

Retail Sustainability

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PROGRESSIVE GROCCER

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PASSIONATE RETAILER

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– T. Thanushgaran

Chairman, Kannan Departmental Store

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Is foreign direct investment in multi-brand food retail the bugbear it is made out to be? Experience suggests otherwise. The opposition and resistance to 100 per cent FDI in multi-brand retail – as compared to the 51 per cent cap currently – is mostly exaggerated and founded on misconceptions. The fear that owners of small kiranas will bear the brunt of loss of business and livelihood is not rooted in ground reality. “Walmart has 20 of its 25 outlets in Punjab and no kirana shop has been driven out of business there,” points out Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Union minister for food processing, whose efforts have nudged the government into allowing 100 per cent FDI through FIPB route in marketing of food produced in India. The policy, announced in the Budget, has been hailed as a very progressive decision.

At a time, when agrarian stress is very pronounced and the rural economy is reeling, the announcement is expected to promote farmers' interest and welfare, encourage farm diversification and boost food processing. Whether it will prompt more international retailers to set up shop in India is something we will see in the fullness of time.

All the same, the announcement has sent very positive vibes for the industry, which has now set its sights on further reforms in the food sector. Many in the industry are hoping that this decision will eventually act as a proxy for allowing full FDI in multi-brand retail. If and when such a decision comes, it will be for the good and betterment of the industry as a whole.



Amitabh Taneja
 Editor-in-Chief

All feedback welcome at editorpgindia@imagesgroup.in

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New products on the shelves



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Market Update

Trent Hypermarket ties up with Future Consumer Enterprise Ltd

Star Bazaar, a Tata & Tesco enterprise, has tied up with Future Consumer Enterprise Ltd. to retail its wide range of food and non-food products across Star Bazaar stores. Star Bazaar will introduce close to 148 SKUs across 10 FCEL brands to provide its customers a unique product price proposition. Star Bazaar currently operates 22 stores (10 hypermarkets, 9 convenience stores, 3 supermarkets) across Mumbai, Pune, Kolhapur, Aurangabad and Bengaluru.

FCEL's portfolio includes consumer brands in the food category like Sunkist, Tasty Treat, Karmiq, Desi Atta and Fresh & Pure, and Think Skin, Clean Mate and Care Mate in non-foods. Speaking at the launch, Kishore Biyani, Group CEO, Future Group said, "This is a new beginning for Future Consumer Enterprise where we would distribute our products through large modern store formats and reach



Kishore Biyani (left), Group CEO, Future Group and **Jamshed Daboo**, MD, Trent Hypermarket Ltd

more and more consumers. I can't be happier that this new journey is starting with a group like Tata."

Jamshed Daboo, MD, Trent Hypermarket, said, "With this tie-up, we will be bringing our customers an extensive range of high quality food products and non-food merchandise. Our objective is to enhance our existing range and ensure we address the growing needs of customers to access unique products at affordable price points."

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Trade fair for tea and coffee sectors

The fourth edition of World Tea & Coffee Expo, India's only International trade fair dedicated to the tea & coffee sectors, will be held from 20-22 Oct. 2016 in Mumbai. The Expo offers a credible avenue for all the stakeholders of the hot



beverage sector to come together under a single roof for networking, business expansion and ideas exchange. The event acts as a catalyst for companies to expand their presence in India and provides a huge potential for franchising, marketing alliances, appointing distributors, bulk orders, joint ventures and overall branding. Supported by the Ministry of Commerce (Tea Board of India) and global associations, the 2016 edition shall have 3-4 country pavilions and international buying delegations from Dubai, Iran, Nepal, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, EU to name a few, WTCE is expecting about 100 Exhibitors from 10 countries and a visitor base of 5000+ industry professionals from across India & abroad for the 2016 edition. While entry to the trade event is free, the show is not open to the general public and only industry professionals will be allowed.

Chile is world's major mussel exporter

Despite a reduction in purchases by European countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and Russia, the South American nation continues to increase its shipments. Globefish, one of the agencies responsible for market analysis on seafood products for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), has published its most recent report on international trade in mussels. According to Globefish, the world's current biggest importers of mussels experienced an 11,000-tonne reduction in their purchases between January and September 2015, a fall of 6% compared to the equivalent period in 2014.



exports in the same period, a decline of 17% compared to the figure up to September 2014. The European Union, as a region, is one of the largest consumers of mussels, so acquisitions by its member nations play a considerable role in the outcome of world trade for this product. An analysis of the January-September period for the past six years shows a growth in EU imports (from 149,000

to 172,000 tonnes); however, in the same time period in 2015, purchases fell 7% when compared to sales averaged for the same nine months for the years 2010 to 2014 (157,300 tons), with the Netherlands recording the greatest contraction: 5,700 tonnes (-34%). Other European nations that experienced a significant drop in imports include Germany with 3,800 tonnes (-29%) and Russia with 3,300 tonnes (-46%). Meanwhile, shipments to Italy, one of the largest mussel importers in Europe, increased by 4,800 (+16%). **PG**

Despite the drop in global imports, the report highlights that during the first nine months of 2015, shipments from Chile increased by 2,500 tonnes, reaching 59,300 tonnes overall. Furthermore, based on data provided by InfoTrade for AQUA, at 2015 year-end, the national mussel farming industry sent a total of 69,499 tonnes to different markets, a figure 8% higher than the 64,096 tonnes exported in 2014, which translated into US\$201 million in returns, 6% up from the previous year's US\$189 million.

Chile's counterpart New Zealand, another major mussel producer, experienced a 21,200-tonne drop in

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Going back to basics

How can a retailer win and retain customer loyalty in today's environment when the impact of e-retail is becoming more pronounced and reshaping shopper behaviour?

By Alagu Balaraman

In a recent conference on e-commerce organised by Dynamic CIO, there were more CIOs from brick and mortar retailers than from the world of e-retail. Everyone was concerned about understanding the impact of the rapidly evolving world of e-retail. Interestingly, there were some good pointers to how traditional retailers can effectively use technology themselves to build their competitive advantage.

Modern trade in India has steadily grown in the last 20 years to capture 8-10% of all retail trade. However, in the last few years, e-retailers have taken over about two per cent of spend themselves. That maybe two per cent of overall retail, but if you look at that two per cent alongside the 8-10%, that's 20-25% of what modern trade could have captured.

Of the various topics explored in the sessions, two areas are of significant relevance: firstly, how can a retailer win and retain customer loyalty in today's environment and, secondly, the extent of overhaul required to ensure that these gains are sustainable. In this article, we will look at the first topic.

Why are you a fickle shopper?

Most people have their favourite store for most categories of purchases. These could be based on location, satisfaction or trust, or a combination of

these factors. Why then would they shift to ordering online? The popular view is that it is primarily driven by discounts offered by the cash burning e-retailers. However, a study of online shopper behaviour conducted by Nielsen showed that the top three reasons for a person buying online in India are: advertising, peer influence and recommendations. The other, and less significant, reasons include attractive discounts, convenience and access to a full range.

What are your strengths?

The world of e-retail has some powerful advantages. E-retailers can study every single customer, every single time they visit. This is an awesome capability. It allows e-retailers to go deep into understanding their customers' collective and individual buying behaviours. They can tailor their offerings pretty much on a one-on-one basis. At least, that's the theory. In reality this is hard to do, but they will get there.

Does this mean brick-and-mortar retail is doomed? Not really. It is important to remember two things. First, the common image of online shoppers jumping from one website to another comparing prices and choosing the lowest one is not that common in reality. Nielsen has also shown that 50% of shoppers stick to their favourite online retailer. People with larger spends, who are more valuable

to any retailer, tend to have less time to deal with a variety of websites. Shopper behaviour is likely to be similar, irrespective of whether they are going online or offline. The second important factor to keep in mind is that traditional brick-and-mortar retailers have a significant advantage. They are already known and trusted by shoppers. There is a history of trust, an understanding and an immediacy of touch and feel that cannot be offered online, at least for now!

In the past, modern trade was a novelty and offered new value to shoppers. There was dramatically improved display, more range and shoppers could take their time. However, with time and increase in numbers, what was a superiority in the past has become a norm. What new customer-facing innovations have been done in the past few years? Not much, really. To get to the next level of attractiveness for a customer, it is necessary to bring about change and to do that, it doesn't make sense to blindly copy an e-retailer, but to use insights from studying how people shop.

Know thy shopper

In best utilising these two insights, an excellent point was made by Ashish Jhalani, of e-Tail India, who referred to the concept of exploiting "micro opportunities". These are small opportunities in the shopping journey where, if a change is made, it makes it easier for the shopper. For example, putting accessories alongside dresses and shirts and not tucked away in a separate corner. Trying out a new satay paste? Are the sticks that go with it nearby? Make it easier for the new and experimental shopper – they are most of your growth.



The traditional model of studying shopper behaviour in the store around the corner was a stout gentleman sitting behind the counter near the entrance of the store. He would collect payments, but also keep an eye on customers in the store and the staff. If a customer were searching for something and muttering, he would ask them what they were looking for and help them. In all this observation and interventions, the owner had a very good idea of the needs and buying behaviour of his customers, down to the level of each individual.

Matching that is hard in today's retail formats. The level of staff engagement or, for that matter, even having the staff around long enough to recognise regular customers is a challenge. However, it does not have to be everyone. Just a few of the senior staff, supported with basic statistics and with appropriate feedback processes could make a big difference to sales and customer loyalty.

Help your customer

Technology can play a big role to help brick-and-mortar retailers, as the e-commerce retailers have shown. They measure everything. What items did you view? How long did you view it? Did you come back to see it again? Is it in your wish list or your shopping cart?

Additionally, brick and mortar retailers can have an appropriate online presence, to complement what they do in stores. Attempting to do a pure play online retail model would be a challenge. World over, the omnichannel model is much talked about but is still somewhat hazy – nowhere near standardised. This is a good thing, for in times like this a smart player can get ahead. Once a new idea becomes standard, all relative advantage is lost.

It makes sense, therefore, to stick to (or restart to) focus on your customers and in attracting new customers. Understand their buying needs and helping to shape their buying behaviour. For example, a grocer knows that shopping for monthly provisions is very different from buying weekly groceries. For the weekly purchase, suggesting personalised new offerings for snacks just the day before your customer visits or menu ideas can help with coming up with something new each week.

In today's world, buying online has cachet. Brick-and-mortar retail needs to give customers something to feel special about. If it can give them bragging rights with others, the chances are they will stay loyal and continue to do business with you.

Like most change, it is best done incrementally, but in quick iterations. Small changes done rapidly are easier to absorb, both by customers and by your own staff. This would be an easier, less risky way to using technology to building a barrier to exit. **PG**

Technology can play a big role to help brick-and-mortar retailers, as the e-commerce retailers have shown. They measure everything. What items did you view? How long did you view it? Did you come back to see it again? Is it in your wish list or your shopping cart?

The writer is Partner & Managing Director – CGN & Associates India Pvt. Ltd.



Creating a new brand story through sustainability

This article is the second in a three-part series that aims to raise some critical questions and reflect on the possible solutions toward better production and consumption in the context of Indian retail.

While the first part of the series focussed on the importance of retail in driving demand for sustainable commodities, this part focuses on the role of brands in the creation of sustainable markets

As an average Indian consumer shopping at the local supermarket, if you were to look for ‘green’ or sustainable products on the retail shelf, you would find four or five brands that have internationally recognised credible certifications – products that you would trust have met their state environmental and social commitments. The challenge, then, is where are these products, how do you get to know about them, how do you access them, and why aren’t there more available in India?

In a report titled ‘Consumer Perception Survey on Green Products’ by Green Purchasing Network of India in 2014, it is stated that the buying trends of Indian consumers indicate that they are often deterred from buying green products because of limited visibility and low availability of green products in Indian markets (Consumer Perception Survey on Green Products, 2014 – Green Purchase Network of India). To change this trend and address the immediate issue, concerted and combined efforts by the civil society, industry and government are required. There is an urgent need to build markets for products that have a smaller environmental footprint and which have been created with concerns for social equity in mind.

