



Linc Pen & Plastics Limited - Upscaling the Brand

Case

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This case was written by Atanu Adhikari (Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIMK)) and Seema Lall (JD Birla Institute). It is intended to be used as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a management situation. The case was compiled from field research.

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Linc Pen & Plastics Limited – Upscaling the Brand

It was a hot summer evening in the second week of May 2018. Mr. Deepak Jalan, the Managing Director of Linc Pen & Plastics Limited (LPPL) was looking quite anxious as he read the company's financials of the year 2017-18 and was comparing it with the financials of the year 2016-17 (See **Exhibit 1**). Total revenue of LPPL had decreased by 5.3 percent in that financial year. Even worse, the profit before tax had reduced by 50 percent!

LPPL was a forty-year-old business house known for its Linc brand of writing instruments in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. Under his leadership in the last 38 years, Jalan had turned a small pen manufacturing company into a highly reputed national brand. “*Stakeholders had been happy so far and Linc had not faced any such situation in the recent past,*” Jalan thought. There were two primary reasons for the decline: Firstly, there had been a sharp increase of up to 28 percent in the raw material price due to a spike in the polymer prices. Secondly, there were turbulences in certain international markets, which led to a reduction in export revenue down from INR 1.05 billion in the previous year to INR 800 million in FY17-18. LPPL confronted multidimensional challenges in their major 5 key export markets in the Middle East and Africa, which led to a complete halt, due to import restrictions, currency depreciation, rise in protectionism, internal strike, war, and serious business sanctions from the USA.¹

Jalan thought LPPL did not have any control of external issues be it national or international, material price, depreciation of currency, country's protection or any such boundaries in this case. At the same time, the brand Linc was positioned as a brand that portrayed value for money. Hence, this became a deterrent factor where the rising cost of raw materials could not be transferred across trade and the finished products for maintaining margins. The competition was intense from both organised and unorganised sectors making the pen industry commoditised, and there was hardly any differentiation amongst the product offerings of the players in the market. There had also been exceptionally low involvement levels exhibited by the consumers in the purchasing process of pens.

Jalan knew that whatever needed to be done, must be executed soon. LPPL had a presence in more than 50 countries. LPPL's products were recognized for being innovative and customer-centric, which were accepted both in international and national markets, but its major sales came from the domestic market.

¹ Linc Pen & Plastics Limited, Annual Report, 2017-18

This case has been developed by Professor Atanu Adhikari of Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode and Professor Seema Lall of J.D Birla Institute, Department of Management, Kolkata. The contents are meant only for class discussion and are not intended to express opinion about an organization's decisions and processes. The numbers provided in the case are a reflection of the situation but are not to be considered to be the actual values.

Repositioning the Linc brand as a premium brand and then increasing its price could be one option, but it had several cons. Another strategy could be developing a new product. Jalan murmured,

We have been trying to develop products which would help the company insulate its margins from the polymer price volatility and secure the future top line as well as bottom line of the company, but Linc is perceived as a mass market brand despite offering high quality product. How effective would it be to add another product in its portfolio without doing some strategic changeover!

Company Background

Linc brand was established in 1976, by Mr. Surajmal Jalan. Deepak Jalan joined his father's business in 1980. Linc had built a name over the years in the domestic market. LPPL had an extensive network in South East Asia, Middle East, USA, UK, Europe, South America, Africa, Russia, and CIS countries. In 2003 LPPL marked its entry in the global market by supplying writing instruments for sale as a private label to Wal-Mart. The year 2012 was a witness to a capital alliance in which Mitsubishi took over 13.53% stake in LPPL. LPPL was the exclusive importer and distributor in India of brands; Uni-ball, Mitsubishi Pencil Co. Japan and Bencia, Taiwan. Linc's popular sub-brands were Signetta, Glycer, Majesta, Meeting and Markline. LPPL focussed on innovation in product designing and packaging. The sole brand of LPPL, Linc, occupied approximately 10% market share in Indian writing instrument market. The brand Linc had an array of products ranging from ball pens, gel pens, retractable ball pens and stationery. **Exhibit 2A** shows the product sub-categories and their shares respectively whereas **Exhibit 2B** shows pictures of popular pens of Linc at price points of ₹5, ₹10 and ₹20 (of the ball pen and the gel pen categories). LPPL had a daily manufacturing capacity of more than 2 million units with quality guaranteed under ISO 9001:2008 certification² at Serakol and Falta³. In 2017, LPPL had set up an integrated factory in Umbergaon (Gujarat). LPPL was listed on NSE, BSE and CSE⁴. In 2005 LPPL received the ICICI Bank – CNBC TV18 Emerging India Award in the FMCG category. This is one among its many other laurels.

