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THE INDIAN RETAIL journey

25 YEARS OF GUTS AND GLORY



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FROM THE WORLD OF RETAIL

International retail is buzzing with many interesting developments. In this feature we have tried to pick the best retail happenings from across the world to keep our readers abreast with important retail developments.

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

AMAZON LAUNCHES RESTAURANT DELIVERY SERVICE IN LONDON

Leading online retailer Amazon has launched its restaurant food delivery service for Prime customers. With this new initiative the company plans to take on Uber and Deliveroo. Prime members can use the “Prime Now” app to select their post code, choose a restaurant and order food with deliveries arriving from local restaurants in an

hour or less. London marks the company’s first foray outside of its home country with its restaurant delivery service. Amazon Restaurants delivery first launched in September in 2015 in Seattle before rolling out to a number of other U.S. territories including Manhattan, San Francisco and Miami.



Jonathan Weiss / Shutterstock.com

RIHANNA LAUNCHES NEW FASHION COLLECTION FOR PUMA

International music icon Rihanna has launched her new line of clothing by collaborating with leading sports wear retailer Puma. Speaking on her new line the singer informed that new collection for Puma is inspired by Japanese street culture, and she has designed the line for her fans. Her new edgy collection is mostly available in black and white, including loose sweaters and pants, dresses, skirts, sneakers and sneaker heels.



Debby Wong / Shutterstock.com



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SAKS FIFTH AVENUE GOES FOR SMALL SIZE RETAIL STORE



Saks Fifth Avenue's has opened a new store at Brookfield Place in lower Manhattan. The 86,000-sq.-ft. store is decidedly smaller than most Saks' locations. It gives a feel of boutique than a department store. It also boasts such new services as a "power lunch" offering. The merchandise mix includes a strong focus on emerging designers, many of whom are commonly not featured in department stores, along with such established but equally cutting-edge brands as Marc Jacobs. In total, the store will carry more than 200 brands and 100 exclusive styles unique to the location. "Saks Downtown may be our second store in NYC, but it is the first of its kind. The design is open, the edit is unique, and it's quite simply fun to shop," said Marc Metrick, president, Saks Fifth Avenue in a media interaction. The store has understated palette and modern look, with rose gold and brass fixtures, floor-to-ceiling windows and playful accents.

M&S THE LATEST TO ADOPT CLICK-AND-COLLECT



Marks & Spencer have become the latest retailer to adopt a click-and-collect strategy as it attempts to keep up with the burgeoning "go economy". The grocer has announced it would trial in-store lockers in its Teddinton Simply Food store, running until the end of the year. This enables customers to order their products online and collect their items with a unique barcode at their convenience. It is not yet clear whether Marks & Spencer will expand the concept to other stores. Many other retailers like Morrisons and Sainsbury's have announced similar plans recently.

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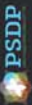
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IKEA GROUP REPORTS STRONG FULL YEAR SALES UPLIFT



As per the leading media report IKEA Group has increased its total sales by 7.1 percent the year to 31 August. Adjusted for currency impact, total sales climbed by 7.9 percent. On a like-for-like basis store sales were up 4.8 percent.

The furniture and homeware retailer said Germany was its largest market, closely followed by the US. China remains one of its fastest growing markets together with Australia, Canada and Poland. Expansion continues at pace and the retailer is now planning to open its first stores in India and Serbia. Peter Agnefjäll, President and Chief Executive, IKEA Group, said: "In all of our meetings with the customers, we want to provide good quality products and inspiration for creating beautiful homes. Last year's focus on the theme "It starts with the Food", covering kitchen, cooking, eating, and the food-business, was a strong success and appreciated by the customers."



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FOOD PRICES FALL TO RECORD LOW



As per the latest findings of BRC-Nielsen Shop Price Index, food prices fell by 1.1 percent in August, accelerating to a record low in the ten years since the Index began in 2006.

British Retail Consortium chief executive Helen Dickinson said, "Shop prices continued their record run in deflationary territory. Lower prices this August compared to last were driven by a combination of continuing promotional activity, softening oil prices and a global supply glut of wheat weighing on food prices."

Mike Watkins, head of retailer and business insight at Nielsen, said, "Lower prices than a year ago across most channels



with further price cuts by supermarkets has been good news for shoppers and helped to keep consumer spend buoyant over the summer.

INTERNSHIP




NEW ACS PARTNERSHIP TO OFFER RETAIL APPRENTICESHIPS



The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) has teamed up with Centrepont, one of Britain's biggest charities supporting young people, to offer apprenticeships in the convenience store sector.

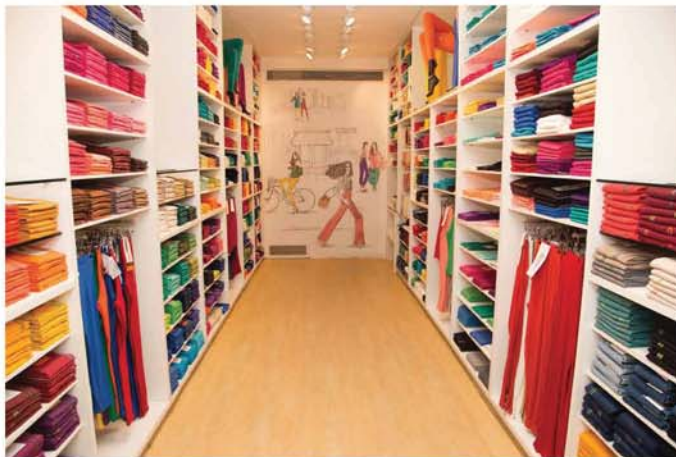
Speaking on the development, James Lowman, Chief Executive ACS said, "Retailers have told us they need clear advice on how to access apprenticeships in line with the specific needs of their businesses. "Centrepont can support members at every stage of the process, from looking at the contribution apprentices can make to their business, to finding the right people, delivering the training, and access to government funding."



Michelle Bellamy, Operations Director at Centrepont said, "Apprenticeships present a fantastic opportunity for businesses to attract fresh talent and provide a cost effective means to invest in the skills of the workforce. Centrepont is able to call on nearly five decades of experience of working with young people, to ensure our apprenticeship programmes are tailored to the needs of and ethos of each business we work with, to produce a skilled and productive workforce." 

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INDIAN RETAILERS ON WINNING PATH

Indian retailers are on a winning trajectory, they have carved their own niche and have standardised their systems in all the spheres attaining parity with their international counterparts. The last month was an eventful one for Indian retail industry and in this section we will discuss about the latest retail happenings from around the country.

By IMAGES Retail Bureau



EMERGING FOOD HUB AT UPCOMING DHAULA KUAN METRO STATION



Upcoming Dhaula Kuan metro station will be hosting an elaborated food court spread over 10,000 sq. area on the Ground Floor. This food court is being developed by B Infrastructure, Conceptualised and Leased by SRED and designed by AVA Group.

Once the walkalator construction between Dhaula Kuan Metro Station and South Campus Metro Station is completed it would provide smooth connectivity from Dwarka to South Delhi on upcoming Brown Line reducing the travel time to South Delhi by 1 hour. The new food hub will offer ample food options on Delhi and Gurgaon highway and for Delhi University South Campus Students.



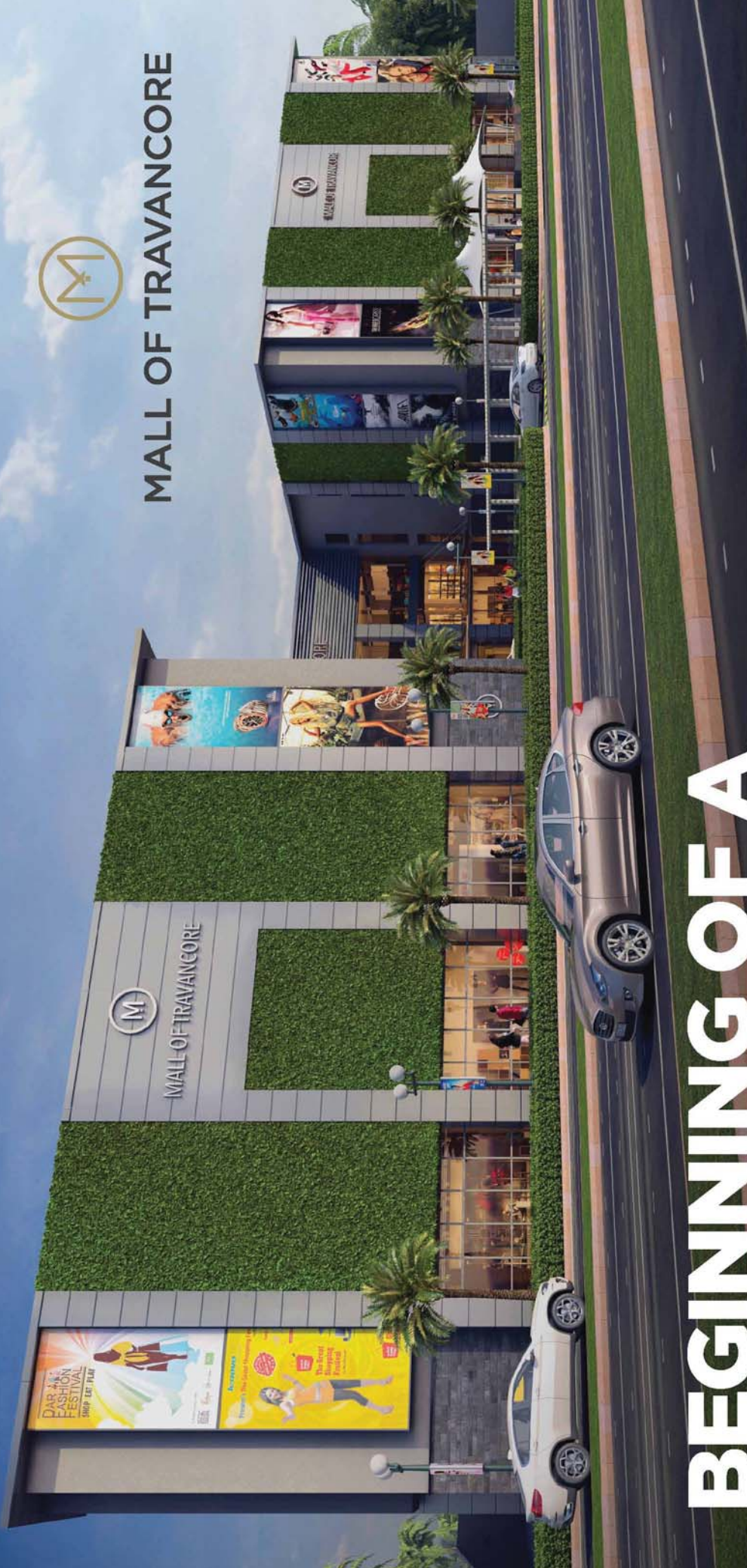
Speaking on same, Shriram Monga, Co-Founder SRED shares, "International QSR chain Burger king is shortly be launching its Delhi's first Drive Thru outlet here. Apart from Burger King, leading restaurant chain Haldiram's will soon be opening its outlet here. All together there would be 12 outlets from different cuisines. This upcoming food-court is expected to be operational by Q4 of FY 15-16."

by Shipra Srivastava

MEDPLUS ON RETAIL EXPANSION IN TN



Pharmacy distributor MedPlus plans to add 200 stores in tier II and III cities in Tamil Nadu over the next one year. "We are planning to reach out to the interior parts of Tamil Nadu and set up 200 franchise stores in the initial stage, in the next one year. We will be planning another 300 stores by 2018," Dr Madhukar Gangadi, Founder and CEO, MedPlus Health Services said in a media interaction. The move to expand retail outlets in Tamil Nadu was in the backdrop of the company tasting success in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.



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VASUNDHARA RAJE INAUGURATES SAFEDUCATE CONTAINER LIBRARY AT AJMER



On the occasion of Independence Day, Honorable Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Ms. Vasundhara Raje inaugurated an innovative Safeducate Container Library. On this occasion, many Rajasthan Government dignitaries were present, most notably Gaurav Goyal, District Collector, Ajmer. The occasion was also graced by Divya Jain, Founder & CEO, Safeducate, Pawan Jain, Founder & Chairman, Safexpress and Rubal Jain, Managing Director, Safexpress. While inaugurating the Safeducate Container Library, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Vasundhara Raje said, "This Container Library signifies our efforts towards promoting education in Rajasthan. We will create many such Container Libraries all over Rajasthan and ensure that our people benefit from the high quality books available in these libraries. I strongly believe that education must be imparted to each and every person, irrespective of her economic status or gender. Therefore, we are ensuring that these Container Libraries are accessible to people from all walks of life." Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Divya Jain, said, "Safeducate Container Library is a unique endeavour by us to create a Mobile Library. This Container Library is made out of a refurbished Container, as a part of our Go Green initiative. The Safeducate Container Library can be easily moved to any location across India. Many such Container Libraries will be set up in the near future. I heartily compliment Honorable Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Vasundhara Raje and Gaurav Goyal, District Collector, Ajmer for pioneering such a unique concept. "

MUJI OPENS SHOP AT VR BENGALURU



VR Bengaluru, a premium, integrated lifestyle destination welcomes MUJI, the Japanese cult retail brand to the Centre. The opening of the MUJI store is in line with the launch of many unique brands and stores over the past months offering new formats and services at VR Bengaluru.

Speaking on the launch, Rajiv Raichand, Director – Virtuous Retail, said, "VR Bengaluru is a curator of unique experiences and we strive to bring the best of modern design and conveniences to our customers. MUJI is a renowned producer of stylish, functional and affordable quality goods that are relevant to all aspects of urban living, whether at work, at rest or at play. And that makes them a perfect fit for the shoppers at our Centre, the co-working community at The Hive and the guests at our boutique hotel & residences at The Waverly."



SPYKAR TO EXPAND PRESENCE IN WOMEN'S WEAR SEGMENT



Fashion apparel brand Spykar, which is expanding its presence in the women's wear segment, is aiming to double its sales to Rs. 700 crore in the next four years, according to market report: Besides, the company would enhance its sales network and tap the online sales channel to boost its sales. In 2015-16, the company had a business of Rs. 245 crore. "We are very confident on the women's segment. It would be one of the largest areas of growth for us as it has huge potential and space," Sanjay Vakharia, COO, Spykar Lifestyles. The company is also mulling to enter Footwear category by 2017. "We would launch casual footwear under our parent brand to complete the wardrobe of the Indian consumer," Vakharia added. Spykar offers garment and accessories to young adults.



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IKEA TO INTEGRATE ITS STORES WITH ONLINE TRADE



Swedish furniture major Ikea which is all set to open its first store in the country by 2017 plans to integrate its outlets with online channel to facilitate its patrons. The company may open its first store in Hyderabad followed by other Indian cities.

“We are rolling an e-commerce business in many countries of the world and we would also do that in India. We would start with building the brand with Ikea stores with good touch and feel...it would be combination of both and we would do both in India,” Ikea India CEO Juvencio Maeztu in a media interaction.

IKEA has plans to open 25 stores by 2025 in different Indian cities with an aim to offer a wide range of home furnishing products.



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MAHINDRA HAILS OLA TO SPEED UP VEHICLE SALES



Leading multinational automobile manufacture Mahindra and Mahindra has entered into a partnership with cab aggregator Ola, targeting to sell 40,000 cars and gain \$400 million worth in sales by offering discounts, lower financing cost as well as free accident insurance worth Rs.15 lakh for Ola’s driver-partners and academic scholarship for their children.

“Future of mobility will be influenced by sharing economy. Sharing economy in India will grow faster than in the West,” said Anand Mahindra, Chairman, Mahindra Group, while announcing the partnership. Speaking on the partnership Bhavish Aggarwal, Co-Founder and CEO, Ola, said, “We already have half a million drivers on our platform. With partnerships such as these, we expect that to grow 10 fold in the next five years,”

KATE SPADE TO ENTER INDIA SHORTLY




New York-based coveted fashion brand Kate Spade is all set to enter the Indian market, opening its first outlet in Select Citywalk in Delhi. The mall has been an entry platform for many other iconic international brands like Massimo Dutti, Zara, H&M, Bobby Brown, Dior and BurgerKing to name just a few.

Kate Spade – known for its fresh, chic-yet-sensible handbags – had tied up with Reliance Brands in March this year, and is likely to open its first store around Christmas this year. Confirming the news to Indiaretailing Bureau, Executive Director, Select Citywalk, Yogeshwar Sharma said, “Just like other international brands, Kate Spade will also be entering India through Select Citywalk this winter season.”

However, he did not divulged specific details related to the opening of the store and the company’s (Kate Spade) plan for India. Earlier this year, Reliance Brands announced that it is bringing Kate Spade

to India through a long-term distribution and retail license agreement. Under the terms of the agreement, Reliance Brands Limited will have the exclusive distribution rights to the brand in the country.

Reliance Brands portfolio of brand partnerships comprises the likes of Diesel, Dune, Ermenegildo Zegna, Gas, Hamleys, Kenneth Cole, Quiksilver, Steve Madden and Superdry, among others. 
by Charu Lamba



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Initially used as a vision corrective device, eyewear products and their perception from the customer's point of view have evolved over the years. Over 530 million people in India need spectacles, of which only 170 million people wear them. That means the eyewear industry is still underserved and there is a huge opportunity of growth for the retailers by providing greater access to quality eyewear

By Parama Sen

Industry Overview

The eyewear retail category in India is slowly but steadily coming up on its own and making its presence felt in the fashion vertical. Increasingly, educated Indian consumers are more concerned about eye health, making them more willing to spend on a good pair of spectacles. Demand for high quality and fashionable branded spectacle frames, stylish cases, multi-purpose spectacles are some of the factors driving the modernisation of this category, with a rising numbers of consumers expected to switch to branded eyewear as a public reflection of their social status.

The eyewear market in India comprises numerous manufacturers that specialise in designing and producing eyewear products in different segments. Along with the presence of leading eyewear companies in the organised sector, market in India is primarily driven by the revenues of a huge number of manufacturers in the unorganised/ unbranded segment.

However, the growth of modern retail is helping to create some structure around the category, as Devansh Binani, Director, Himalaya Optical observes. "The eyewear industry in India has recently attracted a lot of attention due to the entry of new organised retailers and the introduction of e-tailing," he says.

“These developments have helped this industry to grow by bringing to light obscure facts. For instance, a majority of Indians that reside in the rural regions do not even realise their need for corrective eyewear. Furthermore, the optical industry comprehensively still has a greater number of unorganised players.”

“However, as this industry is developing and the country is embracing urbanisation, the organised market is growing at a faster pace than ever before. Pure-play optical retailers are able to enter new markets as consumers have begun acknowledging and appreciating correctly dispensed, high quality products,” he adds.

Market Size and Segmentation

According to India Retail Report 2015, the retail market is worth Rs. 43,243 crore growing at 14-15 percent and is expected to cross Rs. 63,000 crore by 2017. Modern retail is estimated at 8 percent of this total market and is expected to grow at 21-22 percent. The contact lens market -- the fastest growing sub-category in the eyewear vertical -- is estimated at about Rs. 700 crore and is growing at a CAGR of 25 percent. The high-end branded eyewear market is largely dependent on imports and accounts for about 30% of the Rs. 2200 crore sunglasses market.

Broadly speaking, the eyewear market in India has two segments: fashion and prescription. Earlier, the difference between these two was



▲ Devansh Binani, Director, Himalaya Optical

quite clear, but is now blurring as the prescription consumer is also embracing the fashion element in usage. As per industry estimates, 35 percent of Indians need vision correction and only 25 percent of this 35 percent actually gets it corrected! “The eyewear industry is mostly unorganised and there are only a few organised players in the industry. India is a constantly growing market and eyewear is a vast industry, comprising sunglasses, frames and lenses. The category consists of national and regional players as well as mom & pop stores,” says Vandana Bhalla, Marketing & Design Head, Eyewear Division, Titan Co. Ltd.

India prefers spectacles over contact lenses. More than 90 percent of the population, which have corrected their vision, rely on spectacles; that leaves only 10 percent space for contact lenses brands. There is, however, a small percentage of consumers who use both, depending on the occasion.

Growth Drivers

A number of factors have contributed to the growth of the Indian eyewear sector. Higher levels of disposable income and greater awareness of remedial solutions have seen a greater uptake of corrective spectacles by those suffering from some form of vision impairment. At the same time, sales of sunglasses have benefited from greater awareness of the health benefits of such eyewear, as well as a heightened fashion sense, driven by greater media awareness. While, in the past, Indian consumers viewed eyewear as a merely functional product, this mindset has now changed considerably, especially in the urban areas. According to Peyush Bansal, Founder and CEO, Lenskart.com, “Fuelling the ‘robust growth’ would be the ever-changing consumer preferences, rising per capita income and growing awareness among consumers.” As a result, multiple ownership of different brands/style of eyewear is now far more commonplace. Five years ago, multiple ownership in this category was just around 2 percent. Now it estimated at around 6-7 and predicted to grow considerably over the coming years.

Trends in the eyewear industry

One Frame Per Year: Nowadays, Indian consumers typically look to change their eyewear every two years. As Vandana would like to put it, “When Titan Eyeplus entered the industry, the prescription eyewear



▲ Titan Eyeplus





▲ Vandana Bhalla, Marketing & Design Head - Eyewear Division - Titan Company Ltd

category used to be largely functional where consumers changed their spectacles only when their power changed or they lost their spectacles. The average replacement cycle used to be 3 years and there was hardly any multiple ownership of spectacle frames. However In recent times, the replacement cycle has dropped to less than a year with a significant increase in multiple ownership!” According to M. Rahman, AGM Marketing, GKB Opticals, people basically change their eyewear in around 2 years. “Gone are the days, when people changed their glasses twice or thrice in their lifetime today a teenager on an average changes 1 pair a year and older people do it in 2-3 years,” he further adds.

Men Buy More: Men in India spend more on spectacles compared to women. “In today’s market scenario as much as 60 percent of the eyewear consumers are male and we have about 40 percent of female consumers. This can be attributed to the fact that women are more conscious of appearance and wearing spectacles is an important factor that determines the way they present themselves,” says Vandana. Rahman also has almost the same figures in mind, according to him the percentage of male consumers is slightly high 55 percent, compared to the 45 percent of women consumers.



▲ M Rahman, AGM, Marketing, GKB Opticals

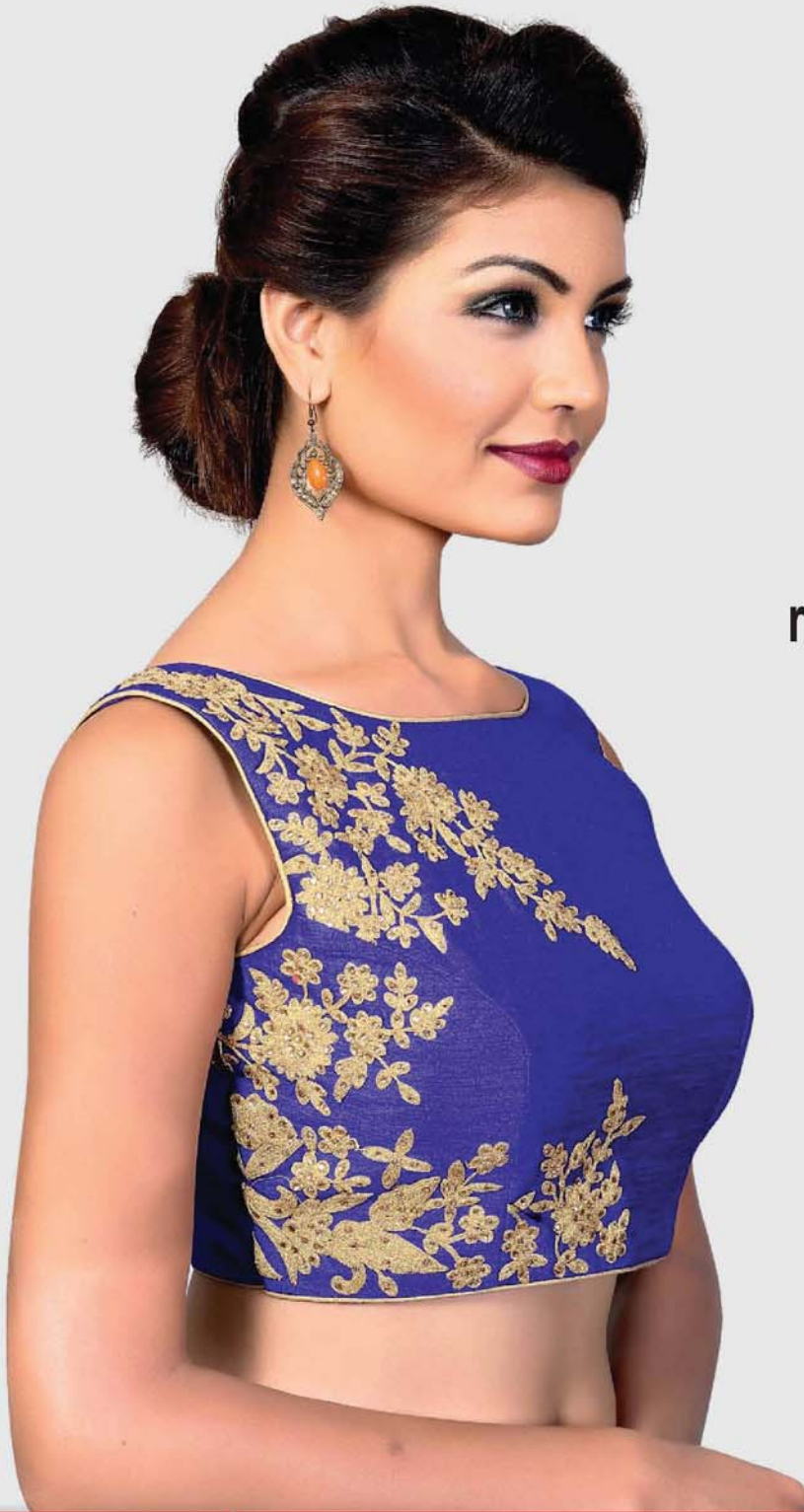
However, according to Devansh male consumers constitute as high as 70 percent of the total consumer base.

All within Rs. 2000: Indian consumers like their spectacles to be comfortable and at the same time pocket friendly. According to industry experts, the price point, which is most favourite, are max Rs 2000. “Majority of the consumers are ok within Rs. 2000 for GKB’s in house brands, for sunglasses, it’s Rs. 1700. For the branded spectacles, they are mostly comfortable with Rs. 10000 and Rs. 7600 for sunglasses,” says Rahman. Vandana is also of the opinion that, Rs. 1000-2000 is the most sought after price range, but as Titan Eye Plus is a player in the branded space, their price range is little high.

