

## E-tailers launch YouTube channels, rope in trainers to widen seller base

The Economic Times, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015

[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-01-21/news/58305759\\_1\\_amazon-india-seller-base-new-vendors](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-01-21/news/58305759_1_amazon-india-seller-base-new-vendors)

NEW DELHI: In India's flourishing online retail market one drag top players Flipkart, Snapdeal and Amazon face is the relatively low number of vendors, and they have come out with a slew of programmes to get millions of sellers from across the country to their marketplaces.

E-commerce companies estimate that India currently has just over 1,00,000 active sellers on ecommerce platforms compared to millions of online sellers in China.

To improve this rapidly, they have come out with several initiatives from launching dedicated YouTube channels and tying up with training institutes to teaming up with state handicraft centres to scouting for manufacturing hubs across cities.

And the e-commerce companies have set ambitious goals. Amazon India, which started about 18 months ago with around 100 sellers, has currently about 16,000 vendors on its India marketplace site and is expected to build the vendors base multiple fold in the coming years. Together with its affiliate site Junglee.com, it has around 100,000 vendors.

"We believe that with those numbers we have barely scratched the surface as there are millions and millions of small and medium businesses in India and I don't see an upper bound to the opportunity at this time," said Amit Deshpande, GM for seller services at Amazon India.

Amazon India has devised multiple programmes to grow its seller portfolio. It has started Amazon Sellers University channel on YouTube where potential vendors can learn about selling on the marketplace.

Also, it has trained about 100 "freelancers" who will sign and train new vendors. Rival Snapdeal, which has around 100,000 sellers on its platform, plans to increase it 10-fold or one million vendors in the next three years.

"The challenge (for enrolling vendors) is reducing day by day," said Visha Chandha, vice-president for market development at Snapdeal. "There are literally hundreds of examples in small towns who were earlier selling through their stores have suddenly the entire country opened up to them," he said.

Snapdeal has tied up with weavers in Varanasi, North Eastern Handicraft and Handloom Development Corp and Rajasthan government, to bring artisans to sell online.

**The Outreach**

**1,00,000**  
Active sellers on India's e-comm platforms

E-comm cos say increasing vendor count crucial to their growth

**New Ways to Enlist Vendors Include**

- YouTube channels
- Tie-ups with state handicraft centres, Institutes
- Scouting manufacturing hubs

**AMAZON**  
Has started YouTube channel – Amazon Sellers University – where vendors can learn about selling on the marketplace

**SNAPDEAL**  
Has tied up with Rajasthan govt, North Eastern Handicraft and Handloom Development Corp to bring artisans online

**FLIPKART**  
Has Karigaar Ke Dwar programme for artisans to sell wares on its platform

Flipkart, the largest online retailer, has a programme called Karigaar Ke Dwar to help artisans sell on its platform. It has entered into agreements with the Federation of Indian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises to enrol vendors in Coimbatore, Jaipur, Ludhiana and Varanasi, among other such hubs. It has also tied up with the Director General of Employment and Training to impart training for vendors.

Besides providing training, ecommerce firms also handhold vendors to help them build their digital catalogue and handle payments and shipments among others services.

"Today, we have more than 19 million products on our platform; many of these sellers are sellers who were never connected to the digital economy and we have invented services specifically for them so that they get hooked on to the digital economy," said Deshpande of Amazon India.

Last year, it introduced Amazon Easy Ship service whereby once an order is placed with a vendor, Amazon will collect the packet from the vendor and deliver it to the buyer, relieving the vendor from the responsibility of delivery. Today, almost 15% of all its shipments happen through this service.