extremely successful. The prestige associated with their team in addition to the practical experience they gained as a result, presented both Sinha and Sian with many opportunities to casually teach and serve as consultants for local productions and talent. These opportunities were formalized when South Asian Arts was born. The company aims at promoting South Asian music and art in Vancouver, and eventually expanding to British Columbia,

Canada and beyond. As an umbrella encompassing not only folk, but classical arts of India, South Asian Arts works with successful local artists, offers courses in music and dance for a variety of skill levels and also runs a summer camp for children called Camp Dosti. South Asian Arts is an active member of ArtStarts, touring schools in British Columbia, and an Artist in Residence with the Vancouver School Board. The organization has worked with several groups including the UN World Urban Festival, the Grey Cup Parade, Scotia Bank Dance Centre, Canada Place, Delhi2Dublin and FootEdge Dance Company. South Asian Arts Society is a non-profit faction of South Asian Arts and was established in 2008. The business operations at South Asian Arts can be divided into the following 5 categories: Education/Touring, Bookings as Agents, Dance Studio/Workshops, Arts Productions, Camp Dosti.

1.1.1 Comprehensive description of product/service

- Education/Touring

In the Spring of 2007, South Asian Arts applied to ArtStarts, developing a lesson plan, to become Artists in Residence in British Columbia. ArtStarts is a non-profit organization which offers educators and artists a forum and resources to promote arts and creativity within BC's schools. During an annual showcase of artists, South Asian Arts presented a 12-minute audition piece before a gathering of BC's principals. The educators rate approximately 200 artists during the span of 3 days and request these artists to teach at their schools according to the scores. At the time of their audition, Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian achieved the highest rating among the other artists and have been booking and touring schools throughout BC as a result of the excellent feedback they receive on their workshops. Their workshop consists of teaching basic

elements of the traditional South Asian folk dance, Bhangra, explaining the origins of basic steps and rhythms, as well as teaching contemporary style South Asian dancing to the students referred to as Bollywood.

Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian also offer classes on individual and group bases, both private and public.

- Bookings as Agents

The owners have been immersed in the South Asian arts scene in Vancouver for a number of years and as a result, have built connections with numerous artists. The vast number of artists in their social circle was substantial enough to warrant producers of shows and events to call on them to act as agents in recruiting talent for local productions. As a direct result of being artists themselves, the owners feel that they understand the artists' needs and can work to bridge the gap between artists' and producers' wishes. Many artists do not understand the business side of the industry and in fact revolt against any changes to their art to cater to an audience. South Asian Arts prides itself in providing a platform for performers to uphold their artistic integrity while at the same time making it alluring from a commercial standpoint.

South Asian Arts has been approached to act as agents for South Asian talent in a number of high scale productions including the 2009 Junos for which the organizers wanted a South Asian influenced opening number at the start of the show. The Junos committee approached South Asian Arts to provide them with the names and photograph headshots of the top female Bhangra dancers in Vancouver. The company put forth

several names from a highly competitive and acclaimed local team, and from this, four dancers and two instrumentalists were chosen to represent Canadian South Asian arts at the opening of the Junos ceremonies. A photograph of the performers from this opening was published in newspapers nationwide the following morning.

South Asian Arts also provides artists for several festivals in and around the city such as the Children's Festival, the Fusion Festival, Desifest, the Vancouver International Film Festival and the Vancouver Folk Festival.

- Dance Studio/Workshops

The South Asian Arts studio is located in an area that is densely populated with people of South Asian origin as well as a market of South Asian shops and businesses. South Asian Arts rents the space out to individual artists needing a space to practice as well as organized teams who practice regularly. It is wired so that bands can set-up speakers, amplifiers, microphones, etc; it has a full-length mirror that stretches across the front wall and a wooden floor optimal for dancing; during camp, the appropriate furniture is brought in so that it can be used for camp activities.

Although some classes are taught by Sian and Sinha, they have an extensive network of South Asian artists with whom workshops are developed. This is one of the defining features of South Asian Arts, as no other company within Vancouver provides workshops to this extent. The workshops are conducted in the studio. Many artists come from out of town for a show they are performing in and teach workshops in between their

rehearsals at the South Asian Arts studio. These workshops include a wide variety of South Asian arts including folk, modern, and classical dance as well as folk and classical musical instruments.

In addition to folk and fusion, a staple workshop that has become a regular fixture at the South Asian Arts studio is conducted by Mangala Bhatt, a classical Indian dance teacher from India. She has conducted 3 workshops annually since 2007, and she has gained a following of students who now expect to learn from her 2 months out of the year. The studio is in use for the classes that are held 3 times per week during her stay. The advanced students are encouraged to perform in the show she puts on every time she comes to Vancouver which is sponsored by South Asian Arts.

- Arts Productions
 - Theatre Productions

In 2004, in Montreal, writer/actor Anita Majumdar began performing a theatre piece she had written and developed. Upon hearing the general premise of the theatre play, South Asian Arts commissioned her to present the piece in Vancouver. In conjunction with the New World Theatre (a non-profit organization), South Asian Arts presented Fish Eyes in July 2006 at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. South Asian Arts split the box office profits 50/50 with Anita Majumdar and enjoyed the success of full audiences and excellent reviews. This caused them to seek out more opportunities to work with the actress. In January 2008, in partnership with the PuSh International Performing Arts Festival, South Asian Arts presented the Misfit by Anita Majumdar. It made the cover of

the Georgia Strait newspaper and was a sold out show with excellent reviews. The next show was produced as part of the Cultural Olympiad of 2009; it was titled Aisha 'n Ben. These are 60 – 75 minute theatre productions generally performed entirely by Majumdar herself. There is a food sponsor that provides Indian appetizers and an Indian bazaar in the foyer of the theatre for the audience to peruse before and after the show. Tickets are approximately \$20 and the show usually runs for 3 nights.

- Cultural Olympiad

In 2008, the city of Vancouver began celebrating a Cultural Olympiad each winter leading up to the 2010 Winter Olympic games. South Asian Arts applied to the Cultural Olympiad and was accepted to put together a show based on the concept pitched in the application, that the talent born and raised in Canada to immigrant parents could emulate the talent of the country they immigrated from, in this case, India. South Asian Arts featured a showcase of 2nd and 3rd generation South Asian Canadian artists in a show as a part of the Cultural Olympiad that presented traditional as well as fusion performance art of South Asian origin. It was a 2-hour show presented in the Norman Rosthein Theatre in Vancouver, fully sold-out.

- 'Canada, My India'

In 2009, the Surrey's Children's Festival allotted an hour-long set for South Asian Arts to entertain the crowd. South Asian Arts revived 'Canada, My India' (Part 2) and presented talent under the same theme—traditional art forms as well as fusion items, replete with spoken poetic interludes that introduced the upcoming performance piece.

The idea was to create a seamless showcase where one item flowed into the next, as a holistic experience rather than a series of separate performance items. The continuous nature of the show helped keep the audience captivated by avoiding breaks in the programme that can cause viewers to lose interest and walk away. ‘Canada, My India’ is expected to be an annual fixture in South Asian Arts’ roster of events.

- Camp Dosti

One of South Asian Arts’ major products is its summer camp. Camp Dosti runs in two, month-long cycles; one through the month of July, and a second enrollment of children (ages 5 – 13) is accepted for a session that takes part in August. In collaboration with a tutoring company, the Higher Grade Learning Centre, Camp Dosti’s daily routine consists of an academic morning followed by an arts afternoon with adjustments made for guest speakers and presentations/performances.

- The following is Camp Dosti’s mission statement:

The Camp Dosti summer program has been developed to enrich the lives of children with the diversity of cultures through the appreciation and application of knowledge and the inspiration of the arts. We want to support and nurture children, encouraging them to be well-rounded individuals and free from the biases and mainstream constraints of conformity, and allow for independence, confidence and understanding to flourish within them

With Camp Dosti, Sian and Sinha hire teachers who are not working during the summer. During a two-day training session, the teachers are given a rough guideline of expectations and suggestions, but all teachers create their own lesson plans and are responsible for supervising the children and conducting the daily camp activities. Sian

and Sinha drop in from time-to-time, but much of the daily decision-making authority is handed down to the teachers. During the month, children are working towards a theatre play that is the finale of the camp activities. They work on everything from their lines to creation of the set and costumes. The last day of camp involves the children putting on this theatre production for parents and anyone who is welcome to come and watch. Being the first of its kind, Camp Dosti allows for South Asian influenced arts to be fused with academic activities and a place where South Asian immigrant parents feel comfortable sending their children.