Brand Consciousness: “With increasing disposable income and exposure to product knowledge online,

in recent years, the awareness of consumer towards branded eyewear has been increasing and people are ready to spend on premium brands. Another reason behind the rise of brand consciousness is the ease of travelling to different countries and hence exposure to brands. The use of eyewear has increased manifolds due to exposure to different gadgets and rather than picking up cheap low quality eyewear, people today like investing in quality products that will be durable and offer value for their worth. In the past Indian consumers viewed eyewear as merely functional products, today they are viewed as important accessories and lifestyle products. As a result, multiple ownership of different brands/styles is also growing among the niche urban consumers,” Devansh Binani has sump up this trend aptly.

Contact Lenses in vogue: With more brands entering eyewear to take advantage of the strong uptake in contact lenses by young consumers, the category became increasingly fragmented. Smaller brands were able to tap into younger consumers’ interest in fashion as opposed to specific product benefits. This change in demand stifled share growth somewhat for all leading players. Young consumers were the standout consumer group in 2015 as they are increasingly accepting of contact lenses. The appeal of this emerging group led to an influx of new players offering trend-driven products at affordable prices. The growth is led by a growing demand for daily



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disposables and frequent replacement contacts, including coloured contacts. Women are the major buyers of contact lenses. Company spokesperson of Vision Express has sum it up correctly by saying, "Compared to men, women tend to postpone buying of spectacles, as those are not considered as look enhancer. So for contact lenses, the case is completely different, where women account for 70-75 percent of the category sales."

Sunglasses, the new 'kid' in the block

Optical retail comprises of spectacles, sunglasses and contact lenses. Amongst the three, the sunglass category is growing fastest at around 16 percent p. a, according to the spokesperson of Vision Express. Actually, more than a utility item, which protects eyes from UV rays, sunglasses have now become a fashion accessory. According to Devansh, "Sunglass has become an integral part of the user's daily life, and is viewed as a determining factor of their personalities. So customers are demanding newer and latest designs. Furthermore, we have also identified a pattern where customers are purchasing divergent designs, indicating their inclination to use different eyewear for different occasions." Vandana describes the madness with sunglasses in the following way, "The prime focus of eyewear designers is on the creation of new styles in sunglasses...the shapes of frames, tinted shades, bright hues, neon shades and other embellished designs. Moreover, the demand from the consumer is to have different pairs of sunglasses for different occasions like biking, party, beach, sports or casuals." Sometimes this particular product is also treated as a determining factor of their personality. "Gen Y loves to experiment and create statement by opting out new design & style of shades like flash mirrors, retro, aviators & club master," says Rahman. Increasing penetration of e-tailing in India is regarded as the major growth driver of this segment. Spokesperson from Vision Express would like to put it in this way, "With



▲ Lenskart



THE NEWEST ENTRY

When Lenskart.com started operating in 2010, no one believed that this online portal would be such a huge success! After swaying its customers through online, Lenskart.com has opened physical stores and has become an Omni-channel retailer in the truest sense. In an exclusive interaction, Peyush Bansal, Founder and CEO, Lenskart.com says, "In Lenskart, we aim to reach consumers through whichever channel they prefer!"

How did you come up with the idea of opening an e-com portal like Lenskart?

We came up with the idea of Lenskart after reading an advertisement in newspaper which mentioned about the eyewear deficit problem in India. Since the beginning of my entrepreneurial journey, the aim has been to figure out problems and solve them in the most unique and creative way possible. Lenskart was founded in 2010 and has been committed to revolutionize the eyewear category in the country by providing high quality, trendy eyewear at reasonable prices.

What are the unique offerings that Lenskart provide to its consumers?

Through Home Eye Check Up, Lenskart is able to serve customers at the comfort of their homes in 7 Indian cities and currently services 1,000+ families through its 200+ certified refractionists. Free Home Trial mirrors the company's commitment of bringing eyewear of great design and quality to consumers who hesitate to shop online because they want to be sure about the fit and style of the pair they are picking up. This facility is available in 45+ cities. There are still many consumers who have inhibitions in buying spectacles online with the fear if it will fit their face or not, and in order to remove these inhibitions we introduced the concept of 3D Try On. We have also set up over 200 offline stores across the country to provide them with touch and feel experience and multiple touch points. We have also invested in MEI machines from Germany, which will produce 3 eyeglasses in 50 seconds.

Why have you taken the physical route of sales?

The reason we also operate through physical stores is to reach the multitude of consumers who may still not be comfortable buying eyewear online and would like to touch & feel the product before purchasing. It also enables the customer to have a rich experience of the brand. Lenskart is an Omni channel platform. We aim to reach consumers through whichever channel they prefer.

How many stores do the company have right now and future expansion plan?

Lenskart currently has 200 stores pan India and is planning to set up 400 stores by the end of this year and is going to invest heavily in Home Eye Check Up business. We are going to enter 372 new towns with stores and people on streets over the next three years. We are also planning to come up with an instrument called Lensometer which enables a person to check the power of his/her eyes. In addition to these developments, we are also in the process of setting up a manufacturing & SCM facility in Delhi/NCR region of 100,000 sq. ft.



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Luxottica (with brands like Ray-Ban, Oakley, Vogue Eyewear, Giorgio Armani, Burberry, Bulgari, Chanel, D&G, Michael Kors, Prada, Ralph Lauren, Tiffany & Co., Versace and Valentino

etc in its kitty) is a global leader in the design, manufacture and distribution of fashion, luxury and sports eyewear. In an exclusive interview to IMAGES Retail, Akash Goyle, Country Manager & MD, Luxottica India has shared his views about the industry

Luxottica in India: We have been in India with a direct presence and a manufacturing unit for many years now. The entry of international luxury brands in India is a testimonial to growth, development and globalization. Products manufactured and distributed by Luxottica Group are the result of supreme precision and expertise that have evolved over time and perfected with large investments in research and development. This is exactly what sets us apart from the competitors in the country. What has also worked well for us is having local brand testimonials. For Vogue Eyewear; we have Deepika Padukone as our brand testimonial, whereas leading cricketers Virat Kohli and Yuvraj Singh have represented our design and innovation brand rooted in sport D Oakley.

Different for every country: If the portfolio is the same globally, Luxottica differentiate the styling and assortment by type of customer and geographical market, producing a broad range of models capable of satisfying diverse taste and tendencies and to respond to the demands and characteristics of widely differing markets.

Retailing format: Luxottica's distribution network is one of the Group's core strengths. It is global and includes retail stores as well as a wholesale network of third party stores and chains. In India specifically, the retail system is quite traditional, especially in smaller cities and is strongly wholesale-driven. Luxottica's distribution channels are complemented by an e-commerce component including the Oakley and Ray-Ban websites.

Sunglass Hut project: Sunglass hut stores have earned the reputation of being the "go to" destination for a wide and contemporary range of sunglasses from marquee brands. Consumers can under one roof find a wide assortment to choose from and highly trained staff to help them make the choice. We are sure Sunglass hut will continue to expand its footprint and bring its unique value and more and more consumers across the country.



▲ Himalaya

better retail infrastructure in both brick-n-mortar and e-tailing, sunglass is growing at healthy rates. Multiple pair ownership is also on the rise given the low pricing that bulk of the market offers at." Like spectacle frames, the sunglass market in India is also dominated by the non-branded category. In the branded segment, India's favourite is undoubtedly Ray-Ban, which is the largest selling sunglasses brand of the country.

Omni-channel: The New Mantra For Survival

The surge in the number of online portals selling eyewear and related products has seen a huge shift away from conventional high street outlets specialising in the sector. This move has been driven, at least in part, by the greater penetration of broadband into India's tier one, two and three cities. "The entire retailing sector of India is currently embracing the concept of Omni-channel Retailing, where the different channels of retailing i.e. online, offline, etc. instead of competing with each other, are being organised to create an ecosystem where they complement each other. The optical industry has also been keeping up with this trend. The concepts of webrooming and showrooming, where customers view the products online and buy them at offline stores and vice versa has also increased. Therefore, every channel requires equal attention and consistency between them is also crucial," says Devansh Binani. Himalaya Optical has its own portal. Same is with Titan, GKB Optical and Vision Express. However Vivek Mendonsa, Marketing Director, Lawrence & Mayo, has a completely different point of view regarding Omni-channel retailing. According to him, "One will buy a spectacle frame or sunglass not because that generally looks great, but if that looks great on HIM, so it is very subjective. That is why market information tells us that the industry is getting only 30 percent online and 70 percent through brick and mortar stores!" But Lawrence & Mayo has its online portal too.

Luxury Eyewear Retail

With consumers treating eyewear on par with other accessories, designer brands have upped the ante, combining cutting-edge technology with iconic designs that leave us spoilt for choice. In India, the trend took off a couple of years ago and Indian consumers now view eyewear as another high-end accessory



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that not only reflects the prestige of the brand, but also as something to be worn according to occasion and context. Glasses get a trendy makeover as luxury buying surges and international brands flock to India through Luxottica Group (the world's largest producer of eyewear, headquartered in Italy), which not only has its own brands like Ray-Ban and Oakley, but also produces for brands like Dolce & Gabbana, Prada and Giorgio Armani and is the global leader in luxury eyewear retail.

Leading Retailers: India's Own

Titan Eye Plus: Titan Co. Ltd. ventured into the eyewear segment in March 2007. The retail brand Titan Eyeplus now caters to more than a million customers every year. Titan Eyeplus has the largest network of optical retail stores in the country with 415 stores across 172 cities. With almost all the leading brands in its kitty, they also manufacture own Titan branded lenses at a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Chikkaballapur.

Himalaya Optical: 80+ Glorious years and 90+ well established optical stores spread in 49 cities across the country... that is the life Himalaya Optical has led so far. Born with a single store in Kolkata, this retailer has risen beyond the boundaries of the city and grew up to have pan India presence. Himalaya Optical is the pioneer in innovative, advanced and fashionable eye care products, has strategic alliance with

the top global eyewear brands too. The technologically driven infrastructure of the Himalaya stores provides best eye care solutions for the customers.

Vision Express: A joint venture between Reliance Retail and GrandVision (partnership was formalised in 2008), Vision Express is Europe's largest optical retailer with a global network presence of over 6000 stores across 44 countries. From launching the first store in Bangalore in 2008, the chain now has over 160 stores across 30 cities in India. GrandVision's best practices in terms of optical retail which covers eye tests, product portfolio and category knowledge bring immense value to this joint venture. Many successful products and promotions from GrandVision's international portfolio have been launched with success in India. They offer the benefits of surety, affordability, quality, world-class designs and decades of optical expertise. Our unique eye wear collections aspire to meet the comfort quotient and eye care needs of every genre.

Lawrence & Mayo: Lawrence & Mayo is the oldest growing and surviving optical retail chain in India and probably in the world. It has started its journey long back in 1877, in Calcutta. In 1975, Lawrence & Mayo became the first optician in the country to introduce contact lenses. Lawrence & Mayo even setup wholly-owned manufacturing units in the major metropolitan cities across the country to ensure a steady and regular supply of contact lenses for its customers.

Computer Eye-Testing, a technique used widely today to test eyesight was first brought to India and effectively implemented by Lawrence & Mayo. Today, Lawrence & Mayo has a network of over 100 showrooms covering 32 major cities and towns across India.

GKB Opticals: GKB Opticals is known for their 66 years of experience and reputation in providing the best quality eye care and eyewear. GKB Opticals group deals in the eye care health business. In the year 1968 it entered into retailing business and opened its first flagship store in Gariahat, Kolkata under the Brand name of 'GKB Opticals.' Today it is one of the leading premium optical companies in India having presence in 26 cities in 71 stores. The stores are equipped with latest edge digital eye testing technologies from foreign countries and state-of-the-art contact lens clinic managed by highly qualified optometrist.

Conclusion

The market for eyewear in India is changing at a brisk rate. Technological advancements and demand of eyewear from an ever growing base of fashion conscious customers and people with vision impairments, as well as the transition of eyewear manufacturers from the unorganised to the organised segment have been significantly changing the market. With new retailers coming in and the advancement of online retailing, we can expect high growth of this underserved segment. 



▲ GKB



▲ Vision Express

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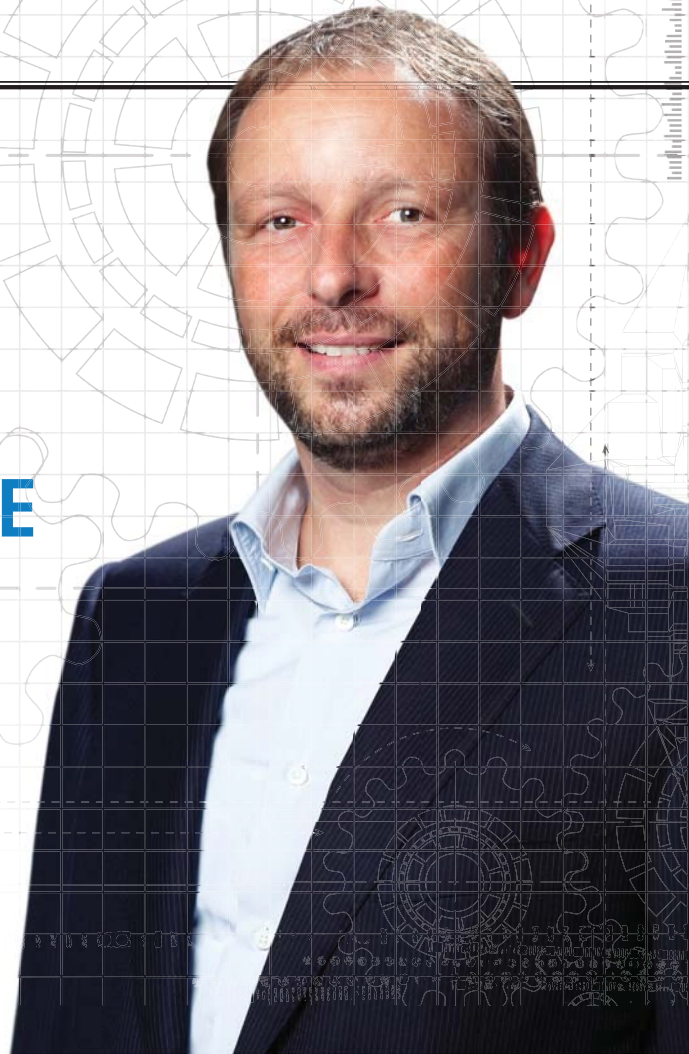
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“**INNOVATION IS THE ESSENCE OF BEING FUTURE-READY**”

Mobility, cloud technologies and digital payment solutions are coming together to drive an eventual goal: delivering superior customer experiences. In an exclusive conversation with IMAGES Retail, Marco de Vries, CEO, Openbravo share his thoughts on how technology has become the biggest gamechanger for modern retailers.



The retail landscape in India has transformed in the past few years, with technology being a key influencer of this journey. Give us your take on this.

For several years now, technology has become of greater relevance in the business of retailing. Of course, the rise of e-commerce – which started to gain traction at the turn of the century – as well as new payment methods such as Paypal and later others have all had a tremendous impact on the dynamics of the retail business. More recently, we have been seeing many new technologies (often commercialised as apps) gaining ground as well as new kinds of payment processors such as the Square and Ayden, which are also impacting retail to some level.

However, most of these new technologies are built on top of the main technological innovation, which is all about mobility. The introduction of what today we call smartphones together with 4G (or higher) mobile connectivity – this is what has had the most impact, in our view.

In your opinion, how is the Indian retail universe different from foreign counterparts?

Well, the vast majority of retail in India is still unregulated. That is the main difference. Depending on the information source, reports acknowledge percentages as high as 80 or more of total retail today not yet being regulated. The drive from retail regulation combined with projected market growth in an emerging economy like India offers a very strong case for international retailers looking at growth opportunities for their businesses.

Which are the chief areas of Indian retail where technological innovation can play a dominant role?

Mobile and cloud technologies are key enablers for retailers to grow in India. Also, digital payment methods offer a very relevant area of technological innovation. The third important area of technological innovation we expect will be centred on brick-and-mortar retailers investing heavily in enhancing the customer shopping experience. Retailers will also try to draw consumers more to their stores and keep them there, making relevant investments to enhance the shopping experience like with in-store localisation technologies, digital signage, augmented reality and self checkout.

How can Indian retailers leap successfully towards omnichannel retailing?

Well, first, the challenges to become omnichannel-ready are alike for most retailers. However, if we distinguish between our experiences when talking to mid-sized retail chains versus larger retail chains, we do see some important differences. Mid-sized Indian retailers need to adopt an integral management system, or Retail ERP, as an important first step. And of course, it is important for those retailers to adopt modern mobile-enabled and cloud-ready technologies for effective deployment. However, in most cases,

the first step for a larger retailer to be omnichannel-ready is to adopt a flexible, open platform that enables them to rapidly integrate with their legacy back-end systems.

What is the most ahead-of-the-curve technological solution you can offer to Indian retail?

Openbravo is a software vendor, which offers the Openbravo Commerce Suite to mid-sized and large speciality retailers. Our solutions offer a state-of-the-art mobile and cloud store solution and fully functional Retail ERP – all built on a very flexible, highly scalable, and easy to integrate technology platform. Openbravo is hardware-agnostic, thanks to being a web-native solution that can run on the most modern tablets and smart phones as well as on older desktop computers or POS hardware. The only prerequisite is for the hardware to have a web browser and internet

To date, Decathlon has 38 stores in India and all of these run Openbravo **mobile POS, integrated at the back-end with their legacy SAP system.**

connection. Openbravo Commerce Suite, rather than offering one single app or technological solution, offers comprehensive retail management software for superior retailer competitiveness.

What would be your recommendation for Indian retailers to become future-ready?

We recommend Indian retailers to adopt a modern system that enables them to continue innovating, which given the speed with which technology evolves nowadays, is the essence of being future-ready.

Can you offer any instances of Openbravo's collaboration with Indian retailers?

Our longest-standing case study in the retail space in India is French sporting goods retailer Decathlon, which has been working with Openbravo since 2011. To date, Decathlon has 38 stores in India and all of these run Openbravo mobile POS, integrated at the back-end with their legacy SAP system. Another case study we like to refer to is M&B Footwear (which also produces and commercialises footwear under the Lee Cooper brand), who has selected the Openbravo Commerce Suite to support the activity of its 100+ retail outlets and gain visibility across its vast distribution network composed by more than 80 distributors. [IR](#)





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RETAIL ANALYTICS

DECRYPTING THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Consumer management, inventory management or store method management, retail analytics technology can analyse data within a fraction of a second, thereby helping the retailer in understanding disparate consumer needs. Chekuri Swarochish, CEO, Penser Analytics Pvt. Ltd. unscrambles the subject in a conversation with IMAGES Retail.

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

CASE STUDY: BABYOYE, MAHINDRA RETAIL

“Using Sherlock, our CRM team is able to access predictive analytics based target groups under 60 seconds saving precious time for me and my team. Also, we find that the predictions from Sherlock are above 80 percent accurate,” Abhishek Pillendla, Head-CRM, Babyoye, Mahindra Retail Pvt. Ltd.

This retailer wanted to identify the most valuable customers based on both engagement and purchase patterns for proactive customer relationship management purpose. They also want to compare different sets of customers and nurture the right customers earlier in their lifecycle. Our solution was based on a three pronged approach, data collection, consumer segmentation and framework. We provided a real time customer segmentation solution.

Expanding the horizon with analytics

Analytics is all about using data to understand certain pertinent questions. In retail, it's used to understand the consumer, like before a product is launched, it has to be understood that who's going to buy that product, how the stores are going to stock up their inventory etc. These basic questions can be answered through retail analytics. This is one part of retail analytics. The other part is inventory management. For e.g. Central launches a particular variety of t-shirt. They have to understand what the future sales figure of this t-shirt is going to be, so that they can modify their inventory accordingly. And mind it; this can be different for different stores. All of these should be captured in retail analytics. Then comes store method management. If we look at franchise system, where one brand has multi-store presence, analysing data is very important. Let's go back to consumer management. Let's cite an interesting example like Flipkart, who runs discount sales day. But the consumer, who the company acquires during this time, is he 'real, loyal' consumer or a discount hunter? Or for that matter, for Future Group, it is important to understand the difference between the consumer of a Wednesday Bazaar and a typical Sunday. Recently with the advent of Big Data and IoT, analytics has changed a lot. Now analytics can predict and analyse with the help of augmented reality too. So it is still expanding its horizon.

Technology in Retail Analytics

Data management and analysis has always been an important thing for any retailer. But they are used to do it in the traditional way, with the help of the analysts, which again involves a lot of time. Normally it takes three to four weeks to answer some basic questions. There are some other retailers like Shoppers Stop, who have an internal analytics team of their own. In that scenario too, the same time will be needed to go from analysing to answers. With the help of technology this time factor can be downsized and at the same time, dependence on manpower will also decrease.

Automatic Analytics

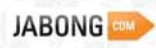
Integrated and distant support system are the basic requirements of data. In a retail organisation, everybody should be provided with analytics. This is not possible in a traditional analytical platform. Our solution, named 'Sherlock', actually enables everybody with relevant analytics. When you incorporate Sherlock, it is intelligent enough to create different data analysis for different people within that organisation and all of it happens automatically. Sherlock is very helpful for omni-channel retailing too. What happens in omni-channel is the data base is huge, the back end technology is different. So the integration of physical retail and e-commerce requires a lot of technological intervention. Sherlock does this beautifully and to the core. [IR](#)



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CLOUD COMPUTING

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To influence purchasing decisions and give time-pressed, on-the-go, digitally connected customers what they value and expect, retailers today need to build detailed consumer profiles from multiple sources, enriched by insights from advanced analytics. The advent of cloud computing now makes it possible for retailers to meet 21st-century consumer expectations during all phases of their shopping experience

By Arun Gupta

In the good old days of technology deployment, IT departments worked with the business teams in selecting solutions for specific requirements: Point of Sale, Merchandising, Planning, Buying, Supply Chain, Customer Management, and more options were available from multiple vendors. The vendor teams worked with business and IT to evaluate the solutions over a period of time which then ran through approval cycle post which project timelines were cast. Implementation was done by System Integrators or the Principals.

IT would then go off and engage hardware vendors on sizing the CPU, Memory, Disk space and various other parameters on Servers that host the application; number of users and data volume added to the complexity of hardware procurement which typically had lead times of 8-12 weeks. The interim time was fruitfully spent in creating the Business/Functional Requirement Specification or Document. These were used to build the solutions or configure Commercial-Off-the-Shelf (COTS) solutions over the ensuing months and at times years.

The equilibrium was broken with the advent of the Internet, which threatened to disrupt business models and technology. It was as if certain death awaited those who shunned embracing Internet based technologies or business models. Unrealistic euphoric expectations came crashing to the ground leaving many futurists licking their wounds and business leaders went back to basics to run their business. In its wake the Internet did leave behind a new set of opportunities with applications on hire and data centres with empty spaces.

Cloud Computing as a term became popular almost a decade after we started using it. In the initial days it was Application Service Provider,



SaaS market is double of IaaS, while PaaS remains a niche market

Internet based Applications followed by Mobile Apps and then variations that confused everyone on what the Cloud really is. Presumably as easy as swiping a card, no one talked about data integration with legacy applications or bandwidth required to upload voluminous data. Not to be outdone by the new age companies, conventional providers created a new category: virtual servers in data centre equals Private Cloud.

Variations followed with virtualisation of every layer of computing and networking; most popular being Application-as-a-service followed by Infrastructure-as-a-service and Platform-as-a-service. The promise of variable billing, pay-as-you-go, pay-for-what-you-use, and other models of elasticity offered good value propositions to customers. The biggest promise to business: independence from unresponsive and slow IT teams who lacked agility and had struggled to keep pace with the new business reality.

Data centre to niche players and Software application providers, everyone eventually joined the bandwagon. New disruptions keep bombarding IT and business alike with Software Defined Storage, Software Defined Network, and Software Defined Everything that you can imagine! Mobile created new opportunities especially with the smartphone becoming the primary device of information consumption and collaboration; today every enterprise struggles to balance the Cloud with legacy systems creating a hybrid world.

For small and medium retailers the Cloud came as a boon with low

complexity of management and reduced upfront costs. While initial offerings were basic, they have quickly evolved to provide complete functionality from Planning, Merchandising, Supply Chain, Store Management, to Loyalty and Point of Sale. For the large retailers Cloud Computing offers efficiency in data centre assets and lower provisioning latency; for aspiring Omni-channel retailers, the necessary platforms to make the transition to new world opportunities.

In the new world mediums of communication are decided by the customer; she has choices that did not exist before. Researching from mobile, evaluating on the web, checking out merchandise in store and then

58 percent select Cloud due to cost, flexibility and security benefits.



finally completing the transaction at any of the channels based on price, availability, peer feedback and convenience. Instant gratification wins over loyalty; everyone likes promotions and offers. Customer segments are breaking into smaller groups with many additional attributes and markers redefining micro-segmentation.

The rise of marketing tools and analytics was aided by availability of plethora of tools from niche players and large solution providers alike. Retailers today want to try at low risk before taking the plunge and investing in technology; Cloud based models are satiating this need effectively while also providing new features and functionality on the go. Competitive landscape for technology solutions now allows retailers to experiment and explore without being tied down to any specific solution or technology and keep pace with evolution.

Fast fashion and just in time inventory have redefined merchandising practices, allocation and logistics; multi-channel commerce adds another dimension extending the supply chain beyond the physical stores. Just in time and inventory turns demand different models in comparison to fill rates and availability. Customers expect 100 percent OTIF (On Time In Full) for orders placed across



channels with the ability to choose schedule for delivery or pickup; and reverse logistics in case the product does not meet expectations.

Supply Chain requires predictive models that keep learning with every transaction across segments of customers and merchandise at the basic level; retailers need to look beyond the monolithic to the new age technology providers who are adept at technology with faster, better, cheaper options and analytical models on the Cloud that can keep costs down while fulfilling customer expectations. Cloud based solutions also offer new promotional capabilities based on tactical analytics of basket, recency, frequency and other parameters.

Multi-tenant systems with data demarcations by company make interesting licensing models with shared cost of infrastructure; it also creates perceptions of insecurity of data. Is my data safe? Can competitors access my data? What if there is a security breach? How do I know that when I exit the provider, has my data been deleted? How do I customise to fit my requirements? What if the provider jacks up prices after signing? How can I transfer large volumes of data online? Connectivity is still a challenge in many places ...