Indian Writing Instruments' Industry

The non-paper category of stationery was a size of ₹41 billion. It contributed approximately 40% of the total stationery market. Non-paper market was dominated by writing instruments, followed by products for office use, colours, and other adhesive & technical instruments⁵. The segment of writing instruments was divided as pens (79% by revenue), pencils (15% by revenue) and others (6% by revenue). The other segment consisted of markers/ highlighters, refills, nibs, sketch pens, leads, and crayons. The segment of pens could be further subdivided into ballpoint pen, gel pen and fountain pen. There was hardly any demand for fountain pens though.

² ISO 9001 Certified" meant an organization had met the required quality management system (QMS) set up by the international organization of standard (ISO). ISO 9001:2008 focused on how the certified organization meeting customer expectations and delivering customer satisfaction

³ Serakol and Falta are two suburban towns in West Bengal, India

⁴ NSE - National Stock Exchange, BSE - Bombay Stock Exchange and CSE - Calcutta Stock Exchange

⁵ <https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/4636681/india-non-paper-stationery-market-overview-2018>

The Indian writing instrument industry saw incessant changes in innovative design of the products, innovation in quality of writing and efficiencies in costs⁶. Pen had become a necessity for all sets of people and there were multiple options available to suit one's taste and preference of pen. The pen industry in India was valued at ₹32 billion with 70 percent organised market⁷. Approximately, sixty percent of the pen market was occupied by ball pens followed by 25% gel pens. **Exhibit 3** shows product wise percentage break-up of writing instruments. The industry was growing at 6-8% CAGR. The reasons of the growth in Indian market were attributed to the increasing literacy rate (about 74 percent) and an increased number of school-goers resulting in a youth literacy rate nine percent higher than adults. Analysts were of the opinion that the Indian market would show a similar growth of approximately 6-8% CAGR in the next five years. The market players with leading market share were BIC Cello, Linc, Flair, Hindustan Pencil, Doms, Kokuyo Camlin among others and regional players like Montex and Lexi.

The pens were priced in the range between ₹5 and ₹100,000. The Indian pen market contributed to approximately 60 percent of revenue from pens that were priced at ₹5 or below per piece with another 10 percent of revenue each from pens priced at ₹10 or below per piece and ₹15 or below per piece.

A small percentage of revenue came from pens that fell in the price range of ₹100 to ₹300. Premium brands contributed a meagre percentage in the market. The pens that were priced below ₹15 grew at the rate of 7-8% annually in the market, while pens priced at more than ₹15 grew at the rate of 8-10% annually⁸. The Indian consumer today is extremely 'value for money' conscious and is willing to pay a premium for a superior quality, which the brand had been consistently delivering in the past. It is found that the price sensitivity of a pen costing between ₹ 5 and ₹ 10 is much less than the price sensitivity of a pen between ₹ 10 and ₹ 20.

The consumers in the writing instrument industry comprised of almost 55 percent of students, followed by executives and office-goers at approximately 20%. The remaining 25% was used by others in business, shops etc. There were about 20 million students who started writing with a pen every year in India. On an average, each Indian used 6-8 pens per year. The mass market of pens priced at below ₹20 was dominated by market players like Cello, Linc, and Reynolds. In the high-value segment, where the price range was between ₹20 to ₹400, the market was dominated by Uni-ball, Pilot and Parker, while the premium and luxury segment, at price above ₹400 was dominated by Mont Blanc, Parker, Cross, Lamy and Sheaffer.