- One-time Events

The significance of one-time events that do not recur in the company's operations is in following popularity trends as well as staying innovative and fresh. As an arts company, it is essential for South Asian Arts to be creative and continually provide consumers with new forms of entertainment. Realistically, many times it is not possible to replicate a show due to the limited availability of artists and scheduling. South Asian Arts' one-time events are as follows:

- Vicki Virk

One such workshop was conducted with prominent Bhangra dancer and teacher, Vicki Virk from San Francisco. Despite being Bhangra teachers themselves, the owners recognize the value in bringing acclaimed artists to Vancouver and giving customers and students a chance to learn from renowned artists from all types of artistic backgrounds.

- Parul Shah

Another workshop held at the South Asian Arts studio was conducted by Parul Shah, a professional dancer trained in Indian classical dance. This artist was brought in from New York and had developed a category of dance that fused together the traditional Indian classical dance she was trained in with contemporary Western movements. Fusion is catching on in the art industry in Vancouver, but there is a lack of resources whereby it can be taught systematically due to the early phases of its emergence. South Asian Arts provides a space and also artists who are formally trained in both South Asian art and western art forms; this allows for students to learn and perform quality fusion performance items as they have a solid resource from which to acquire the skills of both art forms required to produce the hybrid of dance or music referred to as fusion.

- ‘Bollywood Wedding’

The non-profit sector of South Asian Arts is gearing up to present a 2-hour outdoor performance theatre production at the Italian Gardens (PNE) in July 2009. Raakhi Sinha, herself, wrote the script about a semi-arranged marriage between a boy from Canada and a girl from India. The script follows the typical lead up to an Indian wedding complete with several pre-wedding festivities as well as flashy choreographed dance numbers to entertain audiences and give it that Bollywood movie feel. The show is to be presented outdoors, free of charge, but with reserved seating as space is limited. Currently, there are 4 shows scheduled but due to the high level of interest expressed by a number of people who were unable to reserve tickets, 2 matinee performances may be added.

- 'No Holds Bar'

Partnering up with the PuSh International Festival, South Asian Arts held No Holds Bar. This event was a collaboration of artists from different backgrounds and diverse world drums combining with prominent disc jockeys from California, Seattle and Vancouver. Ticket prices were \$25, and it was held at Atlantis Night Club in Vancouver. The venue attracted a different crowd of people, many of whom were exposed to several South Asian music styles for the first time. Conversely, the actual programme itself attracted the usual performance goers that regularly follow this genre of performance art, but brought them to a venue they would otherwise not visit. South Asian Arts holds esteem in introducing market segments to products and services they had previously not known about.

- 'Bollywood Seen'

Together with New Works, a non-profit organization aimed at promoting dance, South Asian Arts presented Bollywood Seen. The story was the making of a Bollywood movie, from a behind-the-scenes perspective. Audiences experienced an hour-long presentation of dance theatre at the Roundhouse Theatre in Vancouver. There were 2 shows and ticket entry was by donation.

1.1.1.1 Competitive Advantages/Core Competencies

- Brand/Image:

South Asian Arts has a huge competitive advantage in their owners. Raakhi Sinha

and Gurpreet Sian are the faces of the company as well as the heart and soul. Both individuals have been immersed in forms of South Asian arts since childhood, and each brings a unique skill set upon which they have expanded as a team. A huge draw for South Asian Arts is in the name of its owners. As radio co-hosts of a prominent South Asian station, RJ1200AM, the two of them have established a following throughout the years that is receptive and interested in South Asian Arts' services. The local celebrity status they enjoy works as a huge competitive advantage in attracting crowds and audiences.

- Promotion:

Another advantage of being on radio is in marketing. During their earlier bout as morning show hosts, Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian captured the morning listeners on their ways to school and work. It was a 4-hour live show that involved a mix of music and talk; in between songs, there would be verbal banter about everything from current events to social issues, including listener participation through calls into the station simply to make comments or otherwise as contestants in games and challenges. This rapport with the listeners allowed the hosts to further establish their presence in the local happenings in and around town. They were free to promote their company events on air through conversation and current event updates. Due to the expanding of the business, Sinha and Sian had to resign from their morning-show duties and opted for an evening slot of airtime between 7pm – 11pm. This show could be pre-recorded, which allowed for more flexibility in the hosts' schedules to tend to their company.

- Efficiencies/Intertwined Network:

In the beginning, despite the owners having numerous artistic successes, it was difficult to obtain business opportunities based on no prior experience. Through hard work, persistence, and innovation, South Asian Arts has worked its way up to a point where it can use past examples and experience to leverage its position in obtaining new business opportunities. Having been operational for 4 years, the company has had many successes and developed its presence as a credible arts company. These successes and recognitions perpetuate into increasingly advantageous opportunities for the company. Along with these successes, the South Asian Arts network has grown to a point where the company is approached with attractive propositions rather than having to solicit for them. The Canadian Juno Awards ceremony performance was one such opportunity, and there are several others as well as network television shows that are eager to take advantage of the recent surge in interest in South Asian music and dance. The network is further solidified through radio interviews; for instance, artists who are contacted for interviews are accessible to South Asian Arts because of the radio connection, and also, artists that South Asian Arts works with who would like some exposure can request radio time or interviews on Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian's show. Since the beginning, South Asian Arts made efforts to support local artists, even when the company was struggling at the onset. These efforts indicate a set of values and imply a business integrity that many artists have taken note of and try to reciprocate in loyalty. In effect, the network of contacts that South Asian Arts has amassed helps the company to be able to be efficient, not having to expel energy and resources researching and soliciting business. Much of the information the company receives on future business ideas and potential ventures is

through word-of-mouth from the extensive network of which they are a part.

- First-mover Advantage:

Although South Asian art forms have been around for ages, the migration of South Asian people to other parts of the world, namely as of the 20th century, created a demand for these art forms in places previously void of them. The city of Vancouver in British Columbia is a diaspora of a population from a vast range of backgrounds. The South Asian immigrants who settled in Vancouver wanted to pass some traditions forth that were not easily executed in the city due to a lack of organization. The last 3 decades have seen a major increase in the accessibility of South Asian art forms—whether they be in the form of schools to teach the actual art form, or in the form of entertainment to perform for an audience. Although organization had occurred so that many Vancouverites of South Asian origin could enjoy these cultural arts, there was little representation to the non-South Asian demographic. Specifically, in reference to the 2nd and later generation South Asian Canadians, there was not much representation of the hybrid culture that had formed out of the mixture of South Asian and North American values and beliefs which many of these Canadian youth had grown up with. There were several traditional dance and music schools—classical as well as folk. There were several performances that would occur in and around the city that represented a specific region of South Asia. Although many of these performances and shows were put on by the youth, there was no avenue for encompassing all the various South Asian art forms we had been exposed to growing up in Vancouver. South Asian Arts positioned itself as a hub for all things pertaining to South Asian arts—the first organization of its kind in

Vancouver. A prominent fixture in the company's arsenal is its annual youth camp. At its inception, there was no other camp of this sort that catered to the South Asian population in Vancouver; within 3 years, organizations have entered the market on this camp venture, recognizing the demand for a service such as this in the city. Due to its first-mover advantage, however, South Asian Arts is the more prominent camp that registers far more youth due to its established presence.

