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The wet month of July was raining trade events across the country. All fairs came up with innovations like as buyer-seller meets, fashion shows showcasing future trends, and more; thus attracting a huge of footfall. The attendance and participation at these events are a strong indication that the industry is sailing through well in tough times.

The weak currency and the fluctuating stock markets may be causing a lot of wrinkled brows, but we are optimistic about the positive growth of the economy and thus of the fashion industry. The time has finally come when India has opened its doors to foreign brands and retailers with direct investment in retail operations. This has direct and immediate impact on the fashion and lifestyle business. There is no time to ponder anymore. It is time to take action. It is in India that we are witnessing positive growth as opposed to markets such as Europe and the U.S.A, and it is thus time that we tackle the prickly issues - logistics, infrastructure, low margins, increasing cost of labour, high real estate prices, etc, much more aggressively and constructively. This is the time to take a plunge and emerge winners. If not now then we may perhaps never get another chance. These are indeed the times we had spoke of, discussed at length and wished for. It has come at last with its own baggage but it is here, nevertheless.

Several big international brands, as was reported, in one of the previous editions of IMAGES Business of Fashion, have signed an agreement with the Government of Bangladesh to invest in the creation of safer infrastructure and ergonomics at production sites. This implies better practices and millions of investment in the country which in turn will definitely catalyse the Bangladeshi Fashion Industry. China has been betting for a long time now on volume and low cost. The Indian fashion industry will have to create its own mantra.

The cover story in this issue is indicative of the fact that though menswear has the largest share in fashion pie; it is the womenswear industry that is growing the fastest. While we may presume that women are much more forthcoming in shopping and impulsive buying, with proper trends study we may actually understand this phenomenon.

Amitabh Taneja

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Association saw increase in participation and increased number of meaningful visitors.



THE WOMENSWEAR MARKET IN INDIA

The Indian apparel market, estimated at worth Rs. 207,400 crore (US\$ 39.6 billion), is expected to grow at a CAGR of 9 per cent to touch the Rs. 321,800 crore (US\$ 61.4 billion) mark by 2017. It is classified into three broad segments, namely, menswear, womenswear, and kidswear. Menswear is the largest segment with a 42 per cent share, followed by womenswear and kidswear with shares of 38 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively. However, the trends are changing now and womenswear is growing more rapidly than menswear.

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The 57th edition of National Garment Fair organised by The CMAI from 01 to 03 July in Mumbai received overwhelming response.

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WOMEN AND THEIR LOVE FOR APPAREL IS SACROSANCT. BE IT A WEDDING, DAY AT OFFICE. A DATE. A CORPORATE BRUNCH OR A COCKTAIL PARTY - EVERY OCCASION IS SPECIAL AND CALLS FOR AN ENSEMBLE THAT FITS PERFECTLY. JAHID OSMAN, DIRECTOR, FASHION 365 RETAIL PVT. LTD.. THE EXCLUSIVE RETAILER OF AVIRATÉ IN INDIA SHARES HIS VIEWS ON WESTERN WOMENSWEAR INDUSTRY IN INDIA.

WOMEN AND APPAREL ... NEED WE SAY MORE!

The Indian retail sector is one of the most exciting and underpenetrated markets in the world, making it the most desirable retail destination as well. The apparel industry is no exception to this phenomenon, and it is estimated to grow at a CAGR of 15 per cent over the next five years. The growing fashion consciousness among consumers has turned the womenswear segment into a lucrative and highly evolving market.

Fashion brands are using marketing strategies to build their brands, increase awareness and create a fashionable, lifestyle-oriented image. One of the factors responsible for this rapid growth are the strong market forces which are making retailers sit up and take notice.

The major growth drivers include:

- 1. Increasing number of women joining the workforce: As more and more women are entering the corporate sector and Indian businesses going global, western formal clothes have seen a great surge in demand. This, coupled by an increase in the purchasing power of consumers, is automatically pushing the demand for womenswear upward. Branded designerwear is also rapidly becoming an important part of the women's clothing business, with the affluent classes opting for this segment.
- 2. Globalisation and greater exposure: With increased exposure and global lifestyle influences, Indian women consumers have come of age. This trend is most prominent in our ever-growing and aspirational middle class, who now holiday abroad, experience world-class products and services, and are simply not ready to settle for anything but the best.
- 3. Tier-II cities now emerging as fashion hubs and fashion becoming a form of self-expression: Increasingly, Indian consumers are embracing the idea of fashion as a means of self-expression, and not merely as a functional purchase. Exposure through television, films, and advertising has, in a way, opened our eyes to the world of international fashion and style. This phenomenon is no longer limited to urban cities. Tier-II cities from Chandigarh to Coimbatore are increasingly becoming fashion conscious; retailers and fashion brands are only too happy to comply.
- 4. The aspirational young Indian coupled with their willingness to spend: Gen Y is impatient, digitally connected, living in real time, and has the spending power. They belong to the age group of 15 to 34 years and are extremely well versed and aware of the latest trends in fashion. So, they demand the same in their lifestyle.
- 5. Growth of retail space creation in terms of opening of malls, hypermarkets, et cetera: While opportunities are galore, retailers today are trying to figure out the best strategies to face some pertinent challenges. The most critical of these are:



