

Surge S32: A Dual-Purpose Electric Marvel or a High-Priced Hurdle?



The Surge S32, a two-in-one electric vehicle (EV), is ingeniously tailored for modern self-employed individuals, promising to revamp their income opportunities and lifestyle quality. This versatile EV, labelled as a 'class-shifting vehicle,' cleverly melds practicality with innovation, potentially triggering a paradigm shift in the larger vehicle market.

Key highlights of the Surge S32 offer

Unique Proposition: The Surge S32's standout feature is its impeccable ability to transform from a profit-generating 3W electric vehicle to a more luxurious personal transport mode - an electric scooter, within a brief span of three minutes, built with a split battery system for both the 2W and 3W configurations.

Robust Performer: The Surge S32's power and battery are smartly apportioned between the 3W vehicle and the 2W scooter. The 3W component boasts a formidable 10 kW (13.4 bhp) engine with a top speed of 50 km/hr, while the scooter is armed with a 3 kW (4 bhp) engine that can reach a top speed of 60 km/hr.

Driver-Oriented: The vehicle features a cabin equipped with a windscreen, lighting, and optional weather-protective soft doors, ingeniously concealing the compact scooter within.

Tech-forward: The Surge S32 features LED headlights, indicators, and a digital instrument cluster, highlighting its commitment to a digitally enhanced experience.

Interesting Tidbit: To optimally use the vehicle, one requires both a 2W and 3W license - the 2W license for the scooter and the 3W license for the larger vehicle.

Opportunities:

- The Cargo 3-wheeler segment is dominated by Individual owners and Captive Owners (Over 80%, ICE & EV). This provides the S32 with an opportunity to pitch to a huge audience, especially the Captive Segment (Defined as – Owners using the vehicle to facilitate the primary business. E.g.: Selling vegetables is the main source of income and the vehicle is used to carry vegetables) which constitutes around 40% of the 3W market (ICE + EV).
- As the S32 is built with a split battery system, it allows the batteries to operate independently, which means they can be charged and used separately:
 - Allowing for varied usage for the individual owners / captive segment to utilize the vehicle as per the business need.
 - Over 50% of 3W Cargo owners are married with kids – This gives an interesting opportunity for the Scooter in S32 to be used as a family scooter / additional scooter in the household.
- A well-equipped cabin appeals to the TG which spends an average of 12-18 hours in the vehicle (especially the individual owners). The in-cabin comfort may act as an elevated, comfortable experience.
- An array of impressive features and Tech upgrades will appeal to modern day customers using multiple apps and getting highly consumable data to manage the vehicle.
- The vehicle's robust all-metal body is designed to withstand the rigorous wear and tear it might encounter over its usage period – Allowing for durability, thus enhancing the vehicle life and attracting a better resale value (Amongst the top 5 reasons for purchasing a 3W cargo vehicle)

Probable Challenges:

- Despite its innovative design, the Surge S32 may face limitations in the load-carrying capacity as a convertible 3-wheeler. The current payload offered in the segment is in the 500Kgs+ range promised by key players (E.g. Mahindra Treo Zor – 500Kgs)
 - Further, the category is known for “Overloading” unless operated under strict norms. The real market practicality of Surge S32 hinges on these variables.
- Given the vehicle operates on the innovative ‘convertible’ design, it comes with its own set of restrictions:
 - Plausible restrictions in cargo deck modification. It has been noticed that over 60% of owners modify/customize the vehicle deck to suit business needs. This limitation can hamper the adaptability of the S32 with queries about the ease of transformation if the cargo deck is modified.

- It is observed that the 3W cargo owner usually is accompanied by a 'helper' who shares the driving seat in the cabin. Owner Drivers modify the seat to accommodate the additional individual in the cabin. Such modification in the seating may lead to coupling / decoupling issues for the convertible S32.
- The Surge S32's transformation into a 2-wheeler could pose challenges for users without secure, dedicated parking spaces, potentially adding to the users' burden and compromising the vehicle's overall convenience and practicality.
 - Hence, the ideal customers for the S32 might be those with access to dedicated parking and with limited reliance on the vehicle for their business operations. This would allow the S32 to function both as a daily 2-wheeler and a business-oriented 3-wheeler.
- The Surge S32's price point will be a key factor in reaching out to the budget-conscious Indian entrepreneur. Brand and Price are the 'Top 2 parameters for consideration' in the 3W Cargo segment. Surge has the Hero backing, so the brand point is taken care of. The pricing will be, hence, a key factor to bring S32 into consideration or positioning it as a 'premium' offering in the 3-wheeler segment.
- Being an EV, the vehicle has to deliver on the effective range and charging efficiency without much fuss. The average distance covered per day by an L3 / L5 Cargo 3W ranges to 100-120

It is undeniable that the Surge S32 has piqued a lot of interest in the fraternity. We are excited to see its journey. The performance of Surge S32 on Indian roads and markets will testify to its true mettle!

Written by the Ipsos India Auto Experts Piyush Mungle & Prasad Joshi

Please get in touch: Balaji.Pandiaraj@ipsos.com