1.1.1.2 Background Skills/Experience

Raakhi Sinha is a well-known personality in the Vancouver South Asian arts community. In addition to co-hosting a daily radio show on RJ1200, she has also filmed a 10-part Bhangra dance show called "Bhangra Workout" which airs on cable television; she can also be heard on CBC Radio 1 presenting Bhangra and Bollywood music segments. As an artist, Sinha has been trained in several forms of South Asian dance, performing for the UN World Urban Forum, the Grey Cup Parade and most recently at the 2009 Junos with Russell Peters. Along with South Asian Arts, she concurrently co-founded FootEdge Dance Company; the two organizations often work together on projects. Raakhi Sinha's early work experience includes volunteering as a children's guide for the Vancouver Aquarium for four years throughout which she honed in on her presentation skills, speaking with groups of children and parents and educating them on historical as well as current facts and information regarding the Aquarium. Raakhi Sinha was also involved in BC Hydro's Power Smart campaign, where once again, she would present; the role entailed setting up presentations at retail outlets as well as local schools and offer energy saving advice and tips. Sinha then joined the team of iStyle magazine

when it was into its 3rd issue. This was a young start-up venture by a young woman; Sinha learned a great deal of business workings from this experience. Because it was a small and new company, Sinha was involved in everything from branding and marketing to photoshoots, graphics design, budgeting and financial projections. She also saw, firsthand, the impacts of a failing business as iStyle discontinued production and exited the industry. These various business operations and presentation skills combined with her love of arts make Raakhi Sinha a dedicated co-owner and Programs Director at South Asian Arts.

Gurpreet Sian is a co-owner and the Managing Director at South Asian Arts. In addition to co-hosting his daily radio show with Sinha, Sian can be seen co-hosting a television show called Punjabi Vibes that airs weekly on the Shaw Multicultural Channel. Sian has been involved in South Asian arts since childhood to presently, performing at the One-Year Olympic Countdown Concert with Sarah McLauchlan, the Opening of the new Vancouver Convention Centre, and most recently at the 2009 Junos with Russell Peters. Gurpreet Sian completed his degree in Mathematics at Simon Fraser University while pursuing a small business venture that he co-established with a friend. Having taken a few business courses in order to have a base academic understanding, the two started up a website, www.indoinfo.com which was successful, receiving upwards of 10,000 hits per day, but Sian was looking for something more arts-involved and challenging to delve into. Sian had also been part of a start-up South Asian drum school, in which he was a teacher but also learned the back-end workings of operating a small

business. This experience also gave Gurpreet Sian exposure to working with children and the savvy of working with the Vancouverite South Asian clientele.

2: Market Environment: Description of Industry

South Asian Arts is located in the city of Vancouver, consistently listed as one of the world's best cities to live in; Mercer Consulting and Economist Intelligent Unit have reported similar findings in 2009 (Tourism Review, 2009). The South Asian arts industry is influenced significantly by South Asian pop culture as well as North American pop culture. In the arts industry, there is an underrepresentation of South Asian art forms. The diverse audiences and citizens of Vancouver enjoy a myriad of multicultural art forms, and in effect, the opportunity to produce and distribute these arts is available to those who are informed. There is a general attitude among the population along the Pacific Rim and West Coast of healthy living and a characteristic interest in living well—examples include yoga centres, availability of vegetarian and health conscious menu items at restaurants, and spiritual awareness activities.

2.1 Industry Analysis

Using the Five Forces Model, developed by Michael Porter, we can gain further understanding of the industry that South Asian Arts is operating within.

- **Entry of Competitors**

Barriers to entry are all low to moderate.

- Capital/Investment requirements

No considerable investments in capital are required. Other than the Dance Studio, there are no other risky or fixed costs associated with the company's operations.

- Customer switching costs

For touring/education, bookings, dance studio/workshops, productions and Camp Dosti, there are no customer costs associated with switching to a competitor.

- Access to Industry distribution channels

Artists and representatives would have to invest some time in making the right contacts in order to be able to distribute their products and services to the right events and people.

- Brand loyalty

Although there is brand loyalty associated with Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian as the owners of South Asian Arts, loyalty does not withstand the inconvenience of time, schedules and funds. For example, if a show wanted South Asian Arts for a performance, but the company was not available, they would most likely find a replacement instead of waiting or re-scheduling, especially if this incurred costs. In the absence of these inconveniences, South Asian Arts' current consumers and customers are relatively loyal and prefer to deal with the company for future performance arts needs.

- **Threat of Substitutes**

- Quality of substitutes

There are few substitutes that can match the quality of product offered by South Asian Arts.

For education/touring, there is no other South Asian artist in ArtStarts, but several indirect substitutes of equal quality.

For bookings, there are between 15 and 20 individuals and organizations that can provide a similar quality of events as well as artists for those events as South Asian Arts.

In the area of dance, there are quality kids as well as collegiate teams of Bhangra, approximately 2 or 3 quality classical dance schools that can compare with the calibre of the workshops conducted, and one substitute Bollywood dance school/troupe.

For productions as well as Camp Dosti, the quality of substitutes is low and incomparable with most of the competition.

- **Bargaining Power of Buyers**

- Differentiation

For productions and bookings, South Asian Arts differentiates itself from its competition by being established, innovative and aligned with accomplished talent. This

allows for their products to stand out as highly creative and authentic. The company's social network also allows for its artists to gain higher quality exposure by performing at higher scale shows and events.

Although their product is differentiated, the scope of South Asian arts is so vast and so diverse that it is difficult to be highly specialized in all fields. For this reason, competitive dance schools offer classes and training on a regular basis that is superior to South Asian Arts because that is their field of expertise.

- Switching Costs

There are no significant transaction costs for a buyer switching to another product, service or company. It is just a matter of locating the right organization or individual.

- **Bargaining Power of Suppliers**

- Suppliers are the artists the company hires and works with

The high concentration of quality artists in Vancouver disables them from having much power when it comes to bargaining. Some artists have set a precedent for themselves and refuse jobs based on payment; however, most artists are starved for paid jobs and work part-time, non-arts jobs to support themselves. For this reason, artists are at the mercy of organizations like South Asian Arts.

- **Rivalry among existing Firms**

- Structure of competition

The competition is structured as many smaller companies who offer one or two of the services provided by South Asian Arts. This results in a diverse range of competition from several different avenues.

- Structure of Industry costs

Industry costs are relatively low. Many individuals and organizations are created in little time and immerse as players due to the low cost structure of offering arts products and services. Once in, an organization can keep risk at a low level as well. The Studio lease and booking a theatre for a production are the two riskier substantive costs that a company like South Asian Arts incurs.

- Strategic objectives

Most of the companies in the Industry are small and offer one or two specialized services. This allows the credible ones to develop a positive brand image as well as produce in mass quantities, in comparison with South Asian Arts. For example, Shiamak Dayar's dance company focuses on Bollywood dance; the organization is growing and pumping out dance numbers and performers/students in high quantities. The ones with low quality, are in comparison, much lower in cost to the consumer.

South Asian Arts encompasses a wide variety of artistic endeavours and as a result, is not restricted to specific dance forms or theatre productions. Rather, as art evolves with popular culture and trends, the company finds new and innovative methods to express it.

- Exit barriers

As most rivals have not put funds into an office space, studio space or any real estate, their fixed financial responsibilities are insignificant. For this reason, it is fairly easy to exit the industry.

2.2 Current Market Demand

The current market demand for South Asian Arts is relatively high. The main factors contributing to this current state of popularity are as follows:

- Popular Culture/Community

The arrival of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Whistler spawned the inception of the annual Cultural Olympiads leading up to the Winter Games. This increased the opportunities for cultural arts in Vancouver during the months of January to March from 2008 – 2010. The Cultural Olympiad performing arts shows draw in crowds of people who do not normally buy tickets to watch a specific cultural art form. This festival has further expanded South Asian Arts' market into non-South Asian populations in Vancouver.

The general increase of demand and expansion of Bollywood culture is also influential on the demand of South Asian Arts' products and services. Interest in Bollywood style music and dance is currently high relative to the past, but it has seen a steady increase in the past few years.

- Brand

The demand for South Asian Arts is directly affected by the recognition and exposure of their two owners and their affiliated teams and groups.

2.3 Key Success Factors

- The Big Draw: Bhangra, Punjabi community (size, clout)

The South Asian community in Vancouver is largely comprised of people who emigrated from the province of Punjab. Bhangra is the folk music and dance originating from this region and as a result, the demand for Bhangra lessons in Vancouver is especially high amongst the South Asian arts that are sought after. South Asian Arts has recognized Bhangra as their hot ticket. Bhangra is the main sell in lessons as well as performance showcases. A sizable audience can be ensured if there are certain notable Bhangra teams on the roster to perform at a show or event; once this audience is captured, introductions to other forms of music and dance can occur. Both Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian are skilled artists and teachers of Bhangra—having taken the time and effort to learn the origin of the dance form as well as the basis behind fundamental steps and the appropriate technical terms and rhythms.

