

Nov 04, 2016 by [Navdeep Suri](#)

[India Is—Old & New](#) ^[1]

The start of a new year is the time for people to forget the old and welcome the new into their lives. Most times, you don't forget the old...you just take stock of the all that has been learned and tried in the past year and implement it onto a new, bigger and more exciting canvas.

The [Public Diplomacy Division](#) started an important new initiative in October 2011. I had written about it for the [CPD Blog](#) in October.

After three months of submissions, the phase 2 (voting) for the [India is ... Global Video Challenge 2011 goes live](#) from February 1, 2012.

This is a new game altogether. So far our efforts have been in collecting submissions and creating a buzz, but it is now time to use all the steam created to chug forward at full speed.

Let me start by telling you that the response garnered by the initiative so far has been heartening if not straight out joyful. The social media initiatives and strategies carried out by "[Skarma](#)" have been widely successful in achieving and surpassing earmarked milestones. Let's just say the 24 year olds did it.

Beginning with the entries, we received a whopping total of 245 eligible entries through the three months of submission. But the best part of this is that 123 of these were received internationally from 40 different countries. Though 75% of the international entries were received from Europe and North America, the highlight of our entries lay in original perspectives of India received from nations like Peru, Romania, Armenia, Serbia, Belarus, Palestine, Moldova, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Chile, Lithuania & Panama.

In the short period starting 1st October and ending 31st December 2011 our website received more than 27,000 hits with up to 16,000 unique visitors from 149 countries in 6 continents. Pushing this forward have been our social media campaigns operating on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Fortunately this is just the start. The *India Is* brand has successfully found its feet with more than 45,000 followers on its Facebook page, with the top 10 countries being Indonesia, Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, Malaysia, the United States, Canada, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

In an attempt to engage such a large base of followers and keep things active, we hosted various contests and games on the social media platform. The winners got some fun *India Is* merchandise along with Indian Diplomacy CDs and books, which worked like a charm.

The guys at Skarma also tested a viral campaign idea, wherein they invited people to share a particular image with their friends on Facebook in an attempt to win a Lomography camera. This was quite a push as it led to followers sharing the image across multiple platforms and various networks.

As a direct result of the social media push, *India Is* was independently written about on 48 different websites in 15 countries and in 4 [newspaper articles](#) with no involvement at all from our team.

The momentum gained so far has made *India Is* a brand poised to collaborate with companies, institutions, brands and products with global outreach, not only on a sponsorship basis, but also as a great form of cultural exchange.

In fact, we are already talking with potential partners from various different industries. This list of probable partners has been growing at a steady pace, encompassing magazines, production houses and various products and brands. One of the best results we received from the viral campaign was that it brought with it an opportunity to collaborate with Lomography directly for sponsored prizes.

Another direction that seems to be arising is the opportunities this is providing for media students globally. Creating a connection with film and art schools all over the world and allowing for cultural exchange between the students may be one of the few resultant activities on the ground that *India Is* will foster in the future.

All of this has been great, the achievements have helped us create a solid base to build and grow this brand. The changes and the positive results of all the social media initiatives seem to be making their way to us with the onslaught of the voting period upon us. With our jury members at the cusp of announcing the 30 finalists (10 per category) we are looking to create partnerships and collaborations within the very first year of our campaign without having to wait until the next year for these chances.

The voting phase in itself will see tremendous growth in our online presence owing to collaboration with a global online and mobile video content company. This collaboration and partnership will allow participants to vote on both our website and the collaborators which has - drumroll here....260 million subscribers. This has allowed us to be assured about a positive response even as we continue our efforts at promoting and marketing the brand.

With all the activity occurring on *India Is*, all I can say is: join the party...VOTE!