Brands, as a key stakeholder in this change process, are at a critical position and could embrace among the most functional approaches to creating a market for sustainable products. In a complex market like India, brands with commitments on sustainability offer an ideal platform to garner consumer and producers’ trust and push the growth of sustainable markets and supply chains.

Indian brands can follow the examples of their global peers from markets like the European Union, Australia and the United States where it is a common practice to adopt sustainability practices and certifications. In these markets, sustainability comes with a strong business case covering aspects of market access, long-term consumer loyalty and brand visibility. High sales are often associated with “good” brands, which typically adhere to environment and social safeguards.

With credible certifications and labelling, brands in India also have an opportunity to tap into a new and evolving market segment – the upwardly mobile, well travelled, brand-conscious, “green” shopper. Now, more than ever before, Indian brands are trying to reinvent themselves to create and cater to new market segments. The “green shopper” is a point of leverage that could potentially be a game-changer.

A report by BBMG and Globescan titled ‘Rethinking Consumption: Consumer and the Future of Sustainability’, published in 2012, reflects that the largest consumer segment in Brazil, China and India represents hundreds of millions of consumers – growing to perhaps billions by 2050. Forward-thinking brands should prioritise reaching them to redefine value, earn their trust and influence them to rethink sustainability.

According to the report, consumers in developing markets are more likely to adopt sustainable behaviours than their counterparts in developed markets, including checking the list of product ingredients (65% vs. 49%) and seeking products in concentrated forms that reduce product packaging (55% vs. 42%).



With the right marketing strategy, brands can establish an interface for consumers interested in sustainable products and producers willing to offer these products. Marketing campaigns that narrate the sustainability journeys of a brand can be used to educate the consumer, not just about the product itself but also about the authenticity of commitments and green claims. In this case, certifications and labels can be used as a mechanism to showcase

authentic claims that ensure measurable impact of the 'green' product on high environmental, social and economic criteria.

Setting an example

While many companies have invested in cause-related marketing, there are also other ways to approach the consumer – for example with on-product labelling of certified sustainable products and off-product marketing and promotion of credible certifications linked to a broader sustainability narrative. Brands can also promote sustainable consumption practices through experiential platforms which engage the consumers with a call to action.

The adoption and promotion of credible sustainability certifications, whether on product or off, links the consumer with demonstrably 'real' environmental, social and economic impact on-ground. For example, Kimberly-Clark, the world's largest tissue manufacturer and WWF Australia partnered on a 'Love Your Forests' campaign to raise awareness about Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the importance of responsible forest management among consumers. FSC is a globally recognised certification that promotes environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial

Indian brands can follow the examples of their global peers from markets like the European Union, Australia and the United States where it is a common practice to adopt sustainability practices and certifications

Man Pasand

Fruit Bhi Fizz Bhi

FRUITS UP

Fruits up contains Fruit



In India, responsible brands are gradually making sustainability a key theme in their consumer engagement. As an effort to positively influence consumer behaviour on seafood choices, ITC Hotels is working with WWF-India on an experiential platform called 'Choose Wisely' that aims to raise awareness of the heavy exploitation of endangered fish resources and encourage consumer action to curb the demand on overfished species. A menu has recently been brought out for almost 41 ITC Pavilion restaurants, classifying fish using a traffic light rating system of red, orange and green. Green indicates that the choice made by the consumer is sustainable and free from adverse environmental impacts. Orange indicates the fish chosen, could be under threat of overexploitation and red indicates the fish is from overexploited fisheries and is under population threat. The marketing and supply chain changes required to implement the programme are an enhancement to ITC's 'responsible luxury' brand.

Responsible brands already understand the value of sustainability oriented business practices. These brands can tell the larger story behind their products and let consumers discover and experience the life cycle of their products, the people who make them, and the social and environmental progress witnessed over time, while simultaneously adding to their own marketing and sustainability story. In Japan, Coca-Cola launched a locally produced mineral water. It sold 200 million bottles in six months and captured a staggering 25% market. A large part of its extraordinary success is credited to the "consumer connection" achieved through the creative marketing of the product's recyclability by environmental positioning that the consumer could understand and relate to.



Creating a "sustainable brand" in India

In India, brands are at a point where they can drive change. This can be done by not just providing an interface between "green shoppers" and sustainable products but also creating awareness about the brands' own responsible practices. Commitment can be endorsed and showcased through credible and internationally recognised certifications on products. Consumption can be incentivised by demonstrating to consumers the social and environmental value of the product rather just product features like quality, safety etc. Most importantly, brands in India can avoid general "green" claims and communicate the progress made on their own commitments. Sustainability could thus easily evolve into the "big switch" that the retail market in India has been waiting for. **PG**

For further information on sustainability in retail, contact:
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Sources: Global Practices in Promoting Environmental Sustainability: A Roadmap for Indian Retail – WWW Report.

Marketing campaigns that narrate the sustainability journeys of a brand can be used to educate the consumer, not just about the product itself but also about the authenticity of commitments and green claims

and economically viable management of the world's forests. The Love Your Forests on-product label linked the well-recognised WWF panda logo with the FSC mark. Kimberly-Clark's leading brands Kleenex Cottonelle, Kleenex facial tissues and VIVA paper towel featured the Love Your Forests label on supermarket shelves in Australia. The campaign helped to differentiate Kimberly-Clark's products in a crowded marketplace, and when linked with a television campaign went a long way to communicate their environmental credentials.

WWF and IKEA have been working on key commodity related value chains including cotton and timber, since 2002. Through engagement in 12 countries, innovation and advocacy, the partnership supports responsible forest management, sustainable cotton, and better water management. Promoting their use of certified raw material off-product, IKEA designed the "We Love Wood" campaign for consumers to highlight their use of wood sourced in an environmentally and socially responsible way.



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Sanjeev Gupta
President, Sales &
Marketing, DRRK Foods

“Marketing Basmati rice has always been a complex game”

Pure Basmati rice is referred to as the ‘champagne of rice’. Like a fine wine, Basmati rice keeps improving with age. The demand for good quality Basmati rice has many takers prompting many food companies to enter this segment in recent years. Punjab-based DRRK Foods, a leading basmati rice exporter, is one such recent entrant in the domestic market, with its flagship brand Crown Basmati.

Progressive Grocer speaks to Sanjeev Gupta, President, Sales & Marketing of DRRK Foods, about the intrinsic values of Basmati rice, its benefits, and how competition in the Basmati rice market has been ratcheting up in recent years. Gupta is an industry veteran of over 20 years, and is recognised as a pioneer in establishing Basmati rice brands in the cut-throat Indian market and, like a bottle of aged wine, is one of the most sought after professionals in the industry



How would you describe your journey till date in this complex Basmati rice market?

In the last 10 years or so, the Basmati rice market in India has become fiercer and intensely competitive with the birth of new brands. It's not that the profusion of brands did not exist before. The difference was that all the brands earlier were coexisting and were mostly into wholesale and marketing in the international marketplace. In recent years, many of these players have started launching their consumer packs in the domestic market. The reason is that while there is a growing demand for Basmati rice in the domestic market, there has been a concomitant decrease in demand for the same in the international markets.

I debuted in the industry around the time when competition in the rice market was heating up and found the going tough in the initial stages. To get an established distributor selling the competitors' brands to sell your product in the market was not an easy job. True, marketing Basmati rice has always been a complex game. I had to adapt and come up with lots of innovation in sales & marketing for the brands I was associated with. But dealing with the distributors and retailers was a different ball game altogether.

However, learning and adaptation has been my forte, and within a short span of time our Crown Basmati Rice brand has become the talking point in the distributors' circle. From one brand to another, my journey of creating a footprint has been of great satisfaction. However, I treat this as just the beginning. There is much more to come!

Which is the most challenging market you have worked in?

In my view every market is competitive and tough and so one needs to understand the market needs and wants. I try to understand these areas from the consumer point of view and tailor my product's attributes accordingly.

What is so special about Basmati rice, which is different from other rice varieties?

Basmati is a unique and aromatic long-grain rice, which originated in India. The best quality Basmati rice is primarily grown in the Himalayan foothills, especially in the states of Punjab, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and in a few other areas. Thanks to modern technology, these days Basmati rice is available in multi-processed forms such as raw, steamed, parboiled, brown, and diet rice. Each process has its own nutritional values and every variety has its unique taste and aroma.

There are other region-specific rice varieties. These are mainly produced and consumed in the



specific geographical areas across India. But nothing matches the perfect blend of length, taste and aroma as Basmati. It is unique by nature and proudly Indian in its identity.

Is it not true that Basmati Rice is accessible to only the top strata of the society?

In the earlier days, Basmati was definitely a premium commodity and was accessible to the rich and elite only. But with the advancements in milling and processing and the initiatives taken by government and research oriented private companies, the production and output of Basmati paddy has grown manifold over the last few decades. This increase in production has reduced the price and brought basmati to the reach of the common man. So today we have many choices available. Two-year-old Basmati is available, which is further divided into different grades like full-grain Basmati rice, Tibar and Tukda (smaller sizes of Basmati grain). So virtually, there is Basmati available in the market for every segment of the society.

How do you propose to do your bit for the society?

I strongly feel that "We become what we eat". Living up to this principle, I always put my focus on serving the best quality and most hygienic rice, which should also have the highest standards of nutritional values in it. Apart from that, we are associated with quite a few NGOs. Recently, we tied up with World Hope Foundation during the Rakhi & Dussehera festival by offering our products to the underprivileged children. These are the organisations constantly working on fulfilling the nutritional needs of the underprivileged sections of our society. We try and extend our support to such NGOs in all possible manner. **PG**

In recent years, many rice players have started launching their consumer packs in the domestic market. The reason is that while there is a growing demand for Basmati rice in the domestic market, there has been a concomitant decrease in demand for the same in the international markets

“We are continuously innovating new recipes to add value to our product basket”



Manish Madan, owner of Regal Kitchen Foods Pvt. Ltd, speaks to Progressive Grocer about his company's growing product portfolio, its major markets and the factors driving the products' uptake



Manish Madan

MD, Regal Kitchen Foods Pvt. Ltd



Briefly describe the product range brought out by Regal Kitchen Foods.

Our product range covers ready-to-eat in retort packaging (Indian curries, cook-in-sauces, rice & health grains), ginger garlic paste, bhuna masala cooking paste, pickles, ketchup, Chinese sauces, fruit jams, mayonnaise, dips, spreads, pizza and pasta sauce.

Which consumer segments and demographic groups are your products targeted at?

Our focus is on general retail trade and institutions. The products are targeted at chefs, cooks, housewives, working couples, independent working persons, students, unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers. These consumer segments go for products, which offer convenience, taste and good health. Our products have all these attributes and they act like support pillars in the consumers' daily need of cooking, besides also offering them palate satisfaction and health benefits.

What has been the growth rate for these products and what would be their estimated market size at present?

For ready-to-eat products, the market size is Rs. 280 crore currently and it is growing at 15-20% per annum.

What has been the growth rate of your major products?

In the domestic market, our major products are ginger-garlic paste, mayonnaise, tomato ketchup and pickles. They are distributed through our own distribution network in north India. These products have been showing a growth rate of 25%-30% per annum.

What do you think is driving the consumption trend for these products?

Our major products are consumed by the working class, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, bakeries, restaurants, caterers, street food sellers, etc. The consumption of our products is driven by the increasing availability of fast food at low prices, scarcity of time to cook, volatile prices of basic fresh ingredients and vegetables, availability and acceptability of packaged food, rise in income, and evolving tastes and preferences.

How do you compare the growth trends for your products in urban areas vis-a-vis rural India?

Our products have acceptability in both urban and rural areas though we drive better sales in rural and semi-urban sectors. This is because in urban areas, consumers are more brand-sensitive and loyal whereas in the rural sector a quality product like ours can drive sales with an efficient service.



Which is the best-selling product in your portfolio?

Our best-selling products depend upon the State or geography we cater to. Overall, our ginger-garlic paste, mayonnaise and mixed pickle are the best-selling products.

Tell us about your R&D and product development process.