- Network

The tight-knit community of the South Asian arts industry commands a co-dependency. News of negative interactions spreads quickly within the community and can gravely discredit an organization or individuals. Conversely, positive communication and support is returned in some capacity, and it also aids in being better informed and aware of new developments happening within the South Asian arts industry in Vancouver.

2.4 Overall Direction for Future of the Industry

The overall direction for the future of the industry seems promising and indicates room for growth. As South Asian arts and culture is expanding into new markets (non-South Asian markets), there is a great deal of opportunity for businesses to capitalize on the products and services that are expanding into these new markets. Corporate giant, Walmart has introduced a Bollywood style line of women's wear at 16 of its locations within Canada, a move that indicates Walmart's recognition of the value of these items (Catto, 2009).

The VIBC committee also recognizes the potential in a market that is underserved. Since it was established, VIBC went from a 2-day competition to a 10-day festival in just 3 years.

The Cultural Olympiad is set for one more year, 2010, and will provide a space for the production of South Asian art forms just as it has in the years preceding.

South Asian Arts has been able to seize the momentum of pop culture's fascination with the arts of South Asia these past few years in particular. As their opportunities have increased, the organization has used this momentum to develop future projects and delve into new ventures. One such project is 'Bollywood Wedding' which will hopefully strengthen the future prospects for productions such as these. In effect, the company invests in projects, which will then further secure the future of the industry.

2.5 Trends

Trends in the community and popular culture affect South Asian Arts significantly. Enrolment and performance requests increases with the arrival South Asian festivals, particularly Vaisakhi, a harvest festival taking place in Spring as well as Diwali, a festival of lights occurring in Autumn; also wedding season in the summer months causes an increase due to the desire for performance pieces during wedding festivities. South Asian Arts also notes a significant increase in enrolment annually after VIBC. These annual piques of interest are expected and considered busy times for business. There are, however, some trends which are not annual and are unpredictable in terms of length of time they will be popular. These are the fascinations with South Asian culture that is rooted in Western/North American popular culture.

One such product that entered the market was the 2008 feature film, Slumdog Millionaire. The popularity of this film created a buzz surrounding South Asian culture

and music that affected the South Asian arts business industry. The demand for Bollywood movies has increased internationally, with several entries submitted to the illustrious Cannes film festival in 2008 (Frater, 2009). Market segments previously uninterested became intrigued by Bollywood dancing and wanted to learn it or see it performed live. Although there were South Asian culture-focused films in the past that had reached Western markets, there hadn't been one that had reached the heights of popularity of *Slumdog Millionaire*. Although it was a UK production and technically not a Bollywood film, the movie was filmed in Mumbai (home to the Bollywood industry) and included local Indian talent; the appeal of this film forayed into non-South Asian markets (Daniels, 2009).

Another influence in popular culture is television. Globalization has allowed consumers to enjoy the arts and culture of many different origins without leaving the comfort of their living rooms (Spangler, 2009). The successful reality show, *So You Think You Can Dance*, auditions dancers from all over the country and filters them down to a group of top 20 dancers who perform a diverse range of dance genres on a weekly basis for audiences at home to vote on. This show, of which there is a Canadian as well as American version, showcases a Bollywood dance piece every season. The introduction of South Asian dancing and music into mainstream media allows for demand to be created and increased in a market where it may have previously been void.

In addition to television and film influences, celebrity personalities tend to have an impact on trends as well. The choice of Russell Peters for the 2009 Junos ceremonies prompted organizers of the show to request South Asian dancing. South Asian Arts was

hired for the ceremonies because it was considered to be a great fit with comedian Russell Peters (he is a South Asian Canadian) to have him enter with a colourful bout of South Asian cultural dancing. Peters' comedic material regularly highlights his heritage, which in line with the current Slumdog Millionaire induced Bollywood interest, warranted contracting a company like South Asian Arts to provide entertainment for the show.

Trends that occur regularly as annual cycles are intensified by trends in popular culture as the market for South Asian Arts' services increases.

2.6 Challenges affecting the Industry

During an economic downturn, the first cuts in funding are usually made to the Arts programs. When the general population is cutting back on expenses, entertainment and leisure spending is more than likely to get cut down from both a consumer as well as producer standpoint. The South Asian arts industry in Vancouver is greatly influenced by the South Asian entertainment that is produced. The economic slump has affected the Bollywood entertainment sector; an Ernst & Young representative predicts that the \$2 billion a year Bollywood film industry is in its worst decline in revenues in a decade as box office sales in April were down 77% from a year earlier (Bellman, 2009).

For example, funding for Bollywood Wedding was extremely difficult to obtain. Not a single sponsorship from a bank; came from Canada Council for the Arts and private donations. Banks are also feeling the hit of the recession, and in effect, are less able to fund community activities.

3: Competition

3.1 Description of Direct and Indirect Competition in the 5 product lines

Education/Touring:

Competitor Description	Quality of Product	Price and Availability
There is a roster of over 100 artists in ArtStarts available for booking in BC schools. No other artist or group teaches South Asian dance.	All registered artists have met a standard. Most are booked based on the quality of their performance during the showcase.	Artist workshop prices are comparable across the board. Availability varies among individuals and groups.

So far, there has not been any loss of business due to competition within the educational touring circuit for South Asian Arts. As a result of excellent feedback and a great working relationship with South Asian Arts, ArtStarts has not taken on any other South Asian dance artists as a part of their roster.

Bookings as Agents

Competitor Description	Quality of Product	Price and Availability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artists as Agents <p>Better-known artists are booked directly by an event organizer who contacts the artist specifically.</p> <p>Other times, artists will apply to be part of a showcase.</p>	<p>Seasoned artists can book their own shows and be successful while cutting out the middle-man.</p> <p>Less established artists could benefit greatly from an organization with the right contacts to help them get their foot-in-the-door.</p>	<p>Few are full-time artists; availability depends on individual schedules.</p> <p>High scale shows (ie: Olympic ceremonies, etc) can draw established artists to work for free. Common fees for a 15-minute set are between \$250 - \$500</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools/Teams <p>The number of schools and teams are vast, but the following are highly competitive and booked often:</p> <p>UBC Girlz (team)</p> <p>Shaan-E-Punjab(team)</p> <p>Shiamak (school)</p>	<p>UBC Girlz—all-girls bhangra team, 20+ years old, lively and modern. Placed in national and international competitions for past 7 years.</p> <p>Shaan-E-Punjab—all boys bhangra team, 5 – 10 years old, lively and traditional. This children’s team is far more professional and visually entertaining than most adult teams.</p> <p>Shiamak—international Bollywood dance school, established in India, expanded worldwide. Standardized technique and quality execution.</p>	<p>UBC Girlz typically require \$300 - \$500 for a 15-minute set. Can perform in groups of 2 – 12 people.</p> <p>Shaan-E-Punjab performs up to 2 – 4 times a week on weekends (especially during wedding season May-Aug). Typically require \$500 - \$1000 for a group of 10+ children.</p>

Events and activities that occur in Vancouver are vast and diverse. Even the

artists that book themselves are approached by South Asian Arts for performance opportunities that they overlooked or missed. It is mostly the same artists performing regularly with a slow and steady entrance of newcomers.

Shiamak is a key competitor in this respect. It is a well-organized company with a clear focus on Bollywood dance; promotional tools such as the website and an impressive video portfolio indicate a high level of entertainment value and quality execution. Shiamak seems primed and prepared to leverage the mainstream Bollywood popularity into further expansion of its business.

