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India's first travel-based
business immersion programme



1. Why does this immersion matter?

Here's the puzzle worth sitting with before you walk in: T&T Motors doesn't design the car. It doesn't set the price either. Mercedes-Benz bills the customer directly, and the number on the sticker doesn't move. So what is T&T actually selling?

The answer is everything that happens around the car. Which showroom the customer walks into, how they're greeted, how quickly a query gets answered, how personal the follow-up call feels three weeks later; all of that is built, staffed, and paid for by T&T, not by Mercedes-Benz's factory in Germany.

That's what this immersion is really about: **how do you build a business worth someone's trust when you don't control the product or the price, only the experience wrapped around it?**

2. Company snapshot

A few numbers to anchor your thinking:

- India's luxury car market is worth about **\$1.5 billion** today and is growing at roughly **5% a year**, slow by Indian standards, but that's the nature of a market built on scarcity, not volume.
- Luxury cars are still under **2% of all car sales** in India. This is a small, watched, high-visibility category; everyone in the industry knows what everyone else is doing.
- Mercedes-Benz sold about **19,000 cars** in India in 2025 and stayed the **#1 luxury brand**, but BMW sold around 18,000 and is closing the gap fast.
- Even though Mercedes sold slightly *fewer* cars, its revenue hit a **record high**, because the mix shifted upward: sales of its most expensive AMG performance cars jumped 34%, while entry-level luxury models fell 23%. In other words, Mercedes made more money from fewer, richer customers.
- Mercedes-Benz India's marketing budget stayed **flat** in the first half of 2026, even as sales hit a record high for that period. The company's own marketing head said publicly they had to get "more resourceful" rather than spend more.

That last point is worth pausing on. If sales are growing but the marketing budget isn't, the growth has to be coming from somewhere else - better targeting, better follow-up, better use

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of the customer data the company already has. That's a live example of marketing efficiency you can go and test on the ground today.

3. Who's buying, and why is that changing?

Millionaire households in India have grown roughly **90% since 2021**, and a large share of today's luxury buyers are first-generation wealth, people with no family history of owning a luxury brand. That matters enormously for positioning: T&T isn't just reinforcing a preference a customer already has. In many cases, it's building that preference from nothing in a single showroom visit.

There's also a generational shift underway. The average age of a luxury car buyer in India has been dropping; pre-owned luxury buyers are now often in their **mid-30s** rather than their 50s. Tesla's India launch has added to this: even though its volumes are small, industry watchers say it's sped up how quickly younger, wealthy Indians consider an EV as their first luxury purchase, which puts pressure on Mercedes to make its own EV story land with a younger audience, fast.

4. T&T Motors: What does it actually do?

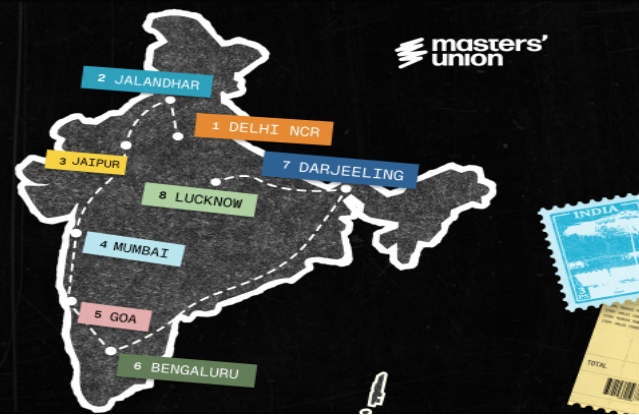
T&T is one of Mercedes-Benz's oldest partners in India, with five showrooms and eight service centres across Delhi NCR, Rajasthan, and Odisha, serving over 20,000 customers. Its biggest showroom, on Mathura Road, is 60,000 sq. ft. and can display 30 cars at once.

But the more useful way to think about T&T isn't "showroom"; it's **three separate jobs running at the same time, under one roof**:

1. **Protecting the brand.** Mercedes sets the standards: how the showroom looks, how staff dress, and how a test drive is scripted. T&T's job is to execute all of it perfectly, every single day, without the brand having to check.
2. **Running a profitable business.** T&T still has to hit its own numbers. Every rupee spent on a local campaign or an Instagram post needs to justify itself in leads and sales.
3. **Managing relationships that last years, not days.** A car buyer today is a service customer for the next 5–10 years. If that relationship feels disjointed: a different

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person each time, no memory of past visits, the brand's promise starts to feel hollow, no matter how good the car is.