The availability of natural and recyclable materials as inputs for manufacturing pens and use of eco-friendly colours in colouring instruments such as crayons and sketch pens led to enhanced demand globally. The scope of expansion of writing instruments broadened with innovation in multipurpose writing instruments, product offerings like pens with styles, variants in coloured inks, appealing body colours for kids, pencils in various sizes, increased usage of highlighters and markers. There was a small market for customized

⁶ <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/marketing/analysing-the-indian-writing-instrument-industry-marketing-essay.php> accessed on 20th April 2020

⁷ https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/writing-instruments-growing-despite-digitisation-sprees-social-trend-117031200207_1.html

⁸ <https://www.mbarendezvous.com/general-awareness/writing-instrument-industry-in-india/>

pen body styles, clips, and use of superior quality ink. Luxury pens were made attractive owing to their designer finish look and quality despite premium pricing. Indian players entered strategic partnerships and joint ventures with foreign players to gain competitive advantage.

Writing Instrument Consumer's Behavior

The students preferred gel pens that were subdivided on the basis of prices as up to ₹5 products, ₹10-20 products and above ₹25 (This was considered semi premium and premium product). Price was the primary factor of selecting a pen followed by the colour of ink and then brand. Students were more brand loyal than the adults, but both looked for any brand if they did not get their choice of pen available in one brand. The fourth factor was the look of the pen. For students, the look criteria often played a primary role in choosing their pens.

While purchasing a new pen, consumers who were not brand sensitive, would tell the retailer the price range and ask to show a pen within that price range. It was then up to the retailer to decide which pen to show. Retailers often showed the pen that gave them the highest profit. Hence, trade promotion played an important role in the sales of pens. Some prominent trade promotions were 'one pen free on ten pens' (the most popular one), free passes to amusement parks/movies and a free gift on a large quantity purchase.

The reasons for growth of non-paper stationery items was more due to disposable income of consumers, awareness about the significance of education, increase in the number of educational institutions, increase in offices, increase in population, and the psychology to prefer writing more. Also, writing instruments became a part of corporate events in the form of gifts or mementoes. Higher writing experience like smoothness of writing, comfortable grip and proper weight played a significant role in spending higher amount on writing instruments by the consumers.

Some industry experts felt that digitisation was in the process of making a dent in the writing instruments' market, while others felt that due to digitisation, computers and smartphones might have very high usage but the use of pen and paper was going to stay. The reason, they felt, lay in the advent of technology in this segment. This advancement related to advances in the raw materials, ink and metal used in the construction of writing instruments. India's working population was expected to grow by 20% in 2020, which would lead to increase in per capita income, which in turn would lead to increased literacy and an increased demand for stationery. These would see the demand for writing instruments growing in India. Exports to countries, which were highly into digitisation, were increasing and pens from Indian manufacturers were preferred over the Chinese counterparts for quality as well as price.

Linc's writing instruments

Linc was a brand that catered to all customer segments through its several range of product categories of writing instruments. Linc was a brand for the masses and focussed on delivering innovative products of high user-friendliness and improved quality at reasonable prices. Linc pens came in varied tip sizes and multiple appealing colours with fast-flowing ink technology for very smooth writing on paper. Keeping up with its brand image of being a product for masses at a lower cost, in 2013 Linc introduced three pens

at ₹20, innovatively packed and branded as Linc Glycer, and also introduced an innovative product called Linc Twinn, which happened to be the world's first ball pen and pencil combo in a single writing instrument at a price point of ₹10.

