FICTIONAL TEACHING CASE · ALL FIGURES INVENTED

TRUTHALI FOODS PVT. LTD.

The pitch is over. The proof is on the table.
You are the investment committee.

SECTOR	BASE	DECISION	YOUR SEAT
AI-personalised meal subscription	**Bengaluru, India**	**₹180 Cr Series C**	**Fund IC, July 2026**

Yesterday you learnt to demand evidence before you believe a claim. Today you sit on the other side of the table. A real operating history is in front of you: five periods of accounts, four funding rounds, cohort tables, cash in the bank. The company executed. Kitchens run. Meals ship. Revenue compounds.

Your job is not to ask whether the team worked hard. Your job is to decide what the record proves, what it hides, and what is still missing.

> **Honesty label.** TruThali Foods Pvt. Ltd. is a fictional company created for this lab. Every person, investor, client, number and event in this case is invented, and any resemblance to a real company is coincidental. The failure patterns it combines are drawn from real, well-documented graveyard patterns, but this document describes no actual company.

THE SETTING

July 2026. The Series C ask.

TruThali sells subscription thalis designed by its app. A new subscriber answers a health quiz, optionally links a fitness band, and receives a rotating weekly plan of calorie- and protein-managed Indian meals, cooked in TruThali's own cloud kitchens and delivered at lunch and dinner slots. Subscribers pay a weekly plan fee per meal; one-time orders cost more. Since late 2024 the company also feeds office parks under corporate contracts.

The company is four years old. It has raised ₹185 Cr across four rounds. It now asks for **₹180 Cr at a ₹720 Cr pre-money valuation** (₹900 Cr post), a Series C to fund three more cities and a packaged-food line. Your table is one fund's investment committee. You have this document, a calculator and 50 minutes.

The company's Series C deck claims

- "2.11 lakh active subscribers and compounding."
- "FY26 revenue ₹118.7 Cr, up 93% year on year."
- "Average subscriber lifetime of 22 months. LTV of ₹40,900 against CAC of ₹2,800. A 14.6x LTV/CAC engine."
- "Contribution positive in FY25 at +7% of revenue, before growth investment."
- "B2B contracts de-risk consumer volatility."
- "Category leader in AI nutrition. The market is early."

Every claim above is quoted from the fictional company's pitch deck. Your exhibits are the operating record behind it. Treat the exhibits as verified; treat the deck as a claim.

Rules of the lab

- Only the exhibits count as evidence. If a number is not in an exhibit, it is a claim, not a fact.
- Blank means not measured. Zero means measured and zero.
- If you cannot defend the denominator, you cannot defend the metric.
- Six questions, graded: two accessible, two analytical, two demanding. Questions 5 and 6 decide the verdict.

What "after execution" means

Weeks 1 to 8 asked: will anyone want this, and can you build it? This case starts after both answers are yes. The app works. The kitchens run. 2.39 Cr meals have been delivered. The graveyard is full of companies that cleared those bars and still died. Today you learn to read why.

THE COMPANY

Business, founders, operating history

What it sells

Weekly meal-plan subscriptions built by an "AI nutritionist": a recommendation model that assembles rotating thalis from a 340-dish library against each subscriber's calorie, protein and dietary profile. Average consumer plan: 13 meals per subscriber per month. TruThali owns the kitchens and the delivery fleet, so it captures the full stack and the full cost.

Why investors liked it

India's urban healthy-eating spend is real and growing; retention in year one looked strong; owning kitchens gave quality control; the AI layer gave the story a technology premium. Each round was oversubscribed within weeks.

Founders

Ananya Rao, CEO (34). Eight years in quick-commerce city operations; ran two city launches for a large delivery platform before founding TruThali in October 2021. Owns growth, pricing and fundraising.

Devesh Kulkarni, CTO (31). Machine-learning engineer, IIT Bombay; built recommendation systems at a streaming company. Built the menu engine and the demand-forecasting stack. His family trust owns four of the buildings TruThali cooks in (see Governance log, Exhibit 9).

People

640 employees in June 2026, of which about 470 are kitchen and delivery staff. A 22-person data and ML team.