Dance Studio/Workshops

Competitor Description	Quality of Product	Price and Availability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studio <p>No other South Asian dance studio exists in the lower mainland.</p> <p>Most teams and artists book local community centres and other studio spaces.</p>	<p>Community centres are not as useful for dance space—usually lacking a mirror and appropriate flooring.</p> <p>Dance Studios vary in quality of location, flooring, sound system.</p>	<p>Community centre rooms can be booked for up to \$50 for a 2-hour period.</p> <p>Dance Studio spaces are normally \$100+ for a 2-hour period.</p>

Competitor Description	Quality of Product	Price and Availability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops <p>An item or more of choreography is taught in a series of classes in the following common forms of South Asian dance:</p> <p>Bhangra</p> <p>Bollywood</p> <p>Classical</p>	<p>Bhangra and Bollywood: lack of standardization and technique, lack of theory. Most workshops just teach a piece of choreography rather than teaching technique and body discipline.</p> <p>Classical: the calibre of classical workshops is usually high, with authentic and intricate choreography as well as disciplined theoretical training</p>	<p>Based on availability of the artist. Specific times during the year. \$10 - \$20 per hour.</p> <p>Based on availability of the artist. Specific times during the year. \$20 - \$40 per hour.</p>

Indirect competitors for dance studios where one can learn a dance art form in Vancouver are in the hundreds. The city offers a wide range of culturally diverse dance lessons and studio space. It is difficult for South Asian Arts to try and stand out among the slew of dance studios in Vancouver, but it can differentiate itself among the South Asian dance competitors. There are several schools in the lower mainland that teach Bhangra. Folk dance forms are speedier to learn and execute adequately than are classical dance forms which can typically take several years of training and theory education to train one's body in the art. South Asian Arts can distinguish itself in Bhangra teachings through its formalization of the steps and theory of Bhangra, which is the main difference between classical and non-classical dance forms.

Productions

Competitor Description	Quality of Product	Price and Availability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VIBC <p>Annual 10-day festival featuring numerous productions and events celebrating South Asian culture with specific emphasis on Bhangra.</p>	<p>VIBC is a high quality festival in terms of performance quality and calibre of artists. Locations of venues for these events are key buildings and theatres within the city that attract the attention of non-South Asian populations. Innovation and entertainment value is high.</p>	<p>Availability is limited to the days of the festival, typically occurring in February.</p> <p>Prices of events vary from free entry to ticket prices for certain shows of up to \$120.</p>

In terms of productions that pertain to entertainment where a consumer can buy a ticket to a show (or view it for free) and enjoy some form of performance in a live format, there is a significant amount of indirect competition. Everything from Theatre Sports on Granville Island to a stand up comedy set at Yuk Yuks to a production at Vancouver Opera falls under the category of live entertainment within the city. One can even go to a restaurant and enjoy live music, whether it's classical like at the Shoreclub in downtown Vancouver or funk and jazz at the Libra Room on Commercial Drive, Vancouver, the indirect competition of live entertainment is vast. The area where South Asian Arts can stand out is in the field of South Asian live performance art.

A huge direct competitor is VIBC—the Vancouver International Bhangra Competition. VIBC started out in 2005 as a Bhangra dance competition that was open to any team that filled out the application form and met the requirements. In 2009, VIBC had grown to a 10-day festival featuring forums of guest speakers discussing social issues

and the impact of arts and culture, an art exhibit at the Vancouver Art Gallery exploring the art of old hand painted murals that were used to promote Bollywood movies in the past before printing presses and technology advanced forth, several performance art showcases (including two that were a part of the 2009 Cultural Olympiad) Transfusion and RePercussion. Shows like Transfusion and RePercussion are direct competition to South Asian Arts' productions like 'Canada, My India.' These shows bring together artists from different backgrounds and pair them with South Asian artists to produce fusion art. Transfusion in 2008 also featured poetic interludes as an introduction to items in place of a master of ceremonies, just as 'Canada, My India' had done. RePercussion was a collaboration of percussion instruments from different countries and origins—a largely improvised set directed by Sal Ferreras, an accomplished musician and producer. RePercussion is very similar in theme to No Holds Bar with differences in venue type and format.

Although there are similarities in the types of events and productions VIBC puts forward, the VIBC Society is a non-profit organization run by volunteers. They are not employed year-round and can only lend their time extensively on a need-based schedule, namely during the weeks of and leading up to the festival. The buzz that VIBC creates looms past the final day of the festival and people are left intrigued by South Asian culture and art, which presents an excellent opportunity for South Asian Arts to provide these services and capitalize on the demand created during this time of year.

Camp Dosti

Competitor Description	Quality of Product	Price and Availability
<p>SFU—Summer Camps</p> <p>6 different programs are available at Burnaby and Surrey campus locations.</p>	<p>Academic as well as creative and artistic activities. The 6 different programs each have a focus depending on the child’s interests.</p> <p>Available for children aged 5 – 16 occurring throughout the summer in weeklong sessions.</p>	<p>Available in July and August. \$150/week.</p>
<p>Khalsa Diwan Society, New Westminster</p> <p>Religious society that brings awareness of the Sikh faith.</p>	<p>Camps have religious component and most children who attend are of the Sikh faith. Activities are religious education as well as physical.</p>	<p>Available July 13 –18 for ages 13 – 28; and July 20 – 24 for ages 6 – 13. \$100/week.</p>
<p>SAFA (South Asian Family Association)</p> <p>Organization that hosts festivals and activities to celebrate South Asian culture.</p>	<p>Similar format to Camp Dosti. For children’s aged 6 – 12.</p>	<p>Available in July and August. Free of charge.</p>

Indirect competition lies in all summer activities that a parent can register children in to keep them active in some capacity through the summer months when school is not in session. More specific competition is through the summer camps offered in the city.

Analysis of the industry indicates that it is in a growth phase, and analysis of the competition indicates that the company is unique. There is a great opportunity for South Asian Arts to increase its market share in this expanding industry, but it is important for the company to market itself as an innovative performance arts company that provides quality entertainment.

The emphasis placed on innovation and professionalism with respects to the calibre of art performed and taught differentiates South Asian Arts from many of its competitors. This is an aspect of the company that can be promoted to set it apart from other players in the industry.

Currently, the company competes for South Asian consumers, but a strategic marketing initiative would be in realizing the value in appealing to a wider range of people and increasing its presence in the non-South Asian market.

4: Marketing Plan

4.1 The Market

- Current Target Market (predominantly South Asian)

The South Asian population in Vancouver is very supportive of arts and cultural activities. As a general rule, most girls learn some form of dance or music in their childhood. Children are encouraged to perform at city events as well as weddings, festivals and cultural celebrations.

There have been 3 significant influxes of South Asians immigrating to Vancouver (and Canada, in general).

- A considerable number of Indians had immigrated and been brought to Africa (particularly East Africa) in the 19th and 20th century. They were a distinct community and had established themselves as business owners. In 1972, Idi Amin, military dictator and president of Uganda, ordered all people of Indian descent living in East Africa to leave. Many of them came to Canada. This accounted for the influx of Indian (although from Africa, they were of Indian descent) immigrants in the 1970s.
- In 1984, Indian prime minister, Indira Gandhi was assassinated in retaliation for a military take-over of the Golden Temple by the Indian

army. The time before and after this event is marked by tension and extreme violence between Sikhs and Hindus. Many Sikhs came to Canada during this time as refugees as well as immigrants.

- In the 2000s, the Canadian government looked towards immigration to provide skills and professional expertise that were lacking in the country. This provoked an influx of young professionals from India who were educated and a stark contrast from the groups of immigrants who had arrived in the past. For example, the Sikh immigrants who had come in the past were largely from rural parts of India; whereas, this new influx of Indians was from the urban areas of India, and as a result of their background and education—a completely different class of immigrants, largely an economic class.

The South Asian population in Canada has grown so significantly that in 2005, Statistics Canada noted the number of South Asian immigrants had reached the number that had been projected for 2017. This number had now succeeded the number of Asian immigrants (largely comprised of people from the People’s Republic of China) in Canada. This surge has caused the country to recognize the massive presence of the South Asian community to a greater extent than before. As a result, several initiatives are underway for which there is funding allotted for South Asian arts and cultural festivals, events and activities. An example of this was an announcement in July 2009 for plans for the Cloverdale Rodeo festivities; a little under \$400,000 was allotted for a new stage, marketing and a South Asian festival.

- Expanding/Potential Target Market (non-South Asian population)

The announcement in Cloverdale is another indication of the increasing importance placed on South Asian arts and cultural endeavours by the non-South Asian population and government. The clout of the community is a factor, but the popularity of Bollywood in the mainstream media and culture also influences the non-South Asian demands for South Asian arts products. South Asian Arts would be well advised to further segue into this market in order to establish themselves and increase their market share.