Notice how these three jobs can pull against each other. A campaign that's great for local sales might not match the brand's global tone. A cost-saving shortcut in service might protect this month's margin but damage next year's loyalty. Watch for where T&T has to make that trade-off - that's usually where the real strategy lives.

5. Two frameworks to carry into the visit

Framework 1: Keller's brand equity model: How a brand gets built in someone's head

Marketing professor Kevin Lane Keller argued that a brand isn't built in one shot; it's built in layers, and you can't skip a layer:

Layer	The question it answers	What it looks like at T&T
1. Awareness	"Do I know this brand?"	Already solved, everyone knows Mercedes. Not T&T's job.
2. Meaning	"What is this brand, really?"	This is where T&T does real work, the showroom, the sales pitch, what the car is made to feel like it stands for.
3. Feeling	"What do I feel about this brand?"	Trust, excitement, pride, shaped almost entirely by how the customer was treated, not by the car's spec sheet.
4. Loyalty	"Will I stay, and will I bring others?"	The real prize: a customer who upgrades within Mercedes and tells friends to buy there too, instead of shopping around at the next purchase.

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Framework 2: The IDIC model: How to actually manage a customer relationship

Marketing consultants Don Peppers and Martha Rogers broke customer-relationship management into four simple steps and most CRM failures happen because a company skips one of them:

1. **Identify:** Do you actually know who this specific customer is, beyond "another lead"?
2. **Differentiate:** Do you treat your most valuable, most loyal customers differently from a first-time browser?
3. **Interact:** Does every conversation build on the last one, or does the customer have to explain themselves again each time?
4. **Customise:** Is the offer, the timing, and the message actually tailored to this person or is it the same script for everyone?

Here's a sharp way to use this on the visit: ask someone at T&T to walk you through what happens between a customer's **first enquiry** and their **first service appointment**, a year later. Count how many of the four steps you can actually see happening, versus how many are just claimed.

6. How luxury brands actually position themselves

- **Scarcity works because it's the opposite of how most retail works.** Most businesses want to make buying easier. Luxury brands often make it *harder*: *waitlists*, no bargaining, and sometimes even an appointment just to walk in. Mercedes-Benz's fixed, no-discount pricing does the same job: it removes the one conversation (price) that makes every purchase feel the same, so the customer is left thinking about something else; status, trust, fit.
- **The story matters more than the spec sheet.** A luxury brand isn't really selling horsepower or safety ratings, those are almost table stakes at this price point. It's selling an idea of who the owner becomes. Listen for how much of the sales conversation is about the car's features versus the life it represents.
- **Mercedes is quietly repositioning itself and that creates tension.** Globally, the brand is chasing younger buyers and pushing its electric line-up hard, using tech and sustainability messaging instead of the celebrity endorsements it once relied on. But

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most of the people walking into T&T today are still buying a traditional petrol or diesel Mercedes because that's what they trust. One brand, two audiences, at the same time, in the same building. Ask the sales team how they handle that split.

- **Sustainability claims only work if they feel earned.** Research on luxury branding suggests customers see through a sustainability message that feels bolted on - it only lands if it's backed by something real, like craftsmanship or engineering quality. As Mercedes leans into its EV story in India, notice whether that story is told through genuine engineering pride, or just as a marketing checkbox.

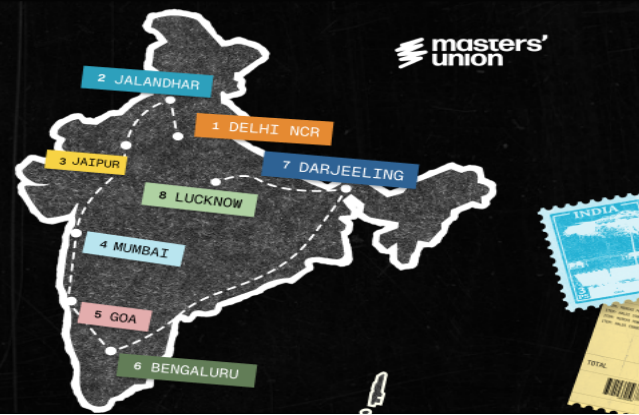
7. CRM: The system nobody sees, but everyone feels

A CRM isn't a fancy contact list. It's the system that remembers a customer so a human doesn't have to remember what they looked at, what they asked, when they're due for service, and what tone of message actually gets a reply from them.

