

## **UIC Digital Awards**

**Name of the Organization:** Stark Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.

**Name of the Project:** Trainman

**Link of website and Apps:**

1. Website: [www.trainman.in](http://www.trainman.in)

2. Play Store URL:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=in.trainman.trainmanandroidapp>

3. App Store URL: <https://itunes.apple.com/in/app/trainman-predict-waiting-pnr/id962054633>

4. Windows Store URL: <https://www.windowsphone.com/en-us/store/app/trainman/3bdae389-bf61-41c5-bdab-6fbdd69335bb>

**Date of establishment:** May 30, 2014

### **Ques 1: What is Trainman all about?**

Ans 1: Trainman is an online platform that provides all the information and intelligence pertaining to Indian Railways. It is accessible via website ([www.trainman.in](http://www.trainman.in)) and mobile apps across all the platforms viz. Android, iOS and Windows.

“Innovation is the key to success.” With this mantra on we keep innovating and experimenting with our product keeping core values engraved within the services we offer. We were the pioneer in bringing the prediction model to our users, which is a common phenomenon now. Our prediction model is based on machine learning technique and we have approx 90 % accuracy. Apart from waitlist prediction, we show Trends for our users to help them identify previous history so that they plan smartly avoiding any last minute hassle. With the latest launch of our app in 7 Indian Languages namely Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati, we saw a drastic increase in the usability of our product especially in Hindi Language. Our key features are:

- PNR Status with prediction
- Seat Availability with prediction of confirmation chances.
- Train schedule and live running status
- Ticket fare for all quotas
- Automatic trip detection from sms and notifications on change in PNR status

- Live station status and Train Route
- Platform number and coach position
- Refund Calculator
- Tips and tricks to book tatkal ticket

Other Unique Features include:

- We follow a color-coding scheme for wait-listed ticket prediction. For 65% and above we show confirmation chances in green color which means that ticket has high chances of confirmation. For 50% and below one can see it in red color which means that it has very less chances of confirmation. Yellow color is shown for borderline cases.
- We show historical trends to user which backs our prediction percentage. User can see some actual past trips of same train, origin, destination and class.
- Refund calculator is a very unique feature. The amount refunded on ticket cancellation depends on a variety of factors – time remaining in train departure, travel class, quota (whether general or tatkal), whether ticket is waiting-list, RAC or confirmed etc. To calculate refund based on all these factors is time taking and cumbersome for users. Plus user needs to memorize the complicated refund rules. This is where Personalized Refund Calculator comes in handy. User just needs to open trainman app and check the status of tickets booked. They can see a personalized refund chart generated on the basis of their ticket. It is dynamic and updates itself as time passes and as the status of the ticket changes.

Our Product demo can be seen in this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWGkxXjujYw>

**Ques 2: How has been the journey so far and why did you choose this idea to work on? How do you know people need this product?**

Ans 2:

- The journey has been encouraging with lots of learning's and ups and downs. The growth on android app has been phenomenal.

- In next six months we want to cater to tier II and tier III cities as well and for that, we will increase the features on our app so that it becomes a one tap solution for our users. Our mid-term target is to triple our active user base by the end of this year.

Trainman aims to be a one-stop shop for all information regarding Indian Railways. Railways (or trains) in India is the most preferred means of transport owing to its widespread reach, low price and unparalleled comfort. 23 million people (approximately equal to the population of Australia) travel on train any given day. Of all the reserved tickets booked, 30% of them are issued under waiting list which means it will get confirm only when other passengers cancel their journey. We noticed that the ticket cancellations followed a pattern. Also, people needed a smart system which can predict confirmation chances and relieve them of anxiety. The rail system too is quite complex to understand for an average user. People are often baffled by waitlisted tickets, troubled by the huge train delay, and cheated by travel agents and TTEs. Trainman comes to the rescue of such passengers. It helps people to choose the best option and take informed decisions in the whole process of executing the train journey. Our claim is that even a person who is travelling for the first time by Indian Railways can complete his journey in a hassle-free way if he takes the help of Trainman app.

Our daily active user count (125,000), repeat-ratio (80%) and play store rating (4.6 with 24k ratings) clearly indicate that people really need this product.

### **Ques 3: Tell us about the core team and founders.**

Ans 3: Core team:-

- Vineet Kumar Chirania:- Vineet is the CEO of the company. A startup enthusiast, Vineet takes care of business at Trainman. Being a techie he is also involved with writing the code. He did his graduation from IIT Roorkee (B.Tech + M.Tech) in Computer Science in 2010. He started his career with JPMorgan, Bangalore. But soon the startup world lured him and he worked with a couple of startups before coming to Trainman. He has been travelling by trains for a long time. He is a big railfan and knows the inside-out of Indian Railways.
- Mohd Amir:- Amir takes care of the technology. He is a full-stack developer with a deep knowledge of latest web-technologies and architectural designs. Having worked with both startups (Winshuttle, Guavus) and big

companies (Adobe, Expedia) he is expert at building rapid prototypes and then making it production ready to handle the scale. He was a Sun campus ambassador at college (IIT Roorkee) and graduated in Computer Science in 2010.

- Karan Kumar:- Karan takes care of mobile apps at Trainman. He has developed the Trainman app for both android and ios platforms. He brings great app-development experience from Snapdeal where he used to work before. He is also an IIT Roorkee grad, batch of 2011.