EXHIBIT 1 · OPERATING TIMELINE AND FOOTPRINT

Period	Milestone	Cities	Cloud kitchens	Employees	Meals delivered (lakh)
Oct 2021	Founded, Bengaluru	-	-	4	-
Jun 2022	Launch: app + first kitchen	1	1	19	-
Mar 2023 (FY23 end)	Pre-Series A; Pune entry	2	3	64	4.4
Mar 2024 (FY24 end)	Series A (Jan 2024); Hyderabad entry	3	5	188	19.6
Mar 2025 (FY25 end)	WorkPlate corporate contract (Nov 2024)	3	7	402	58.0
Mar 2026 (FY26 end)	Series B (Jun 2025); Chennai + Mumbai (Jan 2026)	5	11	618	118.9
Jun 2026 (Q1 FY27 end)	Series C process opens	5	11	640	37.6

Meals delivered are for the fiscal period shown (FY = April to March). Cumulative meals since launch: 238.5 lakh.

THE MONEY IN

Funding history and investor terms

EXHIBIT 2 · ROUNDS RAISED

Round	Closed	Raised	Post-money	Lead investor	Key terms
Seed	Jul 2022	₹6.0 Cr	₹24 Cr	Kadamba Seed Partners	1x non-participating preference
Pre-Series A	Mar 2023	₹14.0 Cr	₹58 Cr	Whitefield Angels Collective	1x non-participating preference
Series A	Jan 2024	₹45.0 Cr	₹180 Cr	NorthPeak Ventures	1x non-participating preference; board seat
Series B	Jun 2025	₹120.0 Cr	₹540 Cr	Sablegate Capital	**2x non-participating preference; full-ratchet anti-dilution;** board seat

All investors are fictional. Total primary capital raised: ₹185 Cr.

EXHIBIT 2A · OWNERSHIP AFTER SERIES B

Holder	Holding	Notes
Founders and ESOP pool	33.2%	ESOP pool about 10 points of this row
Kadamba Seed Partners	11.1%	Seed (Jul 2022)
Whitefield Angels Collective	14.1%	Pre-Series A (Mar 2023)
NorthPeak Ventures	19.4%	Series A (Jan 2024)
Sablegate Capital	22.2%	Series B (Jun 2025); **₹240 Cr** of liquidation preference ahead of all others

Terms used in this exhibit. A liquidation preference sets the payment order if the company is sold or shuts down: a "2x non-participating" holder is paid twice its invested amount before holders lower in the stack receive anything. Full-ratchet anti-dilution re-prices the holder's shares to the price of any later, lower-priced round. The "preference stack" is the queue of these preferences from most senior to most junior. Other working terms used in this case: contribution is revenue minus the variable cost of delivering it; customer acquisition cost (CAC) is the cost of acquiring one subscriber; lifetime value (LTV) is the total contribution a subscriber generates over their paying life.

EXHIBIT 2B · THE SERIES C ASK

Ask	₹180 Cr	Use of funds: 3 new cities, packaged-food line, 18 months of runway
Pre-money	₹720 Cr	7.6x FY26 revenue; ₹900 Cr post-money
Terms offered	1x	1x non-participating, same stack as Series A. Sablegate's 2x remains senior.

THE OPERATING RECORD, PART 1

Five periods of accounts

EXHIBIT 3 · SUMMARY PROFIT AND LOSS, FY23 TO Q1 FY27 (₹ CR)

Line	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Q1 FY27
Revenue	4.6	19.8	61.4	118.7	36.9
Variable fulfilment cost (food, packaging, delivery, discounts)	4.7	14.1	57.0	139.2	47.7
Contribution	**-0.1**	**+5.7**	**+4.4**	**-20.5**	**-10.8**
Contribution margin	-2%	+29%	+7%	-17%	-29%
Marketing and growth spend	0.9	4.6	16.1	33.9	9.9
Fixed costs (team, kitchen rent, tech, G&A)	5.2	10.2	15.5	18.5	5.3
EBITDA	**-6.2**	**-9.1**	**-27.2**	**-72.9**	**-26.0**

FY23 is a part year (launch June 2022). Q1 FY27 is the quarter April to June 2026. Variable fulfilment cost includes consumer and corporate meals at their actual costs; Exhibit 7 breaks out per-meal economics. Margins rounded to the nearest whole point.