By 2019, 83 percent of data centre traffic will be on the Cloud

All valid concerns when deploying Cloud based applications; Cloud providers survive because they have the tools to manage the apprehensions. For them it is their business at stake (not that it is not for the retailer), but they earn based on their ability to provide these services seamlessly to multiple customers. In all probability their stack would be better than an in-house deployment. They are subject to higher scrutiny by every customer before signing up; they are also targets by hackers and other elements.

Global Cloud providers see India as a high potential market and have setup local infrastructure to comply with data residency requirements for specific industries and improve access latency. Local data centre vendors compete with them at times losing on price due to economy of scale. IaaS is a viable offering today for IT departments for most workloads, starting point is test and development which is easily migrated to the Cloud; better orchestration capabilities now enable

hybrid options with legacy on premise and Clouds coexisting harmoniously.

So where is the opportunity beyond the hype of elasticity, scale up and down based on use, economy of scale, management overheads, and reduced dependence on hiring and retaining internal skillsets. What should retailers do when it comes to deploying Cloud based systems or solutions from new age providers while protecting their existing investments? Is there a middle path that offers the best of both worlds? Maturity of conventional wisdom married to dynamism of disruptive technology led models of selling and engagement!

Cloud adoption has been growing by 50 percent year-on-year for the last 3 years; reasons that constrained adoption earlier have become enablers: cost, flexibility and security. Transition needs careful planning and diligent execution; consultants and vendors offer cloud readiness assessments as a part of their presales efforts. Define the business case and the evaluation parameters upfront based on your reality especially if there are short periods of peak load (weekends and festive seasons) which use the IT infrastructure effectively.

Retailers should review technology (hardware) refresh cycles or major upgrades to existing systems as probable opportunity; change management may appear to be complex for large retailers, the benefits will in many cases outweigh the risks associated with new technology. Create and encourage an internal innovation team which scans the new technology horizon for relevance; keep watching customer trends globally and locally. Participate in hackathons or create your own, get bright young talent to challenge conventional wisdom.

Cloud is here to stay, where are you in the journey? Don't be shy of hiring experts to help the cause. The incremental investment is worth a lot more than potential disruption to service and business. **IR**

About the author:

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THE INDIAN RETAIL *journey*

25 YEARS OF GUTS
AND GLORY

Remember the time when shopping was simple? Customers went to the market, made quick decisions as the choices were limited, and returned home content. Retailers understood their customer requirements, built personal relationships and fulfilled the demands of the local neighbourhood. Then the 90s happened...

By Sheetal Choksi and Sharmila Cirvante
With inputs from Parama Sen and Charu Lamba

It's been 25 glorious years since the advent of organised retail in India. 25 joyous, tumultuous, passion driven years. Years of trials and tribulations that have tested the mettle of the industry's unshakeable. Years which have witnessed innovations and survived changes and developments that have threatened the fundamentals of business. We have lamented local corner stores merging into gigantic department stores and malls. Foreign brands that were once a distant dream beckon us with flashy offers. Old traditional retailers, with legacies that date back to pre-independence days, still hold strong and in some cases, pioneer modern change. Even our language is peppered with new definitions and terminologies.

Along the way, there has been much to learn from. The last 5 years ushered in arguments on FDI in retail and its impact on traditional retailers, e-commerce and its impact on brick and mortar. Everything seemed life threatening and yet, everything beautifully co-exists.

To get a firsthand perspective on the history of Indian retail, we asked the industry stalwarts to share their experiences - what they would have done differently in hindsight, what led them to foray into the domains that they did, and some 'what if questions' the answers to which may have changed the course of some brands in the country.

We received 12 responses; here are their points of view on the 25-year retail journey as well as some insights on their journey, their learning, their decisions and their conflicts. Some retailers date back even earlier, to the pre-Independence era. We have followed this with a lens on the future and asked for their perspective of Indian Retail in the year 2020.

The Pre-Independence Era: Decades of traditional retail and the transition to modern

TTK Prestige Limited is one of the oldest businesses of India, established in the year 1928. Over the years, it has evolved into one of the most trusted brands. Chandru Kalro, Managing Director, TTK Prestige Limited, shares some insights into the company's journey dating back to pre-independence till date. What, according



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to him, was the strategy employed by TTK Prestige Smart Kitchens to buffer their success from the onslaught of organised retail (what he refers to as modern format). Here is his interesting story:

“TTK started as an indenting agency in 1928 and we were the gateway to most of the great brands that we see today in India. In that sense, we were one of the first organised distributors in India. The journey of retail as I know it, is outlined in the table given below.”

A bigger change in the midst of big change

TTK Prestige had committed itself to a high growth trajectory basis a very simple philosophy that was the core of their business, i.e., 'innovate and communicate to the new customer who wants something better.' The brand had succeeded in redefining customer expectation and understanding of the meaning of 'value' by offering a better product at the right price, instead of just offering a low price.

PRE -INDEPENDENCE	POST- INDEPENDENCE TO THE EARLY 90s	90s AND BEYOND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underpenetrated categories Less affluence, fewer customers Less competition Narrow distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imports dried up Beginning of 'License Raj' Functionality was key, both in products and retail Scarcity all around Retail was the logical last mile; not necessarily friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of the 'Licence Raj,' reforms kicked in Growth in income Exposure to the West; media proliferation Upgradation was the new indulgence Fierce competition - both from domestic and foreign players Modern format entered; power shifted to the hands of the consumer



Why Ajay Kaul, Director & CEO, Jubilant FoodWorks Limited, thinks pizza is a natural fit for the Indian ecosystem

Pizza as a dish resonates well with the Indian eating habits. Pizzas are round in shape, resembling a chapati, come loaded with vegetables and cheese - both essential nutrients of Indian meals, pizzas are shared and eaten without cutlery - like Indian breads are consumed. Hence, at the outset, pizzas are a natural fit for the Indian ecosystem.



Jamshed Daboo, Managing Director, Trent Hypermarkets Limited, believes that supermarkets will be more pre-dominant than hyper markets

I think world over and certainly in India, hypermarkets have their limitations and customers are looking at more convenient ways to shop. So the hyper format is actually coming down in terms of size and it is the supermarket format which is now getting presence as far as food retail is concerned. The other issue as far as hypermarkets are concerned is that the supply of space is not easy to get as more malls are not coming up. So it is a format which I think will grow but not at the same rates that we have seen earlier.



Kishore Bijani's (Founder & Group CEO, Future Group) learning over the years

Doing retail business for so long in India, my biggest learning is 'what not to do' rather than 'what to do' for our customers. The customers keep teaching us and we move on with these learning.



B. A. Kodandaraman's (Chairman & Managing Director, Viveks) 3-point summary of Indian Retail in 2020

1) **Brick and Mortar:** Experiential with newness around it, 2) **Online:** Speed with convenience and trust, 3) **Omni-channel:** A blend for few sectors such as fashion

The new consumer mindset was looking for new experiences. It needed a fresh, out-of-box retail presentation which traditional channels could not deliver. At the same time, the modern format considered the kitchen category to be of least importance and relegated it to a small corner.

This gave rise to a new concept, a new philosophy - Prestige Smart Kitchen. It offered a distinct promise and created a marked difference from the emerging modern/organised retail outlets by choosing:

1. Neighbourhood stores over high street.
2. Small format as opposed to large format for a 360° kitchen experience. Modern formats were unable to host this feature as they segregated electric and non-electric into different departments.
3. Unboxed product merchandising with sales consultants for a unique browsing and buying experience.

The sheer uniqueness of the concept won over customers who had never before had an engaging, interactive experience. The concept has since further evolved.

Post-Independence to the early 90s: The role of regional players

The advent of modern retail saw many players, even the large ones, struggling

for survival. Popular brands and companies either shut shop or lost their identities in the comfort of mergers. In these winds of uncertainty, a few regional players decided to dig their heels into the ground and roll up their sleeves.

We asked three popular regional players - Metro Shoes, Vijay Sales and Viveks - about the choices they made and the factors that motivated their decisions, which today make them stand strong even in the face of intense competition, both from global brands and equally resilient Indian counterparts.

Viveks and Vijay Sales, both electronics retailers, were leading the electronics and consumer durables categories in their respective regions. Interestingly, both liberalization and the advent of organised retail gave their growth trajectory the much required

impetus. Rather than being defensive or defeated, they welcomed competition from other large national players, both brick and mortar and online, conquered them, and today are of the firm belief that they have the prowess to take on whatever the future has to offer.

Metro Shoes: What motivated Rafique Malik, Managing Director and Chairman, Metro Shoes Limited, to become a national player in a highly fragmented market? What strengthened his belief in the brand? And what will be his journey, going ahead?

Here is what he has to say: "As retail is a consumer facing industry, it is very important to understand that change never stops. Metro was the first footwear company to establish itself as a brand in a highly unorganised market, and this has changed the perceptions and purchase patterns for fashion footwear in India today. The Indian consumer is highly brand conscious and service oriented. Consumer expectations are changing on a daily basis and to meet and exceed those expectations, a brand has to constantly challenge itself to grow and expand. With investment in technology, international sourcing and celebrity endorsement, Metro has, and will, continue to remain adaptive."

The main advantage in national expansion was the brand's ability to adapt to the range of regional tastes without compromising on the brand promise. This has enabled Metro Shoes to establish itself firmly in a rapidly transforming retail landscape that sees a number of Indian and international players jostling for space.



▲ Metro Shoes



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New opportunities of partnering with popular global brands like Crocs and Steve Madden for their distribution, expansion and launches in India have allowed Metro to gain insight into the introduction of international brands in India.

New store formats like MSL (More Shoes for Less) have enabled Metro to address different consumer needs.

Metro has been gleaming success even in the online market by staying relevant to the new generation. The online store witnesses a growth of 200-250 per cent year on year.

Focussing on the key pillars and investing in data, technology and people have helped Metro shoes walk the talk through the decades.

The pre-gos era: the first winds of change

Vijay Sales: Nilesh Gupta, Managing Partner, Vijay Sales Electronics Private Limited, shares his journey during the pre-90s:

“Our industry has undergone many changes in the last two decades. Prior to the 90s, store sizes were typically really small, between 500 to 1000 sq. ft. due to the dearth of products. Then the early 90s introduced us to the India operations of LG, Samsung and Sony and with it, hi-tech products like large size refrigerators, washing machines, air conditioners, microwaves and large screen colour TVs began flooding the stores.”

Viveks: B. A. Kodandaraman, Chairman and Managing Director, Viveks, believes:

“For most products in the domain of consumer electronics and home appliances, the supply demand gaps loomed large with product shortages arising from limited domestic production and severe import restrictions. Competition was minimal and retailers were able to sell what they would buy. Manufacturers had the upper hand and virtually dictated terms. Rather than choosing to exploit the situation of shortages, Viveks chose to stay strongly consumer oriented, resorting to ethical pricing practices. This stood us in good stead in winning strong customer loyalty and patronage.”

Organised retail on the anvil (1990-2010): From an era of shortage to an era of plenty

Vijay Sales: “By now, Vijay Sales had fully fathomed the scale of the future trend and was opening large format stores, beginning with Goregaon West in 1998, followed by our flagship Borivali, Prabhadevi and Goregaon stores by 2002,” says Nilesh Gupta, Managing Partner, Vijay Sales Electronics Private Limited.

He adds, “In the year 2007, organised retailing descended upon us bringing major benefits. Now we could also retail digital products like mobiles, cameras, laptops and other high end products. These products necessitated advertising which served us a bigger slice of the pie. Hence the modern retailers pushed the industry to grow as even the retailers who were adverse to change had no option but to relook their store size and product mix.

In this context, going national earlier was not a choice. In the earlier years, the market lacked the potential to enable us to open stores in various cities. Markets were fragmented, brands were far and few, and turnovers comparatively smaller and not enough to sustain multi-city operations. At best, we could



What B. S. Nagesh, Founder, TRRAIN and Vice Chairman & Non-Executive Director, Shopper Stop Private Limited, would change if he were to create Shoppers Stop all over again with all the experience gained so far...

My definition of the target customer will be sharper and the merchandise categories and assortment sharper and more curated. I would go more premium. Services like grooming, food and restaurant would be integrated to the concept. Services will ensure frequency and higher stickiness due to regular visits.

My relationship with the customer will be through an Omni-channel thought process and an Omni-channel store will be open 18 hours a day on a click and collect basis, other than serving through the brick and mortar stores. I would set the business starting one region and go deeper into the region. The organisation structure will be a multiple project organisation supported by finance and technology. Most of the routine transactional functions will be outsourced and all specialised functions will be in-sourced. It will be a digitally connected organisation with strong processes and empowerment so that the response time never exceeds 8 hours. The average age of the organisation will be 3-5 years more than the average age of the target customers.



▲ viveks

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Venky Rajgopal, Chairman and Managing Director, Indian Terrain Fashions Limited, on what being a former civil servant taught him...

I was a civil servant who, as a young man, learnt great things about people, teams and motivation. It was the foundation on which this dream of Indian Terrain was built. It was born because we saw the need for a genuine sportswear product, in the aspirations of the young Indian consumer, who was just arriving on the global stage. So while the other brands had been there from before, they had we felt, left the aspiration of their consumers less than fulfilled. There was a community of consumers there just waiting for Indian Terrain to happen. Indian Terrain, was rooted and born out of one singular belief, great quality, great style and we have persevered with that, despite the growth in volume and number.



“Technology will have a massive influence on the evolution of retail because it moves at a very quick pace and it tends to disrupt the distinct models much faster. There would be a lot of nimble, technology savvy retail players in the market.

- Gaurav Mahajan, President-Group Apparel, Raymond Limited

have started our multi-city operations 5 years before we actually started. But I'm not sure how much of a difference that would have made. Hence, I feel we started at the right cusp of the curve.”

Viveks: B. A. Kodandaraman, Chairman and Managing Director, Viveks, says, “Economic liberalisation opened the floodgates of opportunity with markets quickly moving from an era of shortage to an era of plenty. Many international brands set up shop in India and offered superior products with large variety. Viveks decided to build a large chain and started expanding, moving from 3 stores in 1994 to more than 30 stores within five years. Explosion in supplies naturally led to increasing competitive intensity as market started fragmenting with more and more retailers getting into business. Consumers, who had to compromise by buying what was available regardless of quality or service, now realised that they could call the shots. With huge choices before them, they became the drivers of market growth.

While most retailers focused solely on sales, we kept the customer at the core and extended our services to include installation and service of the products we sold with our own Viveks Service Centre. We invested in people, technology and relationships with brands and launched the country's first and largest multi-brand, multi-product retailer service centre with over 40 Brand Authorisations. This further strengthened our consumer connect and improved brand goodwill.”

The unanticipated impact of e-commerce: From pricing wars to experiential retail

Vijay Sales: Online retailing is here to stay and it is a part of the retail ecosystem. But even this will have its share of learning and changes in the way it is being implemented. There will be many shifts – from pricing to service such as moving from the deep discounting mode of selling to selling at optimum pricing. Online will find huge numbers in customers seeking convenience and also in places where product availability is an issue.

Viveks: Online retail has entered the fray in a big way, but we need to understand the consequences of low online pricing. We foresee a logical trend of retailers entering a multi-channel mode by moving into online business and addressing a wider audience, mostly regional and perhaps national in some cases.

From the birth of organised retail to 2016: A perspective across different categories

From general trade to modern trade and now virtual, the Indian retail sector has had its own growth pangs. Despite the emergence of various formats, and contrary to industry forecasts, they all seem to co-exist and not necessarily at the cost of each other.

The last 25 years of organised retail has been boosted by economic growth, higher purchasing power, changing aspirations, evolving consumption patterns, a willingness to spend and other factors. In this section, we



▲ Vijay Sales



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▲ Dominos Pizza

cover the thoughts of some of the key retailers across categories from malls to restaurants and suits to watches.

From unfamiliar food to a favourite family treat

Ajay Kaul, Director & CEO, Jubilant FoodWorks Limited, remembers the journey of the Pizza from an unfamiliar foreign dish to becoming a favourite family treat.

"The Domino's Pizza journey in the country has been full of learning. When we entered the Indian market 2 decades back, the organised QSR industry wasn't of a significant size and many existing players were facing challenges to even break even. When we launched Domino's, there was no Pizza culture in the country and establishing the category itself, and bringing pizzas into the meal time consumption consideration set, was the primary task. We studied the Indian mindset thoroughly and customized our offerings in all aspects. A strategy, we continue to use till date.

To take the pizza experience to the masses, we introduced the Pizza Mania range that offered pizzas at as low as Rs.35. Till today; we focus on reducing the price barrier and democratizing the pizza experience. At the other end of the spectrum, we recently introduced the Chef's Inspiration range of Italian pizzas developed in collaboration with Michelin Star Chef Vikas Khanna. This was launched for the discerning, well-travelled consumers.

We even tweaked our brand communication to address Indian sensibilities. The Domino's 'Hungry Kya' campaign established Pizza as a meal time replacement and '30 minutes or free' established Domino's as a trusted brand with the Indian consumers. As a result, India has become the largest international market for Domino's Pizza, outside the U.S. We plan to set up 150 new stores every year and hope to open 1,500 to 2,000 stores by 2020."

Time as an accessory

Titan Company Limited is now the world's largest integrated own brand manufacturer of watches, with over 150 million pieces sold across 32 countries collectively.

Bhaskar Bhat, Managing Director, Titan Company Limited, takes us through the journey.

"It was not until the decade of liberalization that Titan made headway in cementing its operations in the country. This was a time typical of slow and steady progress as India had a limited or no open market.

When it opened up during the late 80s, the country witnessed a surge in the income level of the average Indian household. With money came the need for investments, as did the consumer culture of the country. Growth in purchasing power meant that consumers could now afford to spend their income on consumer durables. Over the years, Titan has utilized the open market to grow and evolve from a premier Indian watchmaker to a global lifestyle giant.

Increasing disposal income among the younger consumers and exposure to a larger plethora of brands has resulted in a sea change in consumer preferences. Consumers are no longer passive observers of market players but active partners who drive product promotion, thinking and even innovation.

With the growing role played by the consumers today, companies such as Titan cannot afford to lose sight of their varied needs and preferences. Keeping consumer needs first and foremost in the brand philosophy is central to our success in today's competitive and



"I feel in the earlier years, market did not have the potential where we could have opened stores in various cities. It was fragmented, brands were far & few and turnover was comparatively smaller, not enough to sustain multicity operations. At best we could have started our multicity operations 5 years before when we actually started.

- Nilesh Gupta, Managing Partner, Vijay Sales Electronics Private Limited



What Harshvardhan Neotia, CMD, Ambuja Neotia Group, learned as an unwilling participant in his mother's shopping trips...

Much of what we did in City Centre was derived from my experience of having been an unwilling chaperone to my mother on her numerous visits to New Market (a local, traditional market). I would notice how she would thrive on bargains, how she would relish diversity, how the shop keeper would promise to do more for her to make her feel special and what I would invariably notice was a familiarity between the shopper and the shopkeeper – not a cosmetic transaction but a personalised relationship.

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▲ Prestige Showroom

crowded market. Titan's efforts towards ensuring this will continue to be our key strength in the years to come."

A mall with the courage to make shopping a byproduct

Building a community centre where shopping was a byproduct, in an age where most malls were aping the malls of the West, is a feat to accomplish. Harsh Neotia, CMD, Ambuja Neotia Group, discusses how a deep understanding of the consumer and market enabled them to break traditional thinking and create profitable city centres in Eastern India.

"As City Centre, Salt Lake completes a decade; my mind is flooded with a patchwork of memories. India had only a couple of malls when we began designing City Centre, Salt Lake in 2001. City Centre was conceptualised as a complete family shopping and entertainment destination, and perhaps succeeded because most visitors did not necessarily have a precise idea why they would be going there. The biggest motivation was the convenience of finding most things under one roof. On the other hand, for our retailers, City Centre, Salt Lake has created a tremendous sense of pride and ownership.

Traditionally, the international experience of malls was more like big boxes, fully air-conditioned in one large space. The Indian concept of a bazaar, on the other hand, is very



“As retail is a consumer facing industry, it is very important to understand that change never stops. Consumer expectations are changing every day and to meet and exceed those expectations, a brand has to constantly challenge itself to grow and expand.

- Rafique Malik, Chairman & Managing Director, Metro Shoes Limited

different. Here, most individual shops are air-conditioned but the corridors are open spaces with several courtyards. The conventional mall theory believes that creating too much opportunity for people to hang out would enhance unremunerative foot falls. We disagreed and insisted that Indians generally combined shopping with 'adda', leisure and outing. The shopper needs to first and foremost be relaxed while shopping. This was the basis of why we evolved City Centre, Salt Lake from a market into

a community centre, where shopping would be an engrossing byproduct.

This journey into the world of malls has been exciting and a process of learning. I have understood that malls are more a hospitality enterprise than a realty venture."

The last 25 years have presented an undulating retail landscape. Indian retail has been barraged with new formats, erratic consumer behaviour, the rapid emergence and decline of home grown and international brands, a change in mall culture, the success of high streets, the temerity of traditional retailers and the aftershocks of e-commerce.

The market is rife with data and statistics pertaining to the size of the retail industry, the share of e-commerce vs brick and mortar and other speculations concerning the future of retail. Will small stores fade into oblivion? Will Omni-channel work its miracles? Will online lose its sheen and reroute consumers back to offline channels, helping malls and shopping centres regain their lost prestige? There is too much hearsay, debate and dissonance.

Retail 2020: survival of the smartest

In such an unpredictable scenario, asking the industry stalwarts to future gaze 5 years ahead would be presumptuous. We, therefore, asked them to share their vision of Retail 2020. Before we delve into their minds for their predictions, let us survey some industry data to set the context for discussion.

Growth is inevitable

Whatever the data source, the narrative stays true to the growth factor, be it e-tail or brick and mortar. This seems to be largely influenced by rising incomes, urbanisation and attitudinal shifts amongst consumers.

As we have been reading time and again, India's retail market is expected to nearly double to US\$ 1.3 trillion by 2020 from US\$ 600 billion in 2015. While the overall retail market is expected to grow at 12 per cent per annum, modern trade would expand twice as fast at 20 per cent per annum and traditional trade at 10 per cent (Source: ibef.org).

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E-tailing is attracting much attention and is touted as the biggest revolution in retail. While there is much variance in the estimates of the e-commerce market, there is a consistent belief that it is here to stay, to grow, and to change the consumers' shopping behaviour far more dramatically than before.

A bubble that won't burst

The second narrative focuses on the dominant roles e-commerce and online shopping are playing in the lives of consumers. Whatever the guesstimates, reality is that it is here to stay! Compared to China and the U.S., India is adding three new internet users every second and is the second largest market ranked by user numbers. In our cover story of the May 2016 issue, 'Emerging Shopping Destinations: How Retailers Keep Ahead of the Curve', we stated that e-commerce is a progressive step to the rapidly evolving retail business and yet attracts opposing viewpoints. The benefits of e-commerce are there for everyone to see: convenience of shopping and deep discounts.

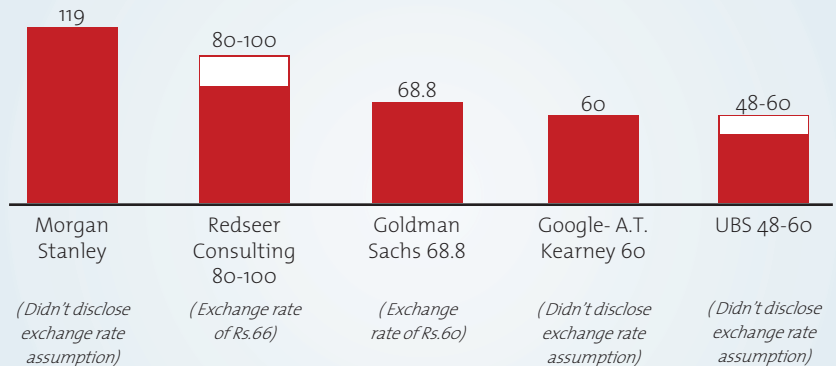
Looking into the crystal ball

2020 is just 3 years and 3 months away. Do the industry leaders envision ground-shaking changes in Indian retail? What other shocking revelations can we hope to expect, given that the scenario is in a constant state of flux every month, every year?

WIDE VARIANCE

A look at the estimates by brokerages and consultancy firms of India's e-commerce market size reveals a wide gap in expectations

Estimates of market size of online retail by 2020



* Online retail here refers to gross sales of electronics, fashion books, furniture and home products, health and personal care products and groceries at e-commerce firms. Gross sales doesn't account for discounts, products return and order cancellations.

** Goldman's estimate is for the year ending March 2009. All the estimates are for the year ending December 2020.

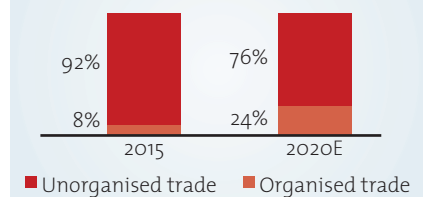
Source: Mint research

Of the 12 retail stalwarts who responded, these 6 key themes emerged.

1. Disruption fuels new ideas

The last few decades have witnessed disruption in retail practises and consumer behaviour, which has kept the industry guessing. Nothing much has progressed; the next wave of

SIGNIFICANT SCOPE FOR EXPANSION IN ORGANISED RETAIL

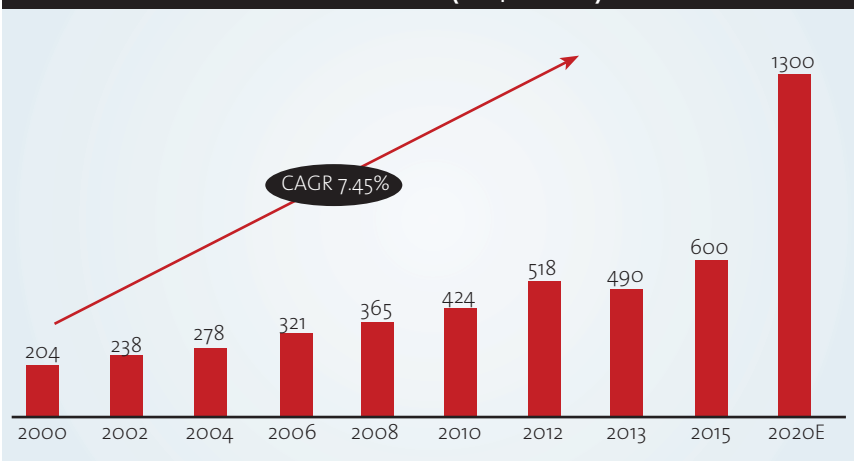


Source: BCG, KPMG-indiaretailing.com, Deloitte Report, Winning in India's Retail Sector, TechSci Research, Notes: 'Mom-and-pop' stores are small stores that are typically owned and run by members of a family, E- Estimate

change is still a question mark. Retail will still have to brace itself against impending disruption from all fronts, technology being the biggest enabler of the same. Disruption is what will keep both online and brick and mortar retailers, however big or small, on their toes in the years to come.