Here's a link to You Tube video introducing the founders:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-o5k-hiHE>

#### **Ques 4: How is the product doing?**

Ans 4: We saw phenomenal response from our users over last two years since our product is useful to railways passengers in all phases:

- Trip planning phase:- User needs to search trains between stations, select the best train for his case, check seat availability and fare.
- Post booking phase:- After booking ticket, user wants to get informed whenever his PNR status changes. If for some reason his train gets delayed or cancelled he wants to know that too. At each point he would also like to know the refund he'll get if he decides to cancel his ticket.
- Travelling phase:- User wants to see the live train status to check delay while travelling inside train. If he wants to do an unplanned trip, he might also need to know the list of trains actually coming in next few hours.
- We believe that language should not be a barrier in accessing information. It is with the intention to address this pain-point that we've diversified our android app offering across seven Indian languages, namely - Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Marathi.
- Our product Trainman is not just an app; it's a true travel companion.

#### **Ques 5: What is the product traction/Statistics?**

Ans 5:

- During last 30 days we witnessed more than 1.5 million total visits on our site with nearly 60% of them coming from mobile phones and tablets.
- During same period, we saw 4.4 million visits (with nearly 250,000 active users) on our android app. We have more than five hundred thousand app downloads on playstore. We are the highest rated train app on playstore with a rating of 4.6 / 5
- In last 30 days on ios devices, the number is lesser with 130,000 total visits and 27,000 app downloads. On windows phone, we witnessed 60 thousand total visits with nearly 20,000 app downloads.
- In windows store the total app downloads is close to twenty two thousand.

### **Ques 6: What are the Industry trends in similar domain?**

Ans 6: Some of the Industry patterns are:

- The Indian travel market has seen exponential growth over the past many years. The Indian travel market is estimated to be worth \$40 billion by 2020, according to an IBEF study.
- Railway budget 2015-16 saw more than Rs.1 lakh crores plan size for Indian Railways which not only is 52.5% higher than previous year but is the highest ever. IRCTC sold 200 million tickets in 2015-16 generating revenue of Rs. 22,500 crore. This number is expected to increase by 20 percent in the current fiscal year. E-ticketing today constitutes about 55% of total reserved tickets on Indian Railways.
- Gov in encouraging new ideas and rewarding innovation. Wi-Fi facilities have been started at more than 15 stations and it is expected that 100 stations will have it by the end of 2016.
- The smartphone industry in India is a growing market with almost a third of all Indian mobile users expected to own a smartphone by 2017. This means a major chunk of people will access information online.
- No of passengers travelling by train will increase and a higher percentage of people will seek information on smartphone. All these are favourable for our industry.
- For any new startup to come it is easy to launch a product to provide information. But one needs to have a lot of data for building intelligence. This means that anyone will take at least 6 months to 1 year to build the minimal amount of intelligence.

### **Ques 7: SWOT analysis on our product.**

Ans 7:

- Strength
  - High Utility product with intelligent features like waitlist ticket prediction
  - Pan India presence
  - Very less competition
- Weakness
  - Dependency on Railways
  - PNR status data unavailable from 11.45pm to 12.30am as Indian Railways official site is down for maintenance
- Opportunity
  - High growth rate in travel segment
  - Growth in smart phones
  - More people becoming Smartphone savvy due to advent of e-commerce
  - Big untapped market
- Threat
  - Indian Railways may form a policy which might be detrimental for startups in this sector

**Ques 8: Tell us about your funding journey.**

Ans 8: We are bootstrapped and running profitable. We might raise money in future if we find an investor who likes and understands our product on a whole and not just from financial angle.

**Ques 8: What is your business model?**

Ans 8:

- Trainman is an online platform which gives information and intelligence pertaining to Indian Railways. Our product can be accessed via site ([www.trainman.in](http://www.trainman.in)) and mobile apps for android, iphone and windows platforms. It is a one stop shop for all information regarding Indian railways. A user can check PNR status, seat availability, train schedule etc. The USP of our product is confirmation chances of waiting list tickets. Trainman is the pioneer app in this segment and more than 90% of the predictions are correct.

- Our major chunk of revenue comes from advertisements. We have also tied up with relevant businesses like Cleartrip (for flight/hotel booking) and Jugnoo (for auto booking) to generate and share revenues.

**Ques 10: How dense is your user base? Which is your biggest market? What is the size of your potential market?**

Ans 10:

- We receive 250,000 visits on a daily basis with 125,000 unique users. Total app downloads is more than 600,000 across all platforms - android, iphone and windows. We witnessed 10 fold growth on apps compared to last year. Our android app has a rating of 4.6/5 on playstore.
- Anyone who travels by Indian railways and owns a smart phone is our potential customer. Therefore almost all of India is our market with most usage coming from metro cities.
- 200 million tickets for Indian Railways were sold online in last fiscal year. Nearly 1.2 million people have used our product in last one year. We can assume that nearly 0.6% of people who booked tickets online used Trainman in last year. We are hopeful that we can capture 1.5% of online train users by the end of 1 year and 10% by the end of 5 years.

**Ques 11: What are the major challenges for Trainman? How are you dealing with them?**

Ans 11:

- For building a prediction engine we need lots and lots of data. Data collection is a huge challenge.
- Building a sustainable business model is another challenge as we do not charge a penny from user.
- We have a huge user base due to which we are able to monetize sufficiently through ads to keep our business running.

**Ques 12: What are your plans for next year?**

Ans 12: Our plans on whole business front:

1. Product: We will keep adding more and more features to our apps. We see that our mobile site experience has a lot of scope for improvement so that is another

area we'll target. We'll build a platform to get user generated content on our system.

2. Marketing: We want to acquire new users at a rapid pace. Our target is to cross 1 million downloads on playstore in next 6 months. We will also work on reducing our CPA and increasing user engagement.

3. Business deals / Partnerships: We will strike partnerships with a lot of relevant businesses to cross-sell their product on our platform thereby increasing user experience and earning more revenue.

4. Revenue: We'll keep trying to increase our revenue per user without compromising on product quality.

5. Recruitment: We will hire tech engineers, a marketing expert and someone who excels at striking business deals.

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