Linc's non-writing assortment

LPPL also houses innovative and low-priced stationery through the Linc brand. Markline was one such brand of LPPL known for reasonable pricing of stationery items with innovation. For example, Markline erasers were dust free for a mess-free experience. Also, the DVD/CD/OHP markers had advanced mechanical technology in manufacturing yet were reasonably priced. Over the years, LPPL had been manufacturing and selling supplements of every requirement of stationery ranging from geometry boxes to desk organizers.

Lemon was LPPL's notebook sub-brand under the Linc brand. However, the consumers did not find the product different than the existing products in the market, hence it was not well accepted in the market. Jalan said,

“It was very difficult to make money in the notebook category. Notebooks went very well with LPPL's network. Lemon did not work because LPPL couldn't compete with brands like Classmate. We could have called it Linc notebooks but we chose not to call it Linc because when you think of Linc, you think of pens. We wanted to associate pens and Linc together. As a marketer, I feel that if a brand has been strongly associated with one category the consumer might get confused seeing other products with the same brand name. Linc notebooks might have been confusing.”

Competition

Writing instrument industry comprised of a few major players and numerous regional players, enjoying substantial market share in certain geographies. Entry barrier was less, and so was the requirement of investment. Hence, there were several organized players who had increased competition. The primary competitors of Linc Pens were Cello, Reynolds, Flair, Montex and Lexi pens.⁹ The competition was highly intense and there were low differentiating factors between the product offerings of all the players as well as the low involvement level exhibited by the consumers in the purchasing process. Some details of the top three competitors are given below.

Cello Pen

Founded in 1995, Cello Pens was one of the largest stationery and writing instrument manufacturers and distributors in India. Cello started its journey by manufacturing & marketing a wide range of classic ball pens with imported tips and German inks. Like Linc, Cello also focused on innovation and high quality with contemporary technologies. In December, 2015, the French stationery major BIC acquired 100 percent ownership in

⁹ https://www.indiaonline.com/article/research-leader-speak/deepak-jalan-managing-director-linc-pen-and-plastics-ltd-18594807_1.html

Cello writing and the company was renamed as "BIC Cello (India)". BIC Cello focused on developing new innovative products and unique ink flow systems, intending to deliver significant value to the writing experience of the customers. Cello had approximately 25 percent market share in the Indian writing instrument market.

In addition to ball pens, gel pens and pencils, Cello had expanded its magnitude to stationery products like Permanent Markers, White Board Markers, Fountain Pens, Roller Pens, Colour Markers and Office & School Stationery. Cello had its own R&D team to do research to improve the writing experience. It also had a well-established distribution system across the country. Cello also exported a broad portfolio of products to North America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, and Asia.

Reynolds Pen

Reynolds Pen was a famous American pen manufacturing company which introduced ball pen in 1945 in the US¹⁰. Reynolds had entered India in the 1980 through GM Pens, the sole licensee of Reynolds. The franchisee agreement discontinued in the year 2016 and Reynolds started operating as Reynolds India Pvt Ltd with distribution partnership with Flair India. Reynolds was considered to be one of the most reputed writing instrument manufacturers and distributors in India. Market share of Reynolds at that time was approximately 15 percent in the organized pen market. Reynolds introduced fine writing in India and played a key role in making a commodity like pen into a branded product. In 2006, legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar became the brand ambassador of Reynolds for nine years from 2006 till 2015 and steered the brand adroitly amongst kids, youth and adults of India. In Reynolds, product range consisted of ball pens, gel pens, roller pens, mechanical pencils and fountain pens¹¹. In 2017, Reynolds tied up with Flair, another pen manufacturer and distributor in India to relaunch all their products. The reason for the strategic alliance was to utilize Flair's distribution network to reach about 55000 retail outlets across the country.