According to Gaurav Mahajan, President-Group Apparel, Raymond Limited, "The last few years have seen tremendous disruption, not necessarily in terms of volume of business but in terms of the nature of retail business, because of digital and online. I think

MARKET SIZE OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS (US \$ BILLION)



Source: BCG Retail 2020, Ernst & Young, Deloitte, indiaretailing.com, Economist Intelligence Unit, Euro Monitor, TechSci Research, Notes: CAGR - Compound Annual Growth Rate, E- Estimated



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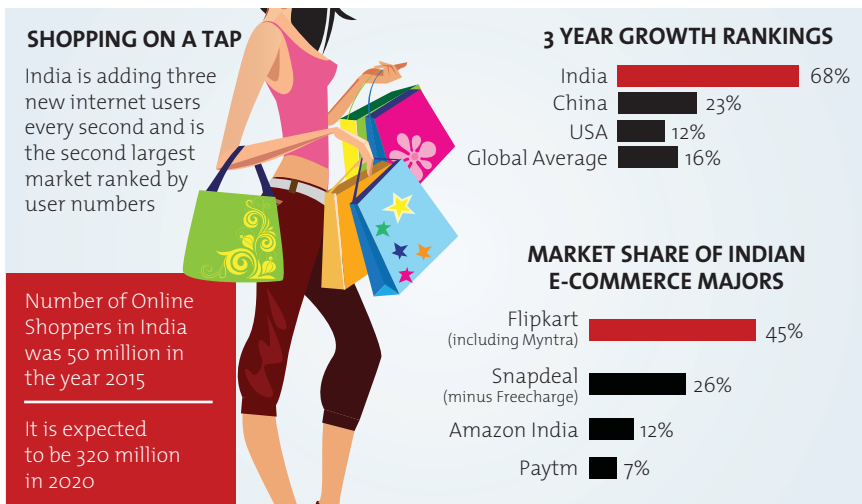
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▲ City Centre, Salt Lake



Source: *economictimesindia.com*

it has been excellent because we are aligning the way we do retailing to the way consumers today live, and the consumers live seamlessly between the physical and the digital worlds.”

2. Technology will enable differentiation

In the cover story of our June issue, ‘Where Tech will take Retail: Retail Technology Leaders Envision the Future’, we had delved into the changing role of technology in the retail space. We had observed that technology, till about a decade ago, was considered unobtrusive, a ‘back office thing’ without a name or an identity. Today, it has emerged from the shadows and stands at the forefront,

orchestrating everything from innovation to analytics, and is being touted as the key enabler for differentiation. Every one of the 12 retail leaders we spoke to stressed upon the importance of technology and its critical role in retail.

Rafique Malik, Managing Director and Chairman, Metro Shoes Limited, believes technology is all-encompassing and encapsulates the same. “Technology will play a vital role in shaping the retail industry in the next few years. Its influence will range across all facets of the industry. Production will be influenced through technologies like 3D printing and hyper local manufacturing, though these effects may take even longer

to become truly commercial. Supply chain efficiencies are being seen even now with the ability to automatically replenish store inventory. This will reduce the cost of holding inventory and hence, working capital. The store experiences will change with experiential retail becoming more a focus. Data analytics will enable us to personalize a customer’s experience either online or offline.

With a quicker flow of information, international trends will be adopted faster, or for that matter, influenced. At any rate, a retail company has to brace itself for an ever increasing pace of change and be prepared to adapt in an increasingly changeable environment”.

Chandru Kalro, Managing Director, TTK Prestige Limited believes, “Efficiencies all across will have to improve. Current cost benchmarks have to go down and technology will be a great help and can provide disruptive opportunities”.

3. Different retail formats will perforce co-exist

While retail may have changed, adopted, adapted many forms in its journey of modernization, most industry leaders believe that the traditional retailer still plays an important role in consumers’ lives. There is a strong conviction that all formats will co-exist, albeit with some changes to match the changing dynamics of both the market requirements and changing consumer behaviour.

According to B. S. Nagesh, Founder, TRRAIN and Vice Chairman & Non-Executive Director, Shopper Stop Private Limited the industry will necessitate three kinds of retailers.

> **Traditional Trade:** Large numbers of outlets serving niche products or general merchandise and food and FMCG products for the local community.

> **Modernising Trade:** Smaller Retailers who have adopted high level of technology through collaboration and are connected through intermediaries on technology platforms to reach consumers directly.

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> **Modern Trade:** Almost 100,000+ retailers who will leverage technology together with one or two stores or local chains, of which about 10 very large retailers straddling both the online and offline spaces will be multi-million dollar enterprises.

Jamshed Daboo, Managing Director, Trent Hypermarket Limited, predicts that the hypermarket store formats will become smaller. It will revise strategy to become a multi-format and will continue to have relevance though it may lose its predominance.

Chandru Kalro, Managing Director, TTK Prestige Limited, anticipates traditional retail in many categories will find it difficult to survive and therefore, like everywhere in the world, independents will diminish.

Harsh Neotia, CMD, Ambuja Neotia Group, expects an average decrease in the overall retail square footage of between one-third and one-half in the next 5-10 years, as the shift to e-commerce will result in less frequent visits to malls. Yet, given the fact that shopping is not a solitary exercise, he believes that shopping malls will evolve as 'community centres' where consumers will come together to bond over food, entertainment and shopping, if need be.

He further states, "The significance of entertainment is paramount in the human psyche. Therefore notwithstanding technology-driven retail networks and increased number of digital savvy customers, entertainment shall continue to remain a source of attraction maximizing footfalls. This is primarily because e-commerce cannot delight shoppers with spa and gym-like experiences, and prudent mall owners are trying to make good on the notion of retail therapy by giving shoppers a platform to not just shop but also indulge in their hobbies. Cookery, painting and sports-based events are just a few examples of it." He strongly believes that malls which lack this will struggle for survival.

B. S. Nagesh, Founder, TRRAIN and Vice Chairman & Non-Executive Director, Shopper Stop Private Limited, concurs, "Almost all the big brands of the world would have entered and this will lead to

a shortage of physical space, which will necessitate the reinvention of malls and shopping centres as social destinations."

4. Phygital will be the way forward

According to 'Digital Retail in 2020: Rewriting the Rules', a Google-A.T. Kearney Study, May 2016, the number of online shoppers is expected to grow more than 3X to 175 million, and the online channel will contribute to 25 per cent of organised retail sales by 2020.

With the study as a backdrop, Bhaskar Bhat, Managing Director, Titan Company Limited, opines, "Through the course of the passing decade, e-commerce has left an imprint by drastically re-shaping India's retail space. Today, customers are not loyal to any channel – online or offline. Phygital, which is all about blending the physical and digital to create an ecosystem between the brand and consumer across the two worlds, is the biggest reality that must be embraced by established and new businesses. We are likely to begin seeing real-world success stories of Phygital in the next few years."

Gaurav Mahajan, President-Group Apparel, Raymond Limited, seconds the opinion and believes that a hybrid format will be the way forward. He elaborates, "By 2020, I anticipate that a lot of pure play offline retailers would have figured out how to operate successfully and meaningfully in the online world. Similarly, many of the large online players, even the smaller ones for that matter, would have also figured out how to have a forte in the offline space. So, I think these hybrid



▲ World Of Titan



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- Bhaskar Bhat, Managing Director, Titan Company Limited

retail formats will be in sync with the way consumers are living today, which is seamlessly between physical and digital, and would have merged much stronger.”

5. Change, adapt or die

Retail has come forth as one of the most dynamic and fast-paced industries of India. Smaller towns are catching up in aspiration and consumption with metros. Younger consumers are identifying their own needs and requirements which are different from those of the earlier generations. Consumers are being exposed to the world and this is changing their expectations from brands. India is evolving and with it, so is the consumer.

Two of the oldest retailers in the country share insights on how they have constantly evolved with the times and how this has helped them over the years.

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Why Chandru Kalro, Managing Director, TTK Prestige Limited, thinks that customer is the most important...

Organised retail has given rise to impersonal but great browsing experience at the retail point. The power of choice was quite evident to the customer. In a sense India grew because of a paradigm shift that was facilitated in the customers mind by modern retail.

B. A. Kodandaraman, Chairman and Managing Director, Viveks, believes that businesses will have to be conducted in newer ways. “Business evolves most of the time with disruption. Just as Ola and Uber are now shaping both the transportation and policy around it, Air Asia and Vistara helped shape the aviation policy. Similarly, the online market place entry into India is helping shape both the online and offline retail”.

Chandru Kalro, Managing Director, TTK Prestige Limited, echoes the viewpoint. He adds, “Modern formats will have to evolve to stand for something specific, not everything to everyone.”

6. Analytics is as critical as consumers

Today, the power of choice has shifted to the hands of the consumer and

therefore, only those retailers who centre their offerings on their consumer needs will survive and thrive. For their strategies to be successful, consumer analytics, engagement and focus will play a critical role.

Chandru Kalro, Managing Director, TTK Prestige Limited, says, “Going forward, customer engagement will be the key. Analytics will be instrumental in managing the customer and keeping their loyalty across the purchase process”.

Bhaskar Bhat, Managing Director, Titan Company Limited, stresses on how focussing on consumers’ needs first has been central to Titan’s success in a crowded and competitive market. He explains, “Increasing disposal income among the younger consumers and exposure to a larger plethora of brands has resulted in a sea change in consumer preferences. Consumers are no longer passive observers of market players but active partners who drive product promotion, thinking and even innovation.”

Rafique Malik, Managing Director and Chairman, Metro shoes Limited, confirms this. He says, “Consumer expectations are changing every day and to meet and exceed those expectations, a brand has to constantly challenge itself to grow and expand.”

Kishore Biyani, Founder and Group CEO, Future Group, emphasises building a single view of the customer in order to differentiate. “We believe the customer is moving very fast towards a seamless life between real

and virtual world. In the next few years, the ones who can give customers a retail experience that offers them choice and convenience will win them. The industry needs to understand this and prepare for the change.”

A new way to approach growth

Predictions are that e-commerce will give a lot of traditional retailers a run for their money. E-commerce is seen to thrive on the four pillars of Convenience, Cash on Delivery, Competitive Pricing and Customer Satisfaction. Yet, both traditional and brick and mortar retailers have continued to hold their ground. Retailers who have been ahead of consumer shifts rather than playing catch up, are the ones who have been able to make a big difference in the industry, and this trend will continue even for the future.

Disruption will come in various forms – geopolitical dynamics, currently growing but subsequently shrinking household sizes, climate change, simplification and downsizing of materialistic aspirations, 3-D printing, autonomous cars and things that we have not even anticipated.

Some questions that leaders will need to answer to stay on top of what’s coming are:

1. What makes us distinctive from the others?
2. How do we engage with consumers in a meaningful manner?
3. Are we nimble enough to respond quickly to change?
4. What technology will help us differentiate?
5. What innovations will be relevant to us and the consumer?

As we have read, even the soundest of strategies can be toppled by a single product, innovation, a new technology or an erratic consumer behavior. While keeping an eye on the long term growth strategy, it is equally important for companies and brands to be agile and responsive to sudden market vagaries. There has been enough disruption and there will be more. The future of retail is going to be a far more exciting journey. 



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TANTUJA

REBIRTH OF A MOVEMENT

From embedding technology in operations to adapting to omnichannel retailing, once-loss-making brand Tantuja has effected an astonishing reinvention. Since then, profitability and brand recall have continued rising, making for a remarkable case study

By Richa Popat

What is Tantuja?

The brand was established under the umbrella of West Bengal State Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society Ltd. Inimitable handloom cotton and silk sarees and soft furnishing are woven by 1.3 lakh weavers working through a co-operative outfit. The initiative was taken by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, in the year 1954 to help the weavers, who migrated from erstwhile East Pakistan after independence. They were in need of sustenance. Tantuja was set up as a co-operative keeping their welfare in mind. The co-operative brought together all weavers of Bengal under one umbrella and organised the handloom industry. The West Bengal State Handloom Co-operative Society Ltd. known as 'Tantuja' (to depict products made of 'tantu' which means fibre), was established in 1954 by the Government of West Bengal. For marketing of handloom products produced by the Primary Weavers Co-operative Society (PWCS) to develop the handloom sector of the state.



“ We source products from the artisans. 236 members of the Primary Weavers Co-operative Society and 84 Self-help groups are the main suppliers.

- Rabindranath Roy, IAS, MD, Tantuja

The Reality Check

Tantuja was making perennial losses since 1988-89 and at the same time was heavily subsidised by the state govt. But the brand made a turnaround in the industry in the year 2011-12 after a long gap of 25 years. Finally, they had been told to 'perform or perish'. What followed was an overhaul of the system. The state government agreed to provide capital expenditure but operational expenses were to be met from sales. Tantuja continued to remain in profit beginning with a modest profit of ₹25 lakh in the year 2013-14 and later it went on to make an operational profit of ₹ 2.5 crore in the year 2014-15. In 2015-16 it reached a new high of an operational profit of ₹3.3 crore against a business turnover of ₹123 crore.

The transformation has been possible because of the introduction of better management practices, planned interventions for enhancement in business, wider product base, product quality management, institutional supplies and e-commerce. Use of technology in accounting and inventory management has also helped them to grow.

Tantuja, which used to work with 35 co-operatives, has now expanded and works with 250 co-operatives. It went online from April 2015 which was another measure to enhance their business. In an era of technology where consumers have become more and more tech savvy, Tantuja started selling their products online on Flipkart and Amazon. More and more interventions are being devised to make the brand grow and promote the handloom sector. We asked Rabindranath Roy, IAS, MD, Tantuja

for some specifics on the operational re-invention.

How are the products of Tantuja sourced? What is the current product portfolio of the brand?

Tantuja basically source its products from the artisans. 236 members of the Primary Weavers Co-operative Society (PWCS) and 84 Self-help groups are the main suppliers. We also have our own production centers. As the name of the brand suggests, it is all about the handlooms. The current product portfolio consists of a range of traditional Bengali sarees like Jamdani, Baluchari, Swarnachari, Tangail, Dhanekhali, Begampuri, printed silk sarees, and both woven and printed Tussar sarees. There product range also consists of dhuti, gamcha (country towel), honeycomb towels, bedsheets, scarves, stoles, cotton fabrics, ari-chadar, cotton shirts, jackets, gauze and bandage.

What measures/initiatives were taken to make it a profit making brand?

It is true that Tantuja was making perennial losses since its inception. There were many reasons behind that and let's not talk about that, instead we should talk about what the brand has achieved since 2012. It made a turnaround in 2011-12 after a gap of 25 long years, which I think is almost unparalleled in the country. In successive years 2014-15 and 2015-16 net profits were ₹2.05 crore. and ₹3.30 crore. respectively.

The reasons behind this success are many. Firstly, measures were taken for business enhancement like quality of the products was enhanced; the product base was also increased. We started participating in national level films and holding exhibitions. That made us aware of the current market standard and where do we actually stand. The showrooms were renovated keeping in mind the present day scenario. At the same time, 17 shops were closed due to non-profit. We have narrowed ourselves from 101 outlets in 2010-11 to 84 outlets in 2015-16! That was a really tough call.

We have streamlined manpower too. From 671 employees in 2010-11 we moved on to 357 employees in 2015-16. In order to handle this downsizing, Tantuja has taken help from technology.





Now all payments in Tantuja, including salaries, are being made through NEFT and RTGS. Sale and inventory management of some shops have been already computerised, accounting system has been partially computerized, and in fact the storage inventory is also being managed online.

Secondly, we have started wholesale business of handloom items with other state Apex societies. Proper marketing strategies were planned and publicity campaigns were designed accordingly. Tantuja ventured into omnichannel retailing with Flipkart and Amazon. We have acquired drug license and ISI registration for gauze and bandages and we are now an authorised user of Handloom Mark and Silk Mark. We have ventured into export as well and handloom items like cotton fabrics, scarves and stoles are getting exported on a regular basis.

Technological innovation is a big thing for any retailer today. How is Tantuja incorporating technology into its journey?

We are trying to incorporate that in our own way. The suppliers for Tantuja are mainly traditional artisans. We have set up State Design Centers, where they will be provided with training with the latest technology. Ned Graphics, a well accepted software is also being used for imparting training to handloom designers for design intervention. Moreover, software

TANTUJA ONLINE

Tantuja started selling products online since April 2015 with Flipkart and sold products worth ₹26.94 Lakh and ₹4.82 Lakh in a FY 15-16 and 16-17 respectively. The company has also started retailing on Amazon from August 2016 onwards and have done the business of ₹0.87 Lakh so far from this site. Indeed this was a huge retail marketing initiative taken by the brand. Tantuja's own website will also be operational shortly.

designed by NIC for solution towards inventory management, showroom management, financial management, HR management is now under trial run. So the process has begun, hopefully in recent future Tantuja will be more technologically equipped.

Tell us about the milestones in the journey of Tantuja so far.

It's been a great journey. The brand, which was started to promote the artisans of Bengal, has become a household name for every Bengali. We are revamping the brand, new products are being launched, Tantuja is going Omni-channel...all these are the milestones in the journey so far. Still I would like to put forward some achievements, of which Tantuja is really proud of, like in the year 1999, the brand won the First prize for excellence in Display in the Fabrics, Yarn and Fibre Section at Tex-styles India by India Trade Promotion Organisation. Last year we

were awarded with the certificate of excellence for outstanding performance as a seller on Flipkart Seller Hub and also won the National Award for Marketing of Handloom Products, awarded by the Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India.


What is the brand's current retail presence in the country?

Till date, Tantuja is mainly based out of Bengal, as 68 out of the total of 83 showrooms are in West Bengal. However the rest 15 are spread across other states.

When will the brand be visible in the leading shopping malls across the nation?

Retail real estate can't be ignored and we definitely have that in mind. We are revamping the brand in a hell lot of ways and Tantuja will be visible in the leading shopping centres across the nation in the financial year 2017-18.

What's in store for the future?

We have a couple of things in mind, like the introduction of organic cotton products; we are thinking about the marketing of handloom products as well as diversified linen items etc. We are planning for the ISO certification for the organization too. As far the expansion plans is concerned, we want to spread our retail footprint to a great extent and want to be present in all major locations of India. 



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THE FRENCH CONNECTION



French luxury lifestyle brand Longchamp is a new entrant in India's evolving luxury market, recently setting shop in DLF Emporio, New Delhi. Internationally, Longchamp is a well recognised brand with more than 300 exclusive stores worldwide and retailing from another 1500 points of sale. In India, DOIT Retail Brands has been appointed as the master franchisee for Longchamp. In an exclusive conversation, Radha Kapoor, Founder and Director, DOIT Retail Brands, throws light on how this French luxury major hopes to solidify its footprint in Indian market.

By Shipra Srivastava



Luxury is a very niche market in India. What was the rationale behind including Longchamp to your portfolio?

The luxury market in India is expanding with growing aspirations and spending power. For us, the idea was to bring good brand to India, and Longchamp already had its clientele here. It took long for us to build the partnership. Furthermore, it is not super high end luxury. The brand has a very good positioning. It falls between the premium and luxury. The USP of the brand is its unique pricing, so from the customers' point of view they are buying luxury with a very affordable price tag.

What are the price points for India?

Our iconic range -- Le Plige -- starts from anywhere between ₹8000 to 10,000, and the leather collection starts from ₹25,000. On an average, all collections are priced up to ₹65,000.

What is your location strategy for India?

The brand is very particular in terms of choosing its location, and we do understand that we have limited choices when it comes to good infrastructure. As of now, we are only looking at premium shopping centres. While the number of luxury malls in India is numbered, we are hopeful that more luxury shopping centres will come up in metro cities. Our aspiration is to have five to eight stores in the ensuing 18 to 24 months. We shall be very circumspect in selecting locations for our new stores. In the immediate future, we are scouting for a suitable location in Mumbai for our second Indian store.

How many SKUs you have introduced in your Delhi store?

We have introduced 500 SKUs to our Delhi store.

Is the merchandise mix similar to those in international outlets of Longchamp? Any merchandise customisation for Indian audiences?

Right now we are showcasing our Autumn-Winter collection with the classic range, which is featured all year around. But in terms of syncing with Indian tastes, we are being a little experimental in merchandising and collection display. We are sort of in a market testing exercise for us to get a sense of what is working and what is not. So, we have introduced the entire range, including leather, accessories, make-up pouches and scarves. The footwear range, however, is currently not available in our Delhi store.

Please share some details on the signature Longchamp store environment.

Universally, all stores of Longchamp have a similar look and feel. We have worked



as per the international guidelines laid down by the brand. We had to bring in a lot of materials and fixtures from overseas to replicate the signature identity at our Delhi outlet. The 800 sq. ft. store at The Emporio mall in New Delhi retails Longchamp's bestselling products like Le Pliage Heritage, Penelope, Roaseau and Le Pliage Cuir bags, along with other accessories.

Who do you see as the brand's competition?

In terms of competition, the positioning is right in the middle so be it a Louis Vuitton buyer or a Michael Kors customer, they all are potential

“Our aspiration is to have five to eight stores in the ensuing 18 to 24 months. We shall be very circumspect in selecting locations for our new stores.

-Radha Kapur, Founder and Director, DOIT Retail Brands

customers for Longchamp. I don't see anybody as our direct competition; a lot of consumers who buy products of other brands, such as Gucci or the like, will definitely like to purchase a Longchamp item. Longchamp conveys its own sophistication -- a classness that comes with the brand.

What is your strategy on omnichannel operations? Would there be an India-specific e-commerce platform for Longchamp?

Right now we are focusing on offline retail. We have one global e-commerce platform. As of now, we are more focusing on making the brand familiar among Indian audiences, before we explore other channels of retail.

How are you looking to enhance the portfolio of Doit Retail brands?

It is too early to quote anything. Yes, we are mulling over few international brands that I cannot name yet.

What is your perception on tier II market? Can we expect a Longchamp store in comparatively smaller cities in near future?

Definitely that is a plan. We are hardly few months old and already have start getting calls from all from different cities like Jaipur, Goa to our store, seeking enquiry related to our product. There is tremendous untapped potential in tier II towns. We would be keen to capture it.

Will you sub-franchise Longchamp in India in order to expand the brand presence faster?

No, we are looking to expand only via company operated stores only. **IR**





MALL ENVIRONMENTS

THE ESSENTIAL SIX COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

Retail habits change all the time, as customers get more demanding, technology advances and as social paradigms shift. Within these ever evolving scenarios so do organised retail formats need to constantly develop and adapt over time. Let us delve deeper on some of the pertinent factors to ensure the success of brick-and-mortar retailers in dynamic retail scenario because on their success depends the survival of today's mall.

Knowing Your Catchment

From scale and size, type of format and to who's your tenant, it is quite simple but it's not going to work if you don't understand what it is you need to provide where. Understanding the market, the demographic and responding to the competition is fundamental in ensuring your centre's success. So getting the right retail consultants to offer you early help in developing your brief is vital to ensuring early success.

The Right Tenant Mix

It's all in the mix!!!! Whilst there are norms and rules to the mix and size of tenants that many retail designers and consultants can advise upon, India needs more variety and international players to get on board. Today, more than ever, a fresh new tenant can light up the dimmest of centres, be it a new anchor tenant like IKEA with aggressive expansion plans to set up in India or a fine dining restaurant with lounge seating, walls of books and a performance space/stage.

Being Original

What's your pull? What is different about your mall? Its high tech interactive facade? The new open public plaza holding a range of events during the day and become a performance plaza at night? Or a place where people can gather and watch a film via bluetooth on the big screen? Is the retail supplementary to an even bigger type of offering...?



As the competition in brick-and-mortar retail format is becoming tougher and tougher with each passing day, mall ambience and design have become two of the key driving factors to attract the shopper. Consumers are more likely to engage if they enjoy the mall ambience and can easily find what they are looking for. When the design becomes the differentiator for a mall, it can create an edge for them in today's competitive retail scenario.

By Zubin Cooper



The most important question to ask ourselves is what type of user experience are we creating. **Not only from the aesthetics of the interior, but also the need to create a development that offers the consumer a varied and unique experience.**

A centre of performing arts for example or the largest aquarium in the city.

The must is to think out of the box and find new exciting ways to incentivise people to shop and linger longer. We need to think of malls as lifestyle centres, that form an integral part of our town centres and daily activities. Instead of boring long facades, we need a building with active edges that creates and animates the streets.

Let's bring back the idea of a standalone cinema that become an immediate much loved destination and icon for the City, such as the much loved picture houses of Mumbai -- Regal and Eros.

Mixed Use Developments

Let them become a living breathing part of our cities, woven into the very fabric offering a variety of different asset classes and activities. Creating a destination and an ethos of work, live and play. Where entertainment centres, cultural activities, residential buildings,

office buildings, community and banqueting facilities become a part of our everyday walk, adding to the quality and richness of our daily experiences.

The Experience

Beyond the type of tenant, or the size of an anchor. The most important question to ask ourselves is what type of user experience are we creating. Not only from the aesthetics of the interior, but also the need to create a development that offers the consumer a varied and unique experience. The quality of the exterior and interior lighting, the nature of the public realm, the design and placement of the environmental graphics and way finding elements are all designed elements by specialist consultants that when managed well can add great value to user experience.

The recognition of people wanting to move around quickly with good supporting infrastructure and offering

qualitative public spaces supported by a rich offer in tenant mix adds to creating the sense of life-style.

Adress the Digital Age

Let's embrace technology and make this digital experience one that fascinates and creates unique moving breathing facades. Facades that we can connect with and interact with.

We have heard so much of the 'omnichannel experience' defined as a multichannel sales approach that provides the customer with an integrated shopping experience. However, if the user experience isn't integrated and seamless it will become a hindrance and a fad as oppose to something that will enhance our shopping experience. So mobile marketing, great web sites and social media platforms need to work together. Creating a strong, easy to use and reliable technology that also integrates 'brick and mortar stores.' A good example of this is from the UK fashion retailer Oasis. You enter the store, you are given an iPad, you find your product, and pay for it with your iPad acting as a cash register. And if the product is out of stock, the staff will ensure it is shipped to your home in good time.

