

RI IMAGES

Retail

TM

OCTOBER 2013 VOL. 12 NO.10 ₹100

INDIA'S
BEST SELLING
MAGAZINE
ON MODERN
RETAIL



CORPORATE MOVES

The Contribution of
THE BIG GUNS
in Developing Indian Retail



ENTREPRENEUR
Saurabh Jhingan
Director
Latin Quarters
Young Turks of Fast Fashion



RETAIL EXCELLENCE
Subhash Chandra
Managing Director
Sangeetha Mobiles
Ringing the bell profitably

Editor in Chief	Amitabh Taneja
Editorial Director	R S Roy
Publisher	S P Taneja
Editorial	
Issue Editor in Charge	Shubhra Saini (Sr. Correspondent)
Assoc. Editor	Rajeev Kumar
Sr. Copy Editor	Shipra Sehgal
Contributing Editor	Zainab Morbiwala
Correspondent	Roshna Chandran
Reporter	Nikita Bothra
Knowledge & Editorial Alliances	Rajan Varma
Manager-International Relations	Noelia Piriz
Creatives	
Art Director	Pawan Kumar Verma
Dy. Art Director	Deepak Verma
Sr. Photographer	Vipin Kardam
Marketing & Consumer Connect	
Director – Mktg. & Consumer Connect	Gurpreet Wasi
General Manager – Consumer Connect	Hemant Wadhawan
Dy. General Manager – Marketing	Sharat Mishra
Asst. General Manager – Marketing	Sheela Malladi
Sr. Manager – Database	Anchal Agarwal
Sr. Executive – Subscriptions	Kiran Rawat
Executives – Database	Neeraj Kumar Singh
	Sarika Gautam
Circulation	
Assoc. VP - Circulation	Anil Nagar
Production	
General Manager	Manish Kadam
Sr. Executive	Ramesh Gupta
Support	
General Manager – Administration	Rajeev Mehndru

ADVERTISING

BUSINESS HEAD

Anjali Sondhi, director
anjalisondhi@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9810204297

Waseem Ahmad, vice president
waseemahmad@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9833628852

DELHI:

Mansi Chawla,
assoc. vice president
mansichawla@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9899900399

MUMBAI:

Bindu Pillai, sr. gen. manager
bindupillai@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9820324063

Sachin Khanna,
manager
sachinkhanna@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9818818142

Nayan Shetty, sr. manager
nayanshetty@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9892769533

Naveen Chauhan, dy. manager
naveenchauhan@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9891390763

Chandan Singh,
sr. exec. - sales
chandansingh@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9769653976

Mohd. Iqbal, asst. manager
mohdiqbal@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9871249479

BENGALURU:

Suvir Jaggi, assoc. vice president & branch head
suvirjaggi@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9611127470

KOLKATA:

Piyali Oberoi, assoc. vice president & branch head
piyalioberoi@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9831171388

Mahim M Jannu, dy. manager
mahimjannu@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 7829251189

Rohan Narayan,
asst. manager
rohanarayan@imagesgroup.in
Mob.: +91 9830961388

LUDHIANA:

Hemant Gupta, associate
hemantgupta77@gmail.com
Mob.: +91 9814019745

Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd.

Delhi: S 21, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi 110020
Ph: +91-11-40525000, Fax: +91-11-40525001

Mumbai: 1st Floor, Panchal Iron Works, Plot No. 111 / 3,
Marol Co-Operative Industrial Estate, Marol, Andheri (East). Mumbai - 400059.
Ph: +91-22-28508070 / 71, Fax: +91-22-28508072

Bengaluru: 523, 7th Cross, 10th Main, (Jeevanbhima Nagar Main Road),
HAL 3rd Stage, Bengaluru 560 075 Ph: +91-80-41255172/41750595/96, Fax: +91-80-41255182

Kolkata: 30-B, Anil Roy Road, Ground Floor, Kolkata 700 029
Ph: +91-33-40080480, Fax: +91-33-40080440

Images very recently organised a curtain-raiser for the India Retail Forum at Veda, Palladium, Mumbai and when it got over most of us were left with a fresh wave of renewed optimism and reaffirmed faith in the human spirit to succeed against all odds, such was the wealth of global examples that emerged as we discussed the subject of how historically forward looking organisations have converted challenging times to periods of setting up fundamentals of new businesses.

