

LOW-CAPEX DISTRIBUTION OUTLETS (MUMBAI & PUNE)

1. Co-working spaces. WeWork (BKC, Magarpatta Pune), Awfis (200+ centres across 18 cities including Mumbai/Pune; ~88,000 seats and ~88,000 active users), 91springboard, Innov8, Regus, IndiQube. All run stocked pantries and community events. Entry: pitch the community/facility manager or the F&B/pantry vendor for consignment placement in the pantry fridge, plus a sponsored "wellness day." Volume: steady rather than explosive (a 500-seat centre at 3–5% daily trial $\approx$ 15–25 units/day). Cost: minimal — usually just free samples + consignment.

2. College campuses. Mumbai: NMIMS, Narsee Monjee, Mithibai, Jai Hind, HR College, KJ Somaiya, VJTI, ICT, SP Jain, IIT Bombay. Pune: Symbiosis (the SymbiEat/Symbi Food Court model; SIU spans 300+ acres with tens of thousands of students), SIBM, SCMHRD, MIT, Fergusson, COEP. Critically, Symbiosis canteens are run by contractors (Symbi Food Court comprises a canteen, a Café Coffee Day and a juice bar) — approach the contractor, not the college administration. Entry: canteen-contractor consignment or student-festival sponsorship (₹10–50k reaching thousands). Note price sensitivity here; ₹129 helps.

3. Sports clubs beyond gyms. Padel is the priority sub-channel (see Key Findings). Named venues: Courtside (Worli, 20,000 sq ft, opened Oct 2025, with bistro/pro-shop), 7Padel (Bandra/Colaba/Chembur/Andheri; MS Dhoni-backed), Padel 360 (Worli, hosted Mumbai's first indoor padel league), SkyPadel & Urban Padel (Vile Parle), Racquet Republic (Santacruz), Amanora (Pune). Also traditional clubs: CCI/Brabourne, Willingdon Sports Club, Breach Candy Club, Bombay Gymkhana (cricket/swimming/squash). Entry: café/pro-shop consignment plus tournament-hydration sponsorship. Padel players pay ₹300–1,300/session, so price sensitivity is low and the demographic is a precise match.

4. Corporate office cafeterias. BKC, Nariman Point, Lower Parel, Worli (Mumbai); Hinjewadi (Rajiv Gandhi Infotech Park, ~2,800 acres), Magarpatta, Kharadi (Pune). Entry via pantry vendors/corporate caterers — the caterer, not HR, controls the fridge. Higher effort, higher volume. Cost: a caterer listing fee is possible; negotiate consignment first.

5. Residential society gyms & pools. Hiranandani Gardens (Powai), Lodha, Oberoi Realty, Godrej properties (Mumbai); Magarpatta City, Amanora, Kolte Patil (Pune). Entry: facility manager/society secretary direct; place a small fridge shelf or honesty-box mini-fridge at the society gym. Volume per site is modest but cost is very low and the captive repeat audience makes it sticky.

6. Yoga & dance studios. Cult.fit yoga, Sarva Yoga, plus boutique studios and dance schools. Aquatein's own site testimonials cite "post-yoga recovery" with the 10g variant — a natural fit. Consignment countertop model.

7. Swimming pools. YMCA, Breach Candy, Willingdon, CCI, university pools. Post-swim protein/hydration is a strong consumption occasion. Small fridge/consignment at the pool café.

8. Marathon & running communities. Tata Mumbai Marathon (18 Jan 2026; 69,100 participants; organised by Procam International) is the flagship, with participants spending ₹130.65 crore on supplements and 30% earning ₹20L+. Also Tata Ultra Marathon Lonavala (22 Feb 2026, 9th edition) and running groups (Bombay Running, Mumbai Runners, Pune

Running). Entry: race-expo stall, finish-line sampling, running-club WhatsApp-group tie-ins. Event sampling delivers the highest trial-per-rupee of any channel.

9. Competitive exam coaching centres. Large institutes clustered in Dadar/Andheri (Mumbai) and FC Road/Deccan (Pune). Angle: "focus/clean energy, zero sugar" for long study hours via tuck-shop consignment. This is a hypothesis channel — a large 18–24 audience but price-sensitive; test small.

10. Hospital & clinic cafeterias. Lilavati, Kokilaben, Hinduja, Breach Candy, Nanavati, Fortis (Mumbai); Ruby Hall, Jehangir, Sahyadri (Pune). Post-consultation nutrition purchase pattern. Aquatein's existing presence in Guardian Pharmacy and Tata 1mg lends the health credibility that helps here. Entry via cafeteria contractor.