The average Indian consumer today, might have more money to spend but is much more sophisticated than he was a decade ago. To guaranteeing good footfalls and sales we have to start designing centres that look beyond the depth of a shop, the size or width of the mall and the width of the upper mall passage. We need to challenge the very nature of what it is we are creating when opportunity presents itself. The mall in its entirety needs to be seen as the City's anchor, a destination for all to congregate. And to bring the people there we need to start thinking beyond just creating a soulless big box with dead elevations, but a building which forms part of our city fabric offering rich and varied user experiences. **IR**

About the author:

Zubin Cooper is CEO of Bentel Associates





EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT

THE KEY TO CUSTOMER RETENTION

The easiest way to grow your customers is to not lose them. If retailers and mall developers keep this line in mind and satisfy the educated, well connected consumers of today by implementing innovation to enhance their retail experience, then only they will be able to retain consumers on a permanent basis

By Shibu Philips

Today's retailers and malls face their toughest competition ever, especially with the flourishing of online retail. A holistic marketing philosophy coupled with the best services is the chance of outperforming the competition. And the cornerstone of a well-conceived marketing orientation is strong customer relationships.

To Satisfy 'Educated' Consumers

Consumers are more educated and informed than ever and they have the tools to verify companies' claims and seek out superior alternatives. In an age where customer expectations are soaring, if a company is able to create satisfied customers, retention becomes instinctive. A highly satisfied customer generally stays loyal longer, buys more as we introduce new products or upgrade existing products, talks favourably to others about us, pays less attention to competing brands, is less sensitive to price and costs less to serve than new customers, as transactions become routine.

However, these shoppers today have the choice between visiting the retail outlet/mall and buying the same or equivalent product online. Hence to lure customers to a physical shopping space, there must be more than retail offerings. The moment a customer steps into your premise to the time he/she exits it; the customer must be greeted with the best service. Service does not pertain to only well trained staff, but also to the ambience created through the music played, temperature control, lighting, innovative services provided and more. In the organised sector, the importance of visual merchandising and in store design cannot be emphasised enough. Innovative store frontage welcomes new customers and ensures top of the mind recall.

For the same reason, malls across the world are experimenting and creating unique themed décor to suit every changing season and occasion, with the help of creative directors and highly acclaimed professionals. By ensuring that the otherwise stagnant infrastructure is given a facelift with creative installations and décor, the 'newness' of a property can be maintained at all times. Having been presented with

an avenue to express one's opinion then and there, customers take to their social media accounts to post photographs and reviews, thus creating an indirect marketing tool for the company.

It is not enough to attract new customers; a company must keep them and increase their business. Too many companies suffer from high customer churn or defection. Most companies are recognizing the benefits of retaining and satisfying current customers. Remember, acquiring new customers can cost five times more than the cost of satisfying and retaining current customers. On an average, companies lose 10 percent of their customers each year. Yet, by reducing the customer defection rate by 5 percent, companies can increase profits by even 65 percent.

Focused Marketing Strategy

Focused marketing is the need of the hour and it's important to provide customers with an experience that meet's their individual needs. 'Blanket targeting' shoppers with generic schemes and incentives will not be sufficient. Today's customers crave for tailored, consistent and convenient service and to stay on top, one should provide just that. Premium services like valet, number plate recognition system to reserve parking for regular customers, personal butler and stylists; events and activities aimed at creating customer engagement and experience enhancement; celebrity meet and greets will all add to the ultimate goal of customer retention.

Ultimately, marketing is the art of attracting and keeping profitable

customers. It is a proven fact that the top 20 percent of the loyal customers often generate 80 percent or more of a firm's profits. Interacting with customers, developing loyalty programs, personalizing marketing are key activities that could be used to build customer loyalty.

Steps To Be Considered

Interacting with customers: Listening to customers is crucial for customer relationship management. An ongoing mechanism that keeps us plugged in to front line customer feedback is necessary. Listening is only part of the store. It is important to be your customer's advocate and, as much as possible, take the customers' side on issues, understanding their point of view. A fool proof system and process needs to be created to ensure customer feedback is received at all times and acted upon, with multiple escalation levels. You need to be as accessible to your customer as possible. An aggrieved customer today can do much damage to your brand's reputation.

Developing Loyalty programs: Most retail and mall establishments run their own loyalty programmes. However, in most of them, less than 50 percent of the entire loyalty base is active and redeeming rewards within the loyalty offerings. Using the right medium to offer the loyalty programmes is vital to its success. With over 80% of one's customer base, owning a smart phone and spending an average of 8-12 hours on it, it is a known fact that the dramatic influence mobile phones has had, not

only on retail, but on all daily personal activities is going to continue to increase. Therefore, building a mobile-first loyalty programme will prove critical in customer retention strategies. Driving offers, bill submissions, managing points and posting communications through mobiles, will not just be convenient to the customer, but will help maintain an active loyalty base. The initial challenges faced by early adopters of mobile loyalty programmes will be overcome with the changing technologies and soon mobile-first will be a must.

Personalizing marketing: Company personnel can create strong bonds with customers by individualizing and personalizing relationships. Not surprisingly, the right technology is an increasingly essential ingredient for this purpose. Maximising customer satisfaction means cultivating long term customer relationships. The vital skill of gauging customer satisfaction requires a working knowledge of marketing research coupled with sensitivity for customer concerns. The data hence collected through market research should not just be analysed, but the findings must be communicated internally to motivate one's team, to act on bad news and plan new ways of satisfying customers.

A customer database, containing the consumers' past purchases, demographics (age, income, family members, birthdays, psychographics (activities, interests and opinions), media graphics (preferred media), is golden. But not all customers would want an ongoing relationship with a company and may resent having their personal data collected and stored. Concern towards customer's privacy and security is required and the marketing needs to be subtle.

With the right measures, adopted at the right time, using the right medium, customer satisfaction and retention can be made effective. [IR](#)

About the author:

Shibu Philips is the Business Head of Lulu Mall, Kochi.



THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORKPLACE CULTURE

The growth of multichannel retail in India is translating to higher demand for human resource and the need to minimise employee turnover. Fortunately, Indian retail companies now are successfully implementing numerous initiatives to retain existing talent and foster a great workplace culture experience among employees.

By Charlotte Baptista

In 2015, Great Place to Work® Institute (GPTWI) - India, surveyed nearly 5000 employees from the Indian retail industry to measure the extent to which they found their organisations a great place to work. The study revealed that, overall, 72 percent of retail employees expressed positive perceptions of their respective workplaces. What makes this study critical for leaders in the retail industry is the fact that organisations that are great workplaces best companies typically experience higher profitability, lower employee turnover, and are able to attract better talent.

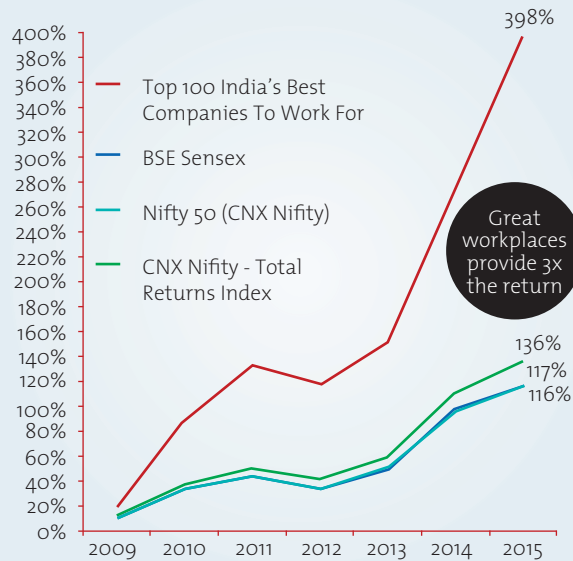
The retail sector in India is poised for fast-paced growth, considering factors such as the entry of foreign players, the unprecedented expansion of the online format, the consumer uptake of mobile payments, and the gaining industry interest the Omni-

retail model. According to a report by Boston Consulting Group and the Retailers Association of India, the retail market is expected to nearly double to US\$ 1 trillion by 2020 from US\$ 600 billion in 2015, driven by income growth, urbanisation and attitudinal shifts. These developments pose a challenge for employee engagement in light of incumbent people issues such as talent shortages, attrition rates, and engagement of a dominantly millennial, non-metro-based staff. How companies in retail are overcoming these challenges and what lessons do they have for the sector as a whole?

GPTWI's data is testament to the fact that employees from these companies truly appreciate the efforts made by their employers that result in pride in the organisation, an enjoyment of the work environment, and an abiding trust in management. Overall, the retail sector offers a great experience in certain areas and there is room for improvement in others.



COMPARATIVE CUMULATIVE STOCK MARKET RETURNS - REINVESTMENT MODEL



One key area of strength among retail organisations is their ability to inspire employees who feel good about the collective effort of the work group and hold a sense of pride in the organisation. Another strong area is the work environment where people can enjoy the friendship and camaraderie of colleagues. The third strength is seen in the fact that the employees express a belief that management is proficient at its business and is providing the right leadership in pursuing the organisational vision. The study also observed strength in employees' perception that opportunities for career growth exist, and their belief that the organisation recognises their value.

GPTWI's study findings also reveal a few areas where the industry has an opportunity for improvement:

1. Retail employees do not perceive that they receive a fair share of the organisation's profits. Only 32 percent of the organisations we studied had a profit-sharing plan. While 36 percent had an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), only 12% had made them available to all employees.
2. Employees do not believe they all have access to unique benefits. For instance, only 32 percent of the companies provide personal accident insurance to their employees.
3. Employees appear to feel that management does not follow through on commitments made and that their behaviour is not always consistent with their public statements.

GREAT PRACTICES FROM RETAIL'S GREATS

► **Puma India:** PUMA employees enjoy a wide variety of benefits that clearly display the level of care and respect given to them as individuals. For example, sick leave can be availed of not only for oneself, but also to take care of ailing family members. Support is extended during personal crises or family emergencies. A congratulatory email is sent on special occasions, and employees are gifted vouchers of their choice. Paid maternity leave of 12 weeks before or after delivery is provided, along with an additional 12 weeks of unpaid leave, if desired; new dads can also take 10 days of paternity leave. PUMA extends support to employees with children with their education and child-care related expenses with a reimbursement policy. Puma, which has an extremely young staff with the average employee age below 30 years, successfully engages them through a fun-filled sporting initiative called the Puma Sports League (PSL).



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► **Hardcastle Restaurants Pvt Ltd (McDonald's India):** Sales Operating Income (SOI) is a profit-sharing plan, wherein a pre-defined percentage of profits are allocated to team members who achieve their targets and contributions towards store profitability.

This is an Annual Scheme with half yearly pay-outs. If the restaurant achieves over a certain percentage increase on the year till date SOI percent compared to the same year till date SOI percent of the previous year, certain percentage of the increase will be awarded to the store management team. There is no upper limit on the amount that can be earned. McDonald's India also believes that feedback from each employee is critical to their success. Therefore, they conduct and act on COSMOS (Crew Opinion Survey/Management Opinion Survey), an anonymous Employee Opinion Survey for employees to voice their opinion freely regarding the company and their work culture. Feedback received through COSMOS is considered extremely valuable and is analyzed by management for continuous improvement, especially to make changes within the organisation as per employee sentiment. Such initiatives can enhance perception on management credibility. The company also makes it easy for employees to raise concerns and provide anonymous feedback through their Personal Action Letter (PAL) programme.



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► **Metro Cash & Carry India Pvt. Ltd. - MSPARK & MSTEP:** The Metro Specialised Program for Accelerated C(K)areer (MSPARK) and Metro Supervisory Talent Enhancement Program (MSTEP) aimed to create a talent pool of trained employees in order to support the expansion of the

organisation, make them an Employer of Choice, enhance growth opportunities for employees, provide aspirants with a rewarding career path in operations, address the growing gap between demand and supply of trained manpower, and ensure threshold skill sets for frontline operations in minimum lead time.

► **Jubilant Foodworks Ltd. - Ambition Club:**

'Ambition' refers to the company's 3-year vision. Ambition is formulated by a committee comprising young managers spanning across departments



Nils Verseemann / Shutterstock.com

with varied levels of experience in the company; they are called the Ambition Committee - Young Board. Involving young minds of the company ensures that fresh ideas are extracted while at same time increasing their sense of ownership. Being involved in strategy also helps young managers to connect their job to the larger picture. Employees at Domino's India (Jubilant FoodWorks) are empowered to give away free pizzas to customers in case of a delayed delivery; delivery boys at Domino's are not penalized for delayed deliveries.

► **Titan Company Pvt. Ltd. - Ignitor:** Through its Ignitor programme, Titan aims to tap into its employees' entrepreneurial capabilities by allowing them to submit business plans for new businesses or extensions of the current businesses. Teams with shortlisted ideas are provided resources - including office space, seed funding, mentoring by senior executives - to execute their project over a 12-week period.

► **Lifestyle International Pvt. Ltd. - Create A Ripple Program:**

This is a grievance redressal programme, the objective is to create an ecosystem where employees display high degree of sensitivity and empathy towards each other's issues/problems/troubles which may be work-related or even personal. Colleagues are encouraged to provide solutions to others when they could, for example helping another employee find accommodation and so on. The programme helps connect an employee with an issue with someone who could help. In case of serious grievances, an employee who needs help can be connected with the HR team. The company has also created 'Lifestyle ka Genius' for its frontline staff, a quiz-based structured learning initiative focusing customer service, product knowledge, store processes, brand details, grooming standards and retail specific concepts at the store like footfall conversion.



4. They believe they are not always involved in the decision-making process on issues that affect their jobs or workplaces.
5. Retail employees also share a perception of impartiality or favoritism at the workplace.

Creating great workplaces takes commitment – they are built through the day-to-day relationships an employee experiences at his or her organisation. Ultimately, how retail organisation's address their engagement challenges also comes down to sincere commitment from the leadership.

Why build a great workplace? Building a great workplace is actually about building a great business. Several organisations identified in the research by Jim Collins based on up to 60 years of performance data published in three books – Good to Great, Great by Choice, and Built to last have also been identified as great workplaces by Great Place to Work® Institute. Research at Cornell University confirms that organisations that are great workplaces provide better customer satisfaction. An independent study carried out by RSM India revealed that investing in organisations that were identified as great workplaces by Great Place To Work® Institute yielded 3-4 times more returns (see graph).

Leaders at organisations can create and sustain a high-performance great workplace culture by conceptualising and implementing the right people & culture management practices. Such practices, to be effective, must be improvised and shaped by feedback from the organisation's employees on a regular basis. Given the optimistic outlook for this sector, we hope that retail organisations across the country are inspired to bolster their employee's engagement. **IR**

About the author:

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INDIA FOOD FORUM 2017

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

India Food Forum is one of the most recognised food events in the industry. The upcoming chapter of the event will take place during 31st January to 2 February 2017 at Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai, India

India Food Forum, established in association with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Govt. of India, and several pioneers in the food sector, is the only one of its kind food retail platform in the country where the entire community of Food & Grocery Retailers and Food Service Operators converge every year in January. At a time when food market dynamics are changing dramatically and consumer behaviour is no longer generic, India's food retail and restaurant sectors offer some of the largest opportunity areas for business. For a sector that is very dynamic but also extremely challenging to be successful in, India Food Forum analyses and researches consumer and market trends and every year it puts together the most comprehensive and concise capsule of themes and directions that affect the market and your business.

Objective

Offering unique opportunities for networking and business ideas, and for exploring growth opportunities in the dynamic world of food retail, the Forum is recognized as India's most comprehensive knowledge sharing and networking platform for the food retail and foodservice sectors in India. Over the years, the Forum has become a unique platform for connecting all stakeholders of Food & Grocery and HoReCa businesses with their respective potential partners to collaborate for profitable growth, collectively work towards new category development, increase and upgrade consumption, share global best practices, establish new benchmarking standards, and serve customers efficiently. "India Food Forum is the leading knowledge and business platform which, over its past editions, has created an immense goodwill in the marketplace. It's one of the only shows that provide an effective channel for dialogue and relevant solutions in the Food & Grocery Retail space," notes Mohit Khattar, Head-Retail Strategy & Branding, Godrej Industries Ltd.

Participants at Food Forum

With scores of interactive and focused panel sessions at the Forum, among the key thought leaders, industry stalwarts and business icons who engaged at India Food Forum 2016 included Kishore Biyani (Group CEO, Future Group), BS Nagesh (Founder, TRRAIN), Damodar Mall (CEO,

Reliance Retail), Mohit Khattar (MD, Godrej Nature's Basket Ltd), Devendra Chawla (Group President, food & FMCG brands, Future Group), Dev Amritesh (President & COO, Dunkin' Donuts India), Vishak Kumar (CEO, Aditya Birla Retail), Sumanta Dutta (CBO, Coca-Cola) among others.

Among the International speakers was Drs Joost van der Laan (Founder, Retail Economics) who shared his knowledge and experience on a plethora of topics related to food retail. Some of the topics that he spoke on length were: how to discover the specific profit drivers of each product category and create focused commercial strategies leading to effective and efficient assortment tactics; how to reduce costs and improve margins by optimizing assortments and shelf-space allocation; improving productivity with the effective internal benchmarking techniques and on creating an effective Omni-channel integration between your website and your store.

Star Speakers at the Forum over the years have included country heads of global foodservice chains, including McDonald's, KFC, Pizza Hut, Domino's, Baskin Robbins, Dunkin' Donuts, Costa Coffee, Starbucks, Burger King, you name it. Alongside them have been founders and business heads of India's established and new-age retail, FMCG and foodservice brands, including HUL, Nestle, Coca Cola, PepsiCo, GSKCH, Cafe Coffee Day, Olive restaurants,

FOOD FORUM: NUMBERS SAY IT ALL

Like every year, India Food Forum 2016 was a spectacular success. The numbers show it all: Participation from some 200 Exhibitors; Close to 200 Speakers and over 300 Delegates; Nearly 150 International Visitors and as many Leading Brands with about 9,000 visitors!

International delegations from USDA, UKTI (UK Trade & Investment) and Dubai Exports. Each of these organisations were represented by scores of food/FMCG brand/marketing heads looking to network with India's most recognised market influencers and optimise opportunities in the Indian market.

The Forum of Indian Food Importers (FIFI) showcased over 700 of the most innovative foreign food brands from across the planet.

A 'LIVE KITCHEN' showcased and hosted some of India's most celebrated chefs who displayed culinary innovations with new-age ingredients and brands.

'DRINKS THEATRE', a hugely popular element of the event, brought together established and emerging bartenders and sommeliers with a breathtaking show of skills and concoctions.

Over 10 PRODUCT LAUNCHES took place at the event. India Food Forum was the official launch vehicle of these food products.

The Annual Coca Cola Golden Spoon Awards ceremony on the evening of January 20th provided a spectacular climax to the three-day convention.



▲ India Food Forum 2016



▲ Exhibitors

Indigo, Mainland China, Sagar Ratna, BigBasket, Spar, Big Bazaar, Godrej Nature's Basket, Spencer's, Tata Star Bazaar, Walmart, HyperCITY, just to name a few.

With the mission of accelerating food retailing excellence by generating ideas, insights, innovation and opportunities for profitable growth, and with the theme of boosting store profitability, optimising the food tech ecosystem and customer experiences, Food Forum 2016 stood out for many achievements and impressive and inspiring on site events.

The Big Attractions

Set to host its 10 edition in January next year, the Forum has emerged as the largest assembly of business captains from India and overseas – spanning the vast array of Food & Grocery and F&B business segments like Brands & Retail, Food Service (HoReCa), Concepts, Design & Support. Serving through its knowledge platforms – print and online publications, research, workshops, conventions and Food Council roundtables – the three-day annual Forum has carved its reputation on its four pillars that have come to be the widely recognized hallmarks of the Forum: Food & Grocery Forum India,



India Food Service Forum, India Food Retail Tech, and the Coca-Cola Golden Spoon Awards.

Food and Grocery Forum India (FGFI) is the only business event in India featuring food and grocery retailers, manufacturers, marketers and distributors converge to develop and share business insights and product innovation under one forum. FGFI is India's most comprehensive platform for food retailers and grocers from across India to identify new trends, discuss new ideas, witness latest product innovations specific to the industry to together drive consumption and stay ahead of future consumer trends. At FGFI, all functionalities and stakeholders of the food retail value chain — from ingredient suppliers, processed food manufacturers to

policy makers, distributors, supply chain specialists, food technology giants and retailers — gather through an innovative format of Conference, Exhibition and Awards.

“As a first time exhibitor, we are extremely satisfied with the kind of response, enquiries and feedback we received during the event. The best part is that the venue was filled up with the right people - retailers, manufacturers, distributors. The conference and masterclass sessions were very enriching. We look forward to being part of this event next year,” says Sunil P Krishnan, GM - Marketing, Double Horse. The FGFI Exhibition is committed to delivering business contacts that create value for every customer. Through buyer clubs, appointment setting systems etc, and on-line visitor planning services, we closely match the needs of buyers to suppliers' offers. From generating sales leads and launching new products, to brand building, maintaining customer relations and appointing new agents, FGFI offers a wealth of business opportunities in India's largest consumption category. At FGFI, buyers can see, taste, touch and try products for themselves through live demonstrations and one-on-one discussions with suppliers and marketers.

Indian Food Service Forum (IFSF) is a must attend Knowledge event for all connected with India's rapidly evolving food service industry to address the challenges and opportunities defining the fast growing restaurant and catering industry in India. IFSF comprises several high-impact conference sessions and product demonstrations conducted by some of the country's finest cuisine specialists, food manufacturers and foodservice chains. The Skill development and Knowledge workshops is the perfect place for meeting industry leaders, hear remarkable case studies on outstanding restaurant concepts, and master your understanding of future foodservice trends.

The Workshops help you to answer diverse questions related to marketing and branding, social media optimisation, cuisine selection and innovation, operational efficiencies

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and more. There is also the Expert Chef Sessions at the show where top culinary artists share their knowledge and ideas about food and menu innovation. Master Chefs take attendees through the complex sociological, environmental and cultural factors that are driving menu innovation and gastronomy. “IFSF is a well-organised show with an exciting assortment of food and drinks on display. As a guest speaker at the Drinks Theatre, I was glad to witness a special focus on wine and luxury beverages,” says Sonal Holland, Divisional Wine & Beverage Specialist, ITC Ltd- Hotels Division. Last but not least, it has Exhibitions/ Demonstrations for handpicked opportunities, which allows you to Sample outstanding products and future innovations at exclusive exhibition zones, along with the Drinks Theatre, where leading sommeliers decode the art and science of beverage creation, consumption and marketing.

In recent times, the food industry has been revolutionised via the integration of technology. Food Tech is currently the top ‘disruptor’ in the start-up ecosystem. However, too much focus on customer acquisition without enough of the same on innovation is beginning to show up; several food startups have already started rolling back operations, while some others have already made quiet exits. India Food Retail Tech (IFRT) helps one to understand technology and how it is possibly the biggest influencer of consumer behaviour in the modern world. From molecular gastronomy to online ordering, technology has dramatically impacted not just how food ingredients are sourced and used, but also how grocery is retailed through online and mobile interfaces, and how the consumer is displaying altogether new shopping behaviours.

India Food Retail Tech is the latest addition and another chapter to the prestigious platform. The impact of technology on human lives is everywhere including what consumers choose to put on their

plates. Not just because it’s changed the way they cook or what they eat, but even more because it’s changed who they are, how they think, what they want and why. The explosion of e-commerce destinations and digital media has created an incredibly urgent need to monitor shopper behaviour in real time. Insights need to be drawn as events happen, and executed before the next lost sale or an out-of-stock situation happens. Wherever they may choose to transact today — physical or online spaces — consumers leave ‘footprints’, in the form of in-store behaviour, page views, abandoned carts, social media chatter, among a thousand other tiny tell-tales. “From tech-savvy millennials to aging boomers, the ways in which consumers gather information in their path to purchase are multiple, but they can be mined. And optimised to deliver ‘WOW’

In recent times, the food industry has been revolutionised via the integration of technology. **Food Tech is currently the top ‘disruptor’ in the start-up eco-system**

experiences, which is what India Food Retail Tech helps you to achieve,” observes Amitabh Taneja, Chief Convenor, India Food Forum and CMD, IMAGES Group, organisers of the Food Forum.

India Food Retail Tech is a focussed and one of its kind forum for business leaders, CTOs, CIOs and technology majors operating in the food retail and Foodservice spaces. The Forum will showcase end-to-end solutions for these sectors — from supply chain all the way to customer analytics and online retail models. A tailored platform for technology solution providers to showcase the latest products, innovations, services, tools and solutions, IFRT is also the perfect environment for delegates / attendees to discover insights and the most innovative products and solutions to optimise the massive opportunity in the Indian food sector.

The Coca-Cola Golden Spoon Awards is the concluding highlight of the Forum every year. It is the most coveted industry accolade that recognises the achievements of India’s most innovative and successful food retailers, foodservice chains and companies for their outstanding performance. Launched in the year 2008 to acknowledge the rising importance of modern food & grocery retail, and its crucial role in the evolution of effective



▲ Live Kitchen



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▲ Drink Theater



marketing and distribution of food and grocery brands in the country, the Award, given away for Excellence in Different Categories of Food Retail, is recognised as India's most prestigious honour for food and food service retailers. The Coca-Cola Golden Spoon Excellence Awards are presented to brands, personalities and concepts; for exceptional initiative, outstanding/focussed performance, setting efficiency benchmarks, innovation, and broader impact to industry. It honours 25 of India's most innovative, successful and revered brands and professionals across food retailing and restaurant categories.

Food Forum's Initiatives over the Years

Since its inception in 2007, the Forum has been taking up a series of support initiatives for the Indian Food Business – it has been hosting every year the country's finest gathering of Indian and international experts in the domains of grocery retail, foodservice and HoReCa sectors. From CEOs and business heads of India's leading grocery retail and foodservice companies to some of the country's most important food and FMCG manufacturers, the Forum is a power packed three-day jamboree featuring wide-ranging exhibitions, conference and knowledge series workshops. The objective of India Food Forum is to build

the roadmap for food and grocery retail & food service sector by connecting people, sharing knowledge, best practices, building innovative technology concepts for profitable, successful and sustainable growth of modern food retail and delighting the new age consumers with a WOW experience.

The Forum's other stellar initiatives include the launch of India editions of 'Progressive Grocer' and 'FoodService', the largest read magazines in their respective segments worldwide, and also the Food Council of India that organises round table meets inviting brands, retailers and restaurateurs in major cities of India to identify areas of possible cooperation for working together. The Forum's privilege membership provides its members with instant access to a broad network of top-level decision makers and business owners across the broad spectrum of the Indian food, FMCG & HoReCa industry – a truly a remarkable business tool.