While it has been a core cause for us at Images Retail to feature significant local retailers this past year, it cannot be denied that the younger brothers of the Indian retail family do look up to their big brothers—the corporates for inspiration and insights on growth strategies. Subsequently, it was time again to revisit and recognise the efforts, achievements and contributions of the leading corporate houses to Indian retail. The cover story of this issue is therefore an exercise in putting together a quick snap shot at where the leading corporate have reached so far in their respective journeys as they clear the path ahead and lead the way for Indian modern retail.

Also in this issue, our favourite customer care associate from Shopper's Stop, Govind Shrikhande crisply outlines his vision of retail circa 2020. He expresses our deep desire for a separate ministry of retail. And if I may add-- given his strong insights, vast experience, and the huge contribution he has made to Indian retail-- a lot of us will like to see Govind as a strong candidate for the post of honourable union minister for the retail ministry when the time comes.

In the Retail Excellence section we present the amazing profile of Bengaluru headquartered Sangeeth Mobiles that have ridden their first mover advantage in South India and are fast emerging as a national chain, with an eye on breaking the 1000 crore mark very soon.

Coming back to the IRF, and if the curtain raiser session was even a tiny morsel of an appetizer, it fired up our craving for more flow of inspiration and thought on modern retail. IRF is really special to all of us as it is the biggest retail event in India (some say Asia), and even more so this year as it completes its first decade. I believe many of you would be going through this issue at the IRF itself and as you attend you will see how the 6-stream sessions that we have organised this year enable you to choose and plan your sessions, and maximise the IRF advantage. For the readers who are unable to attend we promise a detailed post-event report in the next issue of Images Retail.



Amitabh Taneja

All material printed in this publication is the sole property of Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. All printed matter contained in the magazine is based on the information provided by the writers/authors. The views, ideas, comments and opinions expressed are solely of the writers/authors or those featured in the articles and the Editor and Printer & Publisher do not necessarily subscribe to the same.

Printed & published by S P Taneja on behalf of Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. Printed at Modest Print Pack (P) Ltd. C-52, D.D.A. Shed Okhla Industrial Area Phase -1, New Delhi - 110020 and published by S P Taneja from S - 21 Okhla Industrial Area Phase - 2, New Delhi. 110020 Editor: Amitabh Taneja

In relation to any advertisements appearing in this publication, readers are recommended to make appropriate enquiries before entering into any commitments. Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. does not vouch for any claims made by the advertisers of products and services. The Printer, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of the publication shall not be held for any consequences in the event of such claims not being honored by the advertisers.

Copyright Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited. All disputes are subject to the jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Images Retail does not accept responsibility for returning unsolicited manuscripts and photographs.

For subscription related queries, email to: subscription@imagesgroup.in
For feedback/editorial queries, email to: letter2editor@imagesgroup.in
visit us at www.imagesgroup.in



82 COVER STORY

CORPORATE MOVES THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE BIG GUNS IN DEVELOPING INDIAN RETAIL

Modernisation of retail has a lot to do with massive investments in technology, an efficient supply chain and logistics back-up, the development of retail real-estate and infrastructure, and, most of all, people who manage the front as well as the back end of operations. How important is the subject of retail in the minds of the Indian corporates and how much does retail figure in the boardroom discussions today - this in a way would decide the future of modern retail in India. It is only recently that Indian corporates have begun to show interest in modern retail.