We have a separate well-equipped R&D facility at our factory, which is serviced by an adequate, skilled and efficient manpower. We believe the food industry is a very demanding sector, which requires change all time for improvements in the factors like better convenience, taste and preference. We are continuously innovating new recipes, improving current products, receiving feedback and adding new products, which can add value to our product basket and finally help us reach out to more consumers.

Which are your new products in the pipeline?

In our current categories, we are continuously adding new flavours and also looking to add more categories like spices and pastas.

What are you doing to drive consumption of your products and enhance your brand identity?

Regal Kitchen brand is enhancing its reach in all formats of retail like general stores, confectioneries, bakeries, dairies, meat shops, etc.



We are working to make our products available in more markets. At the same time, we are going hyper-local, increasing our SKUs, and adding new categories like spices and pasta. It is still more of push strategy and we are motivating our distribution channel by offering lucrative margins and incentives to the sales team.

Our secondary sales are driven mainly by motivating retailers and wholesalers by giving them higher margins and an efficient service. Our next target is to enter Modern Trade and e-commerce.

Which are the major operational challenges that you face?

Maintaining consistent quality of the products, ensuring competitive prices, and prompt delivery are the main challenges. Cost control and reducing the operational costs by building an efficient supply chain system is also a big challenge. Other major challenges include keeping the procurement cost within reasonable limits, transportation and storage of quality raw material, especially fresh fruits & vegetables where the investment is huge in building infrastructure. The volatile prices of fruit and vegetables throughout the year also poses a huge challenge.

What do you think of the demand for your product categories from the online channel?

Online channels will surely help to increase the consumption of our products and will help the brand to reach out to more consumers.

Concerns about the quality of additives, preservatives in processed food products abound. In your case what are you doing to offset such concerns?

In our ready-to-eat category of products, there are no added preservatives and these products have a shelf life of more than a year. Yes, in other categories we use preservatives based on strict compliance to FSSAI standards. Food safety, of course, is a serious concern and our R&D team is working sincerely to add more products with better shelf life without any preservatives. **PG**

Our products have acceptability in both urban and rural areas though we drive better sales in rural and semi-urban sectors. This is because in urban areas, consumers are more brand-sensitive and loyal whereas in the rural sector a quality product like ours can drive sales with an efficient service

“We are a specialised grocery supplier with a strong network of wholesalers”

In an exclusive interaction with Progressive Grocer, Ayush Jain and Tushar Tyagi, Founders of online start-up Grocery Bag, speak about their unique business model of combining the best quality and most relevant assortment of wholesale markets with the convenience of online shopping



When and how was Grocerybag conceived? What is so unique about its concept?

Despite having so many modern retail formats and now e-commerce, a majority of the population still believes in the quality and assortment offered by traditional wholesale markets. This is evident from the lakhs of footfall every day at markets in Delhi like Khari Baoli, INA, etc., where people flock to for their specialised or monthly ration purchases. Consumers are willing to brave inconvenience and high cost just for the sake of good quality. Even in our traditional business, which is about 200 years old, we have been supplying groceries from Khari Baoli to hundreds of customers daily across Delhi-NCR on a chargeable delivery basis. Through our online outfit Grocerybag, we have been addressing this gap by combining the best quality and most relevant assortment of wholesale markets with the convenience of online shopping. Grocerybag.in was conceived in July, 2015. What differentiates us is that we are a specialised grocery supplier, and our operations are augmented through a convenient technology platform. This is quite different from a



technology company supplying groceries. We know what we sell! We have a strong network of specialised wholesalers rather than general stores, carefully selected by us, who help us in maintaining an “on demand” inventory. The model allows us to maintain a consistent quality with minimum working capital.



Ayush Jain (top) & Tushar Tyagi (Bottom)
Founders, Grocery Bag



In India, the online grocery market is still evolving. What scope does it offer to you?

Even though the macro trends are very encouraging for the sector - rising middle class, internet and smart phone penetration, etc., but grocery on the whole has proven to be a challenging space for both the organised retailers as well as e-tailers. However, given that the food & grocery market is estimated to become a \$1 trillion market by 2020, there will be enough scope to grow provided we stay agile, adaptive and relevant to customers.

Tell us about Grocerybag’s current phase of developments? What are your expansion and growth plans?

We have successfully test marketed our product with a retention ratio as high as 40%. We are continuously upgrading our platform to make it simpler for customers, adding new products and categories and at the same time streamlining our logistics. In the near future, we wish to set up another fulfillment centre in Delhi’s INA market and increase our gourmet



by the mother branches in wholesale markets. Thereby, customers can shop in the way they want – online, offline or a combination of both.

How do you view competition from offline retailers and other online players?

Competition is good. However, as discussed earlier, it's a challenging sector with lots of e-tailers and organised stores closing their shops lately. We believe that whatever be the format, you need to fulfill the customers' needs in the best possible way. Google wasn't the first search engine nor Facebook the first social networking website. We have thrived in our traditional business and

continue to do so because of our strong sense of market and customer understanding. We derive our efficiencies from both the unorganised and organised sector and that is quiet unprecedented in our view.

Big e-tailers are also offering grocery. As a start-up, what are your key concerns as they are also eyeing the grocery market?

We have a rich heritage, we understand the customer and the market like nobody else. Lately, this segment has attracted lots of VC funding, which has been unduly utilised for deep discounts and marketing. However, over the long run, such price-driven models will be rendered unsustainable and only those models will be successful that can retain customers profitably.

What are your plans to raise capital for growth and expansion?

We are in talks with couple of VCs and are hopeful of closing on the best one soon.

What is your business model and how do you think it is suitable for scalability?

We have an asset light model – where in like an auto-hub we plan to set up our fulfilment centre close to our vendors (in this case in wholesale markets) – then carefully select both organised and unorganised whole salers/distributors for different product categories. We procure from them on “on-demand basis” while maintaining full control over packaging and delivery. This allows us to provide consistent quality while maintaining limited working capital and higher profit margins. This model is highly scalable as it caters to both standard as well as localized food item demands with minimum investment.

How tough or easy was it for you to convince the investors expectations?

We are still in the process but the response has been very encouraging considering that we have a strong domain background, robust vendor network, and a profit-driven approach. **PG**

Omni-channel is a natural progression and will ultimately be a reality. Even at Grocerybag, we believe the online portal is just one mode of shopping. In the future, we wish to make it an omni-channel model by tying up with small retail stores, and supplying through a hub and spoke model

offerings. For the long term, we would like to explore the possibilities of a “auto-hub model” (where we set up our fulfilment centres in wholesale markets) in other tier 1 and tier 2 cities as well. Our vision is to be the most trusted edible grocery brand in India.

How are you going to achieve your marketing and promotional goals?

Up until now, we have been maintaining a lean marketing budget for the test phase. Most of it is being spent on the social media, google ad-words and direct mails. In future, we will engage in more offline promotion as well through print and radio.

Technology is integral to modern retail, more so for e-commerce. How are you leveraging technology at Grocerybag?

We believe technology should be enabling rather than intimidating, like in the case of Apple. From day one, we have maintained that the interface needs to be very simple and uncluttered for best user experience. No unnecessary banners, ads, filters, etc. Recently, we developed a special category called “suggested products for you” on our webpage, which suggests products as per your past buying or browsing behaviour when clicked upon, rather than flashing like an ad and obstructing the user experience. We'll soon be out with an app to cater to the needs of our regular users.

Modern F&G retail is gradually moving towards omni-channel. What are your views on this?

Indian customers are buying their groceries from a multitude of channels – daily needs (fruit vegetables, dairy, etc.,) from local stores, monthly ration from supermarkets or traditional markets, etc. So, there isn't and can't be a one stop destination for grocery shopping. Thus, omni-channel is a natural progression and will ultimately be a reality. Even at Grocerybag, we believe the online portal is just one mode of shopping. In the future, we wish to make it an omni-channel model by tying up with small retail stores, and supplying through a hub-and-spoke model, supported by our comprehensive online product catalogue and fed



Anil Kankariya
MD, Navjeevan Super shop

“We are the pioneers of supermarket shops in north Maharashtra”

Modern grocery retail is going great guns even in the smaller towns of India. One such example comes from Jalgaon in Maharashtra, where the supermarket culture has been warmly embraced by the people. “Jalgaon is considered a rural town, but people here have similar aspirations as those who live in the big metros. So it is only fair that we have retail formats to meet people’s expectations,” says Anil Kankariya, Managing Director of Navjeevan Super shop, which does the kind of roaring business that would bring blushes to many retailers in the prime towns of India. Monark Barot of Progressive Grocer spoke to Kankariya about Navjeevan’s inspiring and exhilarating journey from a small kirana outfit to becoming the biggest brand in Jalgaon today

Tell us about your association with Food and Grocery retail and your business journey so far.

Our association with food and grocery dates back to the time when my family opened a small kirana store measuring 44 sq. ft. in mid 1964 at Jalgaon, Maharashtra. Since then the Kankariya family has been carrying forward the family kirana business and it has over time successfully expanded into modern trade in food and grocery.

We are the pioneers of supermarket shops in north Maharashtra, predominantly Jalgaon. Our Navjeevan Super Shop stores, of which six exist today, belong to the supermarket format. The first Navjeevan self-service store opened in Jalgaon on 13th August, 1993.

What is the total retail area in operation?

The total retail space at Navjeevan stores currently under operation is 17,000 sq. ft., which is spread over six supermarket stores, all of which, except one, are self-owned.



Navjeevan Super Shop: Vital stats at a glance

Date of opening of first supermarket store: 13th August, 1993

Number of stores in operation: Six

Location of store (s): One in heart of the Jalgaon market, four around Jalgaon, and one at a taluka, 50 km from Jalgaon

Total retail space under operation: 17,000 sq.ft.

Rentals / Monthly Revenue share: All owned stores. Store at Taluka on revenue sharing basis – 2% of sales

Average monthly sales: Approx. Rs 4 crore

Average bill size: Rs. 500

Average footfalls per month: 75,000

Sales per sq.ft.: Rs 2,500

Sales growth y-o-y: 20%

SKU count: 6,800 approx.

Catchment areas: Jalgaon district plus Khandesh region

Average same store sales growth: 12% y-o-y

Our private label strategy is mainly focused on food categories. We have private labels across groceries, spices, festival offerings, and cereals. The margins range from 30% to 70% and are definitely more than the national brands in similar categories. We try to match the prices of national brand but at the same time our products offer better quality

Which are the main product categories at your stores?
 We offer customers a complete range of groceries and FMCG products, a wide range of utensils, a select choice of plastic goods, ladies and gents' apparel, fruits and vegetables. In all, we have 30 supermarket product categories. In recent years, we have added new categories like garments, household steel goods, toys and crockery.

Can you share some numbers about your average monthly sales / footfall / bill size at your stores?
 The average monthly sales is approximately Rs. 4 crore. The average bill size is Rs. 500 and our stores attract 75,000 footfalls per month on an average.

What are the sales and SKU numbers for your stores?
 Our stores do sales of approximately Rs. 2,500 per sq. ft. and same store sales growth has been 12% annually. The SKU count in our stores is about 6,800.

What is your marketing positioning of your store?
 Our USP is to keep the prices of our products low and offer attractive schemes. We also focus to keep the product quality premium for all our customers.

What kind of people frequent your stores and in which age group?
 The customer profile is quite variegated and is spread across our catchment areas comprising the Jalgaon district and the Khandesh region of north Maharashtra. We have customers mainly from the middle-income groups as well as those who are



L to R:

Damodar Mall,
CEO, Grocery
Retail, Reliance
Retail, visiting
Navjeevan Store
and sharing
tips with **Anil
Kankariya**

well-heeled and affluent. A lot of our customers are housewives and families.

What is the location strategy for your stores?

Our main Navjeevan Super Shop store is located in heart of the Jalgaon market. We have four other stores in the city of Jalgaon and one at taluka 50 km away. All our stores are located in residential areas. This strategy has helped to build our brand identity and push our brand.

What is your private label strategy? In which categories do you have private labels?

Our private label strategy is mainly focused on food categories. We have private labels across groceries, spices, festival offerings, and cereals. The margins range from 30% to 70% and are definitely more than the national brands in similar categories. We try to match the prices of national brand but at the same time our products offer better quality.

