
BREAKING BOUNDARIES OF GLAMOUR!

Know Shraddha Kadakia

Capturing extreme biking, riding over buses or jumping over tall chimneys – no parents would ever expect their child in such situation, more so if the child is a girl. Shraddha Kadakia's parents were no exception. They never imagined such scenarios in their wildest of dreams when Shraddha broke the news of getting into photography to them.

Photography, as popularly perceived, is a profession associated with beautiful people or models in sensual clothes, or capturing beautiful products. But Shraddha Kadakia had other plans. Instead of starting her career with assisting an established photographer, she chose a much daunting entrepreneurial journey to achieve her dreams.

Shraddha knew her creative spark as well as her fervour better than anyone else. Who could have ever thought that this simple-looking girl would one day break the boundaries and enter the domain of the male dominated automobile photography to become India's first female automobile and industrial photographer. It was not glamour but the unglamorous that ignited her passion. Her brain would venture into the world of automobiles and factories to create illustrations that explained complicated words.

Being the first female automobile photographer in India, Shraddha is looked up as a strong woman. At the age of 31 and 10 years into the industry, she has made a mark in an otherwise unexplored territory by women. For her, it didn't matter if you are a male or female as long as you know what you are doing. And this, never-say-die attitude has helped her build long-term professional relationship with automobile brands such as Skoda Auto Ltd., Bajaj Auto, Apollo Tyres, DC Design, and Maruti. Over the years she has carved her way through numerous other sectors such as corporate, industrial, fashion and architectural sectors. While building her portfolio, she also kept on building her brand, "**JUST CLICK**", which was born 10 years ago. Today her brand is established and has diversified from automobile photography to capturing industries, products and making ad films.

She was being someone who always wants to keep experimenting and trying out new things, as being just a photographer was not enough for her. She loved her field and wanted others to love it too. With an inner desire to help others who aspired to become photographers, she started a YouTube Channel "**Shoot It Right**" which showcased her tutorials on teaching intricacies of shooting, different camera angles, shooting the night sky, and so on. Shraddha explains it all with much simplicity. Her channel now has over 1000 subscribers and her videos get hundreds of hits daily since it started in 2013. While her work may sound adventurous and cushy today, her journey into the world of professional photography has been a tough one.

She started her career with film publicity for Sawaria at Rs. 2000 a day, then moved to Times Shop and was working between Rs. 5000 to Rs. 7000 a day. Her third job was with an advertising agency for Rs. 20000 a month. But she soon realized that these endeavours did not give her satisfaction. She had an entrepreneurial spirit waiting to be explored and therefore without wasting much time, she quit her job within 6 months and ventured into Automobile Photography. She started approaching companies directly.

As commonly known, the foremost challenge for a start-up entrepreneur is getting the first client. Many a times, the entrepreneur has to use an innovative approach for that. And if the entrepreneur is young and going against convention in a highly competitive niche market, the stakes are even higher. And, Shraddha has been a perfect case of riding against odds.

The adventure didn't end there. It continued with Shraddha getting her first big client, Skoda.

While Shraddha was following up with various automobile companies to get a break, she got an opportunity to meet Praveen Kenneth, Marketing Head of Skoda in 2009. Praveen asked her to shoot a Skoda Car to check her photography skills. With an evaluative eye, he watched her while she took pictures of the car from all sides and angles.

Shraddha did not know that this photography test was going to become the turning point of her career and life. Next day, Shraddha got a call from Praveen to come and see him in office. He asked her to submit a quote for creating an entire portfolio for Skoda. She was to build an image bank for the German brand.

This was a big opportunity and Shraddha did not want to lose it at any cost. Knowing the extent of competition, she came up with an idea. She offered Praveen that she would take the cost of shoot on herself which eliminated the risk for company. She also promised to absorb the loss in case of dissatisfaction of client. Praveen was impressed by the confidence of the young girl and gave her a go-ahead.

The challenges for Shraddha didn't end with winning the project, in fact the nightmare had just begun. Now, the biggest challenge was the cost of hiring a studio, which would take away a substantial chunk of money. But then as it's said that necessity is the mother of all inventions, an idea took shape in her mind. Shraddha rented out a parking space in a residential building for mere Rs. 500 and turned it into a studio, tying bamboo sticks together to create walls. Thus, she eliminated the major cost and was ready with all equipments for her first big automobile shoot. Praveen was surprised to see such a set-up. It was unheard of till date. He was impressed by her acumen and creativity.

But, there were more surprises lined up for Praveen. Shraddha suggested him to allow her to take the pictures in the factory itself, as this would help company to save on the transportation cost. By this time, Praveen was confident that this girl was different. She had a creative eye as well as a knack for business, which Shraddha had acquired from her businessman father, Somil Kadakia. The Skoda shoot turned out to be a month-long delightful experience.

Success of her first assignment gave her confidence to approach other automobile companies. Her professional attitude, taking an organised approach to understanding the clients and their requirements,

and building a case for a photo shoot that expresses the strength of the brand clearly have been her strengths. These attributes never failed her and soon she was set for an expansion.

It's been 6 years since her first Skoda shoot and she hasn't looked back in her career since then. Shraddha is a self-motivated person continuing to charter newer paths and rewriting the history of photography in India.

And the adventure still continues...