OCTOBER 2013

CONTENTS

- 18 International Roundup
- 28 National Roundup
- 34 New Opening
- 46 **CONCEPT**
[Kuprkabi- World of Clay](#)
Vanmala Jain, Founder, Kuprkabi runs a small outlet at Rizvi Park at Santacruz West, Mumbai to support the NGO she has launched, which helps employ school drop-outs and people who are coming from villages in search of work.
- 52 **IN CONVERSATION**
[Jeswant R, Vice President, Marketing and Sales, Funskool India](#)
The rise in the number of dual income households, increased spending on safe and branded toys, foray of international toy makers into the Indian domain and easy access to affordable imported toys are some of the factors contributing to the growth of the toy industry. Jeswant R, Vice President, Marketing and Sales, Funskool India talks about the burgeoning market of toy retailing.
- 58 **PROFILE**
[Comfortably Yours 'KURLON'](#)
Proven as one of the most reliable brands of mattresses in the country, Kurlon Limited, a Manipal Group Company, carved its niche as early as 1962. Started by Late Tonse Ramesh Upendra Pai, as 'Karnataka Consumer Products Limited' the company was renamed Kurlon Limited in 1995 and has currently reached a turn over of Rs 780 crore, headed by Sudhakar Pai, Chairman of the group.
- 62 **INTERFACE**
[Mohan VK, General Manager, Consumer Product Division, Suguna Foods](#)
A familiar name in the poultry industry, Suguna Foods has carved out a special niche in South India with its range of frozen products and, more recently, its retail outlets. Mohan VK, General Manager, Consumer Product Division, talks about the company's growth over the years
- 68 **RETAIL EXCELLENCE**
[Sangeetha Mobiles](#)
Headquartered in Bengaluru, Sangeetha Mobiles is a well recognised multi-brand retailer of mobile handsets in South India. Started in 1999, it is also the first company to offer a broad range of related services including insurance, EMI and exchange schemes, doorstep service and exclusive Android-based applications. Quality products and innovative retail solutions have enabled it to ring the right bell with the customers and establish a stronghold in the southern region of the Indian market.
- 76 **ENTREPRENEUR**
[Rahul Bhalla and Saurabh Jhingan, Latin Quarters](#)
In 2006, two young fashion enthusiasts inceptioned the idea of creating a fast fashion brand in India, for Indians and by the Indians. And, amidst a host of popular international labels, Latin Quarters has been able to make its mark. Keeping their humble start in mind, the company has gone miles in winning the confidence of many young fashionistas in the country. Latin Quarters definitely has inched up the women fashion in the country.



CONTENTS

OCTOBER 2013

120 **MARKET WATCH**

[Merging Fashion with Business](#)

The Indian retail industry is commanding more attention globally with every passing day, and considering its staggering growth, the merchandisers now play a pivotal role in understanding buyers' needs and buying trends. Buying heads of few of the leading retail brands, talks about the importance of forecasting and merchandising in retail business scenario.

126 **STRATEGY**

[Private Labels](#)

Grocers who are seeing the next big business opportunity in own brands are launching a slew of private label products to take on national brands.

138 **TECHNOLOGY**

[Where do You Keep the Cheese?](#)

Shopper convenience in a retail store in the age of mobility is generating tremendous buzz across all retail formats. There are various opportunities for retailers to deploy in-store mobile applications to provide an enriching customer experience.

142 **LEARNING**

[Winning or Losing Consumer's at the Last Lap](#)

Retailers could win or lose consumers at the point of sale or the last lap of sales completion cycle. There was a time when shoppers could wait for minutes at the billing counters to bill but now even a minute's duration looks gigantic. So what are retailers doing across the globe to woo customers at the last leg of shopping? Also let's look at ways what can Indian retailers possibly do to induce repeat purchases and build a long term loyalty?

146 **RETAIL SOLUTIONS**

[Ginesys](#)

Prashant Lohia, CEO, Ginesys, talks about the changing technology landscape in India and the future plans of the company.

156 **INNOVATION**

[Omni Channel Retailing](#)

Omni-Channel Retailing is slowly catching the fancy of Indian retailers , as more and more consumers are embracing digital technologies into their buying behaviour.

160 **VISION AND VIEWS**

[Govind Shrikhande is Customer Care Associate and Managing Director, Shoppers Stop Ltd](#)

" I envision a retail market that boasts off an eclectic mix of Indian and foreign players."