EXHIBIT 3A · QUARTERLY REVENUE INSIDE FY26 (₹ CR)

Quarter	Q1 FY26	Q2 FY26	Q3 FY26	Q4 FY26	Q1 FY27
Revenue	19.9	26.8	31.4	40.6	36.9

Q1 FY27 is the first quarter in company history with a sequential revenue decline. The deck quotes it as "+85% year on year."

Who actually pays

EXHIBIT 4 · REVENUE BY STREAM (₹ CR)

Stream	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Q1 FY27
Consumer subscriptions	3.9	15.1	42.3	61.0	17.6
Consumer one-time orders	0.7	3.4	9.1	13.6	3.1
WorkPlate corporate contract (anchor)	-	-	5.6	33.8	13.6
Other B2B contracts	-	0.6	2.6	6.3	1.2
Delivery fees and other	-	0.7	1.8	4.0	1.4
Total	**4.6**	**19.8**	**61.4**	**118.7**	**36.9**

WorkPlate is a single annual contract with an office-park caterer, signed November 2024, renewable each January, exit on 60 days' notice by either side. It supplies fixed-price meals at ₹112 per meal to 41 office cafeterias. It was 28% of FY26 revenue and 37% of Q1 FY27 revenue.

EXHIBIT 5 · TWO WAYS OF COUNTING SUBSCRIBERS

Measure (period end)	Mar 2023	Mar 2024	Mar 2025	Mar 2026	Jun 2026
"Active subscribers" as reported in decks	9,400	36,800	118,500	207,600	211,300
Subscribers who actually paid in the last 30 days	8,900	31,200	84,700	121,300	114,200
Paying as % of "active"	95%	85%	71%	58%	54%

Footnote 14, April 2025 investor update: "From 1 April 2025, 'active subscribers' includes registered users who opened the app or logged a meal photo in the trailing 30 days." In periods through 31 March 2025 the term counted subscribers who paid in the last 30 days. The Series C deck uses the term "active subscribers" without a footnote.

THE OPERATING RECORD, PART 3

Do the customers stay

EXHIBIT 6 · PAYING-RETENTION MATRIX: % OF EACH YEAR'S ACQUISITION COHORT STILL PAYING, MONTHS AFTER FIRST PAID ORDER

Cohort (avg of monthly intakes)	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M9	M12
FY23 joiners	100	79	66	57	49	43	33	26
FY24 joiners	100	71	58	48	40	34	24	17
FY25 joiners	100	62	49	39	31	24	15	11
FY26 joiners	100	54	41	33	25	17	n/a	n/a

n/a = not yet observable. TruThali published this table in every investor update through June 2025. It has not appeared in any update since. The Series C deck replaces it with one line: "average subscriber lifetime: 22 months."

EXHIBIT 6A · WHAT THE DECK SHOWS INSTEAD

"22 months." The deck's average-lifetime figure is computed from the FY23-FY24 early cohorts, extrapolated with a model that assumes churn stops after month 9. The company's own newer cohorts, shown above, were not used in that model.

THE OPERATING RECORD, PART 4

What each meal earns, what each customer costs

EXHIBIT 7 · CONSUMER UNIT ECONOMICS PER DELIVERED MEAL (₹)

Per consumer meal	FY24	FY25	FY26	Q1 FY27
Average price paid by subscriber	149	146	143	141
Food and ingredients	62	66	71	74
Packaging	11	12	13	14
Delivery	41	44	48	50
Discounts and credits allocated	8	15	24	29
Contribution per meal	**+27**	**+9**	**-13**	**-26**

Share of consumer orders carrying a discount: FY24 19%, FY25 34%, FY26 52%, Q1 FY27 61%. WorkPlate meals earn a contracted ₹112 per meal against a variable cost of ₹149 (FY26) and ₹153 (Q1 FY27): a contribution of **-₹37** and **-₹41** per anchor meal.

EXHIBIT 7A · COST OF ACQUIRING ONE NEW PAYING SUBSCRIBER

Acquisition	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Q1 FY27
New paying subscribers added (thousand)	9.6	38.5	96.0	121.0	21.0
Marketing spend (₹ Cr)	0.9	4.6	16.1	33.9	9.9
Blended CAC (₹)	938	1,195	1,677	2,802	4,714
Share of new subscribers from paid channels	22%	34%	55%	71%	78%
Paid CAC, paid joiners only (₹)	4,261	3,514	3,049	3,946	6,044

Blended CAC divides all marketing spend by all new subscribers, including organic ones. Paid CAC divides it by paid-channel joiners only. The deck quotes blended CAC.