What has been the growth rate for your private label? What are you doing to promote them further?

The growth rate for our private label has been about 12% to 15 % depending on the product category. Overall, our private label contributes about 20% of the total sales and the target is to take it further to 40%. To achieve this target, we have a strategy for providing better display of the products in the store.

What is your strategy for merchandise display and category management?

Category-wise and brand-wise display is adopted at Navjeevan. The focus is on vertical display of products and better display in the area near the POS. We are planning to introduce the shop-in-shop model, which can help in better category management and in garnering more revenue per sq ft.

Our private label strategy is mainly focused on food categories. We have private labels across groceries, spices, festival offerings, and cereals. The margins range from 30% to 70% and are definitely more than the national brands in similar categories. We try to match the prices of national brand but at the same time our products offer better quality

Do you have a marketing strategy to promote your brand and push sales at your store?

As mentioned earlier, the store's focus is on providing premium quality products at affordable rates. This has ensured that we get a lot of word-of-mouth publicity from our customers in our catchment geography.

We also keep introducing attractive schemes and offers from time to time. In recent times, we have introduced the 12+1 scheme, which means when you buy continuously for 12 months from Navjeevan store, the customer's 13th month shopping is free. Similarly, we had introduced a super hit scheme on petrol, which generated word-of-mouth publicity. This was a joint sales promotion scheme with Bharat Petroleum. On a purchase worth Rs. 300, one would get Rs. 20 off on two litres of petrol.



What's in store for the future by way of your expansion?

We plan to cover more talukas and focus on the Khandesh region. In the future we might open stores, especially in places like Dhule, Jalgaon, Nashik and the Nandurbar districts in north Maharashtra.

What is your current supplier base and at what rate is it growing month on month or year to year basis?

We currently have a 300 plus supplier base. It comprises those from the local areas and the APMC market alongside the MNCs.

How would you describe your achievements over the years?

We have been able to manage sustainable growth and continuous enhancement in customer satisfaction. Recently we were awarded the Lokmat Corporate Excellence award for retail leadership in Maharashtra. **PG**

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“We provide e-commerce services for omni-channel retailing”

Samarjeet Singh, CEO & Founder, Iksula, an e-commerce solutions provider, speaks to Progressive Grocer about the bouquet of retail technology solutions that his company has to offer and the specific requirements and needs that food and grocery retailers are increasingly looking to fulfill



Give us a brief account of your company and its products and services?

Iksula is a leading e-commerce solutions provider to Internet retailers and brands globally. Currently, we serve the e-commerce industry through two business lines – Services and Managed Services (or INCOM Enterprise). Within the Services business, we offer technology, merchandising operations and content management solutions to eRetailers in India, the US, and MENA markets. Through INCOM Enterprise, we provide integrated e-commerce services for omni-channel retailing. Right from building the technology platform to warehousing, logistics & fulfillment, from content & photography services to online marketing solutions and customer support & call center solutions – we manage the entire bouquet of end-to-end e-retailing solutions for brands looking to sell on all online channels within India.



Samarjeet Singh
CEO & Founder,
Iksula

Who are the players in Food & Grocery that you have collaborated with?

We've worked with the likes of Big Bazaar, Tesco and HUL in F&G. For Big Bazaar, we helped develop a unique tablet-based app for their franchise model, Big Bazaar Direct. We also partnered with Tesco for its joint venture in India with Tata-Star Bazaar – and helped them build 'My 24x7 Market' – an omni-channel e-commerce platform. For HUL, we offer Digital Asset Management and marketplace feed management services.

What has been your experience working with retailers? Do they have specific needs that technology providers should look into?

Our specific play is only in the e-retail channel in which retailers' needs range from facilitating their consumer journey from all digital platforms to ensuring presence on all marketplaces to upgrading and maintaining their website. New technologies offered by e-commerce solution providers need to be integrated with retailers' existing technologies.

How does your solutions help to raise the capabilities of retailers?

Our solutions help retailers engage with their customers better, acquire maximum customers through all digital channels, and provide customers with a fantastic experience after ordering, during delivery and through the fulfilment journey.

How does your services help to raise the standards of operational efficiency for retailers?

Our deep domain expertise in e-retail helps in delivering the best of technology and functionality for retailers. This ensures higher conversions, greater customer satisfaction and reduced cost due to operational efficiencies. For F&G retail, our solutions help drive demand generation; ensure seamless content & inventory integrations to increase sell-through; and create seamless brand

experience through omni-channel fulfilment technology solutions.

Which are the major areas that retailers look up to for collaborating? In Food & Grocery, are there specific areas where the demand for technology collaboration is more pressing?

Being experts in eRetail, traditional retailers look up to for technological as well as demand generation support. In our experience, F&G retailers are looking specifically for hyperlocal demand generation and real-time order fulfilment visibility.

Which are your services on offer that can be availed by food companies in India? Which are the services more in demand?

Our offerings for Food & Grocery retailers primarily revolve around technological requirements. Having said that, we have built the capability to offer

Do you think that retailers understand the importance of utilising the kind of services that you have to offer?

Retailers in the F&G segment have started looking at the e-retail space with vigour only in the recent times. But there are few retailers that are already ahead of the curve and have set a precedent. These retailers would typically need support when it comes to implementation of technology solutions. Many retailers whose e-retail operations are yet to establish look to us for strategic consulting services.

Do you foresee any trends or developments gaining ground in the food retail industry for the kind of services you have to offer?

Absolutely. Omni-channel is one such area of retailing that has tremendous potential not just in the food retail industry, but in the retail industry itself. With omni-channel, F&G retailers can improve their online presence and give customers the choice to experience

Our solutions help retailers engage with their customers better, acquire maximum customers through all digital channels, and provide customers with a fantastic experience after ordering, during delivery and through the fulfilment journey



end-to-end e-commerce solutions – including the retailer’s website, merchandising & cataloging solutions for owned website as well as marketplaces, Big Data analytics for precise demand prediction and personalized shopping, and omni-channel retailing.

What are the major differences in the demand for technology services with big and small retailers?

A big retailer chooses vendors based on their capability and past experience to offer a solution that integrates seamlessly with their existing systems and is scalable to meet the future demands. On the other hand, a small retail player is looking at a technology solution that helps it in demand generation and to establish its brand in the market.

the brands at their convenience. For example, retailers can have small kiosks loaded with specifically-developed tablet application that displays the available inventory (from a nearby store or fulfilment centre) and enables customer to make the payment over a credit card or via COD at his/her home.

How can the awareness and acceptance level among food companies for adopting better technology standards be raised?

Despite being a prime segment in the retail industry, food & grocery companies are unaware of the existing and upcoming technological innovations. Industry-body forums can help to develop a clear focus on the usage of technology and promote the advantages of omni-channel retailing experience. **PG**



*“Retailing is a tough and competitive business but **we have been able to reap good profits**”*



T. Thanushgaran

Chairman, Kannan Departmental Store

Shri Kannan Departmental Store (P) Ltd. operates 27 stores across various sizes and formats in the State of Tamil Nadu. Progressive Grocer brings you the inside story of the company's growth journey, its fastest-selling product categories, the new and emerging categories at its stores that will propel the company into becoming a major regional retailer in south India.

We bring you an exclusive interview with T. Thanushgaran, Chairman, Kannan Departmental Store, in which he reveals intimate details about the company's business model, its merchandising and supply-chain strategy, and how it is looking to ramp up its retail footprint further in the days ahead

Which are the retail formats under which Kannan stores operate?

We have 27 stores across convenience, supermarket, hypermarket and wholesale formats, which range from 3,500 sq.ft to 100,000 sq.ft..

What kind of people frequent your stores and in which age group? Has the customer profile been changing in any way over the years?

It is the middle class and upper middle class shoppers who frequent our stores. Though we have not experienced a vast change in our customer profile, the customer segments have definitely evolved over the years. Customer segments today are evolving based on the huge change in the consumption patterns by different demographics, their usage pattern, and the desired benefits they seek from the products.

What is the range of merchandise available at your stores?

We deal with different types of business format in our superstores. We have groceries, pharmaceuticals, fruits and vegetables in the food category. In non-food category, we have stationery, electronics, electricals, imitation jewellery, homecare, beauty care, books, CDs, child-care products and toys.

What is the location strategy for your stores?

A lot of factors need to be checked when a location has to be zeroed in. The size of the store is a major factor in deciding on its location. Over the years we have understood that each store's consumption is different and they should be sized accordingly. The next major factor in deciding on the location is the rent and labour cost. We have continuously avoided high rental locations so as to bring down the operational cost. The other important considerations are traffic, feasibility and logistics.

What is your private label strategy? In which categories do you have private labels?

We have private labels across categories like home care, beauty care, packaged, processed foods and pooja products. It is only in private labels that we can bring down cost of the product without disturbing the quality and pass on the benefits to both customers and ourselves. We are also very particular about the quality of the private labels. We push our suppliers to watch the quality of the products in comparison to the national brands.





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What kind of margins your private labels offer you compared to national brands?

Obviously the margins are much better in private labels. The reason being decreased marketing expenses and operational cost. We also pass on retail insights to manufacturers to bring out their best competitive products in terms of both price and value, which would delight a customer.

What is your pricing strategy for private labels?

Initially, we price them competitively to increase the retail pick of private label products and we successfully promote the difference in price to the customers. Our team continuously tracks and checks quality of the products to ensure that the quality is always at par with the national brands.

A lot of factors need to be checked when a location has to be zeroed in. The size of the store is a major factor in deciding on its location. Over the years we have understood that each store's consumption is different and they should be sized accordingly

What is the sales split between your private labels and national brands?

National brands still occupy a majority of the share in several categories, but the trend is changing for good. People are trying out our private labels because we transfer our credibility to those products as well. And then, there are the advantages of better price and value.

What is the sales turnover of your private labels?

The growth has been consistent in private labels and altogether they contribute 12% of the total sales.

Which new products would you like to introduce in the private label category?

We now have private labels in most categories. We would like to introduce more such labels across confectionery, packaged foods, health drinks and foods, kitchen appliances and pooja products.

What are you doing to promote your private labels?

We do a lot of in-store branding and activities that attract customers. We also create awareness for our products in the areas nearby our stores as a brand-building activity.

What is the sales velocity in your stores (sales per square foot)?

The size of our stores depends on the potential of a particular area. That is why we have operations in a 3,500 sq.ft format as well as in a 1,00,000 sq.ft format. So each store's sales velocity varies and also the average sales per square foot.

Which are the fast-moving product categories in your stores?

The fast moving categories are staples, bakery produce, fruits and vegetables, personal care and home care.





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Kannan Stores: Vital Stats

Retail format (s) of Kannan stores:
Convenience, Supermarket, Hypermarket, Wholesale

Year of starting operations:
1985, in the name of Sangeetha Shopping Center

Average size of stores: Between 3,500 sq.ft and 100,000 sq.ft.

Time taken for a typical Kannan store to break even: Three months

Number of Kannan stores currently in operation:
27 stores across south of Tamil Nadu

Total retail space under operation: 4,65,000 sq.ft.

Whether company-owned stores, leased or rented:
Company owned as well as rented

Average bill / ticket size of transactions: Rs. 650 to Rs. 675

Average footfall in Kannan stores: 20,250 visitors per day

Sales growth year-on-year / same store sales growth:
15% sales growth and 10% same store growth



We have private labels across categories, which include home care, beauty care, packaged, processed foods and pooja products. It is only in private labels that we can bring down cost of the product and pass on the benefits to both customers and ourselves

Which are the new and emerging categories in your stores?

The emerging categories in our stores are our fresh fruits and vegetables division. This is due to our switch in making the purchases from farmers directly. It has enabled us to offer fresh products at a comparatively cheaper rate than the market. The other major emerging product category is healthcare where we offer millet-based packaged foods, diabetic foods, health drinks, mother and child-care products. We are also experiencing much growth in the snacking division. It has evolved and accommodated many subcategories and products, which are interesting not only to the children but also the entire family. In non-foods, kitchen appliances, new-born baby products, home furnishing, gardening tools and sports equipment categories are growing.