162 **VIEWPOINT**

[Innovating for Profitable Growth](#)

The organised food & grocery retail sector in India has demonstrated high growth but is still struggling to achieve profitability. Adopting innovations in the merchandise mix, business model or format is critical to unlock profitable growth avenues. This will require thinking beyond traditional boundaries of the retail business.

174 **TRENDS AND CONCEPTS**

[Dining cum Retail](#)

Dining cum retail formats are a new concept in India's foodscape as the market opens up to newer, fresher products and ingredients, enabling restaurateurs to offer fine dine experiences along with greater diversity in food preparations, besides keeping wastage and inventory costs under control.

182 **PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH**

[Jaideep Rathore, COO, Digiworld](#)

COMFORTABLY YOURS 'KURLON'

Proven as one of the most reliable brands of mattresses in the country, Kurlon Limited, a Manipal Group Company, carved its niche as early as 1962. Started by Late Tonse Ramesh Upendra Pai, as 'Karnataka Consumer Products Limited' the company was renamed Kurlon Limited in 1995 and has currently reached a turnover of Rs 780 crore, headed by Sudhakar Pai, Chairman of the group.

By Roshna Chandran



Looking Back

As part of an industrial delegation for AIMO (All India Manufacturers Organisation), Late Tonse Ramesh Upendra Pai, travelled to Germany, in the 1960s, where he saw the benefits of small- and-medium-sized industries and also collaborated the technique of manufacturing rubberised coir from industry professionals. It was after the Second World War, during the 1940s, that horse hair was used extensively as cushioning for car seats, following this, the price of horse hair shot up. This was then replaced by pig's hair which had also escalated in price. "It was after this that coconut fibre was used which was mainly sourced from Sri Lanka, Kerala and Indonesia. The technique of curling the coir was named Kurlon. Today, every car, especially the Mercedes Benz uses Kurlon fibre for seating," explains Sudhakar Pai, "We started making rubberised coir for carpet underlay, for four wheelers like cars, jeeps, lorries and also the railways. So our tagline was 'Stand on, Sit on, Sleep on, Kurlon'."

The Kurlon mattresses were initially supplied through distributors and dealers across the country. Ramesh Pai soon realised after a market survey, that out of 100 Kurlon mattresses, 78 were duplicates. Following this, a couple of distributors were arrested for duplicating the brand, but this did not nip the problem in the bud. Later when Sudhakar Pai took over as Chairman of Kurlon Limited, he personally visited the dealers in Delhi, who immediately told

him that the distributors operated with two different go downs: one for the original mattress and the other for the duplicates. So, sudhakar put an end to distributors. He says, "So now our company believes in direct dealer penetration in the market. We now have 6000 dealers. Also to attack the duplicates, I thought that the best method would be to open our own store. So at that particular moment we had called our stores 'Kurlon Home Comforts'. 9 years ago, we had opened 8 stores, in Delhi, in one single day. All of them had an area of 600 square feet."

Venturing into Retail

Today, Kurlon has 120 franchised outlets across the country and one exclusive company owned 2500 sq.ft store that was opened in Jayanagar, Bangalore, 9 years ago. Currently, following a per square feet cost and per square feet realisation, the newer stores are planned around 400-500 sq.ft, which is a much tighter format that can exhibit around 2-3 mattresses.

The company ran with the franchise model since 2011, as Sudhakar found it be more attractive to investors. The business crossed a mile stone by designing and building 100 operational stores till March 2013. Franchisees are provided with designs to lay out their stores as well as training and selling of products. Depending on location and rentals, a franchisee would have to invest between Rs 5- 15 Lakh. The break even period also depends on the location. Explains Sudhakar, "For instance in Mumbai, a franchisee had broken even in the first 5 days. In Bangalore, I had given a challenge to a franchisee that in the first one month he has to sell 100 mattresses. He just took 3 days to do it."

Kurlon has 44 sales offices located all over the country. The Company products are also exported to West Asia viz; U.A.E., Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, UK, Europe, South and East of Africa, Indian Ocean rim, SAARC, South East and Far East Countries.

Some of the best performing stores are Karol Bagh and Mayur Vihar in Dehli and also Bandra, Dadar, Kharghar, Malad, Mulund, Navi Mumbai, Thane and Vasai, located in Mumbai.