As a national platform that brings together industry leaders to deliberate and discuss an array of issues before the industry and offer their insights on the new opportunities and trends opening out before them, the annual congregation of India Food Forum 2017 will once again see participation from a crosssection of industry leaders, established businesses and an equally large share of start-ups and young entrepreneurs who want to

showcase their products and services before an informed and discerning audience and get valuable feedback from the industry experts.

With the ongoing and rapid shifts taking place in the Food retail industry, the undercurrents and trends will once again get visited and brainstormed at India Food Forum 2017, in the presence of a powerpacked theatre featuring the top CEOs and business heads of India's largest food retail and restaurant businesses. Block your date for Food Forum 2017 and be a part of the high octane convention, which will covene to sit, discuss and predict the future disruptions in the industry with the guidance of global research and analysis experts. [IR](#)



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We are proud to announce that the second edition of the **South India Retail Summit (SIRS)** will be held on **December 6, 2016** at **ITC Gardenia, Bangalore.**

SIRS is the first-of-its-kind regional retail event in the South India region presented by India Retail Forum (IRF), to empower the region with retail knowledge, explore bigger and better future opportunities, align with the national vision and provide a platform for all stakeholders in the South Indian Retail to learn, share and evolve with the masters in the business. This one-day forum, where the who's who of the retail industry will come together, is an important regional knowledge platform for discussions on key issues facing the retail fraternity and exchanging best practices within the industry.

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ATTENDEES**

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- ▶ Retail Technology
- ▶ Apparel and Accessories
- ▶ Brand Retailers
- ▶ Shoes and Accessories
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- ▶ Department Stores
- ▶ Etailers
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- ▶ F&B
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- ▶ Discounters
- ▶ Forecourt Retailers
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- ▶ Consumer Durables
- ▶ FMCG
- ▶ Consumer Electronics
- ▶ Home & Interiors
- ▶ Logistic, Distribution & Supply Chain
- ▶ Shop fit & Design
- ▶ Retail Security
- ▶ CRM & Customer Service
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HIDESIGN

THE INDIGENOUS ICON



It started off as a hobby with ₹25,000 as capital and with only two artisans. But today, after almost four decades, Hidesign is an international brand worth more than Rs. 100 cr. with products selling all over the world and more than 3,000 employees.

By Parama Sen

In 1978, Dilip Kapur, a PhD in International Affairs from the prestigious Princeton University, USA, returned to his hometown, the French-flavoured Puducherry (then called Pondicherry), and found out that there was nothing exciting for him to do in the spic and span Auroville rather than to make it greener by planting more trees. So the young lad opted for an interesting option of designing leather bags, which was his hobby. He started making bags with his own designs by buying leather from Chennai and gifted those to his mother, sister, aunt and some friends. When one of his friends offered him Rs. 300 for one of his bags, he realised he could make money out of his hobby!

One hint is enough for a wise person; Kapur was enterprising enough to understand the 'hint' and thus started the brand 'Hidesign', which has created its unique success story in the intervening 38 years. In an exclusive conversation with IMAGES Retail, Dilip Kapur, founder and CEO of Hidesign takes us with him through the timeline of an eventful journey.

The Journey Begins with 'Naturalness'

"While studying in the States, I had taken an internship with this leather factory for a few months. This short stint was what made me relook at leather and became a lifelong passion for me. I decided to return to Auroville and wondered what to do next. To keep myself occupied I started making leather bags. What started as a hobby soon caught the interest of people passing by and I landed up with larger orders," Kapur recalls.



But what was so unique about Hidesign products that attracted consumers towards them? According to Kapur, it was the ‘naturalness’ of the product. Starting from the inception point, Hidesign products are always natural. Fake leather, PU, zinc buckles were a complete no-no. The colouring of the products is done by using the age old Indian technique of vegetable tanning.

“Hidesign was born out of the need to be distinct from the uniformity and synthetic flatness of the mass market,” Kapur says. “It was almost like giving shape to my instinctive aversion to painted, patented leathers that lose all semblance of naturalness. Hidesign’s brand values are always consistent and provide Hidesign a unique identity and great customer loyalty.”

First ‘Global’ Indian Brand

Hidesign can be cited as a very good example of today’s ‘Make in India’ campaign. Where all the other Indian brands have first curved a niche of success in the domestic market and then tried to move towards international beginnings, Hidesign has done just the opposite; crafted out of India, the Hidesign bags were first sold out of some Australian stores. In fact, Hidesign products were available in Indian market years after the brand’s global launch. But, according to Kapur, he had never taken any kind of marketing exercise; on the contrary, the markets have always ‘found’ him. One of his first designs was bought by his friend, who liked it and later on bought 1440 pieces from him and started selling those in Australia. Then his cousin liked those and she started curating Hidesign products for the UK market. From there

HIDESIGN IN INDIA

Total no. of Exclusive Hidesign Boutiques

73

No of cities present

41

Total Shop In Shop Presence

100 (Shoppers Stop, Lifestyle, Central, Ritu Wear, Soham Shoppe, Shohum Emporia, Style Plus etc)

Store count break up between High Streets/Malls/Airports

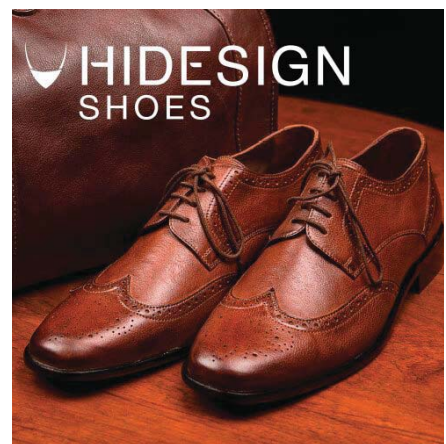
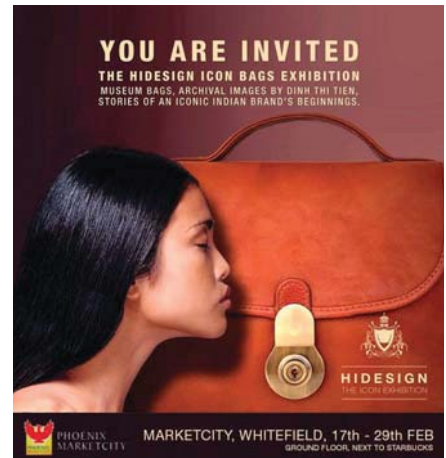
23 EBOs in High Streets, 44 in Malls and 6 in airports.

Best performing store
Bengaluru airport store.

Online partners and % sales from online channels

Hidesign sales through own website and e-com partners like Shoppers Stop, Infibeam, Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, Snapdeal and Jabong. The total percentage of sales is approx 20-25%.

We take great pride in some of our iconic bags which are legendary for our brand. In 2014, we re-launched 11 of our most beloved bags, calling them ‘The Icons’. These bags with their whimsical designs are individualistic and full of character; they stood for what we loved best - a spirit of adventure, clean designs and the use of natural materials like the Boxy bag which was awarded the ‘Accessory of the Year 1992’ by Accessory Magazine UK and the felicitation of the same was done by none other than, the gracious Princess Diana. Another very iconic bag from Hidesign is the Grazia bag, which has a signature shape that is identifiable with Hidesign,



Hidesign bags travelled to California and the journey continued. As Kapur has studied arts in the USA and always had international standards in mind, the products were designed accordingly and never lacked an international sensibility. This very thing actually paved the way for success.

Capturing The Home Front

In the year 1998, Hidesign forayed into the Indian market. The story happened in the following way: Indian consumers who travelled abroad, discovered the brand there, came to know that this was actually something ‘made in India’ and yet not available in the country itself. These consumers actually forced Kapur to launch the product for the Indian market. The first Hidesign store was launched in Bangalore, in 1998.

“Looking at India changed us completely. Suddenly we were directly in touch with our customers. This

focus on India came at the right time for me. I was bored and was ready to quit and join Auroville full-time. For me, it was like I discovered myself all over again,” Kapur says.

India turned out to be the biggest market for the brand in the following years. Two thirds of the business now comes from the domestic market. Hidesign has opened more than 70 stores in the country and has over 100 shop-in-shops.

‘Unique’ness of Hidesign

Hidesign began its journey at a time when ‘Indianness’ and ‘being international’ meant two completely different things altogether. Where the West, as we can term it, was all about class, simplicity, minimalism and aristocracy woven together, East was about getting flashy, spunky and making it cheap and pret, as opposed to haute couture. Typically, in order to satisfy consumers from two completely different markets, a brand either has to create two different lines or craft a ‘middle’ way. But Hidesign

Hidesign has shifted from the urban, hippie couture from where the design ideology started, **it was for this unique rebel design approach that its products were sold initially only through ‘alternative’ retail outlets.**

has not done that. Clearly, the same line worked in all markets beautifully even when it was available in India after almost three decades since its launch. The timing was sanguine; after liberalisation of the economy, Indians started becoming well acquainted with western standards and were much more ready to adopt Hidesign’s aesthetic language. As Kapur himself likes to put it, “We have our own leather tanneries and a loyal set of artisans that understand the brand ethos; therefore we have great leeway to create a product as per our design sensibilities in a sustainable manner.”

“Also, our customers and the media understand that our brand is an original brand with a unique brand story and a true heritage. Our heritage adds to the premium perception of the brand, and our marketing, for instance the Art of Re-Use, the Icon Collection and the ongoing Green Story marketing campaigns, are really among the best and most interesting marketing initiatives.”

Hidesign products are meant for urban, educated men and women ranging from the age of 25- 40 years and is mostly tech-savvy and a working professional, Kapur adds. “Our customers tend to have a good understanding of the product and have a fashion sensibility that skews more towards classics. Our TG usually also includes people who have inclination toward environmental sustainability and conservation.”

Though Hidesign has shifted a little from the urban, hippie couture from where the design ideology actually started, it was for this unique rebel design approach that its products were sold initially only through ‘alternative’ retail outlets. “I would say it is the

TIMELINE

1978	Begins with a two-person artisan workshop. First markets are small, alternative shops in Australia and USA
1982	Launched in UK and became popular in independent shops.
1984	Solid brass buckles instead of zinc ones
1985	John Lewis in UK, the first departmental store to carry the complete line of Hidesign.
1988	Hidesign introduces leather garments
1990	Estd first custom design factory in Pondicherry.
1992	Best accessory ‘Boxy Bags’ by Accessory magazine UK. Princess Diana awarded Hidesign
1997	First international exclusive store in Moscow, Russia
1998	South Africa, Vietnam, Malaysia and India became emerging markets
1999	Started growing in India as well
2000	Launched award winning ad campaigns in India and internationally.
2004	Alberto Ciaschini joins as the new lead designer
2010	Launches flagship store in Pondicherry which includes Hidesign Museum



▲ Dilip Kapur at work



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There is always something ‘cooking’ in the Hidesign factory; **creativity is the essence of Kapur’s existence. Retail expansion is also on the cards.**

rebels who bought my bags. So, our bags were sold in alternative stores and not in the mainstream stores. We had only the rebels as our customers in the first ten years. It took us ten years to conquer the mainstream market. That was with UK supermarket chain John Lewis retailing our products. By then, the entire culture had changed and consumers became less conservative, more casual. But yes, I did feel a little bad when we moved from the rebel camp to the mainstream camp.”

But this was only the international scenario. After capturing the West’, Hidesign also won consumers of the Far East, in countries such as Malaysia, Vietnam, etc. In fact its

first international exclusive store was opened in Moscow, in 1997.

Best-in-class Partnerships

Hidesign was the first Indian retailer to receive foreign funding. Realising the brand’s potential for scalability, luxury retail conglomerate Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessey bought a stake in the brand in 2007 and thus helped it open a new state-of-the-art production unit in Puducherry. At the same time, Hidesign also had the opportunity to learn the intricacies of the luxury retail business from the very best in the market.

“LVMH has never interfered in our operations but I learn something from them all the time,” Kapur states.

In 2009, Future Group’s venture capital arm Future Ventures and Hidesign entered into a 50:50 joint venture to launch an India-oriented

lifestyle brand, called Holii. This new brand was to focus on the modern Indian woman and offer competitively-priced products. It was designed to cater to the mid-market segment with prices being 30-40 percent lower than those charged by Hidesign. “We set up Holii, because Kishore (Biyani, Group CEO, Future Group) kept teasing me that I did not understand India. That is why Holii is modern and vibrant, but has its feet firmly in India,” says Kapur.

There is always something ‘cooking’ in the Hidesign factory; creativity is the essence of Kapur’s existence. The brand launched a footwear range January this year, beginning with a men’s line, shortly to be followed by a women’s line as well. Retail expansion is also on the cards. “In the next few years, we will have about seven stores coming up,” Kapur says. But that’s not all. Hidesign it also looking to optimise the e-commerce channel. “Currently, we are focusing on Hidesign’s luxury collection -- the Atelier Collection featuring exotic deer skin and ostrich leathers. It is segregated under two categories: Champagne and Caviar Collection. The price range starts at ₹2,595 onwards and goes up to ₹25,900,” Kapur informs. 



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WHAT WOMEN WANT

What women want, is a puzzle. One that's still being solved. She could want a green tea one minute and hit the bar, the next. She could be a corporate wiz by day and want to cook a 4 course meal back home in the evening. The things a woman wants to do and be all at the same time would fill an encyclopedia. And we're here to tell her, "more power to you! Be bold and be elegant. Be amusing but take yourself seriously. Rebel, and rebel with style." We know that fashion and function are two aspects of the same entity. One doesn't work without the other. And hence was created WHAT WOMEN WANT, to give the self-actualized woman what she deserves.

WHAT WOMEN WANT is a retail concept which brings to you a wide range of apparel in categories like lingerie and intimate wear, shapewear, athleisure, beachwear, silicone and other accessories. Our lingerie is fancy and comfortable; the sports bras are stylish and fit like a dream. The different

styles of yoga pants would want to make her hit the gym tomorrow and our shapewear beckons the shy one and gives her the confidence to step out in a beautiful dress. For those searching exotic beachwear- hurry, hurry!

Our prices are competitive too, and the one who's looking for sales and other great deals, this is the perfect shopping destination. The prices for bras, panties, yoga pants, sports bras, shapewear, beachwear and accessories start at Rs.399, Rs. 199, Rs. 999, Rs. 599, Rs. 999, Rs. 1499, Rs.99 respectively. We operate in a store as well as kiosk format and are currently located in Infiniti Andheri (Mumbai). Find us all days of the week on the 2nd floor opposite the Zaffran restaurant, between 11 a.m. and 9 p.m.

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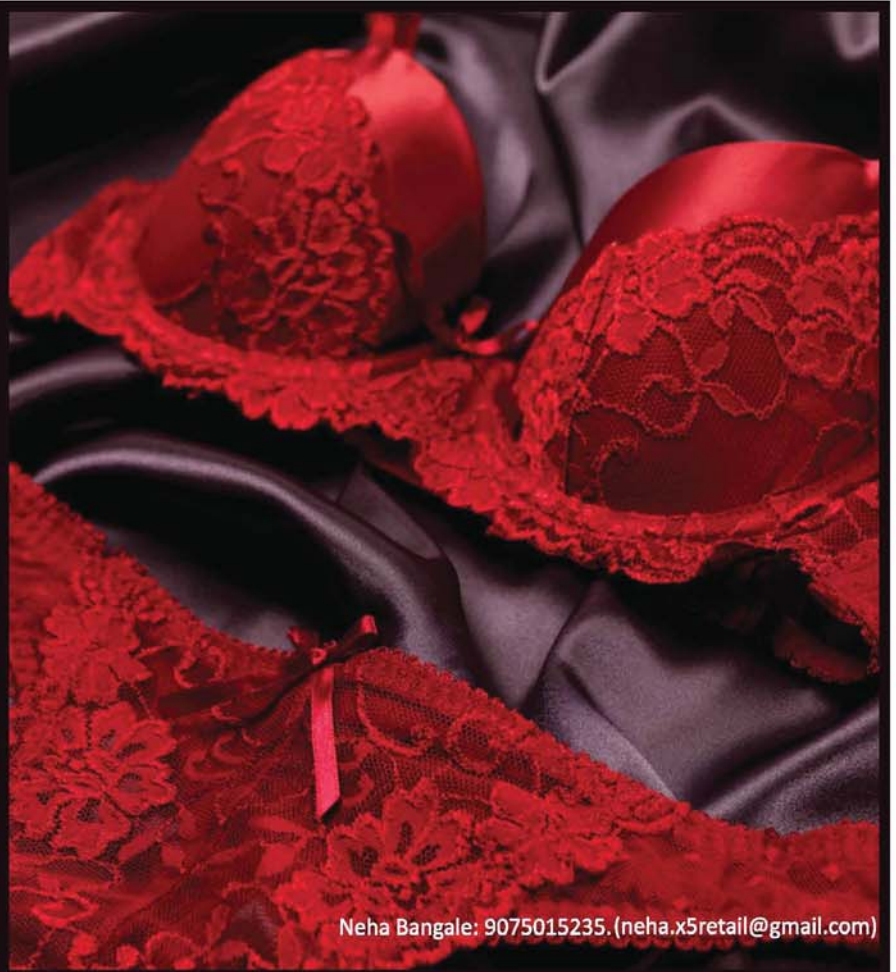
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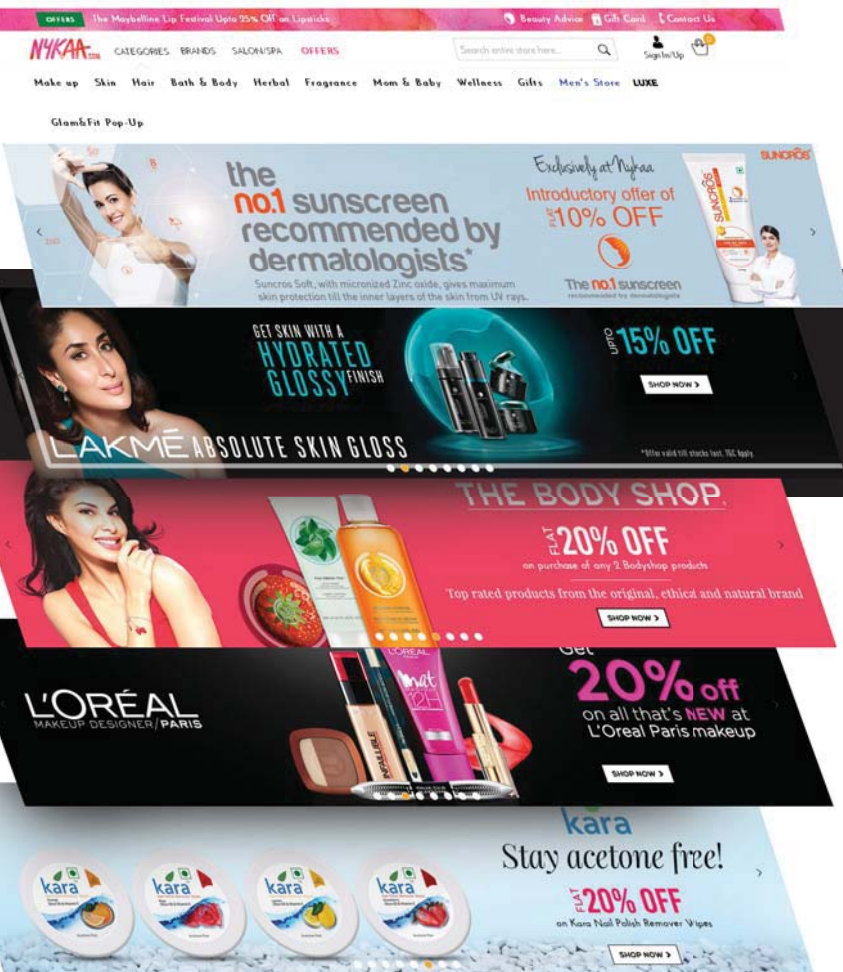
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NYKAA

LEADER OF THE ONLINE BUSINESS OF BEAUTY SPACE

April 2012 marked the beginning of a journey that can well be documented as a case study for budding e-commerce entrepreneurs. Nayar with her venture www.nykaa.com has gone ahead to create a niche in the online beauty. We document the journey the Nykaa is the leader in the e-commerce space when it comes to the business of beauty.

By Zainab S Kazi



Moving out of a comfort zone is perhaps the toughest challenge specially so when there is no need or compulsion to do so. But those who take the plunge are the ones who also go ahead to define new territories and set examples for others to follow. The story of Falguni Nayar and the journey of her maiden venture – www.nykaa.com accentuate this.

A walk down the memory lane

Having spent 19 years as an investment banker and broker which also included having spent eight years overlooking the group's international operations in the US and the UK where she headed their Institutional Equities division. In 2005, Nayar took over as Managing Director of the investment banking business and was responsible in closing a lot many successful M&As.

Everything seemed to be going perfect for Nayar but then there was more to come. From investment banking it was now going to be about treading the path of an entrepreneur. The trigger being her visit to Sephora and a few couplets she heard from her daughter from one of Constantin P. Cavafy's poem which read –

“.....Keep itthaka always in your mind. Arriving there is what you are destined for. But do not hurry the journey as all....” As she shared in one of her media interviews, “The poem emphasizes how one must cherish the journey rather than being overly focused on the end result.”

Elaborating on the idea of entering an altogether new space in the business of beauty, Nayar shares, “I once walked into a Sephora store and was amazed by the profusion of brands, the beautiful displays and the women behind counters who offered advice, sold beauty products and helped women discover a whole new side to themselves. This and other exposures to multi-brand online retail made me realize there was such a huge gap in India with a severe dearth of good multi-brand retail experiences in the beauty and wellness space. I saw the need for a multi-brand retail format that gives unbiased advice to consumers, being able to guide them on the right products for their beauty and health concerns. It was a risk I was willing to take but, I am happy to say that they have been well-received by our customers.” The last sentence

Unlike bigger e-commerce players who prefer the marketplace model, Nykaa stores 85 per cent of its inventory. **The company started off with 5 employees for business, technology, operations and content. Currently, they are a 200+ team.**

holds true every bit as today Nykaa is one of the strongest players in the e-commerce space and specially so when it is catering to a niche category unlike other portals who have a multi-category offering.

The first few steps

The company started off with 5 employees for business, technology, operations and content. Currently, they are a 200+ team. Nayar shares, “We have a large technology team and we are very proud of them. Almost 50 per cent of sales come from the app and that has led to our success. We are on our way to launch a mobile lite site.” Adding further, she says, “Having a very efficient digital marketing team has helped us to achieve and be where we are. As for the brands, we started

off with brands like Neutrogena, Lakme and L’Oreal. The initial investment was very small, under ₹10 crores.”

Overcoming Challenges

In terms of challenges, Nayar rightly points out that major challenges usually crop up when the business grows. To hear it in her own words, “I think a few roadblocks and challenges we faced have to do with technology in terms of getting the right choice of people and executing. The problem begins when you start to scale. It is important key to understand the process and implement solutions accordingly.” Adding further on the ongoing challenge, Nayar’s predicaments like that of any other e-commerce retailer – that of having the right inventory and keeping tab of the changing customer demands. She elaborates, “Retail is all about detail, so getting the right detail execution is always a challenge. We deal with a lot of products on a daily basis, over 700 SKUs, and we constantly need to manage this inventory for the various regions to predict demand.”

Having entered the space at a time when major players like Flipkart, Amazon and Snapdeal were already having a loyal clientele, Nykaa had to find its USP to build a loyal client base. The differentiating factor had to be truly strong. Elaborating on the USP that has made Nykaa have such a strong patronage, Nayar shares, “We believe in content, we make sure to put content throughout the website as we strongly feel that it creates better customer engagement. Customers need advice in the beauty segment, for example right foundations for the Indian skin tone and things like that. This is why we have a dedicated section called the ‘Beauty





LOGISTICS

Nykaa has invested in having three warehouses - Mumbai, New Delhi and Bangalore, of 1500 sq. ft. each. The courier delivery partners are outsourced.

Book' which features product reviews, tips and tricks on applying the right makeup and guidance on choosing the right products for concerns." A very strong differentiating factor that Nykaa has that gives it an advantage over other players in this category is based on their inventory led model. Nayar reveals, "Unlike bigger e-commerce players who prefer the marketplace model, Nykaa stores 85 per cent of its inventory. If you see it on the site, we have it in our warehouse. This leads to a much more superior user experience with extra fast delivery." It also leads to complete quality control as well. Adding further in the USP, she shares, "Then it is the extensive inventory of 450+ brands we carry, as well as the international beauty trends that we will launch like Korean skincare, Dead Sea products etc."

Today Nykaa has 450+ brands live on their portal and four years ago, they had started off with 80 brands which mean doubling their inventory every year.

Reiterating on the key aspects that Nykaa has implemented that make it amongst the top players in e-commerce today, Nayar reveals, "We follow an inventory led model, because of which we needed to compromise and not take foreign capital. This model is reason for our success as we earned consumer trust. Consumers are always looking for

Nykaa welcome 5-6 million visitors a month

Nykaa currently clock a 20 crore GMV per month

Nykaa delivers to 30,000 pincodes

Regional sales pattern: Delhi - 22% / Bombay - 12% / Bangalore - 10%

TOP PERFORMING CATEGORY AND TOP 3 BRANDS WITHIN EACH CATEGORY

Makeup and skincare

Makeup accounts for 43% of their revenue with L'Oreal, Lakme and Maybelline as top brands.

For skincare; the top brands are Forest Essentials, Neutrogena and Nivea.

authentic, fresh and genuine products and we meet all those customer needs. Since inception, we have strongly believed in developing strong conversations with our customers, whether through product reviews, or on social platforms or our video tutorials. This in-depth customer connect has allowed us to understand their needs and learn continuously. This translated to the launch of the native Nykaa beauty brand in-line with our long term goal of offering quality products at value for money prices. Apart from our online presence, we are building on our offline presence. We already have a Nykaa store in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai and we plan to have 30 stores by 2020."

Brand Association and Relationship

Nykaa has a strong, rather a very strong social media presence and each of their social media communication is dominated with brand offers. This accentuates the fact that the relationship Nykaa shares with partnering brands is cemented well. Nayar shares, "Our brand partners are constantly surprised with our e-commerce penetration in the beauty category, and we believe that it could be the highest, almost 20- 30%. It





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was different from when I entered the business. In 2012, not even 40,000 women were shopping online. Today there is a much larger population shopping online, out of which a substantial percentage are women.”