Flair Pen

Flair was an Indian company established in 1986 and was incorporated into a private company in 2016. It offered primarily ball pen, gel pen products and non-paper stationery products like mechanical pencil, office stationery, correction pens, painting crayons etc. It had approximately 13 percent market share in the Indian writing instrument market. Flair had been an exclusive distribution partner of Reynolds since 2017 after GM Pen disassociated with Reynolds. Flair operated through 7,500 distributors and about 250,000 retailers. Flair's revenue in FY 2017-18 was INR 5.75 billion with net profit of 500 million. Flair exported to 80 countries through its 50 international distributors. Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan had been the brand ambassador of Flair and it came with a tagline 'Mera Dost, Mera Flair' (Flair is my friend). Flair had bought international brands namely Pierre Cardin (Paris), Hauser (Germany), Rudi Kellner etc. and was the distributor of ZIG (Japan).

There are other players like Montex and Lexi Pen in the same market having a market share between 4-8 percent. In the premium pen category, Parker had a market share of

¹⁰ <https://www.reynolds-pens.com/about-us>

¹¹ <https://www.zaubacorp.com/company/REYNOLDS-PENS-INDIA-PRIVATE-LIMITED/U36991TN1998PTC040913>

approximately 3% followed by Pierre Cardin and Mont Blanc who occupied meagre share.

Brand Building Initiatives of Linc

LPPL's flagship brand was called Linc. The Linc brand was positioned around the tagline, "Think it, Linc it". This was a play on the word Linc for link and an indication to collect and connect one's thought and put them in writing with a Linc pen. "The Think it, Linc it" campaign was meant to inspire each one to express more on paper because ideas change lives and they need to be expressed, LPPL felt. The campaign was aimed at motivating its real and potential customers to use Linc pens (See **Exhibit 4**).

In 2004 Linc launched retail outlets with the names Just Linc and Office Linc for more brand visibility. These stores stocked all brands and products of LPPL to meet the needs of school and office-goers, needs of stationery at offices and the general requirement of writing and non-writing stationery of the people at large. But this exclusive brand outlet did not work for Linc and it was making losses due to high property rental. Consequently, company had to close most of the outlets and kept only a few for branding purposes. In 2008 Linc roped in Bollywood superstar Shahrukh Khan as the brand ambassador of Linc. In 2010 Linc associated with IPL¹² teams– Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals¹³. In the same year Linc also associated with the IIFA¹⁴ awards as the literacy partner. In 2011, LPPL roped in Bollywood actor Katrina Kaif as ambassador for brand Uni-ball and was associated with two more IPL teams.

In 2015, Linc introduced Linc Twinn, a pen that also had a pencil at the other end. LPPL launched this product as a highly innovative product at INR 10, double of regular Linc pen price. LPPL promoted Linc Twinn aggressively both in TV and print media. To make this product cut a space as a premium product, LPPL sponsored 2015 ICC cricket world cup telecast on Doordarshan (DD)¹⁵. LPPL also used animation in its Ad to make the communication cut out of the clutter. While Linc Twinn did make a space in the market, it could not develop an identity for the company, and remained as just another product in Linc's portfolio perceived as another value for money product.

SPELLINC – English language mastery contest for school children

In 1999, Linc started an inter-school English language mastery contest called Spellinc. It was being held at three levels namely school, city and national levels annually to provide a platform to the students for displaying their mastery in English language. Spellinc encompassed spelling and vocabulary. This kind of an event gave Linc immense popularity and visibility among its important target segment- the school-goers. The contest covered more than 1500 schools, with different mediums of instructions, levels and number of students through 11 cities in India to become a national event. Academicians were of the opinion,

¹² IPL: The Indian Premier League is a professional Twenty20 cricket league in India contested every year by teams representing different states/cities in India.

¹³ Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals are IPL teams representing the city of Kolkata and the state of Rajasthan.

¹⁴ IIFA: The International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards are a set of awards presented annually by the International Indian Film Academy to honour both artistic and technical excellence of professionals in Bollywood, the Hindi language film industry.

¹⁵ Doordarshan (DD) is an autonomous public service broadcaster founded by the Government of India, owned by the Broadcasting Ministry of India and one of Prasar Bharati's two divisions. One of India's largest broadcasting organisations in studio and transmitter infrastructure, it was established on 15 September 1959.