Product ranges

Sudhakar's goal was to convert a mattress company to a home comfort company and that was how Kurlon Nest collection had evolved. His idea was to cover as much as possible the entire home of a consumer. The only segments that were left out were the kitchen and the toilet.

Today Kurlon has broadly 3 categories of mattresses which are divided into spring, rubberised coir and foam mattresses, priced around Rs 1500-158000. The most expensive one is Rs 178000. Sudhakar has further plans of bringing another mattress at Rs 4 lakh. "People spend 1/3rd of their lives on a mattress. If you spend Rs 20-30 lakh or even a crore on a car, then there are people who are willing to spend. The most expensive mattress in the world is \$64000."

So far, Mumbai has recorded the most percentage of sales in the expensive range of mattresses. Apart from cities, Sudhakar is aiming at tiny pockets like Sholapur and Nagpur. The most popular mattress under Kurlon is the Spine care mattress that has the very first memory foam, invented in Germany for space shuttles used during zero gravity. The Spine Care mattress is currently the fastest moving category and is often picked up by the younger generation of below 30 years, who are more in tune with healthier living and often look for more info and knowledge for the right kind of mattress.

Kurlon has also come up with an exclusive product range of Mattress Xpress which includes mattresses



"Today, Kurlon has 120 franchised outlets across the country and one exclusive company owned 2500 sq.ft store that was opened in Jayanagar, Bangalore, 9 years ago."

- Sudhakar Pai
Chairman, Manipal Group Co.

and pillows. In order to increase the range, products like comforters, bed-sheets, mattress and pillow- protectors have also been added. In the year 2012-13, the company expanded Kurlon Mattress Xpress to tier II and III cities.

The largest part of the revenue comes from mattresses, followed by foam, then pillows and furniture. Categories like curtains had to be discontinued as the company found it difficult to keep up with the change in design trends.



CORPORATE MOVES

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE BIG GUNS IN DEVELOPING INDIAN RETAIL

By Zainab Morbiwala



Modernisation of retail has a lot to do with massive investments in technology, an efficient supply chain and logistics back-up, the development of retail real-estate and infrastructure, and, most of all, people who manage the front as well as the back end of operations. How important is the subject of retail in the minds of the Indian corporates and how much does retail figure in the boardroom discussions today - this in a way would decide the future of modern retail in India. It is only recently that Indian corporates have begun to show interest in modern retail. There are currently only a handful of players who have established a presence. Big retailers worldwide are big employers and wealth-creators and are very significant entities in their economies. In India, however, it may take a decade or two for any retailer to reach the size and scale that captures at least 1 percent of the country's GDP. While there certainly is a lot of excitement building up across the globe for the market of the future, India, let us take a closer look at the retail businesses of some prominent Indian corporates- what they have done so far and where they are headed.



Just to set the context for the story to follow, let's have a quick recap of all that we know pertaining to names in consumption in India. So, let us first take a look at what brands were present in the country till the close of the 4th decade of the 20th Century. India is considered a tea drinking nation but it is surprising that it was just Brooke Bond and Lipton that found place on the shelves of kirana stores back then. Lux and Lifebuoy minus any of their existing SKUs were the only two bathing soap brands that the country had and it was Sunlight when it came to washing bars. Cooling / fairness talcum powders were not even thought of then as the only brand available was Himalaya Bouquet. Afghan Snow was used as an all purpose cream as obviously the concept of age defying and fairness cream was absent then. Colgate was the only toothpaste that consumers bought - be it to fight tooth decay / sensitivity or have a refreshing breath. 7'o clock blade was the only male grooming accessory which was used till its bluntness could no longer be sharpened and there was a need to replace it with a new fresh 7' o clock blade! It was only the hair-oil category which had about 3-4 brands but then these brands were put to use only on special occasions. After reading about all this it should not come as any surprise to learn that the country got its first brand for slice bread in 1964! And yes, to share more - this brand originated from Orissa just in case you thought it was Mumbai, Delhi or Bangalore which took the lead for setting up the industry for slice breads in the country.