How much time is left

EXHIBIT 8 · CASH WALK: CAPITAL IN, NET BURN, CASH REMAINING (₹ CR)

Period	Opening cash	Capital raised	Net burn (period total)	Closing cash	Avg monthly net burn
FY23 (Jun 2022 - Mar 2023, 10 months)	-	20.0	7.0	13.0	0.7
FY24	13.0	45.0	13.2	44.8	1.1
FY25	44.8	-	27.6	17.2	2.3
FY26	17.2	120.0	76.8	60.4	6.4
Q1 FY27 (Apr - Jun 2026)	60.4	-	22.2	38.2	7.4

Net burn is total cash outflow net of inflows for the period, including capital spending. Rounds banked: Seed (Jul 2022) and Pre-Series A (Mar 2023) in FY23; Series A (Jan 2024) in FY24; Series B (Jun 2025) in FY26. In every period, opening + raised - burn = closing; the average monthly burn is the period total divided by its months. FY23 is a part year (launch June 2022).

EXHIBIT 9 · GOVERNANCE AND DISCLOSURE LOG

When	Entry
Mar 2025	Auditor changed mid-year: SRKC & Co (a national firm, appointed at Series A) replaced by Rao & Co (the two-partner founder-era firm). No reason given in the filing.
Apr 2025	"Active subscriber" definition changed (Exhibit 5). Disclosed once, in a page-14 footnote.
Aug 2025	CFO Meera Iyer resigns after 16 months. The financial controller has acted as interim CFO since. Two CFO searches were started and abandoned.
Sep 2025	Quarterly cohort table (Exhibit 6) stops appearing in investor updates. Update cites a "move to outcome-based reporting."
FY25 filing	Related-party footnote: 4 of 11 kitchens are leased from Kulkarni Agro Estates, a trust of the CTO's family, at ₹2.9 lakh per kitchen per month. Two independent brokers put market rent for comparable units at ₹1.7-1.9 lakh.
Feb 2026	The board's only independent director resigns "for personal reasons." The seat is still empty. The board is two founders, two investors.
Jul 2026	FY26 statutory accounts not yet filed. Company cites "auditor transition."

The statement file

EXHIBIT 10 · CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET (₹ CR)

As at	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2026	30 Jun 2026
Cash and bank balances	17.2	60.4	38.2
Trade receivables	4.2	9.8	10.4
Inventory (ingredients, packaging)	1.6	3.1	3.3
Fixed assets, net (kitchens, fleet, equipment)	10.7	14.2	14.9
Total assets	**33.7**	**87.5**	**66.8**
Trade payables	6.8	11.6	16.2
Other current liabilities	4.4	6.3	7.0
Share capital and securities premium	65.0	185.0	185.0
Accumulated losses	(42.5)	(115.4)	(141.4)
Total liabilities and equity	**33.7**	**87.5**	**66.8**

FY25 column audited; FY26 and Q1 FY27 unaudited (FY26 statutory accounts not yet filed - see Exhibit 9). The company carries no debt and charges no depreciation; accumulated losses equal cumulative EBITDA losses from Exhibit 3. Share capital and premium equal cumulative primary capital raised in Exhibit 2. Cash agrees with Exhibit 8.

EXHIBIT 10A · EMPLOYEE STOCK OPTION POOL

ESOP	Mar 2025	Mar 2026	Jun 2026
Pool size (% of fully diluted)	9.8%	10.1%	10.1%
Granted	6.2%	8.0%	8.3%
Vested	2.9%	4.1%	4.4%
Option exercise price (₹)	100	100	100

Standard four-year vesting with a one-year cliff. The Series C term sheet contemplates a pool refresh to 12% post-money.