- **It's not the same as inventory software.** A Dealer Management System (DMS) tracks cars and money. A CRM tracks *people*. Good dealerships run both, wired together, so a service booking and a sales lead don't live in two disconnected worlds.
- **A luxury brand's CRM should feel different from a mass-market one.** Mercedes and BMW lean hard into personal touches, a call from someone who remembers your name and your last car. A brand like Toyota, built on reliability and value, doesn't need to try nearly as hard on that front. If T&T's CRM feels transactional rather than personal, that's a mismatch with the brand it's supposed to represent.
- **A lot of this is moving online before the customer even shows up.** Buyers increasingly research, configure, and sometimes even reserve a car digitally before setting foot in a showroom, Mercedes reports a meaningful share of its leads now start as a digital enquiry, not a walk-in. That changes what a good CRM has to do: it needs to know a customer's *digital* history the moment they walk through the door, not start from zero.
- **Even the showroom layout is part of the "system".** Well-designed luxury showrooms aren't laid out randomly, there's usually a quiet buffer zone near the entrance to let a customer relax, a dramatic "hero" car placed to create an emotional first impression, and a deliberate path that nudges someone from browsing toward a decision. Some newer showrooms even track foot traffic digitally to see which cars get the most attention. It's worth asking whether T&T does any of this consciously, or if it just evolved that way.

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8. Guiding Questions

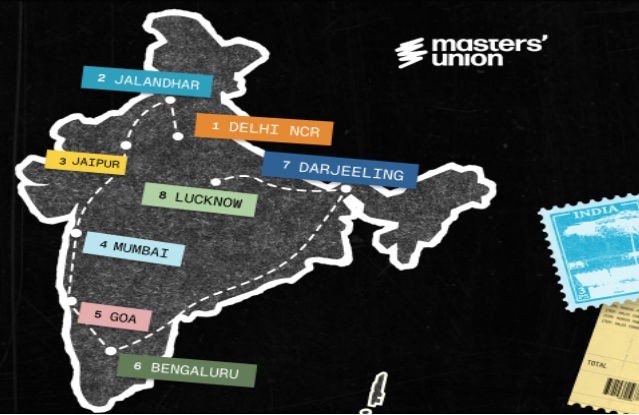
1. If the marketing budget isn't growing but sales are, what's actually driving that growth; better ads or better follow-up on leads that already exist?
2. A huge share of today's buyers have no family history with any luxury brand. How does a salesperson build trust with someone in one conversation versus someone whose father also drove a Mercedes?
3. Mercedes is chasing a younger, EV-curious buyer globally, but most walk-ins here are older and want a traditional car. How does one showroom serve both convincingly?
4. How a legacy dealership stays relevant while the brand above it changes direction.
5. If you were measuring customer lifetime value here, what would matter more: the price of the car sold, or everything that follows it, service, accessories, the next purchase?

9. Glossary

Term	Meaning
Brand Equity	The extra value a name carries beyond what the product actually does; the reason someone pays more for the same thing.
Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)	What a customer is worth to the business across their entire relationship, not just the first sale.
Conversion Funnel	The path from "never heard of it" to "just bought it," useful for spotting exactly where people drop off.
Omnichannel	Being present across many channels (website, showroom, app) and making sure they talk to each other, instead of operating as separate silos.
Personalisation	Using what's known about a specific customer to shape what they're offered, instead of treating everyone the same.
Phygital	A customer journey that deliberately blends physical (test drive) and digital (app, website) touchpoints into one seamless experience.
Share of Wallet	How much of a customer's total spending in a category (car, service, accessories, insurance) one brand manages to capture.

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10. Before you walk in

This isn't a tour; it's a live business, mid-operation, on a normal working day.

Show up ready to notice **signals, not statements**. What a salesperson says is one data point. What the showroom's layout, the CRM screen, and the follow-up process actually do, that's the real story.

Walk in curious. Walk out sharper.

11. Sources

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