Means of communications were visibly absent. Radio wasn't in the reach of a common man forget having a television at home. Till late 1970s Illustrated Weekly was the only magazine hence where and how would brands advertise then? Had it not been for Lal Bahadur Shastri's intervention, perhaps we still would have just been tuning to Radio Cylon. It was he who under his reign launched Vividh Bharti. In 1972 Mumbai saw the launch of the television! The trend of owning television then mushroomed during the 1980s. That is when information explosion and information bombardment started happening and advertisers were there plenty many!

FOOD AND GROCERY RETAIL	
Major Players	Format
Aditya Brila Group	MORE Supermarket and MORE Megastore
Bharti Enterprises	Easyday, Easyday Market, Easyday Hyper
Future Group	Big Bazaar, Food Bazaar, KB's Fair Price and Foodhall
Godrej Group	Godrej Nature's Basket Limited
ITC	Choupal Fresh
Jubilant Bhartia Group	Jubilant Retail
K Raheja Corp.	HyperCity
Reliance Industries	Reliance Fresh, Reliance Super and Reliance Mart
Landmark Group	SPAR / Auchan
RP - Sanjiv Goenka Group	Spencer's Retail
TATA Group	Star Bazaar

APPAREL/LIFESTYLE/ACCESSORIES/BOOKS ETC.	
Major Players	Format
Aditya Birla Group	Madura Fashion & Lifestyle, Pantaloons
Future Group	Big Bazaar, Future Retail (earlier it was Pantaloon Retail), Central, Brand Factory and Planet Sports
Gitanjali Group	Various company owned stores / franchises of all the brands that Gitanjali Group has e.g. Asmi, Nakshatra, Gili etc., Gili apparels and Diya apparels
ITC	Wills Lifestyle and John Players
K. Raheja Corp.	Shoppers Stop, Mother Care, Estee Lauder, Crosswords
Lalbbhai Group	The Arvind Store, Mega Mart, Arvind Lifestyle Brands
Landmark Group	Lifestyle, Max Fashions, Splash and Bossini
Reliance Industries	Reliance Trends, Reliance Brands, Reliance Footprint, Reliance Jewels, Vision Express, Marks and Spencer and Vimal
TATA Group	Westside and ZARA (in a JV with Inditex), Landmark

ELECTRONICS/CONSUMER DURABLES/DIGITAL/HOME/MUSIC	
Major Players	Format
Essar Group	The Mobile Store
Future Group	Ezone and Home Town
Godrej Group	Godrej Interio
K Raheja Corp.	Home Stop
Landmark Group	Home Centre
Reliance Industries	Reliance Digital and Reliance Timeout
RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group	Music World and Saregama
TATA Group	Croma
Videocon	Next, DigiWorld and Planet M

ENTERTAINMENT/RESTAURANTS/CAFÉ ETC.	
Major Players	Format
Jubilant Bhartia Group	Dominos & Dunkin Donuts
Landmark Group	Fun City, Gloria Jean's Coffees, Polynation, Krispy Kreme
TATA Group	Starbucks Cofee



Andreas Langer, Head of Merchandising, Marc Cain



Jaydeep Shetty, CEO, Mineral



Anant Daga, CEO, W



MERGING FASHION WITH **BUSINESS**

The Indian retail industry is commanding more attention globally with every passing day, and considering its staggering growth, the merchandisers now play a pivotal role in understanding buyers' needs and buying trends. Buying heads of few of the leading retail brands, talks about the importance of forecasting and merchandising in retail business scenario.

Merchandising is where fashion meets business. It involves not only marketing 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 over-invest 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.

WHAT'S THE WORLD OF A BUYING HEAD OF A RETAIL BRAND LIKE?

