



**Institute for
Reproductive Health**
Georgetown University

expand family planning choices,
advance gender equality,
and involve communities



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Family Planning in a Digital World

While it is commonplace to shop online for shoes, clothes, books, and more, have you ever considered purchasing family planning methods online?

As the Global South becomes increasingly connected through technology, the reproductive health community is considering how to harness the power of this rapid change to expand access to family planning and empower individuals to be informed consumers.

In India, where the government has created a strong national family planning program, barriers still exist for women and couples who want to access family planning methods that are suitable to their needs and fertility intentions. In fact, only 64% of urban dwellers use a method of contraception, primarily sterilization. Taking family planning outside of the health system and directly to the consumer could break down barriers to access and reduce unmet need, particularly if done through digital technology.

HLL Lifecare Ltd, the largest contraceptive manufacturer in India, has recognized this opportunity and is bringing family planning



Creating an effective marketing strategy

To generate demand for Makesure Cyclebeads, a multi-pronged marketing strategy was used.



straight to consumers through an online platform. As the pioneer in online sales of condoms, HLL was well positioned to offer CycleBeads®--the visual tool used with the Standard Days Method®--to internet-connected consumers in India. In December 2012, HLL launched the product, *Makesure Cyclebeads*, the commercial brand of CycleBeads.

An important component of offering health products through the private sector is demand generation and promotion. A communication campaign was devised to market Makesure CycleBeads through magazine and online ads, a dedicated website for information and sales (www.makesurecyclebeads.com), and a helpline for customer support. The campaign, implemented in English, speaks to urban women and men of reproductive age who are willing to purchase health products online and are looking for a contraceptive option that is effective, yet side-effect free.

Interest in Makesure CycleBeads has been sparked among the intended audience as evidenced by online orders, clicks on the Makesure CycleBeads website and online ads, as well as calls to the helpline. Men, in particular, have shown strong interest in learning about and purchasing the product as the majority of orders and calls to the helpline are from men in their 30s in Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, and Delhi.

Want to learn more about the changing social and technological landscape in India? Read the recent article, [The Virtual Middle Class Rises](#), published in the New York Times.

Magazine ads for product promotion and trial method use. Readers are able to begin using the Standard Days Method through a [paper image](#) found in the magazine. If they are satisfied with the method, they can purchase Makesure CycleBeads through the website.



Facebook page for product promotion



Dedicated **website** to online sales

Announcements

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Did you see it? Our guest post was featured in *Impatient Optimists'* blog series, "[What's Your Method?](#)" Authored by Victoria Jennings and Elaine Murphy, the article discusses the reasons we should keep an open mind about the Standard Days Method. You can read the full post here:

[Keeping an Open Mind: What the Evidence Tells Us About the Standard Days Method](#)