The majority of non-South Asian audience members that take an interest in South Asian Arts' productions are arts consumers in general. They have a keen interest in arts as a whole or else a specific interest in South Asian influenced arts. There is, however, a growing number of non-South Asian people who are becoming consumers of South Asian productions and arts lessons, in addition to the usual arts connoisseurs. South Asian Arts is making itself as accessible and as mainstream as possible to these demographics and new markets with events that are free of charge and in venues that are non-exclusive; for example, 'Bollywood Wedding' and 'Canada, My India' Part 2 at the Surrey Children's Festival which are both free of charge and outdoors for anyone to enjoy.

- Education/Touring:

The demographic is elementary and High School students in British Columbia. It makes no bearing on the decision to hire South Asian Arts as the workshop teachers that the students are of a certain ethnic background. There are 200 communities in BC from

which schools are registered, and students are representative of BC's population (ArtStarts Index, n.d.).

South Asian Arts does not do any soliciting to schools to book tours. The company is contacted by ArtStarts or the school directly and has so many requests to conduct educational dance workshops that it is often turning them down due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts. Also, the workshops are physically demanding and it is difficult for Sinha and Sian to conduct them as frequently as they are requested to.

- Productions:

Statistics Canada shows that Asians became the largest immigrant group in BC in the 1980s; within the South Asian population in BC, there is a difference of about \$10,000 in the median income between those who were Canadian-born and those who were foreign-born between the ages of 25 and 54, with 52% of BC's South Asian population being under the age of 34 years. These findings suggest that the Canadian-born South Asians, many of whom were born to the influx of immigrants that arrived in the 1980s have a higher spending budget than those who were foreign-born. These findings also confirm the demographic of audiences at South Asian Arts' productions, where the South Asian attendees are largely under 40 years.

- Camp Dosti:

Statistics Canada reports that as of 2006, 23% of South Asians in BC are under the age of 14 years. Camp Dosti enrolls students ages 5 to 13; the level of interest expressed warrants an expansion of camp services. Camp Dosti appeals to both parents

and children; parents are pleased to send their children to Camp Dosti knowing there is a full morning session of academic lessons, and children enjoy the experience in large part due to the afternoon sessions which include sports, theatre, and arts and crafts.

4.2 Marketing: Promotional Strategy

South Asian Arts has a myriad of avenues whereby it can obtain promotional services for free. The South Asian media and entertainment industry in Vancouver is a relatively small one. At the very least, organizations engage in mutually dependent niceties for the sake of reciprocity. South Asian Arts recognizes that successful promotion of its events and services is contingent upon close working relationships with other organizations. In return, the company offers similar promotional services in return.

- Radio:

Being a part of the RJ1200AM team allows Raakhi and Gurpreet to promote events on their programme as well as slip in news of their upcoming productions in the local event news section of other programmes. Media entertainment and news organizations need content; listeners expect news on current events and local happenings. It is an easy transaction to obtain promotional advertising in the form of local event information that is regularly relayed to listeners. In addition to RJ1200AM, although it is the rival South Asian radio station in Vancouver, 93.1ReDFM host, Nick Chowilla has an established working relationship with Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian. Sticking true to the reciprocity aspect of their promotional strategy, South Asian Arts contracts out the live band, En Karma, for many of its productions; Nick Chowilla, ReDFM host, is the

producer of this band. Although it seems like a conflict of interest, Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian have interviewed En Karma several times during their radio show and conversely, Nick Chowlia has interviewed South Asian Arts performers on his. The parent company of RJ1200AM, i.t. Productions Ltd, also owns a separate radio station titled Radio Rim Jhim which caters to an older demographic of South Asian listeners. Whenever appropriate, South Asian Arts promotes its events on Radio Rim Jhim as well. Another radio endeavour which has worked in their favour, promotionally, is Raakhi Sinha's 6 part CBC Radio 1 series on the art of Bhangra. In conjunction with CBC Radio 1, Sinha has put together a documentary interviewing established as well as up-and-coming artists and individuals who are immersed in the Bhangra industry.

As the faces of the company, any promotion and face-time that Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian receive on stages and in media reflect positively and directly on South Asian Arts.

- Television:

Gurpreet Sian is a host of long time running television programme, Punjabi Vibes on the Shaw Multicultural channel. A weekly programme aimed at youth, Punjabi Vibes develops a weekly comedy sketch as well as informative updates on local community news in between showing popular South Asian music videos. South Asian Arts events are freely advertised and in return, Punjabi Vibes is listed as a sponsor for the specific event. The same applies to another programme, Desi Rhythms, which is similar to Punjabi Vibes, but with different hosts and a different time slot. The hosts of Desi Rhythms are within the South Asian Arts social and business network.

Another television programme that provides free promotional advertising to South Asian Arts is Chai Time on Omni TV. Chai Time is a daily news and entertainment show aimed at offering viewers information and interviews on upcoming South Asian influenced activities, from entertainment to serious social and community issues. Chai Time has interviewed performers of South Asian Arts productions several times and at the same time provides show time and ticket information for viewers who are interested in attending shows or taking lessons.

i.t. Productions Ltd. has also featured South Asian Arts in its other programs aired on the Shaw Multicultural channel and Omni TV on cable; programs such as Saturday Hangama, What's New in Vancouver and Women in Focus have promoted South Asian Arts and their owners in feature episodes. The demographic of viewers for these programs is mixed in age, but they are largely South Asian in origin. These viewers are also the market that is interested in upcoming South Asian events. For this reason, it is a co-dependency of some sort because the program needs content and the companies need promotion of their events and services.

Zindagi is another program aired on the Shaw Multicultural channel weekly. Aimed at South Asian youth, this program provides the same type of information on upcoming local events and community related activities. South Asian Arts productions are frequently promoted on this program.

- Newspaper/Print Media:

For similar reasons to television and radio shows, South Asian community

newspapers and magazines feature South Asian Arts events in their publications as well. South Asian Arts has a great working relationship with the South Asian Pacific Post as well as the Asian Pacific Post which can be counted on to promote company events in exchange for sponsorship. Darpan magazine is another South Asian publication—a lifestyle magazine with several columns, fashion spreads and a current events section. The more South Asian Arts becomes recognizable and prominent in the arts community, the easier it becomes to receive free promotional advertising because readers, listeners and viewers want to be in the know and know what is popular.

There are two established South Asian community newspapers that have been published for years. The Link and The Voice are the two most popular newspapers of their kind; they both run only paid advertisements. There is, however, a way to promote events through these newspapers without having to pay for advertising. Both publications will print articles so, South Asian Arts will submit articles from time to time of upcoming events and their significance to the community in efforts to obtain promotional advertising in an editorial context.

- Paid Promotional Advertising:

Although there is a loop hole through which advertising can be extracted from the Link and Voice newspapers, South Asian Arts has also paid for advertising space for their events.

The same is true for the Georgia Straight newspaper in Vancouver. South Asian Arts has paid for advertising with the Georgia Straight, but has also been featured on the

cover for Anita Majumdar's theatre production of the Misfit. The Georgia Strait is an arts-focused newspaper publication so, the readers are specific in their interest.

- Online Social Networking and Promotion:

Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian's individual presence on facebook and twitter is substantial, the facebook group for South Asian Arts could increase its membership number. With just over 700 group members, the South Asian Arts facebook group contains information and pictures on upcoming events and provides an avenue for facebook users to contact the company and organizers regarding classes or ticket information. South Asian Arts should also set up a twitter account and provide tweets regarding current, cutting-edge information on South Asian arts and culture.

- Effects of Integration:

Due to South Asian Arts' support of new local talent, often the company is at the forefront of bookings for new rising stars. One example is a fusion music band known as Delhi 2 Dublin. South Asian Arts was among the first to book this band for \$500 in 2007. Since then Delhi 2 Dublin has released an album and is achieving much success in Europe and abroad. As an expression of its loyalty and as well the experiences of positive past transactions with South Asian Arts, Delhi 2 Dublin has asked Raakhi Sinha to accompany them on stage as a performer for various festivals as well as out of town concerts. The band has requested South Asian Arts owners Sinha and Sian to accompany them to Taiwan in August 2009. These appearances boost the image of South Asian Arts on an international level. The Delhi 2 Dublin premiere music video also features Raakhi

Sinha as one of the two main subjects in the video who are a Bhangra dancer and an Irish dancer. This video will be released on MTV and Much Music in Canada and it is expected to increase the exposure of South Asian Arts, as Sinha is the co-owner.