FOREVER 21 OPENS ITS FLAGSHIP STORE

FOREVER 21, ONE OF AMERICA'S TOP FASHION RETAILERS, OPENED ITS FIRST FLAGSHIP STORE HERE IN THE CAPITAL RECENTLY. SANJHI AGARWAL FINDS OUT WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE BRAND AND THE STORY BEHIND THE SCENE.



L-R: DO WON CHANG (CEO, FOREVER 21), TIMMY SARNA (DLF BRANDS MD), SIDDHARTH MALHOTRA (BOLLYWOOD ACTOR) AND JATIN MALHOTRA (DIRECTOR OF EXPANSION, FOREVER 21) AT THE LAUNCH OF FOREVER 21.

The month of July brought good news to all fashion lovers in the Capital with the opening of international label Forever 21's flagship store at DLF Place, Saket.

The store launch took place on 12 July, in grand style Bollywood celebrity Siddbarth Malbarra, of Stylent

style. Bollywood celebrity Siddharth Malhotra, of Student of the Year fame, was roped in for the opening ceremony. At the launch, Malhotra randomly picked 21 girls from the crowd gathered around the store. The girls were then given fresh looks with Forever 21 merchandise and were also given invites for the launch party.

This flagship store sprawls across an approximate 14,500 sq. ft. of retail space and features an extensive selection of Forever 21 apparel and accessories. In addition, the store stocks other in-house brands, such as 21MEN™, the fashion line for men, and Forever 21's lingerie line. There's also the retailer's shoe line as well as a cosmetics line – Love & Beauty™. The men's collection, which has been introduced





THE INDIAN APPAREL MARKET HAS DEMONSTRATED EXCEPTIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN RECENT TIMES. THE MARKET, ESTIMATED AT WORTH ₹207,400 CRORE (US\$ 39.6 BILLION), IS EXPECTED TO GROW AT A CAGR OF 9 PER CENT TO TOUCH THE ₹321,800 CRORE (US\$ 61.4 BILLION) MARK BY 2017. THE INDIAN APPAREL MARKET IS CLASSIFIED INTO THREE BROAD SEGMENTS, NAMELY, MENSWEAR, WOMENSWEAR, AND KIDSWEAR. MENSWEAR IS THE LARGEST SEGMENT WITH A 42 PER CENT SHARE, FOLLOWED BY WOMENSWEAR AND KIDSWEAR WITH SHARES OF 38 PER CENT AND 20 PER CENT, RESPECTIVELY. HOWEVER, THE TREND IS NOW CHANGING AND WOMENSWEAR IS GROWING MORE RAPIDLY THAN MENSWEAR.

Historically, the womenswear market in India has remained limited to homewear and occasion-specific clothing. Prior to economic liberalisation, job opportunities for women in India remained limited to government sectors and, thus, the participation of educated women in the nation's workforce was comparatively low. However, with changing economic dynamics of the nation, the presence of women in the workforce and their lifestyle, especially in urban India, has undergone a sea change. Women's wardrobes have expanded from traditional ethnicwear to include westernwear items like denims, T-shirts, tops and shirts, dresses, skirts, et cetera. Many brands and retailers are now opening up to the potential of the relatively untapped but promising womenswear market in India. Most of them have already ventured into segment, and are optimistic about the available growth opportunities.







FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: ANDREAS LANGER, HEAD OF MERCHANDISING, MARC CAIN JAYDEEP SHETTY, CEO, MINERAL ANANT DAGA, CEO, W

MERGING FASHION WITH BUSINESS

THE INDIAN FASHION INDUSTRY IS COMMANDING MORE ATTENTION GLOBALLY WITH EVERY PASSING DAY, AND CONSIDERING ITS STAGGERING GROWTH, FASHION MERCHANDISERS NOW PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN UNDERSTANDING BUYERS' NEEDS AND BUYING TRENDS. NIVEDITA J. PAWAR SPOKE TO THE BUYING HEADS OF A FEW LEADING FASHION BRANDS. READ ON TO KNOW WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY ...

Fashion merchandising is where fashion meets business. It involves not only marketing fashion in retail stores and boutiques but also presenting a bouquet of fashion styles to consumers and anticipating what they will be most interested in. In that sense, it doesn't centre on fashion alone; it entails a keen business sense and knowledge of assorted marketing strategies and techniques. In the apparel industry, merchandisers bridge the gap between the management (or industry) and the buyers (consumers). These are professionals with a keen eye for style and a calculative head for business. As a rule, it is expected from fashion merchandisers to be able to predict future fashion and market trends. In order to do this, these professionals often rely on their own research as well as current trend reports.