Andreas Langer, Head of Merchandising, Marc Cain

Hectic, but exciting! There is an intense process involved in managing the flow of merchandise from the initial selection of designs to be produced to the presentation of products to retail customers, with the goal of maximising a company's sales and profitability. The display must be inviting to the customer, hence the merchandiser has to design things keeping this aspect in mind. In the case for Marc Cain, the merchandiser has to maintain the look and feel of the international brand in the Indian context. The current trend handbook is handed over to each store to do the needful. Merchandising is a job that requires staying abreast with the latest fashion trends, understanding the demands of the target audience, and represent a brand on behalf of a merchant. The job includes ensuring that appropriate products and quantities are laid out on the sales floor, giving ideas for product grouping and conducting trend analysis to be updated with the latest trends. On the other hand, we also have to create and maintain relations with the management to negotiate on rates of the location, placing of the products for display along with exploring new locations for the brand.

Jaydeep Shetty, CEO, Mineral

These are usually long days spent between fabrics, suppliers and production sheets – demanding your attention every minute. There is scope for improvement in processes, costs and execution in every aspect.

Anant Daga, CEO, W

Today, the womenswear market is extremely competitive, with a variety of choices available to the discerning customer. A role of a merchandiser is important in not just ensuring the right product is available at the right time but also forecasting trends along with the buyers. They also play a key role in deciding the final prices to maximise profits and ensure profitability.

WHAT'S THE TOUGHEST PART OF THIS BUSINESS?

AL, Marc Cain: Some of the many hurdles that we face in merchandising are matching the sizes, maintaining the look and feel of the international brand across all stores over the world, and pricing of the product. Sizing is one of the biggest issues faced by all of us, as the normal body size of the consumer varies from country to country. Since Marc Cain is a German brand, our garments mostly come in large sizes and are made in Germany. Also, Marc Cain being an international brand, we have to manage as well as match the look and feel of the brand in India. Merchandising requires forecasting skills. We need to predict and introduce the latest fashion trend after a detailed understanding of the buying characteristics of the consumer in each city. Though the Indian market is well versed with the trends all across the globe, pricing is still an issue we face in India as it is a price-sensitive market. They always want products which offer value for money or which are a status quo.

JS, Mineral: The toughest part is the availability of fabrics, trims and accessories with predictability.

AD, W: I would say, it's about maintaining exclusivity and excitement!

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

AL, Marc Cain: It has so many aspects. You have to be creative, work with different kind of people and adapt to trends quickly. At the same time, you have to be analytic and be able to read and work with the figures.

JS, Mineral: The process of creation is the most enjoyable aspect, provided one has a good team to back you at all times.

AD, W: Every day, challenges like planning the budgets and sales, controlling stocks and ensuring the bestsellers reach their full potential are some of the aspects I enjoy. The whole process of creating a brand which is so unique, innovative and constantly re-inventing season after season is what I love.



ORION



ORION 2

COMING SOON TO EAST BANGALORE

Following the stupendous success of Orion mall at Brigade Gateway in Bangalore, the Brigade Group is now developing a second Orion mall in the established East Bangalore. This second mall development named 'Orion East' will be the only lifestyle mall in about a 7 km radius, and will serve as the destination of choice for a young population in the upmarket areas of Fraser Town, Benson Town, HRBR Layout and Kamanahalli. With Brigade Group and Orion Mall's impressive track record in design, development, marketing and operations management, Orion East is poised to make a mark yet again in Bangalore's retail landscape

Brigade Enterprises Limited, 29th & 30th Floors, World Trade Center, Brigade Gateway Campus
26/1, Dr Rajkumar Road, Malleswaram-Rajajinagar, Bangalore 560 055

www.orionmalls.com

Follow us on





Our unique design led focus on development makes our Centers the focal point of the communities we serve and enables our retail partners to operate in an experiential shopping ecosystem like no other.

As India's only institutionally owned developer-operator, and with 10 MM SF of prime retail real estate positioned in city center locations across 6 of India's top 9 urban markets, Virtuous Retail offers unrivalled access to over 40 MM aspirational Indian consumers. (That's twice Australia's population!)

With the opening of our Inaugural Flagship Center in Surat, Gujarat in May 2013, we have set a new global benchmark for retail in India.

We are Virtuous Retail.



To learn more visit www.virtuousretail.com

Surat | Whitefield | Chennai | Mumbai | Pune | Bengaluru | Kolkata