Entering the Offline Space

Keeping in mind the offline stores that Nykaa has which are visually appealing and well stocked, the first thought that comes to mind is that if Nykaa with such a niche offering can do it, then the whole argument about e-commerce eating up offline retail stands no ground. Strategically located, Nykaa's offline stores are rich and luxurious in their look and feel. Nayar elaborates on the entry into the offline space, “We are of the strong belief that the Nykaa customer needs a mix of an online and offline format. Customers may be quite happy to buy products online for a majority of purchases but at times customers may want a more sensory experience. Visiting the store allows customers to touch, feel and try on a product that they may be interested in buying at that moment or to consider it as a future investment. According to me, it is the right optimum mix to have both online and a store. We aim to be a destination store where we have the right set of brands which provide consumers with performance products.”

A major challenge though is to have the right kind of people to man the offline store. She adds, “Sales staff are key to offline stores - their passion and expertise is very important.”

Nayar highlights on the differentiating factor of an online and an offline customer saying, “The two customers are different. The online customer prefers to research and review on products she wants to buy and invest in and have in depth knowledge. Offline customers look to beauty advisors before purchasing a product and they also get to touch and feel the product.”

The Launch of their Private Label

With over four years of experience in this space, Nayar realised that there were many gaps to be filled in the range that was available in India. This



From inception till date, Nykaa has received an approximate **of ₹170 crore in funding**

triggered off the idea to launch their private label. She elaborates, “We believed there was a gap in the market and certain foreign products were not available. For e.g. - we felt there was a lack in nail polish colors available in the market hence we started our private label with nail polishes. Then launched body mists due to the lack of them as well. We introduced our private label in order to offer a continued choice to our customers. We make sure to use the best quality and best formulas in their production. We are happy to say that our private label products have been very well-received by our customers, in fact becoming one of the top-selling ranges within a short period of time. We will soon be expanding this range to offer a larger make-up and bath and body collection, as well as a fragrance range.”


Nykaa's nail enamel collection dominates the category and they have recently launched Bath & Body collection which has also been gaining momentum. According to Nayar, within a short time span, Nykaa has emerged as the 8th largest brand on the website.

Marketing and social media initiatives

As mentioned earlier, Nykaa has a strong presence when it comes to social media. They have more than

1.4 million followers on Facebook and 1.3 thousand on Instagram. Their YouTube presence is also very strong and so is their blogger network. The brands that deserve recognition are given full support without any bias and that is what makes Nykaa different. They emphasize on the quality and niche offering of each brand thus instilling customer trust. Nayar shares, “Our marketing initiatives include Google ads, display marketing, email marketing and app marketing. We are also present on Twitter, Google + , Pinterest and Snapchat. The innovative and original content on our social media platforms has led to a highly engaged audience.”

On the road ahead that Nayar has in mind for Nykaa, she reveals, “We aim at opening 30 offline stores by 2020. Of course our online presence will continue to grow. We will see 300% revenue growth in the next couple of years which will take us to a critical size, to be a dominant player.”

The business of beauty in India is growing from strength to strength. The very fact that there are niche players like Nykaa going all out in investing in different formats (online, mobile and offline) to tap the ever increasing needs of the consumers, proves that the industry has a lot of potential to grow. 

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What sets them apart is the fact that they deliver best in quality and timely service to all their clients and their clients are testimony of the same. Alacrit's aim is simple, provide quality and timely projects and at the same time cost effective geographical coverage across India.

Ajay Mehta CEO of Alacrit Retail Pvt. Ltd. shares with IMAGES Retail, "In this age of customer being the king, it becomes imperative for any brand to shout through the roof to get customer footfall, eyeballs and share of wallet. We help our clients take newer avenues through innovations and creative solutions. We take a consultative approach towards developing the right solutions for the clients to meet their requirements for image, brand communication and durability. We have tremendous backend support of detailed knowledge and experience combined with our pan India associations enabling us to act as a mediator in creating instant connects between customer and brand."



Ajay adds, "We believe that our work is the face of our company. We constantly thrive to be most effective and brand centric organization that helps brands delivers solutions across India by translating brand's vision into physical reality."

Ajay further shares, "our expertise lies in

- 1. Fabrication:** wood, metal and acrylic
- 2. Signage Program:** GSB, ACP, Acrylic, LED, SS

Currently, Alacrit is working with GoIbibo and MakeMyTrip for their visibility at hotels across India in more than 100+ cities. This would include cities which are hard to reach like Manali, Kasauli, Siliguri, Rameshwaram, Dharamshala, etc.

Alacrit works with different industries like FMCG, Travel, Consumer Durable, Telecom, Home Décor, B2B and Financial Institution. In the next financial year they are planning to build their own GSB and ACP signage fabrication center in South India.

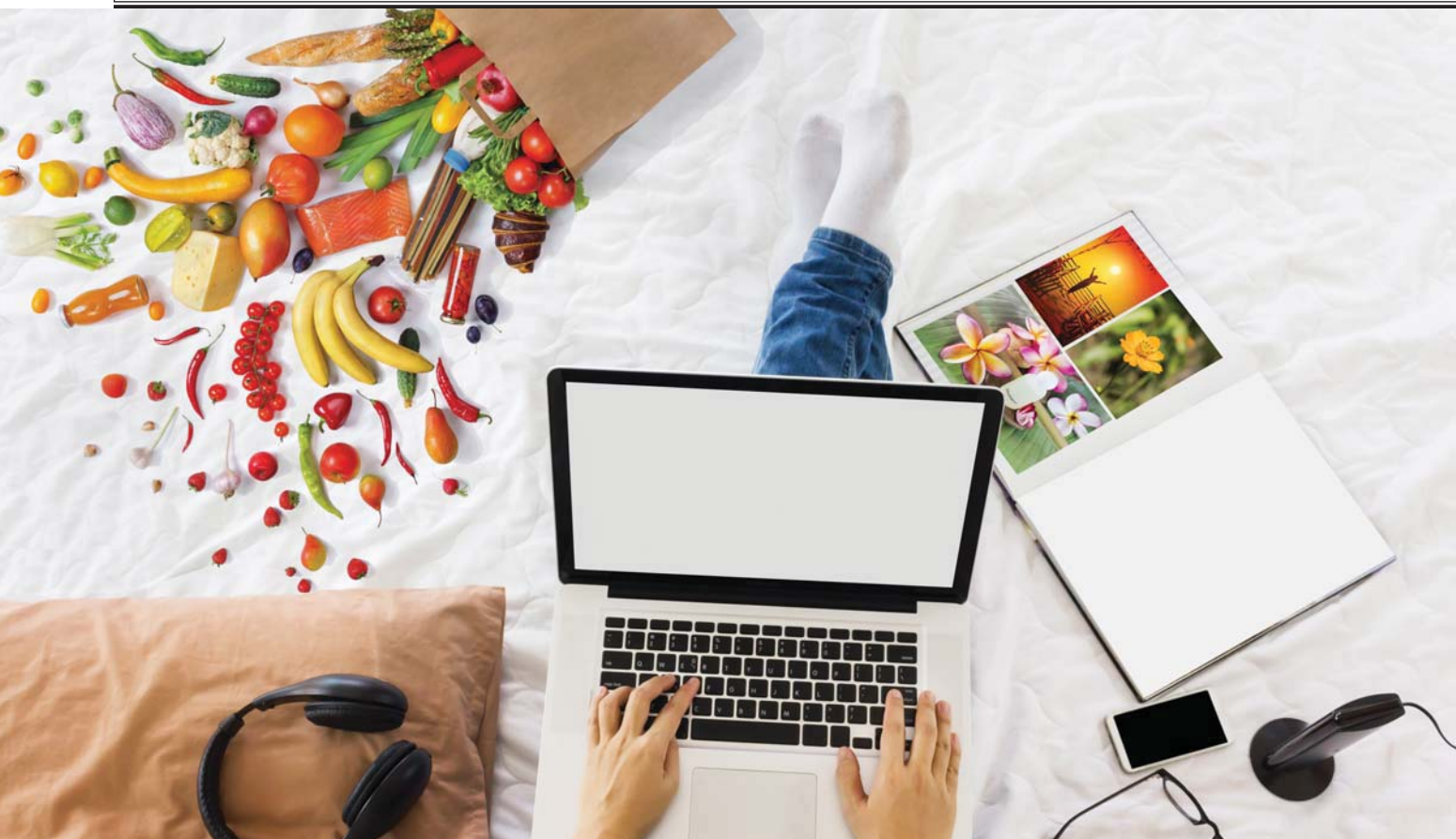
"The Future of Indian P-O-P industry has a very exciting phase and is going to grow hugely. With the e-commerce industry facing huge challenges, we believe retail would be the format for brands to explore and there would be a lot of technological and material improvements in the recent years. The future of retail looks very exciting and challenging." concludes Mehta.

AJAY MEHTA CEO - ALACRIT RETAIL PVT. LTD.

For more information

Mail us at : ajay@alacritretail.com

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PLAYING THE RIGHT E-COMMERCE CARDS

India and Indonesia share a number of characteristics that position them on the tipping point of explosive e-commerce growth

By Serena Jacob & Vivek V. Krishnan

Between them, India and Indonesia account for one out of every five people alive on earth. With India's economy predicted to grow 7.5 per cent in 2016 and Indonesia emerging from economic slowdown, they also represent some of its most attractive and important consumer markets. However, the complexities of India and Indonesia have locked many international brands out of these opportunities. Could the apparently imminent take-off of e-commerce be about to change the game in their favour? Only if they have the right cards up their sleeve – and know when to play them.

The new e-commerce games in town

India and Indonesia share a number of characteristics that position them on the tipping point of explosive e-commerce growth. These are rapidly urbanising, high-growth markets, with a ready supply of low-cost labour to act as potential delivery networks, a lack of entrenched modern trade shopping habits, and an interest amongst both urban and rural consumers in accessing a broader range of products than are available to them through offline channels. India's internet penetration has doubled in the past two years whilst Indonesia's is growing at 15 per cent year-on-year, with low-cost smartphones putting potential e-commerce devices into the hands of more and more people. Both markets also have the players in place for the e-commerce game to begin: new payment solutions are trialled on a regular basis – and e-commerce brands are attempting to build awareness and buzz through above-the-line advertising. However, the fact that we can predict e-commerce growth for India and Indonesia does not mean that the nature of e-commerce in these markets will be in any way predictable. Brands expecting to play a familiar game with tactics that have worked well elsewhere are likely to find themselves quickly out-manoeuvred. India and Indonesia will not follow the same pattern of e-commerce growth as the US and Europe; they may not follow the same pattern as China either. This unpredictability is partly a result of the factors providing such fertile ground for e-commerce. The limited reach and influence of

Digital infrastructure and internet connectivity may be advancing – but that advance is not even or predictable. **Despite the growing penetration of smartphones, most of the network speeds available through those smartphones remain stubbornly low.**

modern trade means that Indian and Indonesian consumers do not approach online shopping with the same assumptions, attitudes and behaviours as consumers in developed markets.

The role of smartphones in accelerating internet penetration mean that patterns of e-commerce have not been defined by desktop computers, as they were in the US and Europe. In India and Indonesia, e-commerce will rewrite the rules of the game whilst it is being played. It's not just consumer attitudes and behaviour that will be different. Brands cannot afford to wait for all of the usual supporting systems of e-commerce to fall into place before they begin to play. In some situations, a robust delivery infrastructure might be lacking; in others it's a trusted payments system that's missing. Brands must be prepared to innovate business models to meet the different scenarios that they encounter in these markets, rather than relying on a single, rigid business model that applies nationwide.

The challenges ahead

The challenges start with the physical infrastructure. As anybody who has travelled in India can tell you, roads are a challenge: heavily congested within major cities, hugely underdeveloped in many of the rural areas beyond them. Delivering goods across Indonesia's far-flung archipelago of more than 17,500 islands is only possible through expensive courier services (logistics

accounts for 27% of the cost of goods sold online – more than in any other market). This makes fulfilling orders cost-effectively a challenge; the difficulties of returning goods that consumers are unhappy with (a vital pillar in building trust in e-commerce), are an equally significant barrier.

Distribution challenges don't end with the physical difficulty of moving goods around; there's also the issue of trust that comes with hiring unregulated labour at scale. Many workers have little or no documentation, and background checks are difficult, increasing the risk of fraud and making customer safety an issues that brands must address.

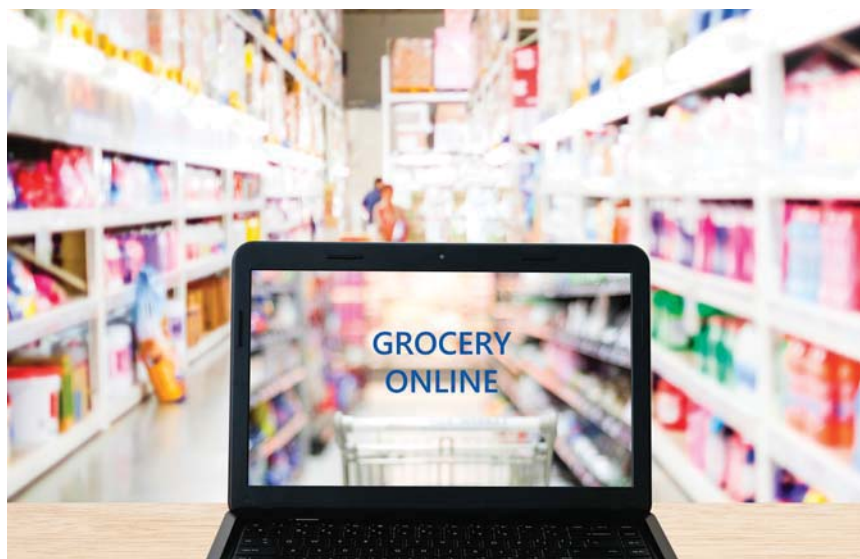
The sheer size of both India and Indonesia present other problems besides distribution. Bureaucracy and local lawmaking and regulation are a significant issue in India, where sales taxes vary across states, as do regulations banning items such as alcohol or certain types of packaging.

Immense linguistic diversity is another product of the vast geographical spread of these countries. India has over 120 major languages and over 1500 languages in total, with 22 of these recognised in its constitution and no single national language. Over 700 languages are spoken within the Indonesian archipelago – and the national language of Bahasa Indonesia is the first language of less than half

the population. In such situations, 'speaking the consumer's language' is a significant challenge for brands. They don't need one e-commerce strategy; they need a strategy for each significant language community.

Digital infrastructure and internet connectivity may be advancing – but that advance is not even or predictable. Despite the growing penetration of smartphones, most of the network speeds available through those smartphones remain stubbornly low. India is the setting for several high-profile efforts to improve internet access, supported by global technology firms. Google's Project Loon aims to extend high-speed internet access to remote rural areas via a network of wi-fi transmitters carried on futuristic hot air balloons; the same company is championing an initiative to install free wi-fi hotspots at the country's vast network of railway stations. Attempts to roll out 4G are bringing high-speed internet to some rural areas. These are promising developments – but they do not yet add up to internet connectivity on anything approaching a national scale.

Even as internet accessibility and speed improve, e-commerce players must still tackle the issue of whether people have sufficient trust in buying things over the internet. Despite the strengthening incentives for doing so, two considerable barriers remain: a lack of cashless payment systems, with credit cards and mobile payments a



rarity and the vast majority of Indians and Indonesians still lacking basic bank accounts; and consumers' wariness about buying goods they cannot see or touch. While the average European fashion website receives queries on only 5 per cent of its orders, the fashion website Zalora receives at least one query for every single order placed through its website in Indonesia. At this point in the development of

e-commerce, even those consumers willing and able to try the experience of buying online need constant support throughout the process – and this requires a major investment in customer service on the part of e-commerce platforms. The interesting thing about the Zalora story is that this is exactly what the website is prepared to do. It cuts into its margins and takes away many of the efficiencies of

e-commerce that established developed market players have come to see as fundamental to the whole exercise. And yet Zalora's marketers know the value of investing in building trust at this stage in its market's development. Its approach is an acknowledgement that, of all the potential barriers to e-commerce that exist in India and Indonesia, consumer trust is the only barrier that really matters.

The only way to start building trust is to start building solutions that can deliver positive experiences despite the inefficiencies and costs that other barriers result in. Like Zalora, brands must go all in if they are going to make long-term gains. This is a game that rewards boldness – but only from those who know the right cards to play, and the right consumer buttons to push.

THE URBAN/RURAL DIVIDE

India and Indonesia, much like China, have distinct urban and rural areas that are starkly dissimilar when it comes to people's access to goods and ability to buy. For urban buyers, lower product prices and the ease and convenience offered by e-commerce sites is cause enough to switch to online shopping. However, as the markets mature, the lower prices will soon become the norm and the success of the business will hinge instead on the convenience they offer their customers. Most online retailers, including large players like Amazon, are experimenting with new ways to increase convenience, for example through innovative payment solutions and sameday delivery. Convenience also includes flexibility - allowing the shopper to decide when they want to receive the product. Some brands such as Matahari Mall in Indonesia have tied up with traditional retailers to create pick-up points where buyers can collect their purchases at a convenient time.

Yet rapid urbanisation in both countries is causing severe infrastructural issues: congested roads, unplanned commercial areas with little or no parking space, high real estate costs. These are both a challenge and an opportunity for e-commerce brands.

Challenges faced while travelling around the city will drive more urbanites to make purchases online. However, these same factors create issues delivering the goods to customers within the stipulated time. For rural shoppers, the key driver is access to products. Traditional retailing in rural areas has never been able to offer the same range of products available in urban areas. e-commerce in these markets delivers the first real opportunity for rural shoppers to access new products and services at the same time as their urban counterparts, even if this access is going to cost them a little more. However, providing broad access to a variety of products requires several innovations.

Rural areas in both countries suffer from poor road infrastructure, inefficient waterways, or simply sheer distance from urban distribution centres. Although online portals allow shoppers to source and buy products, last-mile delivery remains a challenge. This lack of infrastructure also limits the speed of delivery that can be offered by online retailers. To overcome this, companies like Amazon are working with traditional trade retailers to use their local warehouses as pick-up points. Businesses also need to consider the most effective payment solution once the product arrives. Delivering goods to shoppers who want to pay cash on delivery to a third party distributor requires very careful management if it is going to become profitable.

Finally, affluent shoppers in both rural and urban environments are looking to buy international brands that are currently out of reach because the business does not ship there yet. There is huge potential for e-commerce companies that can enable these cross-border purchases and give enthusiastic online shoppers access to a far-greater range of products.

Evolving business strategies

From China to the US and Europe, players in developed e-commerce markets are accustomed to building brands and business models on a national scale. Their brand comes to represent a consistent and



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When it comes to reaching consumers across countries with **inconsistent online habits, choosing the right platform is often the key to success.**

wellunderstood type of customer experience that is underpinned by a single, efficient business model. They may not achieve full national coverage (not everyone in China has access to Alibaba), but anyone who does use the platform can expect a similar experience.

In India and Indonesia, things are different. Attempting to roll out a single nationwide business model runs the risk of delivering inconsistent experiences, failing to deliver on customer promises and damaging brands. The only way to build a strong e-commerce brand in these markets is to have multiple business models in play, adapting strategies to reflect different situations, selecting the ones that work best, and abandoning those that become defunct as the landscape changes.

Across India and Indonesia we see brands successfully doing so for every stage of online shoppers' journeys. Successful global brands have had to re-evaluate their strategy for the complex Indian market. India, for example, is the only market in which Amazon operates exclusively as a marketplace. This enables it circumvent restrictions on foreign direct investment that make the online retailer model it adopts elsewhere simply untenable.

Uber has had to remove surge pricing, a key element of its business model, to adapt to the state laws in Delhi and Karnataka. It's not just business models that change. Adapting

operations to a new competitive environment can also help to overcome many of the challenges that India and Indonesia represent. Hindustan Unilever Ltd has taken a direct approach to building e-commerce platforms by partnering with small, neighbourhood 'kirana' stores in India, in order to bypass many of the issues involved in delivering online purchases. Its humarashop.com pilot connects shoppers with local retailers from whom they can pick up the goods they order, whilst also providing these small retailers with a relevant, local e-commerce presence.

When it comes to reaching consumers across countries with inconsistent online habits, choosing the right platform is often the key to success. The affiliative culture of Indonesia has supported strong growth in social platforms, accessed through mobile handsets, and these are likely to prove the most powerful channel for building e-commerce solutions.

Both brands aggregate products that users advertise for sale on networks such as Instagram. In doing so, they are helping people who once sold goods to their friends, families and connections, to scale their businesses and reach new customers. Socialising the experience of online shopping has other important advantages as well. Instant feedback and affirmation from friends and family can help to overcome misgivings about

buying goods without seeing or touching them first. That's the thinking behind Flipkart adding the Ping social network to its e-commerce platform in India.

Working with shopper concerns

Overcoming the perceived risks associated with buying online is the driver of much innovation in Indian and Indonesian e-commerce. Zalora has partnered with Virtusize, to help customers gauge the size and fit of the items they buy by comparing them to items they already own. In India, fashion retailer Jabong tackles the same problem in a different way, by sending a range of different styles and sizes for customers to try at home prior to making a final choice. Big Basket in India does something similar for the fruits and vegetables that it sells online, allowing its customers to make a final choice when they have their items in front of them.

What about the final stage of the online shopper's journey? The process of actually paying for goods? Here again, brands cannot afford simply to wait for Indian and Indonesian shoppers to overcome their concerns about cashless forms of payment, or for the Indian governments efforts' to persuade citizens to open bank accounts to bear fruit. All major players in the market offer some form of cash on delivery option – or work with fast-evolving third-party payment systems such as PayTM, KasPay or BukaDompot. As a result, e-commerce take-off in India and Indonesia could well take place without the mainstream adoption of credit and debit cards.

Brands in India and Indonesia will be rewarded for maintaining an open mind about what e-commerce looks like. The route to market may not be as clear as in other markets – but it is a very valuable route to travel. The opportunity is huge, and those prepared to be nimble and innovative in grasping it will have a major advantage when it comes to securing the consumer trust that all e-commerce players need to succeed. **IR**

About the author:

Serena and Vivek - are Managing Director and Regional Shopper Expert respectively at TNS, which is part of Kantar Retail.

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TURN THE PAGE ON YESTERDAY **WITHOUT REGRETS**

I built my brand from a kitchen table, literally, with four plastic jugs and a saucepan. It started from the kitchen sink. I didn't have money. But I had big dreams - Jo Malone MBE, fragrance designer and founder of Jo Loves

My upbringing was quite unconventional. I come from a poor background. I realised quite early in life that if you had a product and sold it, you would have enough to eat. My father was an artist. He taught me the art of being a good shopkeeper. I used to sell his paintings in a market. I started selling goods when I was nine. I loved the experience of telling a story and selling a product. My father was also a magician. He taught me the art of creativity and entertainment. He was a great gambler, too, but wasn't good with money. That taught me a big lesson – I didn't want to lose money in gambling. My mother worked for Revlon. She taught me the beautiful art of making skincare products. I started making skincare products when I was 10. It came so naturally to me and stayed with me. Although my life is very different now, I still have that instinct of being a working class person.

Turning passion into a viable business proposition

The love to create beautiful fragrances and the urge to run a business led to the launch of the Jo Malone brand – a concept based on bath oil that was changing the world. My business partner and husband Gary and I ran the business for almost 14 years. We opened up a lot of territories during this time, although we opened our first shop only in 1994 – a tiny 300 sqft store at 154 Walton Street in London.

The five-year growth pattern of our first store was unbelievable. We saw growth every single day. This growth was driven by four products – a bath oil, body lotion, fragrance and scented candle. Every department store wanted to stock our product, every entrepreneur wanted franchise rights. Within 24 hours of opening, I was offered \$1 million to sell the business. I couldn't tell if that was real interest or a nasty joke. Whatever it was, I declined the offer.

We soon realised the associated costs of running a business. You have to protect your brand legally, hire people, undertake marketing and PR activities and do so many other things. We saw our pool of money running out. We realised it was time to collaborate. In 1999 the Jo Malone business was acquired by the Estée Lauder Companies, headed by Leonard Lauder, son of Estée Lauder. Then something completely unanticipated happened. I was in the New York City when I was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. I was less than 38 years old. Many people ask me, "Jo, why did you give up Jo Malone?" This is the reason I left Jo Malone.

It seemed as if my life had suddenly stopped. I had wealth, but everything seemed bleak. I spent the next year fighting cancer in New York City, while trying to run the business. I lost my sense of smell. It seemed nothing was left of me. But that difficult phase taught me a lesson – there are three ingredients a true creator and entrepreneur must have no matter what: passion, resilience and creativity.

Resilience is what helps you to rebuild, reinvent

The only thing I can do really well is create fragrances. I can't swim, I can't drive, I can't read graphs and I'm dyslexic.

And, yes, I know how to build retail businesses. But for five years, I was prevented from re-entering the industry, although legally it was three. I strongly believe in honouring a deal when I shake hands and make the deal. That's why Lauder and we are still friends. Those were the most difficult and miserable years. I found other things to do, like television shows. I wanted to start a vineyard and joined a board. But these things weren't meant for me.

During those five years, I yearned to get back into business. In 2011, once the contract period was over and I was feeling much better, I decided to rebuild. But there was a glitch! I waited for days on end for creativity to strike back again, but it didn't. I felt helpless for almost six months to a year. It wasn't until I created 'Pomelo' that it all started looking up again. My family and I decided to start a new brand Jo Loves – my son suggested the name. The brand carries a little red dot and that's my fingerprint.

The first year, 2011, was excruciating. I made so many mistakes all over again, had to quickly adjust and decided to try again. We started out with a small office in London and a website. People usually don't buy fragrance without smelling it. Add to that the fact that my name was associated with a global brand – it's so difficult to build a new identity in the same category. We started doing

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- Jo Malone MBE, fragrance designer and founder of Jo Loves

pop-ups at Selfridges and a few other places. By this time, we had a little over 150 customers. Word started going around and the press started writing about us. Our customer base started increasing from 150-to-300-to-3,000-to-10,000-and counting. We saw Jo Loves getting popular very quickly.

Finally, we set up a Jo Loves store three years ago in 2013. It was my 50th birthday. My husband gave me a birthday gift in a small box – a small key to what is today the Jo Loves store on 42 Elizabeth Street. It was the same store from where I had started out my retail journey at the age of 16, working as a staff. I was fired for tripping a bucket of water on someone.

Creativity helps brands connect with consumers

Creativity started talking to me again at that tiny 360 sqft shop. I could sense a voice tell me to do things differently this time. I spent hours thinking how to reinvent. Finally, I came up with a bizarre idea of creating a tapas bar. The idea clicked.