Which marketing and promotional activities do you prefer for pushing sales in your stores?

Initially, our marketing strategy was limited to word-of-mouth promotion. This was made possible through our low prices and the wide range of product mix that we offer in each category. But now we do a lot of in-store branding and communication. A lot of brand- building activities are done inside and outside the stores.

What is your strategy for merchandise display and category management in your stores?

Category management is one area where we put continuous research in each store. The product mix is arrived after a series of market tests with new and old product categories. We interpret the data to gain an insight into the customer needs and behavior. The merchandise mix is displayed in accordance with the product mix. New and profitable categories are given much importance.

Do you have any tie-ups or collaborations with brands for category insights and better category management?

Category management is done wholly by our team and we do not have any collaboration with outside parties. Our core development team keeps continuously working and putting in effort for learnings and insights and for the improvement of each category. We analyse the market, the particular areas of consumption, the competitors and brands' perspective before deciding on the merchandise mix for a particular shop.

Is it important for retailers and brands to work collaboratively?

To reach out to the customers, one has to work with brands. The learnings of the retailer and the brands will be effective in tapping more consumer segments when the efforts are made in collaboration.

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Category management is one area where we put continuous research in each store. The product mix is arrived after a series of market tests with new and old product categories. We interpret the data to gain an insight into the customer needs and behavior. The merchandise mix is displayed in accordance with the product mix. New and profitable categories are given much importance



can understand and deliver on our concern for quality and value products.

What is your current supplier base and at what is its growth rate?

Our procurements are done locally, across the states, and internationally, in large quantities in order to reap the benefits of economies of scale.

How do you ensure that suppliers stick to quality standards and efficiency norms?

When selecting a supplier, we run serious background checks on his track record and pick on the most efficient ones who can ensure supply of quality products at a competitive price. Our team also works with suppliers to bring down the cost. For certain categories, the team even sources the raw materials, passes on its packaging knowledge and other innovations to bring down the operational cost.

Have you partnered with brands to build new categories?

We have worked with many growing brands in developing new categories. When doing so, we analyse the top brands and the market trends to zero in on the products. We have developed product categories such as health drinks, herbal products in personal care, water bottles and containers by working closely with brands.

What is your criteria for selecting suppliers?

Since we deal with a number of products, sourcing the right suppliers becomes critical. There are a few suppliers whom you cannot avoid, given their wide national presence. There are some with whom you can work for the interest of the customer and yourself. Our development team is in charge of checking on the supplier's credentials in each product category. The team checks for the price, quality and the improvements that the supplier has done to the product. We also check on whether the supplier will be able to work with us in the long run and

Are there specific product categories where direct form of sourcing is a better approach?

The basics of any business is to bring down cost of the product. At Kannan, we try to source the products across geographies in large quantities in order to reap the benefits of economies of scale.

Any innovations in your supply chain model?

We have worked much on regulating the operational cost by bringing a more efficient distribution system. Some such examples include making an optimum use of vehicles and innovating with the inventory system. We have also embraced technology for tracking the inventory and restocking shelves, all of which has allowed us to cut costs. Supply chain management is not only about giving the right products to the right customers at the right time but also giving them in the right quality. We have understood this and have made amendments accordingly since we deal with both perishable and non-perishable products. We have also done reformatting with regard to the size of our stores and their product mix.



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Though we have not experienced a vast change in our customer profile, the customer segments have definitely evolved over the years. Customer segments today are evolving based on the huge change in the consumption patterns by different demographics, their usage pattern, and the desired benefits they seek from the products

What's your expansion plans?

We would like to enter into the whole of south India in the existing formats as well as franchising formats. But right now we are focussing only on restructuring our existing formats and getting into the franchising mode.

Any new cities/regions you have on your radar?

We are looking to expand in the whole of south India. We have done and redone our business formats and have been able to stabilise ourselves in this industry. From here on the takeoff will be fast and sure-footed. We will spread our branches in the whole of south India .

Tell us about your strengths and achievements so far.

We are passionate retailers. Our core strategy is to offer competitive prices and high quality products. Our team is Kannan's ultimate strength. We have a great understanding of the retail format and know to evolve with the industry. This is one of the main reason that has helped us grow to a Rs. 500 crore plus company. Retailing is a very tough and competitive business to be in but as a company we have been able to reap good profits, which is a great achievement.

As a retailer, what have been your valuable learnings and experience?

Over the years we have learnt that product allotment in each category for each shop should vary. For example, most shoppers don't want 20 brands of packaged foods. They want experts to narrow it down to the best two or three, each offering distinct flavours and characteristics. Too much and too less of a choice actually spoils the shopping mood.

After understanding the areas of consumption and its patterns, we decide on the size and format and the product mix that the store will support. It is a very serious exercise that we carry out in full earnest. In fact, we have even removed furniture and textiles in a few stores to reformat the store's size.

Which are the marked differentiators for your stores that put you apart from other supermarkets and retail players?

We offer customers the convenience of one-stop shopping. From grocery and everyday goods to sports and entertainment, we offer a product mix that every customer requires, and that too at a very competitive price. We have our own bakery division and packaging division through which we maintain the quality and hygiene protocol. Our pharmaceuticals offer a 18% discount on transactions. Our farm-fresh fruits and vegetables division is also a marked differentiator for



steadfastly offering lesser-than-the-market prices on various products.

Which are the more visible trends in your stores for major grocery categories?

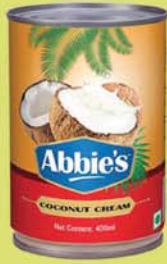
An increased awareness about personal well-being has caused the health and wellness category to evolve at a fast pace and co-opt various segments such as diabetic foods, low calorie snacks, slimming foods, green teas, health and energy drinks, etc. Individual tastes and preferences have gained a lot of importance to the extent that many packaged foods are adding flavours and characteristics tailor-made to suit the preferences and choices of specific demographic groups. People are willing to try out different cuisines and hence there is an increase in the availability of international foods, home bakery products and other regions' masala mixes.

How liberal are you in trying out and encouraging small and new entrepreneurs?

We are already dealing with a good number of small scale industries and women entrepreneurs. Our development team works with them to establish their brands in our stores. A lot of importance is given to their promotional activities inside our stores. We try to increase their sales through our wholesale division also. Lots of preference is given to their products and we place them on shop-shelves at a par with national brands.

Are there any innovations you have introduced at your stores?

Our new bakery production unit has been recently restructured with the state-of-the-art technology to meet the changing tastes and trends of customers. Food brands should be very alert to consumer tastes and preferences, and they should be ready to adapt and innovate quickly to these changes. **PG**



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“We are way too different and better than our competitors”



Sunil Jain, Director
Weaver Aqua Everflo

Sunil Jain, Director, Weaver Aqua Everflo, speaks to Progressive Grocer about the recent launch of o2Rise, a new bottled water brand, and about the new and exciting branding and promotion plans that his company has unveiled to up its ante in the packaged water category

The packaged water market is dominated by brands like Bisleri, Aquafina, Bailey’s and Dabur. Under the circumstances, what is your strategy for capturing market share?

Water is an essential commodity and nowadays clean and safe drinking water is not easily available. So the market is no longer limited to urban pockets. As regards to the competition and our strategy vis-a-vis other national brands, the primary focus of O2rise is on providing excellent service and quality to the consumers. Also, we are working on the three important strategies, which include price, product and place.

How are you leveraging your market strategy for pushing your products and building your brand?

Our product Weaver Aqua Everflo was launched in 2001 in a 500 ml pack. By 2002, the packs were available in 500 ml, 1 litre, 1.5 litres, 2 litres, 5 litres and 20 litres. In order to target restaurants, weddings, parties and similar social occasions, the company introduced water cups. We launched another brand ‘PumpUp Aqua’, which too has been successful. After the success of our PumpUp Aqua brand, we are now launching our new brand ‘O2rise’. For a 500 ml pack, the company has offered an introductory price of Rs.6, which is much lower than the price of Rs. 10 for 500 ml packs by other national brands. At the same time, for rural areas, we have introduced 200 ml bottles at an attractive price of Rs.5. Simultaneously, the company has launched water cups priced at Rs.3 per cup.

Weaver Aqua Everflo was initially made available in the western zone and later on it was rolled out nationwide. After the success in Maharashtra, we launched the product in other states consecutively. The 200 ml bottle for rural areas was first test marketed in selected places in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh for test marketing. After the encouraging response, they were launched in other regions. Today, Weaver Aqua Everflo is present across four to five states in India and is still expanding.

What is the size and the packaged water market, which are its main segments and what’s their growth rate?

The current size of the water market is about Rs.60 billion, of which the top five players account for 67 per cent of the marketshare. The bottled water industry in India was growing at a CAGR of 30% for the last



three years. This market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 33%, to reach Rs.160 billion in 2018. The main segments for the bottled water industry include retail, institutional and corporates.

What have been the consumption trends for the packaged drinking water category?

Earlier we had to educate the consumers to consume safe drinking water. Whereas today the consumer is very conscious about health issues and understands the importance of safe drinking water. Since there is a very healthy competition in the market, consumers have the choice to choose the best brands. In terms of trends, packaging has always played an important role. The trend has shifted to consumers preferring a handy pack, which is easy to carry. So smaller packs are more convenient and in demand.

What is your product differentiator and which are your major market segments?

In packaged drinking water category, factors like availability and pricing hold the key. Our quality standard is very high. Every bottle of Weaver Aqua Everflo passes through six stages of purification

processes, which shows that good manufacturing is our biggest strength. The pricing factor also makes a huge difference to our products. Our products are available at a very reasonable cost to the consumers compared with the prices for Bisleri, Aquafina, Himalaya and others brands.

Then, instead of depending on the market distribution system, the company leverages its own large fleet of trucks to supply bottled water directly to retailers through a system called 'Route Selling', where the driver of a truck is trained to be a service person. The packaging is also very attractive and a little different from the packaging offered by other brands in the water space. Above all, our operations are spread across all the major cities, thus giving us a national presence.

How do you see the growth trends in urban areas vis-a-vis rural India?

We believe that the rural market is the biggest market and the biggest target area for any product. So the acceptance of the product or the category in rural India will give a super thrust to the product. As regards to O2rise, we have been focusing on the

The primary focus of O2rise is on providing excellent service and quality to the consumers. Also, we are working on the three important strategies, which include price, product and place



HEALTHY SNACKING FOR GREAT LIVING





In terms of trends in this market, packaging has always played an important role. The trend has shifted to consumers preferring having a handy pack, which is easy to carry while travelling. So smaller packs are more convenient and are in demand

rural areas more than the urban as we understand that we can get more visibility and brand acceptance in the near future from rural areas.

How do you see the main markets for your product growing in the future?

O2rise has been focusing on the institutional segment from the early days. The growth is 100 per cent in this segment. Also, a lot of institutions have developed in the past 10 to 15 years in India, and hence we see very good potential growth.

Which are the ways you collaborate with retailers to drive product sales?

The retail segment is more about having the reach of the distribution network. We believe in giving small distribution areas to our distributors, which ensures maximum reach for our products in the retail segment. As regards to driving the sales, we offer incentive programmes and target schemes, which encourages the retailer to get associated with us.

What are you doing to expand distribution and retail footprint?

Our basic retail strategy is about offering proper margins to the retailer and ensuring an efficient supply chain. We believe in giving higher margins to the retailer and keeping a low share for ourselves. One also has to look at the current trends in the market. Technology is taking over the trade and there are online apps for every product. Similarly, there are apps being developed specially for the retailers, which help in connecting the retailer to the brand owner directly. We are also coming up with our own app soon, which will connect us directly with the shoppers.

We are expanding zone-wise, not only in retail but across all the segments that are available in the market – whether it is retail, institutions, corporate, etc., as everybody is a consumer to us.

O2rise has been in this business since 2001 and we enjoy a very loyal distribution network, which is spread across different localities to cover both the urban and rural requirements.

Which are your new innovations in marketing, branding and promotions?

There are couple of things we are working on like creating exclusive water outlets where the demand is huge. Also, to cater to the increased demand, we will have a single point of contact for all the consumers. We are also working on a concept for introducing mobile vending vans, which will sell our products. These vans will be located across all the prime locations in Mumbai.