Keeping all of these demands in mind, the most common business challenge for fashion merchandisers is: How to buy to sustain and attract new customers? Should one buy something just because it is trendy? Not really, since trends are very complicated and they are hard to forecast. They also appear quickly – and fade away even quicker. Especially in retail, knowing what trends are worth investing in may be difficult. Fashion buying heads must be careful not to overinvest in a trend. On the other hand, they should also not miss out on a profitable trend because they invested too little or not at all. Excerpts from conversations with buying heads of Marc Cain, W and Mineral brands.

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Women shop differently than men do. If you take that into account, it pays off. Writes Julia Monnich

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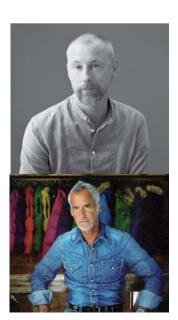
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GENDER SELLING

WOMEN SHOP DIFFERENTLY THAN MEN DO. IF YOU TAKE THAT INTO ACCOUNT, IT PAYS OFF. BY JULIA MÖNNICH

It is irrefutable that men are different from women and this is evident in everyday life. And psychologists, sociologists and other scientists have long given empirical proof of it. And it is obviously true that these differences won't fly out the window when people shop. Women have decision-making processes that are completely different from how men make up their minds. At least that is what Diane Jaffé and Vivien Manazon sav. The two are communication and sales trainers as well as gender marketing experts who research, teach and write about differences between men and women. At least when it comes to shopping. Whether it's with men or with womenselling clothes will not get easier and the demands faced by sales staff are increasing because retail stores, product ranges and concepts are becoming more and more similar thus setting yourself apart based on your retailing format is getting a lot tougher. Because more footwear and clothes are being sold online, sales assistants in physical stores are having a harder time building a relationship with customers. This means the volume of returns is also increasing for physical retail because close-knit customer relations have become far less common. Sales assistants do their job today within parameters worked out and regimented right down to the last square inch including product range policy, merchandising requirements and shop management. A sales assistant has almost no leeway within these narrow constraints. At the same time, these circumstances make the sales assistant even more crucial because he or she is the only person at a store who can create a unique sales proposition, achieve a clear distinction versus other companies, say Jaffé and Manazon in their newest book: Selling to Adam and Eve: Secret Advice on Successful Sales Tactics for Men and for Women.

What will never change, though, is this: "Sales assistants will only make the sale if they are able to understand what people need at the moment," say the authors. And to determine that, as has been true all along, you need to convince the customer to buy. But for the sales interaction to work well, it is worth looking at how men and women differ from each other, which has been worked out by the authors. For this can ease the entire sales process (as well as this or another situation in life...). Here are their most important findings:

SHOES FOR MEN AND WOMEN
CAN BE AS DIFFERENT AS THEIR
SHOPPING HABITS.

NAVYBOOT

Women are people-focused. They want to be liked, also as customers, want to have their concerns acknowledged. Men, on the other hand, are object-oriented and are interested in the product, feel themselves drawn into arguments and competition and think in hierarchies. Men love to have managed to gain an advantage which they have for themselves only. In addition, women believe everything can always be improved a little, whereas men have the rock-solid rule: If something works, nothing needs to be changed. Plus, the authors also note: Women are attached to products, brands and labels which they've had good experience on the job, while men clearly separate job-related things from their private life.

If women buy a dress, shoes or jeans and turn to a sales assistant for help, then the most important thing for the salesperson is: Providing guidance, narrowing down the options, and creating a positive vibe throughout the sales pitch because women are very sensitive about things which detract from their pleasure in shopping. When giving advice, women want to know that all the criteria favoring the purchase of a product have been considered and thus need more time to make their decision to buy than is the case with men. Therefore, women talk longer with sales staff and are interested in details. "Women complicate things, while men simplify things," says Jaffé.

Male shoppers want short interactions but a lot of factual input, because men are already well informed when they have a salesperson help them. They take the shortest path to making the purchase; to them one or up to three criteria which favor buying the product is enough. Women follow a more roundabout path before buying things. They don't want to be confronted with results, they want to be involved in the decision process. Women like friendly sales assistants, men like sincere ones.

Another statement by the authors is interesting: Women think about their environment when choosing a product, men think in terms of products. And the longer women are in a store and talk to a sales assistant, the more money they spend. Women want to come to the store again, want to become involved in a store for a long time. Jaffé and Manazon have also found out that women often feel they are treated badly when shopping, whereas men hardly ever feel they are treated that way. But if men dislike something, they say so. Women, on the other hand, don't complain. They just don't go back.













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