



KAUSALYA MADHAVAN

FLAVOR OF SHOPPING IN
GULLIES ONLINE

**Kausalya Madhavan,
Founder & CEO**

A CA by profession and a traveler at heart, Kausalya is a passionate entrepreneur with prior experience in the field of finance and IT implementation. A testament to the power of perseverance and passion, she enjoys the finer things in life such as golfing, listening to western classical music and exploring exotic locations.



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India is a treasure trove of culture and has beautiful bounty to offer to those who venture into the country's twisting lanes and by-lanes. Home to various cultures and traditions, the streets of India offer the most unique products in terms of clothing, handloom, crafts, jewelry and accessories, among others. While the locals are privy to the secrets to shopping at the right spots, tourists and travelers often rely on second hand information, especially online.

Helping shoppers with accurate and genuine information about the best shopping spots across major Indian cities is ShopKhoj Content. Founded by Kausalya Madhavan, a passionate traveler and a thorough professional, the firm is a one-stop-shopping portal for India which serves as an online guide for every offline shopping need. In a candid conversation with the CEO Insights, we speak to her about her inspiration to founding the unique organization.

? Take us through your professional journey prior to founding ShopKhoj.
! What inspired you to venture into the online retail space as an entrepreneur?

I am a CA by profession and I've been working since 1985. Initially, I worked in the financial services market and eventually moved to PwC, where I received exposure to IT implementation. Throughout my professional journey, I got the opportunity to work with various organizations, learn the nitty-gritties of finance while also gaining experience about technical aspects.

The inspiration to venture-out as an entrepreneur came from my children who motivated me to explore new and exciting paradigms of work. Also as a person, I enjoy exploring new opportunities, which gave me the much needed push.

? ShopKhoj is a unique online shopping portal that lets its readers soak into the very vibe of a city's shopping areas. How did you come-up with this one-of-a-kind concept? Also, tell us about ShopKhoj as an organization.

I am a traveler at heart and enjoy exploring new countries and cities. While traveling, I ensure that I immerse myself in the city's culture and the various local shopping treasures that it has to offer such as textile, handicrafts and jewelry, among others. I believe this exposure is important, since it introduces one to the very culture of the place. I realized that no such marketplace guide was available online and decided to create one of my own.

I thus created an extensive catalogue of some of the best shops in India. The list is divided under categories such as ethnic wear, casual, formal, bridal wear, gold, silver & imitation jewelry, accessories, shoes, handicrafts and ayurvedic products, among others. The website caters to women and focuses on major cities such as Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Pondicherry, Jaipur and Delhi. Our organization, which is run by a tightly knit group of women, is self-sufficient and we take care of marketing, design and content creation in-house. I have been involved in every step of the process, right from conceptualizing the entire website to designing it and getting it updated from time-to-time.

? What roadblocks did you face while establishing ShopKhoj as a force to be reckoned with in the retail industry? Also, how did you mitigate these challenges?

As an entrepreneur, we are always faced with challenges and learn to roll with the punches. My initial challenge was in terms of laying the ground work for the website in terms of collating data and identifying the best shops. However, the toughest challenge we encountered was to grab eyeballs in the crowded internet space. Internet as a medium is a tough place

because people's mind space is limited, and getting eyeballs is not easy. There is so much content on the internet today that it is a challenge to stand-out and bring value to your audience.

To counter this challenge, we ensure that our content is unique and brings value to the people. We are not merely a directory listing; my team has visited every shop and written about it. Our reviews are genuine and give a clear insight about the shops to our readers. It is extremely gratifying when we receive several thousand page visits from readers spread across the globe and from the deepest pockets within India.

? In your opinion, what is the one factor that makes ShopKhoj distinguish itself from its competitors?

I truly believe that India is a fascinating and culturally rich place with many products such as textiles, jewelry and more to offer. My objective has always been to highlight these novel products and bring it to the people across the globe. While we rely on technology heavily, we believe that our biggest strength as an organization is the quality of content that we create. We write about the city, the market and the best shops and bring the very flavor of it to the readers. We have curated an extensive glossary of products for our readers that familiarizes them with the things that India has to offer. For instance, a German customer might not know what a Chanderi saree or a South Silk saree is. Our extensive glossary helps our readers familiarize themselves with such products.

? A female entrepreneur is often faced with an extra set of challenges in terms of maintaining work life and family life balance. What is your opinion on the same?

Although my children are grown-up now and do not require much attention, I did struggle when they were younger. As working women, we often learn how to prioritize things and work accordingly. I believe that it is all part of the game and we need to learn to work around it. In the end, we can only do our best and enjoy the process. If we do what we are passionate about, we will learn to fight against the odds. [CEO](#)