“Spellinc is a worthy initiative for the subtle push it gives, leading towards a well-spoken and well-read community.”

The 2017-18 edition of SPELLINC witnessed a participation of more than 60,000 students from 79 schools across classes V to VIII, spread nationally in all major cities and metros of India. British Council became the Knowledge Partner for Spellinc. Jet Airways and Tiger Turf also came on-board and added to the appeal of the event. Jalan said,

“We are immensely proud to contribute to the development of the student fraternity and organize an event of such magnitude for so many years. The response at every stage has been nothing short of overwhelming. We promise to return with a more engaging and exciting format in the years to come. This year Spellinc had extended its wings to include some specially-abled children and will strive harder to increase its reach to such students.”

Cash prizes, academic assistance, supplies of stationery and gift hampers were the takeaways for the winners at Spellinc.

Write-O-Values

Focussing on the importance of handwriting and keeping up with Linc’s core business of writing instruments, LPPL started an event named Write–O–Values in 2009, which was an intra-school handwriting competition for the students of classes V and VI, in English. The event focussed on moral values for tender minds and offered valuable tips on improving handwriting skills. Since inception, Write-O-Values had marked its existence among 125,000 students and 750 schools.

Brand Perception of Linc

LPPL felt that over a period of four decades, Linc became a household name for writing instruments and stationery, and a popular choice for school-goers. Linc also acquired high visibility and reliability from its consumers. The prices were essentially kept low around INR 5 for most of its products because users associated Linc with high quality and lower prices. Jalan believed that most of the similarly priced pens in the market from competitors did not give the required writing experience as they lacked smooth flow of ink and had design issues. Linc therefore made a mark for itself amongst the masses. LPPL felt that they had a thorough understanding of what the consumers required in a pen and continued the positioning of Linc in the minds of the customers as a utility centric pen at a reasonable price, making Linc pens affordable but a product for mass. Jalan remarked,

“With brand Linc, we have traditionally been in the popular ₹5 price point of ball pens. A price point of ₹5 being the most popular price point; even if we launch good quality affordable ball pens at ₹50 or ₹100, the acceptability will be very low because we are perceived to be a low cost, good quality ball pen brand.”

Jalan was confident that if he had to develop a new product, he had the technology to make a pen that writes better and smoother than the competition at a lower cost. Innovation had been the strength of LPPL, he believed. At the same time, if he developed a new product it had to be named by following marketing norms – using alliteration or double entendre or repetition if it was a two-word name. LPPL could not follow that

while naming Linc Twinn, but it strategically misspelled the word - 'Twinn' to attract the attention of its consumer while communicating the idea of the product, twin – pen and pencil. He thought the flow of ink in Linc pen resembled the word 'tonic' of a pen. Some words rhythm his mind like 'Tonic', 'Titanic' and a few more. Whatever may be the new name of the new product to be developed, should it carry the mother brand Linc's name with it like the ones before? He thought deeply.

Jalan's Dilemma

Higher discretionary spending, a preference towards higher lifestyle in all segments of consumers in India and higher attention paid to individual's perceived status was leading Indian consumers towards better products. Experts believed that this change represented a fundamental and potentially permanent shift in consumer behaviour in low involvement products; more in categories that consumers could display in public. Other consumer product categories had been paying attention to this change in consumer behavior. For example, products in food categories like grocery products, and non food FMCG products like soaps and detergents brands coming with product extensions with higher price points with superior quality. Companies are making substantial investments to develop its positioning strategy and brand equity.

Jalan knew that Linc as a brand had good visibility and recognition in the writing instrument market. The awareness about Linc as a writing instrument brand amongst the consumers was high. The users of Linc had a high perception about its quality. But if he increased the price of existing products to offset the increase in polymer prices, wouldn't consumers shift to the competitors? Wouldn't LPPL lose its market share? Wouldn't the four decades of efforts which have gone into building the brand Linc turn futile? Over the years the brand Linc had become synonymous with trust and reliability, at the same time surviving without sustainable profits meant no business. Jalan thought,

“Linc is a brand; when you think of the brand Linc you think of a ball pen, an affordable ball pen. Brand positioning of Linc had automatically become that of a low cost affordable, quality ball pen.”