4.3 Marketing Plan: Promotional Plan—Portfolio

South Asian Arts should invest in a quality portfolio that can be used in applications for events, business ventures and funding. This portfolio can also be distributed or used to send to event organizers, corporate event organizers and convention organizers in order to expand into that non-South Asian population further. The Portfolio can be comprised as follows:

- Video

A quality video compilation should be constructed to showcase the wide variety of performance arts that South Asian Arts can offer. This video should include clips from past events: the 2009 Junos performance, ‘Canada, My India’—the indoor version as well as footage from the outdoor version presented at the Children’s Festival, Bollywood Seen, and Bollywood Wedding.

- Photos

The photograph section of the portfolio should include high resolution photos from past events as well as promotional posters from specific shows that were eye-catching and attractive—there were 2 ‘Canada, My India’ posters that were shot professionally and received much attention and positive feedback. These can be used in addition to photographs that showcase the diverse variety of South Asian arts offered through the company—both classical and folk.

- Write-Ups

The written section should be short and should indicate the customizing ability of a South Asian Arts showcase. For example, presentations can be classical and sophisticated in content and mood, or exuberant and colourful with more of a folk theme, or even a blend of both. Length of showcases can be customized to accommodate the event.

4.4 Marketing: Pricing Strategy

- Education/Touring:

Funding for schools include a certain amount of money that is allotted to Arts education. As a result, schools are willing to comply with South Asian Arts' rates with little hesitation. The company charges between \$650 - \$800 per day and can take 90 students at a time; this rate is competitive compared with the other registered artists. South Asian Arts has a solid relationship with ArtStarts and views the transaction as a smooth and enjoyable one. In return, South Asian Arts is a favourite among the ArtStarts organization. There is no other South Asian artist in ArtStarts' registrar, and ArtStarts has kept it this way due to the excellent relationship that the two share.

- Booking as Agents:

Agent fees are negligible as many artists act as their own agents. Revenue comes in when the company books itself as a performer. Prices vary significantly depending on the size and scale of the production and what is being requested of the artist; performers

have been paid anywhere up to \$3000 for a 10 minute item. South Asian Arts should have all cheques payable to the company, and then write cheques payable to their artists in order to receive their agent commission as well as to keep track of all performance bookings.

- Dance Studio/Workshops:

Most users have had access to the space for free and have gotten used to not having to pay for studio space at South Asian Arts. The access to community centres and other hall spaces is so easy to come by that it is possible the company will alienate several artists if it initiated a fee at this point, especially when they have been using the space for free for the past few years. If, however, an artist is using the studio to conduct classes, South Asian Arts requires that profits from the classes are split with 30% going to South Asian Arts and 70% to the artist. The monthly lease payment is \$1600. When workshops with an out-of-town artist are conducted, South Asian Arts pays the artist to conduct the classes by splitting the profits, 50% each.

Workshops are sporadic during the year dependent on when and for how long artists are in town. Times the studio is in use varies from week to week as well. Raakhi Sinha approximates the studio is in use on average 2 hours per day, and it costs approximately \$53 per day to keep it open. Several teams, groups and individuals have taken interest in using the space.

- Productions:

So far, all full productions put on by South Asian Arts have been in conjunction with non-profit companies, which allowed for them to be government or sponsorship funded. Ticket prices are always approximately \$20 - \$25, with matinee presentations being lower in price.

- Camp Dosti:

Camp Dosti runs in two terms—one month durations, July and August. Children pay \$550 for the month; if there is more than one child from a family, each additional child pays \$500. There are 2 teachers hired, they are paid \$1300 monthly, and there are student volunteers to assist the teachers.

5: Management and Organization

5.1 Business Structure

The business structure of South Asian Arts is a partnership (50/50) between Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian. Sinha operates under the title Programs Director and Sian under the title Managing Director.

Decisions are made through consulting with one another, but also in conjunction with the many organizations and individuals with expertise in the industry with whom they have built business relationships and partnerships on respective projects.

- South Asian Arts Society (non profit)

In 2008, South Asian Arts Society was formed. Growing up as South Asian artists, Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian experienced the lack of resources and recognition that was allotted to art forms of South Asian origin in comparison to art forms of a more international or otherwise Western appeal. In order to increase the recognition for these arts and to create demand, South Asian Arts realized a strategy whereby these performing arts could be produced and distributed free of charge to consumers. In the beginning, one of the main goals of South Asian Arts in developing their company was to raise awareness, starting in Vancouver, of South Asian art forms. As the company grew and they began producing shows in partnership with other companies, they noted a great deal of benefits in the partnerships with non-profit organizations. The sponsorship and

funding capabilities of non-profit organizations gave the companies an avenue to produce shows they otherwise would not have been able to raise capital for. Booking venues, creating posters, printing tickets—there were lower discounted rates for all the associated costs of non-profit ventures as well. This also helped provide these products and services to consumers at no extra cost to them, which helps to draw in people who may otherwise not attend or subscribe. In addition to the business benefits and the opening up of new business possibilities as a non-profit organization, there are personal goals and a sense of achievement to be able to enrich and give back through community arts. The South Asian Arts Society’s first venture is ‘Bollywood Wedding.’ Tickets are booked for free through reservations, and anyone and everyone is welcome, space permitting.

5.2 Consultants/Partnerships

South Asian Arts regularly teams up with organizations on business endeavours in order to leverage off of the experience of other businesses. Being a relatively new company, this allows for them to work with seasoned organizations that have the knowledge and resources of past projects.

These partnerships also open up new segments of the market for South Asian Arts. Arts organizations have a niche market and by aligning themselves with these organizations, South Asian Arts has been able to expand into non-South Asian demographics to tap into these market segments.

- FootEdge Dance Company

Another frequent and regular partnership is the one that South Asian Arts forms with FootEdge Dance Company. FootEdge Dance Company was founded by 5 women of various dance backgrounds in 2005. The company holds regular classes every Sunday from 12 – 2 pm in the South Asian Arts Studio and performs frequently within the city at festivals and events. Raakhi Sinha is one of the founders and executive members of FootEdge Dance Company. Both organizations mutually benefit from one another as a few of their services overlap, as does their consumer base. Most South Asian Arts shows and events contract FootEdge Dance Company to provide talent.

6: Operational Plan

In order for business to operate smoothly and efficiently, it is necessary for South Asian Arts to hire an assistant. An assistant could organize paperwork and files, keep a schedule of appointments and events, and tend to administrative and preparation work. Much of this type of work is piled up and creating inefficiencies in operations as a result. Many opportunities are being missed and un-awarded due to a lack of organization and human resources. The two owners are spread very thin with respect to time and energy. The assistant could help develop the portfolio and appropriately distribute it, as well as tend to paperwork and conduct communication between the owners and artists. This will open up many opportunities and increase efficiency and quality in business operations. A quality assistant could be hired to work 3 days a week for \$3000 a month.

- Education/Touring:

Operationally, the education and touring aspect of business is fairly straight forward. An assistant could keep paperwork in order, deposit cheques and input tour dates into a calendar.

The company should determine how many days of the year they would like to embark on educational workshops, and schools can be booked in between business activity as in the past.

- Bookings as Agents:

Bookings involve interactive discussions to discuss organizer and performer requests and needs. These are often time-sensitive and detail-oriented; an assistant could communicate on behalf of the company. A roster of working artists should be created with an updated contact list, including the expertise of the artist as well as a rating system that indicates the level of experience the artist brings. An assistant could be an excellent resource in organizing bookings and ensuring the quality of performance is enhanced through efficient communication of the event organizers needs and the artist's abilities.

Also, the assistant would collect cheques and distribute payment to the artists. Cheques would be made payable to South Asian Arts and cheques would, in turn, be written out to performers. This would enable the company to keep a more detailed account of how much revenue is generated from performances.

- Dance Studio/Workshops:

Studio rental and use needs to be monitored in order to determine when and for how long it is typically in use.

A calendar should be placed online, either on the website or on facebook, that would allow artists to request studio time and see when it is free. The assistant could monitor and accept requests; only administration should be allowed to adjust the calendar.

The major contract details of workshops should be worked out by the owners, but enrolment and the collection of fees should be handled by the assistant.