11. Sports nutrition stores. HealthKart (200+ stores; Mumbai: Mahim, Bhandup, Kandivali, Kharghar; Pune: Viman Nagar), GNC (Veer Nariman Rd, Andheri East, Santacruz West), plus local retailers and Steadfast. This is the highest-conversion channel because the shopper is already buying protein. Entry: distributor/direct wholesale at standard retail margin.

12. Salon & barbershop chains. Enrich, Looks, YLG, Jawed Habib, TONI&GUY. Impulse checkout placement. Hypothesis channel — worth a small pilot, but fit is weaker than fitness channels.

13. Petrol pumps with convenience stores. HP, IndianOil, Reliance BP/Jio-bp, Shell. High footfall but weaker demographic fit and often high slotting; deprioritise for Phase 1.

14. Railway/Metro premium outlets. CSMT, Bandra, Dadar, Andheri; Mumbai Metro retail. High footfall but licensing/slotting fees are steep; deprioritise until Phase 2.

15. Dark stores / delivery hubs (the scale lever). Beyond simply listing, brands increase Q-comm velocity by ensuring stock reaches the dark stores serving specific high-affluence pincodes (Bandra, Powai, Lower Parel, Andheri West in Mumbai; Koregaon Park, Baner, Kharadi in Pune) and by buying sponsored slots during the 6–9pm peak ordering window. Zepto's Seller Hub gives smaller brands direct catalog/inventory control and weekly payment cycles — better for working capital than Blinkit's typical bi-weekly cycle. Note Blinkit shifted to a first-party inventory model from Sept 2025, so onboarding there increasingly means selling into Blinkit rather than a marketplace listing.

16. Gaming cafés & esports centres. Mumbai: AIM Gaming (Nana Chowk, 24hr), Simply Gaming (Andheri/Kandivali), Pacific Gaming. Pune: Vibezone (Wanowrie), GGwellplayed (Dhankawadi), XP Gaming (Viman Nagar). These already sell Red Bull and cold drinks; the angle is "zero-sugar clean energy for long sessions." Consignment fridge. Hypothesis channel.

17. Swimming/sports academies. Youth academies (football — Mumbai City FC youth; cricket, badminton, swimming). Parents and young athletes are both present. Consignment at the academy tuck shop.

18. Food delivery aggregator partnerships. List Aquatein via health-food/nutrition stores already on Swiggy/Zomato (non-restaurant listings) so it surfaces in "healthy" and "protein" searches without Aquatein having to own a storefront.

Indian FMCG cheap-distribution case studies:

- **PepsiCo Sting:** a ₹20 price point plus impulse placement (kirana, paan shops, pharmacies, canteens, petrol pumps) via Varun Beverages' cold-chain network took it to roughly 90% of India's energy-drink market. PepsiCo's Senior VP-Beverages George Kovoov told the Economic Times (July 2023) that Sting's growth "has been more rapid and robust than any other soft drink brand launched in India over the past three decades." *Lesson for Aquatein: a sharp price point (the recommended ₹129) plus ubiquitous impulse placement beats premium-only positioning.* (Exact revenue-crore and "20 lakh outlets" figures circulate via analysts/secondary sources, not PepsiCo filings — treat as indicative.)
- **Paper Boat (Hector Beverages):** entered via non-traditional channels first — airlines (notably IndiGo), trains, hotels, cafés, offices — before mass retail, reaching 120,000 outlets (30,000 direct) partly through an Indo Nissin Foods distribution tie-up (Forbes India, 2016). CEO Neeraj Kakkar: "We are digital first and mass media second. We use the cheapest way to reach out to people." *Lesson: institutional/non-traditional channels build brand equity cheaply before fighting for kirana shelf.*
- **Yogabar (SproutLife Foods):** built offline through yoga centres, gyms, pop-ups and free sampling instead of celebrity ads — reaching ~6,000 outlets with 150% FY22 revenue growth (Financial Express, April 2022); ITC then acquired a stake for ₹175 crore (Economic Times, Jan 2023). Co-founder Suhasini Sampath: ATL/celebrity ROI "isn't good enough until your products are present in at least 40,000 stores and we currently sell in 5000 outlets." *Lesson: at Aquatein's scale, sampling plus fitness-adjacent channels is the correct spend — not mass media.*