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CHOWMAN: THE CULINARY MAESTRO FROM KOLKATA

Founded in 2010 in Kolkata by Debaditya Chaudhury, Chowman emerged as a distinctive restaurant offering Chinese cuisine at an affordable price, thereby bridging the gap between casual street-side eateries and upscale culinary establishments. Driven by his fervor for Chinese food and enriched by his passion for music and travel, Chaudhury fulfilled his dream of launching a restaurant, which aimed to democratize the fine-dining experience, while providing authentic Chinese dishes in an inviting ambiance. The meticulous focus on ambiance, menu selection, ingredient quality, and appropriate pricing propelled Chowman to widespread popularity and growth. By 2023, Chowman had successfully expanded to 21 outlets in Kolkata, 6 in Bengaluru, 4 in Delhi-NCR, and 2 in Hyderabad. However, with a turnover of over Rs. 1 billion (USD 120 million) as of 2023 from Chowman, Debaditya Chaudhury faced a multifaceted challenge. He pondered on how Chowman could further refine its branding strategy to not only maintain its unique brand identity amidst rapid expansion, but also optimize its digital channels for enhanced customer engagement? Secondly, how should Chowman select its path forward among diverse expansion strategies?

Prof. Saravana Jaikumar of the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta developed this case study as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate the effective or ineffective running of an organization. It is fictionalized case but is based on real events and real data. Any resemblance to events is coincidental.

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