- Productions:

The size and complexity of productions vary. Larger-scale productions may require administrative and memo-writing assistance, but the owners enjoy having a hands-on approach to productions to ensure their vision is adhered to.

The assistant will also keep applications organized. Applying for funding, whether in the form of private sponsorships or government grants, can be an arduous task. The assistant can keep track of deadlines and application requirements.

- Camp Dosti:

Teachers take over the majority of camp activity once they are hired. An assistant could provide support to the teachers with regards to requests for supplies, materials or printing needs. The assistant could also act as the first point-of-contact and attempt to solve problems and address issues before they are taken up to the owners.

6.1 Production/Delivery

Production and delivery is specific to the product. Venues of South Asian Arts' productions are selected based on cost, image of venue, and proximity to target demographic. For most performances, artists must travel to the chosen venue and South Asian Arts has no power in the decision. Private classes are conducted where the artist

will once again, travel to the customer's residence or the parties will all meet at the South Asian Arts Studio.

6.2 Location of Business

The official location of the business is 104 – 7928 128th St. in Surrey, British Columbia. This is the address of the South Asian Arts Studio. The strategic location of the studio ensures that workshops, practices, and classes are held in a popular hub of South Asian activity. The South Asian themed market in that area makes it convenient for children to be dropped off for classes and for parents to peruse the market while waiting for them. It also offers the convenience of having businesses nearby that are often visited for costumes, performance accessories and stage props.

6.3 Tracking company success

As a starting point, revenues, expenses, and future and current operating budgets should be tracked and recorded quarterly. It is imperative to obtain a clear indication of revenue and expense patterns. Currently, funds are deposited and withdrawn without allocating them to specific activities. Once these trends can be realized, high-profit ventures can be further expanded on and low-profit ventures can either be improved upon or eliminated.

7: Financial Overview

All figures have been submitted by the owners of the company—Raakhi Sinha and Gurpreet Sian.

As a result of this organization being Sian and Sinha's first business venture as owners, there was a huge learning curve. Financial records became more organized and detailed as the company grew. An Income Statement and Balance Sheet can help summarize the company's operations from a financial perspective.

7.1 Income Statement

Income Statement	2005	2006	2007	2008
Sales	47000	55000	39000	78000
Operating Expenses	16000	17000	4000	8000
Operating Profit	31000	38000	35000	70000
Income Tax	0	1000	0	
Net Profit	31000	37000	35000	70000
Operating Expenses:				
Rent	19260	19260	19260	19260
Utilities	1300	1300	5000	5000
Gas (travelling)	5000	3200	7000	4000
Food	3300	2300	5000	5000
Studio Maintenance	500	500	500	500
Salaries & Subcontractor Fees	8000	8500	7000	55000
Total Operating Expenses:	37360	35060	43760	88760

- 2005 was the start-up year and as a result, the expenses were high in relation to sales. Salary and Subcontractor fees in 2008 reflect a pay out for the owners, who hadn't been paid out since inception. In general, expenses have been decreasing in relation to sales.
- In 2007, the owners were out of the country for approximately 4 months, which affected the sales revenue accordingly. Sales have been increasing each year, with a significant increase in 2008 due to a 5-week tour the owners embarked on that increased sales by \$16,000.
- The company did not pay taxes in 2005 and 2007, and they have yet to file their taxes for the fiscal year 2008.

- Rent has been the same since 2005, when the company signed a 5-year lease for its studio. Utilities expenses increased in 2007 as a result of increased frequency of use. Maintenance costs are minimal and comprised mainly of cleaning costs.

7.2 Balance Sheet

Assets	2005	2006	2007	2008
Current Assets				
Cash (end of year)	9200	9700	12500	16700
Equipment (Computer, Sound System)	0	0	800	0
Depreciation			160	320
Total Current Assets	9200	9700	13140	16380
Total Assets	9200	9700	13140	16380
LIABILITIES & SHAREHOLDERS EQUITY				
Current Liabilities	2005	2006	2007	2008
Tax Payable	0	0	0	0
Total Current Liabilities				
Non-current liabilities	0	0	0	0
Accounts Payable	0	0	0	0
Total Non-current Liabilities	0	0	0	0
Shareholder's Equity				
Retained Earnings	9200	9700	13140	16380
Total Shareholder's Equity	9200	9700	13140	16380
Total Liabilities and Shareholder's Equity	9200	9700	13140	16380

8: Risk

South Asian Arts faces relatively low levels of risk as a business. Fixed costs are very low for the majority of the firm's operations until an appropriate amount of business is secured and/or an event is committed to. Potential problems and risks are as follows:

- Not obtaining the capital required to achieve profitability. For example, a production is organized, but not enough tickets are sold to cover costs; a workshop is conducted, but not enough participants sign up; business activity does not accrue enough revenue to make the studio lease payment.
- Lack of interest by consumers
- Poor economic conditions turn to Arts programs and entertainment activities as a place to start cutting back—government funding as well as consumer spending.
- Fragility of partnership relationships with organizations—contractual as well as unwritten. Business endeavours with other organizations increase risk due to the added risk of the other organization. Non-verbal contracts with other South Asian media and entertainment companies who are mutually dependent on one another are not formal so, there is risk of non-compliance of verbal contracts.

Risk may be reduced and/or avoided by the following:

- Organization and planning to ensure that an appropriate amount of business is secured before putting down deposits and making commitments through advertising and contracts. For example, Camp Dosti only officially hires its teachers one week before camp is to start.
- Market research is conducted through the owners of the companies and their hands-on approach to all activities. They know their clients, artists, and even many of their audience members. Sinha and Sian make themselves available after events to obtain feedback and converse with the crowd.
- Monitoring progress and benchmarking
- Adapting to market trends and locating voids
- Inspiring the artists and organizations to maximize output
- Encouraging innovation and creativity

9: Conclusion

South Asian Arts has come a long way in four years. The organization's various activities have created business and developed new artists as well as provided established artists with an outlet from which to expand.

Business Concept: The company has structured its business activity into five categories and has encompassed the diversity of South Asian arts in its products and services. These five categories are well formulated to allow for the organization to delve into just about any conceivable arts endeavours, widening the potential opportunities and possibilities for business activities.

Industry: The industry is in a growth phase, and South Asian Arts is increasing its presence as a key player in Vancouver. Although the economic downturn has negative implications for arts consumption, the current interest and popular cultural trend of South Asian arts offsets decreases in current demand.

Competition: The company has competition within each of its categories, but no organization in Vancouver is similar to South Asian Arts as a whole. This gives the company flexibility in promoting certain aspects of their business during times when that particular activity is in demand—seasonally or trend-wise. Organizations within the industry engage in one or two main activities, or products and services, and must bear the impacts of slow phases during the year and in general.

Marketing: The market demographic largely consisted of the South Asian population in the past. In the recent past, however, it has become increasingly apparent that there is a demand in non-South Asian populations for South Asian arts products. In order to appeal to this wider market segment, South Asian Arts should invest in a portfolio. A portfolio would highlight and feature the company's most impressive products; it would be used to promote South Asian Arts in order to expand into a larger market.

Management and Organization: Although the owners conduct much of the business on their own, they enlist the support of many arts companies that are experienced and well established. These partnerships on specific projects have become common at South Asian Arts, and the owners have a reputation for being easy to work with and producing results.

Operational Plan: South Asian Arts' foray into non-South Asian markets, along with the surge of demand for South Asian arts in mainstream culture, has caused growth in the South Asian arts industry in Vancouver. In order to meet this demand and capitalize on the current momentum, it is important to consider re-structuring and organizing the company. The opportunity for South Asian Arts in the near future is substantial and positive. Minor adjustments in organization, such as hiring an assistant, will not set the company back much, and can be expected to produce significant results that will see the company primed to maximize business opportunities and increase profits.

Financial Overview: The company shows a steady growth in sales revenue since 2005, and expenses can realistically be reduced without negatively affecting business

operations. Better and more thorough organization of daily business operation can significantly reduce operating expenses.

Risk: The company risk is low to moderate and relatively easy to monitor.

In conclusion, there is great potential in this business to grow and expand in the industry. In addition, South Asian Arts has the capability to be a strong leader in the industry in Vancouver; the innovation and quick-to-adjust attitude of the business makes it enticing for arts consumers.

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