We also do brand promotions in malls across all the states we are present in. As regards to the display of our products in the shops or in the retail segment, we have exclusive outlets, which are our loyal outlets, and have been associated with us for more than a decade now. You will be able to find the exclusive branding of O2rise in terms of banners and danglers and special schemes for consumers in these outlets.

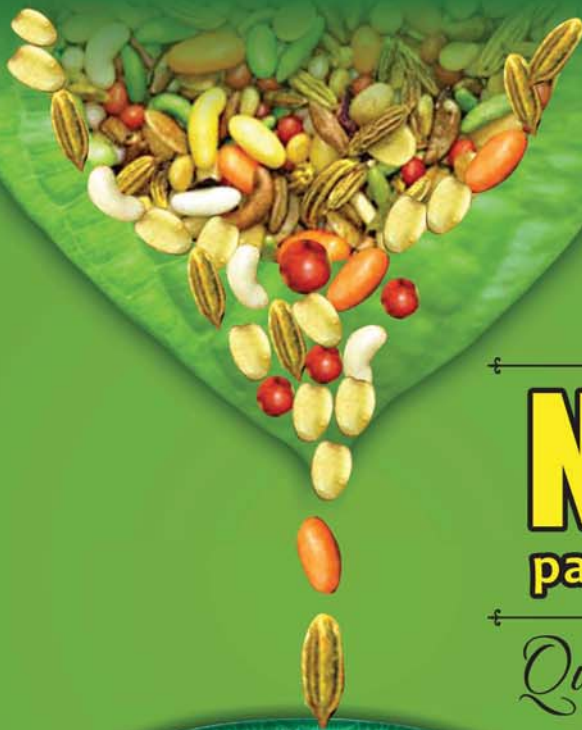
Which are the major operational challenges that you face and would like to mention?

The bottled water industry is much an unorganised sector at the moment. To bridge this gap, the focus should be on improving the logistics and setting up new plants for higher and better services to the consumer. We believe that for any brand to grow, reducing the logistical cost remains a challenge. The retail and distribution cost is taken care of if there is a control on logistics' cost. Also, poor infrastructure, poor roads and transportation, and the lack of skilled human resources are the other challenges faced by the industry. **PG**





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Almond attracts major organic growth in health foods

Several market and consumption factors are coalescing to bump the uptake of the United States' No. 1 agri export to India. But with some help from the government, the affordability and accessibility of almond can be increased many times over, which can help to address many of our nutritional and health concerns

By Sanjay Kumar



“Almonds fit the healthy food bill perfectly and it figures very prominently both as a snack and an ingredient, not only because of its health attributes but also for its other qualities

—Richard Waycott
President and CEO,
Almond Board of
California

Healthy snacks and better-for-you foods are sprinting ahead of other food categories the world over. The health and wellness foods market in India, worth Rs. 33,000 crore, according to industry reports, is surging ahead with significant growth numbers. There are reasons galore for pushing this trend along. As the economy keeps growing, there are marked changes to the demographic structure of the population. More numbers of people from middle-income groups are entering the economy every year, and they are the ones embracing the health-conscious culture. At the same time, nutritional concerns are growing stronger as certain lifestyle diseases have reached pandemic proportions. All of these factors are playing into the trend and feeding the frenzy for health foods.

For the almond industry, the trend presents a ground-breaking opportunity to grow and penetrate new and emerging food categories. “Almonds fit the healthy food bill perfectly and it figures very prominently both as a snack and an ingredient, not only because of its health attributes but also for its other qualities,” says Richard Waycott, President and CEO, Almond Board of California, which is the largest global exporter of almonds with about 83 per cent of the global supply under its belt.

Rise in almond consumption

“The health benefits of almonds are very much aligned with the needs of the people in India and in many other parts of the world. For instance,

almond is good for the heart, it is good for diabetes, offers beneficial calories and helps to manage your weight and fat profile, all of which are major health problems in many parts of the world including India,” says Sudarshan Mazumdar, Regional Director, India, Almond Board of California. Almonds are also rich in unsaturated fats and dietary fibre and antioxidants, which flush out the toxins from your system. Besides, they are fun to eat, are very shelf-stable, keep their natural and unadulterated form for much longer periods and, above all, pack a lot of nutritional punch.

India is a very important market for California almond exports. It is the third-largest export market for California’s almond industry in the world, almost neck-to-neck with China and some distance behind Spain. “The volume of our almond exports to India is now nearly the same as that of China. In the past 10 years, export volumes of California almonds have risen from 59 million pounds to 124 million pounds,” informs Richard.

From a port perspective trade value, the value of almond export to India was worth \$470 million in 2015, and is likely to reach \$500 million by end of the current fiscal, according to Global Trade Atlas. This not only makes the export value sizable but also the largest single commodity export from the US to India by far.

India imports the soft-shell variety of California almonds, which is also among the most expensive varieties. There are other varieties with hard shells, which need processing and mechanical means to

open the shell and they are also more cost-effective. “I hope that with time, Indian food processing will have the technology and plants to treat the hard-shell varieties,” says Richard, adding that over 30 per cent of all agri exports from the US to India is almond and California almonds make up for about 75% to 80% of India’s share of almond import. “But we don’t really look at it from the market share perspective because there exists a tremendous potential to grow the almond market in India.”

tends to slow down after the winter months but that is not the case with south India where the consumption is on a year-round basis. Our aim is to make almond consumption all year round because it’s a healthy product and it makes sense to have it throughout the year,” says Mazumdar. “The feedback we are getting from the trade is that consumption during the summer months is gradually picking up. We are not here to change things overnight and market building is a long haul



Growing use as a product ingredient

While there exists many food product categories in India with a huge potential for using almond as an ingredient, the opportunity for almond growth is much bigger with certain categories that have remained untapped. For example, breakfast cereals. The category is huge outside India. It is growing in India but still the breakfast tradition in the country is mostly traditional. So obviously, as this category grows it will drive the growth of almond as well. There are other categories – like energy bars, nutrition bars, almond milk, trail-mixers, etc. – which are currently very small in India and so the growth potential for almond, as these categories develop and grow, is huge.

“But basically, the per capita consumption in India is miniscule and even the per capita consumption by the sub-set of the total population that can more easily afford better and healthy food options is still very small. So I see a tremendous scope for organic growth of almond consumption in the health food segment,” feels Richard.

Apart from the opportunities that can come with the expansion of certain product categories, there is also a potential for growth by promoting more eating occasions around almond and finding new demographic groups for almond consumption. There is a sizable number of young children who can be encouraged to eat a few almonds every day as part of their breakfast. There is also the case for promoting almond consumption throughout the year, instead of only during the winter months or the festive seasons. “In north India, consumption

and takes time. But I am sure that new attitudes toward almond consumption are beginning to form and will create more eating occasions for almond as well as more users for it,” he adds.

For a product that is a storehouse of nutrition and is known for its myriad health benefits, Almond Board of California is expending a lot of efforts on making almond more accessible to larger numbers of consumers. “Given the fact that India faces serious nutrition challenges for a sizable number of its people, here is a product that is good for health and nutrition and in the context of malnutrition in the country it would really help to solve the problem to some extent by making it easier for people to pick up almonds at an affordable price,” says Mazumdar.

Making almonds affordable

On its part, the Almond Board of California is pushing to up its export further and make its product more accessible to consumers, it also faces some trade headwinds. “There are some minor irritants and unnecessary bureaucratic hassles. It would be nice if they were done away with because they act as trade inhibitors, add to the cost of doing trade, make our almonds unnecessarily expensive for Indian consumers, which should not be the case in the first place. These issues can be done away with easily without in the least endangering food safety standards in any manner,” feels Richard.

One such issue pertains to Indian labeling and packaging norms. However, it is not something peculiar to almond but concerns the food industry in general. “We definitely respect and understand the





The health benefits of almonds are very much aligned with the needs of the people in India and in many other parts of the world. For instance, almond is good for the heart, it is good for diabetes, offers beneficial calories and helps to manage your weight and fat profile, all of which are major health problems in many parts of the world, including India

—Sudarshan Mazumdar
Regional Director,
India, Almond Board of
California

Indian government’s concerns for ensuring food safety for the consumers and as a semi-government agency in the US it is something that we whole-heartedly encourage. But where we would like the government to act is to ensure that there is more space for imports to come in,” says Richard. For instance, he feels that the government could introduce a process for identifying importers who have a consistent track record for ensuring quality and safety of food products and for following the norms. Then, there are certain things which instead of being on the label could be put in the company documentation as that would make it easier and less cumbersome for importers when and if there are sudden changes in the commercial pact between the parties involved.

Many of the trade issues are regularly taken up by the Board with the Indian authorities. Richard, who keeps visiting India off and on, says that the activities of California Almond Board in India have many dimensions. “We conduct regular trade meetings, trade conferences, government-to-government meetings to ensure that important trade and import issues are handled and addressed,” he informs.

Actions and initiatives of the Board

Considering the growing importance of India as one of the top markets for US almonds, the Board has continuously been stepping up its engagement activities in the country. As a result, what began as a small trade programme of California Almond Board in India nearly 10 years ago has now built up in scale and grown substantially. “Initially, we started with a programme to get to know the trade in India and provide the industry here with the tools that we had developed to manage the cultivation of different varieties of almonds in California, about nutritional



research on the product, its impact on human health and communities and to communicate those messages to the trade,” informs Richard.

Over the years, the programme has been gradually enlarged. It has now grown into a full-fledged public relations and advertising exercise, which has entailed a big leap in terms of the Board’s investment in India.

“We spent about \$3.78 million in India in 2015 in print advertising, PR, social media, and on consumer research.”

With its focus on underscoring the health benefits of almond, the Board is actively into propagating this message backed by its vast repository of nutritional research on almond. “We have spent over 20 million dollars on research from 1990 onward and have so far published 125 papers in leading journals. So when we talk of the health and nutritional benefits of almond, we come with a very strong base of scientific research and knowledge and it is just not something said off the cuff,” says Mazumdar.

With such solid credentials to show for, food companies are more than willing to buy into the Board’s findings and market research. “There are enough food companies in India who recognise this trend toward growing almond consumption, are willing to tap the opportunity, and have come to recognise almond as pretty much a natural fit along with the cultural and culinary tradition towards healthy eating and for healthy foods. So all of these factors are playing in the market and are helping to bump the consumption trend for almond,” opines Mazumdar.

To push and accelerate the trend for almond use and consumption, the Board regularly interacts with food companies that use almonds as an ingredient in their products such as biscuits and chocolates. It offers technical education to the companies about the right use of almonds in their products, what is the right variety of almond and the right kind of application for using almonds in their products, how to roast the almonds, how to store it properly so that they can (a) use the appropriate kinds of almond for their applications (b) handle it in the best way (c) offer the best experience to the consumer, which can spur more product launches with almond as an ingredient.