It's a very special feeling when people connect with a brand for the first time and fragrance tapas is all about building that special

connect. That was my way of doing things differently, engaging with the consumers and letting them experience the brand. It's more than buying a product off the shelf. It goes beyond entertainment. The vital element of our business is making the consumer the creator along with the brand. It makes the connection with the product extremely powerful. I have a loyal client base that loves the brand. But it couldn't remain limited to the tapas bar. I had to take it one step further. My husband, who is excellent in strategy, told me he wants to see one patented concept every year to create a paradigm shift in the fragrance business. After the tapas bar came the candle bar and there will be many more such concepts – all this with just one store and 23 people working with the brand. I realise that a business can't be fluffy, it has to make sense and make money too. What we were lacking was distribution. That, too, will change soon as Jo Loves becomes available globally on Net-A-Porter from June 20 shipping to 170 countries worldwide. .

Up close & personal

Your way of working: I love creating and making money too, although I'm not in love with money. The balance of being productive and doing something you love is a blessing. I don't have an office. I don't like to sit at a desk and work so I only have a chair in the office that gets moved around whenever a new member comes in to make space for them. I didn't even have business cards until recently. I'm creative and unconventional.

I'm happiest being in the shop, interacting with customers. I like to tell my story and it's all out of love, so it never seems like a tedious job. I like to bring people on board who are smart in their own areas of expertise. I'm a hard task master. While I expect a lot from people, I'm ever-ready



someone makes a mistake while trying out something new and different. But if something goes wrong, as a company, we collectively figure out how to rectify the situation.

Building the right team: It's crucial for any business to have the right people. My husband and I always worked together, which is a big plus. While he is left-brained and very strategic, I'm right-brained and very creative. People who are part of Jo Loves have been with us for years and this is a huge strength. Our communications director Charlotte has been with us for over 16 years. It is like a family. We sit and have family dinners together. We know each other's strengths and ways of working, with each one of us contributing positively towards growth of the business.

Giving up what you created: People often tend to miss the part before the first Jo Malone shop was launched. The brand was with me for most of my life; it was my best friend. Even today, when I see a Jo Malone store anywhere in the world, I feel very proud. I never stopped loving that brand and I never will. But I don't identify with the brand anymore; I don't feel my creativity in there any longer. That's fine because it belongs to someone else now. There are moments that make me smile and moments that make me sad. I never go into the shops

Decide if it is a hobby or a business idea. If it's a hobby, it's fine. **Be honest with yourself. If it's a business idea, remember there will be many sacrifices.**


anymore because I'm not the consumer, neither am I the creator. I'm in between and it feels awkward. But I don't feel any bitterness or regret.

Creating Jo Loves: When I started out the second time, I could have done something as a hobby. But that's not who I am. When we started Jo Loves, again around the kitchen table, it was to build a global brand, yet again. The journey has been amazing. When I got my life back from cancer, I knew I had to delve deep to find my creativity and make it happen. To not do that for the rest of my life didn't seem like an option – at 50, I was too young to sit around not doing anything and too old to start something from scratch. I had never anticipated leaving Jo Malone. When life took me in a different direction, it was a big shock. I never thought I'd ever start a business again, but I was wrong. I didn't know until then how creating fragrance was such

an integral part of my life, my whole being. Today, people trust me, and they love the brand, and I'll never do anything to break that trust.

Your ultimate goal: I love to learn new things. No matter what you do in life or how successful you are, you have to always learn something new. You have to challenge yourself always, every time. A part of me feels there is something else that I'll create and it may not have to do anything with fragrances. I feel there is something more to come – it could be food, building or something totally different. At this point, I don't know what it is. I want to change the world, but I'm not seeking fame. It will give me a sense of fulfilment and gratitude to life itself to be able to change my life and those of others. And, of course, my ultimate goal is to be happy, content and live and love life.

Message to budding entrepreneurs:

- Decide if it is a hobby or a business idea. If it's a hobby, it's fine. Be honest with yourself. If it's a business idea, remember there will be many sacrifices. You've to figure out if those sacrifices are worth it. But when you build something and it becomes successful, it is very empowering. You become the master of your destiny.
- Retail is no longer restricted to the four walls of a shop or an online presence. There's a third world emerging in retail. To discover this new world, one has to take some risks, get into situations that may not seem so comfortable, have resilience to do things differently and embrace creativity.
- Take the first step. Go out there and see what happens. The worst that can happen is you'll fail. For all you know, this failure might make you humble. Always remember, no one remembers failures forever. Most successful people I know have gone through their share of failures and disappointments. 

As told to Rupkatha Bhowmick





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'IT'S ALL ABOUT **THE CUSTOMER'**

If anybody is passionately involved in international retail business, it is Edgar Rosenberger. He established vertical as well as multichannel retail concepts before people were even talking about them. Today he advises entrepreneurs and corporations with his know-how. His guiding principle has always been to see things from the customer's point of view.

Interview Sabine Kühnl

A number of stages mark the career path of Edgar Rosenberger, who has worked in the retail and fashion business for over 30 years, speaks five languages and divides his time between the headquarters of his company in Hamburg and trips throughout the world.

After earning a master's degree in Business Administration in Mannheim in 1977, he launched his professional career in Sweden (at Saab) and France (with the German-French Chamber of Commerce). In 1980 he started to roll out stores of H&M in Germany and was responsible until 1987 as managing director of the German subsidiary of the Swedish fashion giant.



“ A customer often knows more about a brand or a certain product than a salesperson in a traditional store. **It is becoming more and more important for brands to be transparent and to integrate customers into their processes. Even small brands can gain international attention in the Web quickly.**”

Afterwards he joined Esprit as partner and CEO for its European business and helped the company shift its focus from wholesale to retail. In 1992 Rosenberger founded the vertically integrated retail concept Ipuri, offering contemporary fashion and lifestyle products for men and women. The Ipuri magazine has been named Germany's best customer magazine several times. Since 2003, Rosenberger advises with his business-consulting firm Retail Brand Services companies such as Deutsche Bank, Burda, Jack Wolfskin, Tchibo, Universal Music, Clas Ohlson, Dressmann, Stadium and Reima.

Rosenberger sees himself more as an advisor to entrepreneurs than as a classical consultant for companies. He only accepts engagements involving not only the development of a strategy but its implementation. He helps industry and wholesalers to become retailers as well as foreign companies to get established in the German market. His third and most sizeable focus is advising private equity interests on international branded consumer goods. In addition, he was appointed in 2011 as adjunct professor at the recognized Copenhagen Business School in Denmark.

Rosenberger spoke with SI about the challenges faced by the retail industry today and how consumers need to be approached.

In the 1980s, with the introduction of H&M, you established the vertically integrated model in the German fashion market and later transformed Esprit from a wholesaler into a retailer. This was followed by your launching of cross channeling with Ipuri in the 1990s. Currently, verticals like Primark and also major online retailers such as Amazon and Zalando are coming under fire—both groups dominate the market. Does the criticism make sense to you?

The criticism is certainly justified in part, but despite of all criticism one thing is very clear: in the end it is the purchasing decisions of the consumers which determine the success or failure of these companies. Despite of all their own weaknesses, many of the competitors which criticize Amazon and Zalando, do not recognize the stronger and stronger influence consumers have today.

What does that mean in concrete terms?

The textile value chain has become more and more concentrated in recent years. As a result, vertically integrated companies such as Primark and H&M are in the lead today because they offer better value, are faster and more profitable than traditional retail stores. The advantage of the major pure players on the Web, such as Zalando and Amazon, is both their highly

organized logistics and their extensive knowledge about the buying behavior of their customers.

With their huge data resources, they are able to provide quickly and with high accuracy, what their customers want and need. Both the verticals and the pure players on the Internet have a mindset very strongly focused on the market and their customers. In the end, it is all about the customer!

What do these customers look like today and what do they want?

Today customers primarily want a product range which suits perfectly their needs. They switch back and forth across channels, do online research but purchase offline, or vice versa. Who goes window shopping on Sundays anymore? This is done on the Web now. And brick-and-mortar stores are coming under increasing pressure, because all products are available with the Web everywhere at any time. Additionally customer expectations are extremely high. Relatively speaking, this is true for all target groups.

Does a template of customer target groups make sense anymore today?

Definitely, but in completely new clusters. It doesn't make sense anymore to segment customers according to age, education and income, as it was done in the past. Today, customers identify with lifestyle

“ Good service is when you aren't aware when it's happening. This is when a customer leaves a store or a website with a good feeling. **All customers have their own definition of good service, but the general expectations of product and processes have increased significantly in recent years due to the Internet. The best brand story is useless if the staff at the POS do not live it.**

grouping which they feel they belong to. They identify where they belong in terms of values and basic orientations. And what they expect from brands is significantly more differentiated than it used to be. People can expect a modern image and high quality today at all levels, not only in the premium sector. Especially the verticals, such as H&M, have contributed very much to the democratization of design.

It is often said that making money is only possible either in the high-end or the cheap market segment. Is the mid-priced segment dying?

I don't believe so. The mid-segment between Luxury and Price can be viewed in a more differentiated way, when you break it down into upper and lower mid-market. You have an intense competition in the lower mid-market, where verticals have a high market share. I still see however good growth opportunities in the upper midmarket. This is demonstrated by the increasing activity of vertical concepts in this segment such as Massimo Dutti, COS and & Other Stories. Interaction among these market segments has become much more intense due to the Internet.

...and has led to customers now being very knowledgeable...

Yes, that's true. A customer often knows more about a brand or a certain product than a salesperson in a traditional store. It is becoming more and more important for brands to be transparent and to

integrate customers into their processes. Even small brands can gain international attention in the Web quickly.

Have the major brands seen their best days?

Not at all. But if they want to be successful today, they need to differentiate their product range more than before and also prove they are good retailers. You need to frame the product from a customer perspective! By offering tailor-made products, niche providers avoid competition and gain market share. Verticals such as Inditex began diversifying their concepts many years ago instead of letting everything run under one brand.

“Creating emotions” is one of the most common slogans for exciting customers at the point of sale. But how can these emotions be created, especially online?

It isn't enough for a multibrand retailer to just gather many strong brands at the point of sale. Far more important is how to mix and merchandise these brands and herewith create an own retail branding. Innovation and differentiation are the two key ingredients for establishing a strong USP. As customers become more and more demanding, many traditional retailers cannot meet the increased requirement for an exciting product presentation in their store. To surprise and to excite customers at the point of sale is the basis for good retailing, regardless of whether it is offline or online.

Who does this especially well then?

Even if the innovation pace has been weakening with Ralph Lauren in recent years, for me he is still a star. He knows how to stage themes and tell stories. H&M is one of the few fashion companies which really do well with omni-channeling. I admit, that this is easier for a vertical than for a wholesaler with limited retail revenues of its own. H&M has also shown with brand concepts such as COS and & Other Stories that they can make more inroads into the upper midmarket segment.

Where is there a particular need to catch up?

The list in that regard is long. There are notable deficits with many brick-and-mortar retailers, especially when it comes to their private labels and with personnel. Retailers are launching more and more private label products on the market, because of the need of low entry price levels or higher profit margins. But very few retailers succeed in making genuine brands out of these labels.

How come?

They do not succeed in developing a comprehensive brand story with its own product design, graphic, packaging and communication. For years I have been in a clinch now with a major German clothing retailer which is trying to take over the brand Ipuri from me through court actions. This retailer is neither capable of



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“ Nearly 40% of offline customers have gathered information online before they become active offline. More and more of them are using mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets to do so. **From the customer's point of view, omnichannel retailing is a seamless shopping experience requiring the supplier to have a holistic, cross-channel brand presence.**

developing its own brand story and attractively presenting it at the POS, nor does it understand the value of a genuine brand. However, there is a vast difference between a lovemark and a label. In addition to private labels, a further major challenge is personnel. You need employees who love their job and want to get things going. Brick-and-mortar retailing cannot get the upper hand against the Internet by cutting down on sales staff or scaling back service.

What do you consider good service?

Good service is when you aren't aware when it's happening. This is when a customer leaves a store or a website with a good feeling. All customers have their own definition of good service, but the general expectations of product and processes have increased significantly in recent years due to the Internet. Amazon stands out for its logistics and customer data in its huge database. In brick-and-mortar retail it's to a considerable extent the staff which makes the difference. The best brand story is useless if the staff at the POS do not live it.

But what is actually the use anymore? Haven't we been trained to serve ourselves for years now? Just look at supermarkets, banks, bakeries...

Yes, but you can't just lump them all together. Based on their hybrid behavior while shopping, customers make quite different demands depending on their varying needs.

The Internet has redefined service and put offline retailing under immense pressure.

The only problem is that it is becoming more and more difficult to find good staff who will take relatively low-paid jobs in the service industry...

It has never been easy to find good staff in service industries. In addition, jobs at Internet business are more attractive for young people even though there are no better salaries than in physical retail. What is missing at brick-and-mortar retailing are passionate teachers and good job perspectives. The dramatic low demand for apprenticeships in retail is the best indicator that something is wrong. Thanks to omnichannel retailing and retail branding, there ought to be many new opportunities opening up for young people in retail.

What factors need to be kept in mind when creating an innovative retail concept or developing a strong brand?

The most important success factor is a good product, for nothing works without a unique and innovative range of goods. Thereafter comes the store, in other words the presentation of the brand both offline and online. Good communication and enthusiastic staff are also necessary to establish a strong brand. And last but not least you need effective operations in place, such as logistics, merchandise management and IT. All these success factors must perfectly fit together like the links in a

chain. In the end, a retail concept or a strong brand is only as good as the weakest link in that chain.

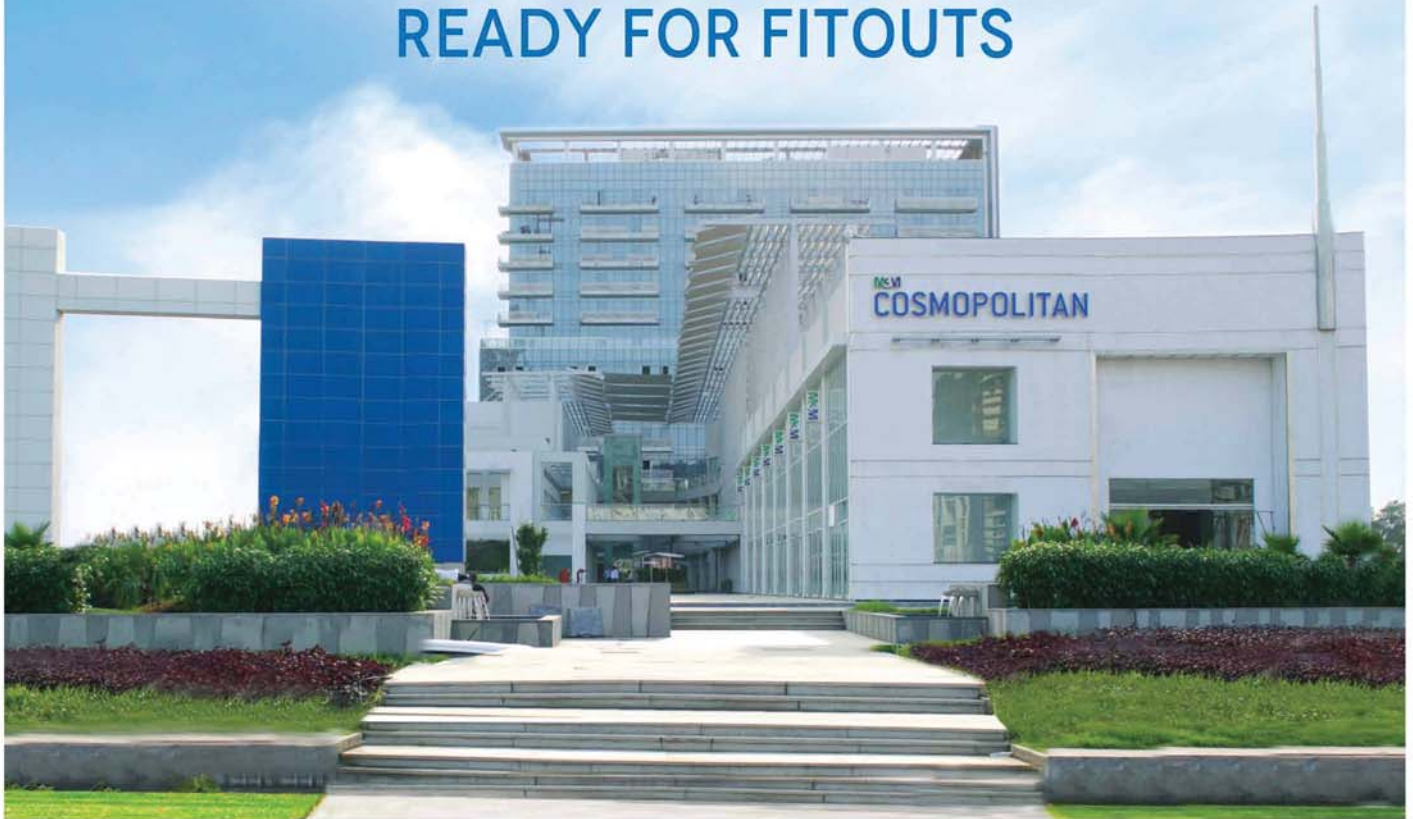
What about the store?

For offline, it starts with the choice of the right location and signing a good lease contract. After that come the implementation of the brand concept in the store design and the visual merchandising. How do I make my store attractive with interesting crossovers? And if I can't manage that on my own, what conceptual third partners do I add if necessary? It is just the same with digital presentation. Here too, a brand must be similarly projected in all its facets.

Is an online store absolutely necessary for every brick-and-mortar retailer nowadays?

Not for everyone, but if your customer is cross channeling, you need as a physical store to have also an online store. Nearly 40% of offline customers have gathered information online before they become active offline. More and more of them are using mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets to do so. From the customer's point of view, omnichannel retailing is a seamless shopping experience requiring the supplier to have a holistic, cross-channel brand presence. Finally it is no longer a matter of the origin of your brand and the question of whether H&M was originally a brick-and-mortar retailer, Boss a manufacturer, or Amazon a pure player

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“ It is really boring when you always find the same brand shop-in-stores lined up side by side across a lot of multibrand retail space. Fortunately, the success of pop-up stores is adding some surprising moments at stores. Customers love and appreciate that, **also on the Internet where you have far more entrepreneurial daring with new ideas. This is also because the financial resources for a company are easier made available online than offline. Courageous start-ups in physical retail face an uphill battle.**

on the Web. The only thing which counts for a customer is the value of a brand and the required availability of its product offer.

What does this mean with regard to a brand's image?

First of all, customers expect today credibility from a brand and to an increasing degree also sustainability. The image of a brand is no longer the story told by the company's PR agency, but the story told by fans and bloggers. A brand company can control the design of its products and stores, the clothing hangers and shopping bags, but the image of a brand is driven by its customers. Once again, it's all about the customer!

Well, retailing is fine as far as that goes-but the value chain starts quite a bit earlier...

It is certainly not unimportant where and at what price the raw materials for a product are purchased and how a product is manufactured. But the moment of truth in the supply chain comes at the point where contact with the consumer occurs, regardless of whether this is online or offline. That is why

I feel no doubt that the customer calls the shots more than ever, and that retail is the decisive point in the supply chain.

But why is it that you still get the feeling that you are surrounded by a lot of boring retail concepts? Is there a lack of ideas?

No, there are many creative ideas around. The problem in my opinion is their implementation. Either there is no holistic concept or sometimes there is quite simply no money for the investment necessary for implementation.

It is really boring when you always find the same brand shop-in-stores lined up side by side across a lot of multibrand retail space. Fortunately, the success of pop-up stores is adding some surprising moments at stores. Customers love and appreciate that, also on the Internet where you have far more entrepreneurial daring with new ideas. This is also because the financial resources for a company are easier made available online than offline. Courageous start-ups in physical retail face an uphill battle.


You are thoroughly familiar with the trials of business life. After all, in your own retail project Ipuri you had to contend with insolvency. What was actually the problem at the time and did you feel this was a failure?

Many people believe that we were too much ahead of our time with Ipuri in the 1990s. That is not my

personal view. What made the project fail at that time was that it simply did not reach critical mass. You need some revenue for the success of a vertically integrated retail concept, which is sufficient for the minimum purchase quantities as well as to support the development of its own brand and design. To achieve this minimum level of revenue we would have had to have at least twice the number of stores we had at the time.

We simply failed to achieve this level of expansion. In the US failure is almost a requirement in the life of a true entrepreneur. That kind of experience is a stimulus to do it better next time.

Having tried it once and done everything right-Isn't there still a factor which cannot be anticipated?

What do you need to keep in the back of your head? When all is said and done, the decisive things are passion and fun. You have to be consumed by an idea and never forget the fun involved in implementing a project. In Silicon Valley the fun factor is one of the decisive components in choosing a job. Nobody counts the hours when you have fun with what you do. 



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DESIGNED WITH PASSION

Founded in 1952, BoConcept is globally-renowned premium furniture and accessories brand, offering customised, coordinated and affordable products styled for modern day living. With its flagship store opened in New Delhi recently, the brand seeks to add a touch of class and its “Urban Danish Design” heritage to homes of NCR denizens.

By Namita Bhagat

Denmark-based BoConcept, a premium furniture and accessories brand, has entered the Indian market via the franchise route. With its flagship store opened in New Delhi recently, the brand is looking to mesmerize the denizens of National Capital Region (NCR) with its exquisite, modern design furniture that adds a touch of class and its “Urban Danish Design” heritage to one’s abode! BoConcept has appointed Zoe Concepts Pvt. Ltd. as its exclusive franchise partner for Delhi NCR and other markets. The firm has been conceptualized by Navin Khanna, who is a modern contemporary design enthusiast. An established entrepreneur, he also owns “Nouvel”, a leading integrated service provider company, offering solutions for: facility management, turnkey interiors, ambient scenting, handyman services and plant rentals.

The origin of the brand dates back to 1952, tells Navin. “BoConcept is a premium furniture and accessories brand based in Herning, Denmark. Its foundations were laid by two Danish craftsmen, Jens Ærthøj and TageMølholm. Part of the brand’s name is “Bo”, a Danish name for “living” and other part is “concept”, and thus, BoConcept stands for creating your own living concept. The brand, today, enjoys a worldwide presence, with approximately 250 flagship stores in 60 countries,” he expounds.

Market potential

The taste and fashion of the people in Delhi is evolving each day, notes Navin and says that we are extremely excited about the launch of the BoConcept flagship store in the national capital. I believe that the well-travelled discerning buyer of New Delhi would be able to identify with our product offerings. There is a void in the interior space for high quality finished products designed by world-class designers. We believe that BoConcept will successfully fill that void in the market. What makes us even more unique is our ability to customize each piece to suit the individual style of our buyers. It's more than a great design, it's a concept!

Inside the store

The BoConcept store presents an ultimate destination for modern and contemporary furniture. It offers a wide assortment of home furniture and accessories ranging from small accessories to complete furniture solution for the entire home. "Our store is situated at MG Road, Delhi and is spread across 4,500 sq.ft. of area. It has 14 in-house studios displaying different design schemes and has skilled design consultants to assist customers decorate the home of their dreams. The store offers a wide range

of furnitures like dining tables, beds, sofas, chairs, etc. and accessories like cushions, rugs, lamps, etc. to choose from," Navin informs.

Product bouquet

In furniture, the brand's product range comprises: living (sofas, sofa accessories, sofa sleepers, daybeds, armchairs, coffee tables, etc.); dining (tables, chairs, bar stools, sideboards); sleeping (beds, sofa sleepers, mattresses, bedspreads, etc.); storing (wall systems, media units, book cases, shelves, chest of drawers); hallway (hallway furniture, mirror & accessories); working (desks & chairs, office accessories); and outdoor (furniture & accessories).

Product range in accessories includes: decorations (vases, candlesticks, bowls & dishes, sculptors, clocks & mirrors, wall decorations & frames); textiles (cushions, bedspreads, poufs, throws and more); rugs (rugs & runners); lamps (floor, table, pendants, wall); functional accessories (living collection, storage, stools, racks & hooks, office accessories).

Pricing strategy

The brand will primarily cater to the upper middle class with its range of modern design products. Regarding the pricing strategy in India, Navin apprised, "We call it as affordable luxury for the reason that we are not on the top end of the market but we

The BoConcept store presents an ultimate destination for modern and contemporary furniture. **It offers a wide assortment of home furniture and accessories**



are somewhere slightly above what we get at this point of time in India.” He also lets in that the minimum price for a piece of furniture such as a 3-seater sofa or bed starts from ₹1.5 lakhs and can go upto ₹10 lakhs and above. The minimum price of accessory item like

candle holder is ₹600 whilst the most expensive piece of accessory can cost ₹20,000 and above.

Made for success

Importantly, BoConcept’s whole range will be produced at Denmark and

would be imported to India. But why not manufacture locally? Navin avers, “The USP of the product is that it’s manufactured in Europe and we don’t want to take that speciality away from it.”

The brand has a passionate team of talented in-house designers at its headquarters, who design exclusively for it. They strive to design the perfect furniture and accessories in their quest to help their patrons realize their dream home. They are devoted to urban life and functionality yet hold their background, ideas and approaches whilst creating the beautiful products with international audience in mind. Simplicity and functionality are BoConcept’s core values. The designers focus on optimizing the manufacturing process and making it cost-efficient without compromising on the look. Besides, the designs are a clever and innovative piece of work. The brand takes delight in accomplishing the best results for its customers. BoConcept’s design and product knowledge can help them make the best choices for their living spaces.



“ The USP of the product is that it’s manufactured in Europe and we don’t want to take that speciality away from it by local manufacturing.

- Navin Khanna, BoConcept Franchise Partner (for Delhi and other markets)



...What’s next?

Encouraged by the positive customer reception in Delhi, Zoe Concepts is planning to expand BoConcept into other markets also, for which it has franchise rights. It is looking to have two stores in Mumbai and Bengaluru by 2017. Shares Navin, “We plan to open another one in Mumbai by February 2017, followed by Bengaluru and Chennai. In the next three years, we expect to have at least four stores, and eight stores in all in the next five years.” In reference to the sales expectations, he feels that each store could generate at least ₹12 crores a year. Zoe Concepts will be investing roughly half a million euros (~ ₹4 crores) for opening each new store. The firm has already started scouting for locations in Mumbai, where the store is expected to open its doors by March next year. **IR**

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Company Name	
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2.	FOC Ads / Promo Banners on Images Group Portals / E Newsletter + EDMs (applicable as per category).	FOC up to Rs.25,000	FOC up to Rs.1 Lac	FOC up to Rs.2 Lacs	FOC up to Rs.5 Lacs
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7.	Presence at indiaretailing/ India Retail Forum website	URL Link	URL Link	URL Link	URL Link
8.	Placement of 100 copies of Catalogues at Members Lounge	NA	NA	NA	NA

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