THE DECK'S APPENDIX

What the deck says about the world

EXHIBIT 11 · MARKET AND CATEGORY DATA, AS CITED IN THE SERIES C DECK

Market estimate (India)	2024	2026E	2030E
Online healthy-meal delivery (₹ Cr)	5,100	6,800	14,500
AI-personalised nutrition app downloads (lakh)	92	210	640
Urban "health-conscious" consumers (Cr)	7.9	8.4	9.6

Named competitor (all fictional)	HQ	Last round	Claimed subscribers
FitPlatter	Mumbai	$22M Series B, 2025	40,000
CalorieKart	Delhi NCR	$9M Series A, 2024	18,500
GreenByte Foods	Bengaluru	$3M seed, 2026	6,200

Source: Series C deck appendix, citing syndicated industry estimates commissioned or purchased by the company. These are the company's cited market figures, not its operating record.

EXHIBIT 12 · CUSTOMER SURVEY, MARCH 2026

Survey item	Result
Respondents (in-app users active in March 2026)	4,812
Net Promoter Score	61
"Would definitely reorder next month"	71%
Top praise: taste / convenience / "plan feels personal"	44% / 38% / 33%
Top complaints: late slots / price increases / portion size	27% / 24% / 18%

In-app survey commissioned by the company, March 2026; respondents could skip any question; percentages are of respondents answering that item.

THE LAB

Six questions. One verdict.

Work as your table's investment committee. Show your arithmetic. When you use a number, name the exhibit it came from.

Q1 · ACCESSIBLE

The headline story. Compute revenue growth for FY24, FY25 and FY26, and the annualised run rate implied by Q1 FY27. Then, in three or four sentences: what does TruThali sell, who pays for it, and how has the payer mix shifted since FY24?

Q2 · ACCESSIBLE

The clock. Compute the company's average monthly net burn for Q1 FY27 and its runway from 30 June 2026. Roughly what month does cash reach zero if nothing changes? What does that date do to the company's bargaining power in the Series C?

Q3 · ANALYTICAL

Defend the denominator. The deck says "2.11 lakh active subscribers." Reconcile this claim with the company's own subscriber records. Identify what changed in April 2025, then restate subscriber growth on the old definition for FY26 (Mar 2025 to Mar 2026) and for Q1 FY27. What does the widening gap between the two lines tell an investor that the headline number cannot?

Q4 · ANALYTICAL

The 22-month claim. The deck claims an average subscriber lifetime of 22 months. Estimate the average paying lifetime of the FY24 and FY26 cohorts from the operating record (state your method; a reasonable estimate suffices). Rebuild lifetime value on a contribution basis and set it against the cost of acquiring a subscriber, for both years. In which fiscal year did the acquisition engine stop paying for itself?

Q5 · DEMANDING

The growth mix. Decompose FY26's revenue growth by stream. Recompute FY26 growth excluding the WorkPlate anchor contract. Then estimate "contribution-quality growth": how much of FY26's incremental revenue was sold at or below variable cost? If you could underwrite only one revenue line for the next 18 months, which would it be, and what three pieces of evidence would you demand on it before signing?

Q6 · DEMANDING

The memo. Write your IC's one-page memo: pass, defer, or invest at ₹180 Cr / ₹720 Cr pre. Support it with evidence from at least six exhibits, named. Address the preference stack you would sit behind, and the company's governance record. Close with: the three pieces of evidence that could change your answer, and the single exhibit you would have demanded in January 2024 that would have changed the Series A outcome.

BEFORE YOU VOTE

Your fund's decision

TruThali executed. It shipped an app people downloaded, kitchens that cooked, a fleet that delivered, and revenue that compounded for four years. It raised from four sets of professional investors who all did diligence. None of that is the question in front of you.

The question is what the record proves, what it does not prove, and what is not in the record at all. Everything you need is in the twelve exhibits; anything outside them is a claim, not evidence. Your committee votes at minute 45: pass, defer, or invest at ₹180 Cr on ₹720 Cr pre. One page, signed by the whole table.

The question that outlives this case

Your own venture will one day show an investor a record like this one. Not a pitch. A record. Which line of yours will you hope they do not read, and why are you still running the company that produces it?

This case is a work of fiction built for teaching. It does not describe, and is not a comment on, any real company, founder, investor or contract. The failure patterns it combines are common in the public record of failed startups; the Startup Graveyard museum (graveyardmuseum.app) catalogues real examples your table can study next.