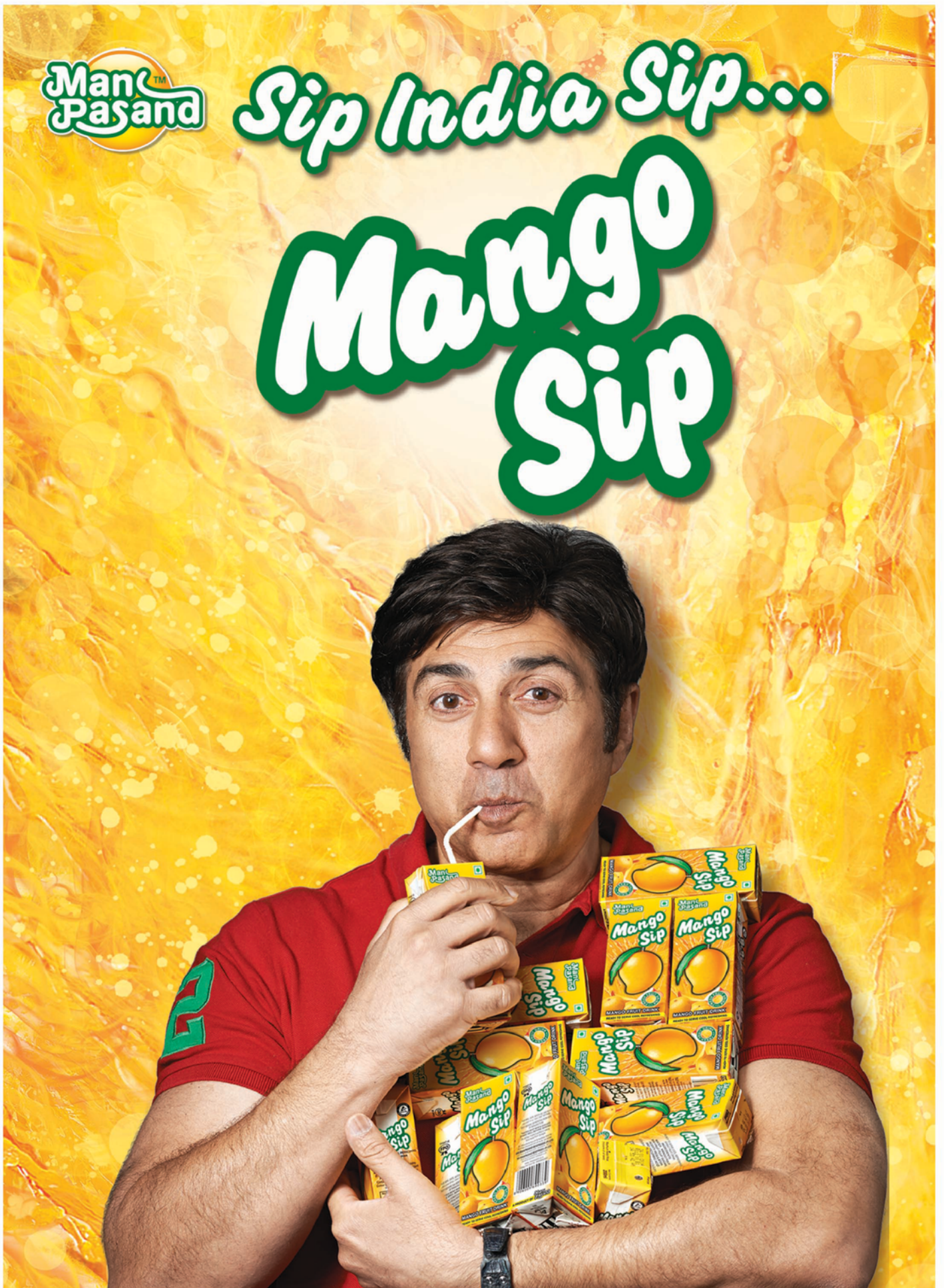
The efforts have paid off handsomely for the Board. According to one of its studies done to sizing up the opportunities across different markets, the projection about India said that the US almond market in the country would grow to 185-199 million pounds by 2017-18. “We are pretty close and hope to cross that target within the time frame,” avers Mazumdar. **PG**



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9TH ANNUAL COCA-COLA GOLDEN SPOON AWARDS

The second day of the 9th annual mega congregation of the India Food Forum held in Mumbai from 19-21 January culminated in the Annual Coca-Cola Golden Spoon Awards. The ninth edition of the Award felicitated outstanding achievements of food service operators and food & grocery retailers for the calendar year 2015.

The nation's foodservice and food and grocery retailers had submitted nominations for multiple award categories. The selection process included analysing key performance metrics such as growth in top line sales and retail presence, sales per square foot, same store sales growth, among others. The Jury, comprising eminent personalities from the fields of business, media, and research and consulting, also studied the impact of IT application, innovation, marketing, supplier relations and employee practices.

We bring you the pictures of winners receiving the award from industry stalwarts at a glittering ceremony attended by the who's who of foodservice and food retail sectors in India.



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PERFORMANCE AWARDS – 360 DEGREE ASSESSMENT **FOODSERVICE CATEGORIES**



IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Chain Of The Year: QSR Indian Origin
Haldiram's

Nominees: Goli Vada Pav | Kebab Xpress | Slice of Italy | Wow! Momo
Presented by: Amitabh Taneja, Chief Convenor, India Food Forum



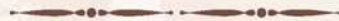
IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Chain Of The Year: QSR Foreign Origin
Domino's

Nominees: Burger King | Dunkin' Donuts | KFC
Presented by: Rishad Karkaria, McDonald's Business Manager at Coca Cola India



IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Chain Of The Year: Cafes & Bars
Chaayos

Nominees: The Beer Café | Coffee Tree
Presented by: Amit Nigam and Ankit Jain, Co-founders, AskmeGrocery.com



IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Chain Of The Year: Ice-cream & Dessert Parlours
Natural Ice Cream

Nominees: Dunkin' Donuts | Baskin Robbins | Kabhi B
Presented by: Amit Nigam and Ankit Jain, Co-founders, AskmeGrocery.com



IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Retailer Of The Year: Dine-in
Berco's

Nominees: The Golden Dragon | Set'z | Sankalp
Presented by: Kayur Bhatia, CMD, TJUK Trade Networks



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SPECIAL JURY AWARDS - ON QUALITATIVE PARAMETERS FOODSERVICE CATEGORIES



**IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Retailer Of The Year:
Effective Technology Adoption:
Dunkin' Donuts**

Presented by: Kayur Bhatia, CMD, TJUK Trade Networks & Kajal Bhatia, Whole Food Nutritionist



**IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Retailer Of The Year:
Supply Chain Management:
Kebab Express**

Presented by: Adam Branson, Senior Agricultural Attache, USDA



**IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Retailer Of The Year:
Human Resource Policies & Initiatives:
Chaayos**

Presented by: Adam Branson, Senior Agricultural Attache, USDA



**IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Retailer Of The Year:
F & B Quality, Safety & Menu Planning:
KFC**

Presented by: Deepak Pillai, Director, Neilsen



**IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Retailer Of The Year:
Marketing, Promotions & Customer Service:
Baskin Robbins**

Presented by: Abdelrehman Al Hosani, Director, Dubai Export Development Corporation





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EXCELLENCE AWARDS - ON QUANTITATIVE PARAMETERS **FOODSERVICE CATEGORIES**



IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Retailer Of The Year:
Retail Expansion – Increase in store count and retail space:
Domino's

Presented by: Dev Arora, Zonal Channel Marketing Manager, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages



IMAGES Most Admired Food Service Retailer Of The Year:
Store Performance - Sales Per Sq Ft & Same Store Sales Growth:
Goli Vada Pav

Presented by: Dev Arora, Zonal Channel Marketing Manager, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages



EXCELLENCE AWARDS - ON QUANTITATIVE PARAMETERS **FOOD & GROCERY RETAIL CATEGORIES**



IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year:
Regional Supermarket:
Heritage Fresh

Nominees: Good Food Retail | Ratnadeep Super Market | N Supermarket
Presented by: Alok Mehrotra, Head of Modern Trade, Catch Salt and Spices



IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year:
National Supermarket:
Easyday

Nominees: Food Bazaar | More
Presented by: Alok Mehrotra, Head of Modern Trade, Catch Salt and Spices



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IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year: Speciality:
Godrej Nature's Basket

Nominees: Twenty Four Seven | Nuts 'n' Spices | Foodhall
 Presented by: AS Chaddha, VP Sales, Organised Trade, Nestle



IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year: Private Label Development:
Aditya Birla Retail

Nominees: Future Group | Hypercity | Easyday
 Presented by: AS Chaddha, VP Sales, Organised Trade, Nestle

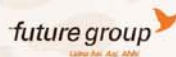


IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year: Large Format:
More Megastore

Nominees: Big Bazaar | Hypercity | Spencer's Hyper | Star Bazaar
 Presented by: Oliver Mirza, Director, Dr. Oetker India



SPECIAL JURY AWARDS - ON QUALITATIVE PARAMETERS FOOD & GROCERY RETAIL CATEGORIES



IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year: Effective Technology Application:
Future Group

Presented by: K K Maurya, Head of Sales, Baramati Agro



IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year: Supply Chain Management:
Trent Hypermarket

Presented by: Arvind Kumar, Head of Modern Trade, Duke



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**IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year:
Human Resource Policies & Initiatives:
HyperCity**

Presented by: Ravindra Kumar, CMD, MM Poonjiaji



**IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year:
Merchandising, Marketing, Consumer Promotions & Customer Service:
Spencer's Retail**

Presented by: Amitabh Taneja and Bhavesh Pitroda, IMAGES Group



EXCELLENCE AWARDS - ON QUANTITATIVE PARAMETERS **FOOD & GROCERY RETAIL CATEGORIES**



**IMAGES Most Admired Hyperlocal Online Grocery Retail Start-up of The Year:
AskMe Grocery**

Presented by: Amitabh Taneja, Bhavesh Pitroda and Jiten Taneja, IMAGES Group



**IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year:
Retail Expansion – Increase in store count and retail space:
Future Group**

Presented by: Debashish Mukherjee, AT Kearney





IMAGES Most Admired Food & Grocery Retailer of the Year: Store Performance - Sales Per Sq Ft & Same Store Sales Growth: **Twenty Four Seven**

Presented by: Deepak Pillai, Director, Neilsen



IMAGES Most Admired Online Grocery Retailer of the year: **Big Basket**

Nominees: AskMe Grocery | Grofers

Presented by: Deepak Pillai, Director, Neilsen

FIFI HONOREES



Harish Motiani, A&S Dry Fruits, Ahmedabad



Hitesh Gawri, Peshawri Supermarket, Chandigarh



Nanji P Shah, Neelam Foodland, Mumbai



Mr. Jamsher, Big Market, Bangalore



Mr. Kumar, College House Shopper's Shop, Madurai

Progressive retailers and consumers will make modern trade thrive



offers some interesting but useful insights on the emerging trends, which can be worked upon to develop a profitable business plan accordingly.

Clearly, today's consumer is latching on to new ways of shopping as its easy, convenient, fast, and hassle-free. But the fact remains that the touch-and-feel factor in most categories of consumption still plays a great role in our buying choice. Hence the need to keep working on making assortments attractive in offline retail outlets remains paramount.

In a significant recent development, many online companies are reviewing their business models to stay afloat. They have not been able to break even inspite of committing huge spends on promotions and launching mega sales of billions of rupees in the past few months. The predicament that many online retailers find themselves in can act as a timely reminder for the brick-and-mortar models to evolve their business in line with the competitive pressures and accordingly sharpen their business strategy and plans.

While changes and bumps are a part of any business journey with new challenges and

Consumer behaviour is evolving rapidly and the number of informed and aware consumers is fast on the rise. The growing proliferation of apps is helping to make the consumers more empowered. As a result, consumers today, especially the younger generation, are eager and ready to adapt to new concepts and products than any time before. The availability of more money at their disposal is creating a flutter across various segments of retail trade and is leading to the establishment of new benchmarks across the marketplace, which offers both opportunities and challenges to progressive grocers of today.

Shopping trends emphatically point to the shift in buying pattern in favour of organised retail and online. The change is forcing progressive grocers / brick-and-mortar departmental stores to adapt or align with the new channels of generating business

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR STUDY

- The age segments 25-34 and 35-44 years appear to be more active than other groups in terms of accessing internet for online shopping although most people have made at least one online purchase in the last 3 months regardless of age.
- 25-34 year olds are most active as they buy online 6 times a quarter, and purchase more products in this period than other age groups.

	Overall	Male	Female	18-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-49 yrs	50-64 yrs
Base (All)	n=1006	n=710	n=296	n=333	n=361	n=137	n=82	n=92
% respondents accessing the internet for online shopping	86.0%	85.8%	86.7%	85.7%	89.2%	87.4%	80.5%	77.9%
% respondents who have made at least one purchase in the last 3 months	96.6%	97.0%	95.5%	96.4%	97.7%	95.8%	96.1%	94.3%
Average number of occasions an online purchase was made in the past 3 months	5.4	5.5	5.1	5.1	6.0	5.2	4.5	4.9
Base (Those who have made a purchase online)	n=971	n=689	n=283	n=321	n=353	n=131	n=79	n=87
Average number of years of experience of online shopping	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.1	2.8
Average number of items purchased online in the past 3 months	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.7	6.4	5.8	5.8

Shopping trends emphatically point to the shift in buying pattern in favour of organised retail and online. The change is forcing progressive grocers / brick-and-mortar departmental stores to adapt or align with the new channels of generating business. Many categories like electronics, apparels, homeware, branded accessories, etc., have seen sizeable shift in business to online in recent months. Consequently, brick-and-mortar models have no choice but to redraw their assortments and planogramming at the stores to sustain the interest in categories and cater to the smart consumers.