Not only offsetting the increased raw material price, Jalan also wanted to take LPPL at a higher level in the writing instrument business. At the time three options seemed most plausible. First LPPL could introduce a slightly premium line of Linc ball pens with higher price, maybe ₹10 or ₹12 to capture both current consumers as well as new students who were looking for a little more expensive but better-quality pen having higher brand salience. It would give economies of scale with respect to advertising and promotional activities, Jalan thought, but LPPL executives and brand managers may have concerns anticipating that consumers may get confused about Linc's brand image. Also, would this option help LPPL to come out of the only value image that it had built in the last four decades, and add a premium image to its brand? Jalan was not sure.

Second option could be to develop an entirely new product with higher price points under a new brand, and then develop the brand. In Such case, the future of the new brand will be quite uncertain, and the company would need to chalk out a foolproof strategy. Initial investment to establish another brand would also be high. Third option could be completely rebranding Linc with a new brand name giving premium appeal; and then launching a down market line to cater to Linc's present customer segment. This may help LPPL to reposition itself as an upscale writing instrument company with a fighter line for

the mass market. The third option would give LPPL a best-better-good product line-up and potentially keep consumers buying LPPL products regardless of their reference price. It would also give economies of scale with respect to advertising and promotional activities.

It was already late evening and Jalan called it a day. As he was driving back home, he saw an ad hoarding with a photo of a black colour tall circular tower building with its antenna straight up from the roof. It looked to him as a pillar of confidence held high. He liked the design and mused.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1 – Financials of LPPL (₹ in lakhs)

Particulars	2017-18	2016-17
Revenue from Operations	33189.15	35049.34
Other income	116.28	42.59
Profit before depreciation, interest and taxation	2693.32	3404.14
Finance Cost	485.24	216.66
Depreciation	960.29	792.83
Profit before Tax	1247.79	2394.65
Provision for Taxation-Current	267	543
Provision for Taxation-Deferred	196.68	125.33
Profit after Tax	784.11	1726.32
Total Other comprehensive Income	-2.11	-9.37
Total Comprehensive Income of the Year	782	1716.95
Add: Credit Balance of the previous year	996.39	1013.32
Amount available for Appropriation	1778.39	2730.27
Transfer to General Reserve	500	1200
Dividend	443.58	443.58
Corporate Tax on Dividend	90.3	90.3
Balance carried to Balance Sheet	744.51	996.39

Exhibit 2A: Products from Linc brand in the year 2017-18

Products	Price Point	Brands	Share of Sales (%)
Ball Pen	Below Mrp 10/-	Maxo, Glycer, Smart Gl, Pocket Rocket, Faster	65%
	Mrp 10/- & Abv	Signetta, Signetta Gold, Glycer 10X, Majesta, Twinn Ball	12%
Gel Pen	Below Mrp 10/-	Ocean Gel, Soffy Gel, Maxx Gel	14%
	Mrp 10/- & Abv	POPP Gel, Executive SL-500, Flowsign Gel, Inklusion Gel, Twinn Gel	6%
Pencils		Bensia Printed Pencil, Markline Pencil	1%
Other products		Markline Eraser, Bensia Rocket Eraser, Markline Lazor Geometry Box, Markline Bi-Colour Pencils	2%
			100%

Exhibit 2B: Picture of Key Products from Linc brand

Linc Ball-point Pen ₹ 5



Linc Gel Pen ₹ 5



Linc's high end pen Signetta ₹ 20



Linc Twinn Gel pen ₹ 10

Exhibit 3: Product categories and their shares in writing instrument market

Type	Share (%)
Ball pens	62
Gel/roller pens	22
Mechanical pencils	3
Premium pencils	2
Fountain pens	3
Others	8

Exhibit 4: “The Think it, Linc it” campaign