An in-depth study of online consumer behaviour

solutions coming up along the way, the best part is that the overall pie is growing and so are the business opportunities. Thanks to one Australia getting added to our country every year by way of the increase in population, the story of India's consumption-driven growth will remain the shining hallmark of our economy in the years to come. **PG**



The author has over 25 years of experience in FMCG and Modern Retail. He is on the selection panel of 'Hunar' skill centre (Retail and Hospitality), a collaboration between Delhi and Singapore governments. He can be reached at rakeshgambhir@imagesgroup.in

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what's next

► **Non-fizzy fruit water with aloe vera**

Mumbai-based Pristine Food & Beverages, a leading non-alcoholic beverage company, has recently augmented its Fruit Aqua collection of non-fizzy fruit water infused with the goodness of aloe vera. Available in orange lime, guava peach and strawberry black currant, the Fruit Aqua is a pure blend of natural fruits & aloe vera, which helps in digestion, improves immunity, is low on calories and is good for the skin. The range is available at selected retail outlets.



► **New range of ginger, garlic pastes**

Neo Foods has recently added a whole new range of pastes to its existing repertoire. The company, which specialises in pickled and preserved vegetables and fruits grown under contract farming, has come up with a new range of ginger, garlic and ginger-garlic pastes.

Neo Paste range is available in 200 gm, 1 kg pouches and 5 kg pouches to cater to the demands of various segments. They are available at Amazon, Bigbasket, Snapdeal and select retailers nationwide and will also be available at additional retailers very soon. With its focus on purity and flavour, the products are manufactured under the supervision of skilled workers as per the defined food industry guidelines. Neo products are known for their hygienic and leak-proof packaging, and long shelf life.



▲ **Single-serve honey packs**

Honey Twigs reimagines the way honey is consumed in India. The innovative single-serve packaging makes these Twigs portable and mess-free. What's more, the company ensures that the honey is pure and 100% antibiotic-free. You can purchase Honey Twigs at honeytwigs.in

▼ **Ready-to-cook recipe kits for noodles**

Mumbai-based Fizzy Foodlabs, a leading importer, manufacturer & supplier of food products, has launched noodles recipe kits. The company says the product has crossed 300,000 kits in monthly sales. After a successful run of its Italian dinner kits, Fizzy FoodLabs has launched its Oriental series under its brand Chef's Basket. The new line includes ready-to-cook recipe kits for noodles in Kung Pao, Tsing Hoi, Khow Suey and Tangy Sichuan sauces. The start-up is aiming to sell one million kits from the range by Summer 2016.



► **Toffee with pan and mukhwas ingredients**

With the aim of making quality toffees with natural taste and in line with the Indian tradition, Global Industries have come out with a new product called No Spit. The novelty of the product is that it contains delectable ingredients of meetha pan & mukhwas. The ingredients boost mouth freshness and can be consumed by people of any age group as it is tobacco- and -supari-free, besides having a shelf life of nine months. No Spit is packed in a rich container pack, which is designed to enrich the look of your office table, dining table and car deck. The product also makes for an ideal corporate gift pack. By inventing this toffee, Global Industries has kept in mind the PM's mission of Swachh Bharat and has made its small effort to the success of the cause.





TESTIMONIAL

With SIAL CHINA Director Mr. Bjoern Kempe

Shanghai



The concept of Look Deeper at SIAL CHINA 2016

SIAL CHINA always responds to the strong market needs in China and Asia which in return bring shows a strong growing momentum for our 2016 edition. Inspire food business means diversity in terms of origin, with 62 countries showing their regional know-how, and as you "Look Deeper" into our 21 product sectors you will also find inspiration. For instance, our **MEAT sector** at hall E3 & E4 will show more than 400 exhibitors from around the world for various kind of meat. We also launch the **DAIRY sector** for the first time in history of the show to address the strong demand of dairy products in Asia. Our **WINE sector** in hall W5 will await with a fresh look to show the importance of alcoholic beverages in Asia. We are very proud of our **SEAFOOD sector** that is getting stronger from year to year and shows not only Chinese aquatic products but also many international pavilions who bring their seafood products to SIAL CHINA.

LOOK DEEPER is not only reflected in the large product choices but also at our events. **SIAL INNOVATIONS, LA CUISINE, Seafood Fest'**... will let buyers and chefs from around the world get a deep inside of Asian food innovations and fusion cuisine. After all, SIAL CHINA is not only about buying and sourcing food products from around the world but also to get a roundup of the main food developments and trends in Asia.

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► **Carbonated fruit drinks and premium fruit juices**

Home-grown beverage producer Manpasand Beverages Ltd. has recently unveiled a range of carbonated fruit drinks and premium fruit juices in Mumbai. The fruit juices and carbonated fruit drinks come in different flavours and are available through modern retail stores and major food chains. Premium fruit juices are available in mango, apple, guava, litchi, orange and mixed fruit flavours and contain 16-17% fruit pulp. The carbonated fruit drinks are available in grape, orange and lemon flavours and offer 5-10% real fruit juice. “The launch of ‘Fruits Up’ is a humble yet proud realisation of the Prime Minister’s appeal to beverage makers to blend aerated drinks with at least 5% fruit juice to help distressed farmers find a new market for their produce,” said Dharendra Singh, CMD, Manpasand Beverages.



▲ **‘Dolce Vita’ cookies from Violanta, Greece**

Leading fine food importer Chenab Impex Pvt. Ltd. has recently introduced filled cookies from the house of Violanta Biscuits, Greece. Available in two variants – cocoa cream and mocha cream – the cookies taste perfect with coffee or tea, and also easy to eat at the office or during your coffee breaks. Violanta cream cookies and filled cookies have been awarded with the ‘Superior Taste Award 2015’, in Brussels, by the International Taste & Quality Institute, iTQi.

▼ **Coffee capsules in multiple flavours**

Olive Tree Trading has introduced its 100% ground coffee in single-serve coffee capsules, which make for that satisfying caffeine kick. These capsules are self-protected and vacuum-packed, to preserve the freshness and aroma.

Available in a wide variety of flavours like Ethiopian Single Origin, Full Roast Lungo, Dark Roast Italian and Choc-Hazelnut Coffee Capsules by Olea Europaea.

Priced at at Rs.450 for 50 gms box / 10 capsules per box, available at all leading retail stores across the country. Olea Europaea also offers light weight, maintenance free, easy to use Premium Espresso coffee machines and milk frothers.



▲ **New range of veggie fiesta**

Baramati Agro Limited has introduced a new range of veg products under the brand name Freshious. Easy to make and high on taste, these products are made only from quality farm fresh vegetables and packed with enticing flavours. There are two tantalizing ranges to suit every taste. The Fry and Serve range has cheese corn peas nuggets, cheese jalapeno shots, veg burger patty and veg fingers. The Heat and Serve range comprises Malabar paratha, chapati and aloo paratha. Invite friends and family over and share these amazing preparations with them!

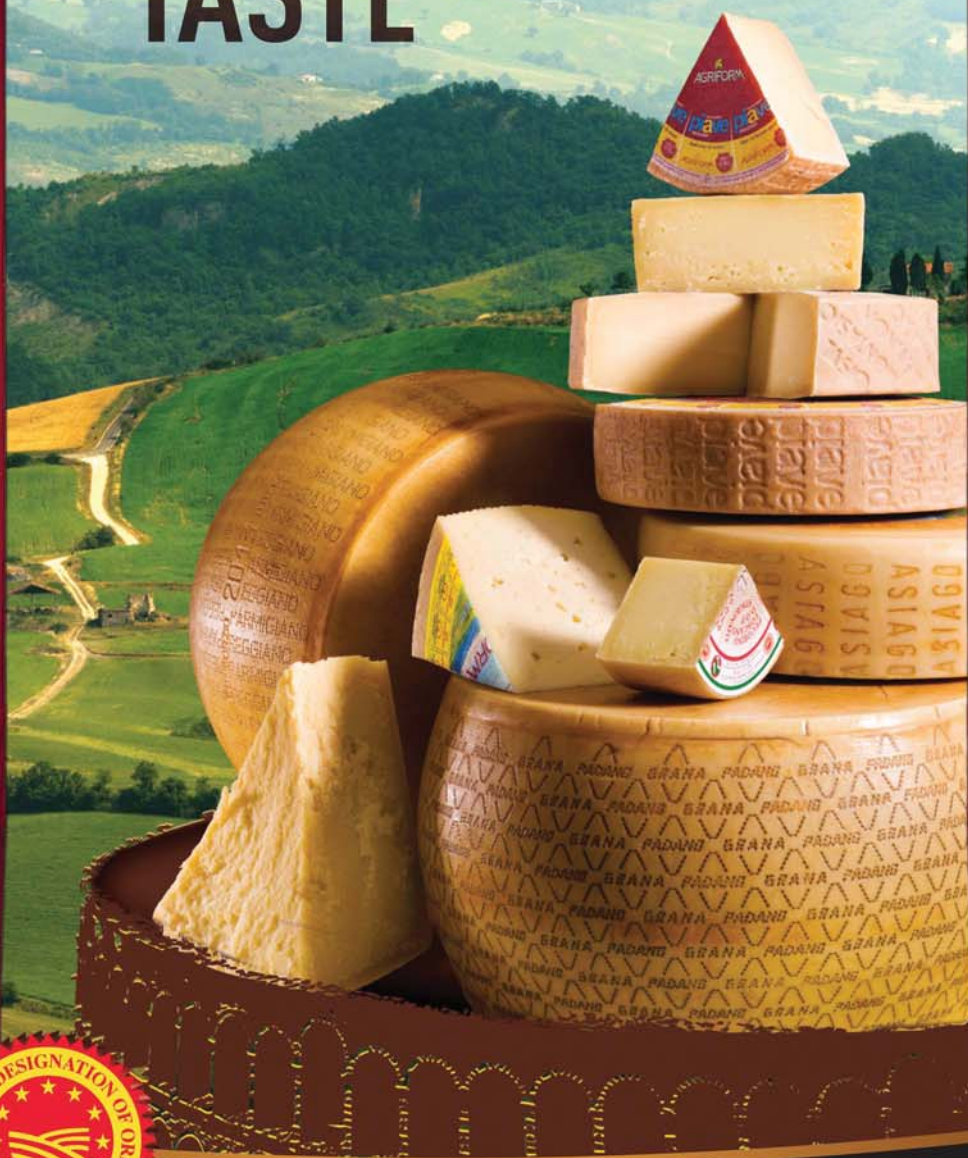
▼ **California almonds and walnuts**

Nuts and dry fruits brand Tulsi has launched raw cashews, California almonds and raisins in new identical looking packs. The product is available in 500 gm pillow pouches and is available in modern trade stores like Reliance, Walmart, Big Bazaar, Metro Cash & Carry, More, SPAR, etc. The product is also available at some popular online ecommerce website such as Amazon, Paytm, etc. The flow to traditional trade is through the age old khari baoli shop and broker network.

Tulsi has also launched California walnuts inshell as well as kernels. These come in two grades each and the packs are properly graded & vacuum packed to retain freshness.



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California Walnuts



- Accounts for 99% of the commercial US supply and 2/3rd of world trade.
- Known worldwide for their excellent quality.
- Grown, harvested and processed following strict Federal and State food safety regulations with finished product often exceeding quality standards set by USDA.

Walnut consumption is significantly increasing in India. California Walnuts provide the perfect opportunity for Indian dry fruit trade to expand their product portfolio and fulfill the needs of Indian consumer.



California Walnut Commission

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