

Market

GST's gathering momentum set to bring a sea change in the FMCG sector

Page 18

Retail Innovation

How to make exemplary payoffs from executing great concepts

Page 24

Nutraceuticals

The category is primed for growth and on the cusp of a break-out

Page 40

PROGRESSIVE GROCER

November 2017

Volume 11 Number 11 • Rs 100 • www.indiaretailing.com

INDIA EDITION

Page 30

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The recently concluded World Food India 2017 is expected to provide the much needed thrust for realizing the vision of India becoming a preferred investment destination and sourcing hub for the global food processing industry. The event helped to pull in an investment of \$10 billion in India's food processing sector, which can help generate one million jobs in the next three years.

The vast potential of the food processing sector in India stems primarily from its inherent strengths in the agriculture sector. The country is the world's largest producer of bananas, mangoes, papayas, chickpea, ginger, okra, whole buffalo, goat milk and buffalo meat. It ranks second in the production of sugarcane, rice, potatoes, wheat, garlic, groundnut (with shells), dry onion, green pea, pumpkins, gourds, cauliflower, tea, tomatoes, lentils, wheat and cow milk. The country is also the world's largest producer and exporter of spices, accounting for 48 per cent of global spice trade by volume and 43 per cent by value.

Currently, the food processing segment contributes about 25 per cent to the national farm GDP and is worth approximately US\$ 200 billion. In step with the recent initiatives of the government such as opening of more food parks, the food processing sector is poised for a giant leap in capacity across its key categories. With food industry leaders from all over the world professing their willingness to invest in India, the country is on path to meet the huge demand potential domestically as well as in overseas markets. This is bound to create immense opportunities for players, generate employment and give a welcome boost to farm incomes across the board.


Amitabh Taneja
 Editor-in-Chief

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

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RETAILER

30 “We serve a premium niche in food & home needs retailing”

Hyderabad-based Q-Mart has changed the retail landscape of the city by being the first to introduce gourmet, organic and specialty food categories, way back in 2001. Its promoters have also brought in new concepts in merchandising and technology, all of which have helped the store build a large base of customers.



B.V.K. Raju
Promoter, Q-Mart
Retail Ltd.

08 MARKET UPDATE

World Food India

The three-day event turned out to be a good platform to network and collaborate with Indian and international businesses.



12 SUPPLIER

Pioneers in eggless bakery

Lovely Bake Studio is ramping up its pan-India presence and has also started exporting to the Middle East, Hong Kong and Australia.

14 GST-VIEWS

F&G sector bats for easier compliance burden

Three prominent members of the industry to offer a sense of the sector's comfort level in dealing with GST.

18 GST-IMPACT

GST is bringing a sea change in the FMCG sector

FMCGs will be the first industry to feel the positive impact of GST.

20 ECOMMERCE

The Fantastic Four

Doubling down on ecommerce for future success.

24 RETAILING LESSONS

How to make big payoffs from execution of great concepts

India Retail Forum feted retailers that have introduced unique retailing concepts and showed excellence in execution strategy.

34 INTERVIEW

“We can create synergies”

India and Peru are looking for the internationalization of their companies with the aid of strategic partners in the food and beverage industry where the two companies share many complementarities.

40 FUNCTIONAL FOOD

Nutraceuticals

The nutraceuticals market is becoming a strong pillar of the health and wellness revolution.



44 INTERVIEW

“Munchy On's products appeal”

Manoj Gupta of AFP Manufacturing Co. Pvt. Ltd speaks about how his company is looking to scale in the days ahead.

46 ONLINE RETAIL

Bringing more variations in superfoods

Zain Virjee, Founder of Dryfruit Mart speaks about the opportunities and challenges of online food retailing and his plans for ramping up business.



48 ALMOND MILK

The healthy dairy alternative for you and family

Growing awareness about the health benefits of almond milk is making it one of the more popular dairy alternatives.

52 APP QUEST

App Quest

Success has been spotty, but progress is being made.



IN EVERY ISSUE

56 COLUMN

New mantra for retail – social media, personalization...



F&G sector bats for easier compliance burden



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The tax slabs are on the higher side primarily for food and beverage items. While on the one hand, we are fighting to tame food price inflation, on the other side we have high tax on food items that is creating a contradictory situation.

— **Amit Lohani**
MD Max Foods and
Convenor, Forum of
Indian Food Importers

Progressive Grocer spoke to three prominent members of the industry to get a sense of the sector's comfort level in dealing with GST. While each one of them welcomed its implementation and were appreciative of GST's stated aim to bring about transparency and accountability in transactions, they also expressed an overwhelming concern for more simplicity in the rules and greater flexibility in the compliance.

More than three months into GST, what do you feel has been its impact?

Amit Lohani, MD Max Foods and Convenor, Forum of Indian Food Importers: GST has been a tremendous idea, which if executed with less confusion would have led to better trade conditions. But unfortunately that is not happening, at least for small trade stakeholders and SMEs. The tax slabs are on the higher side primarily for food and beverage items. While on the one hand, we are fighting to tame food price inflation, on the other side we have high tax on food items that is creating a contradictory situation. Business has visibly faced the brunt of such inherent anomalies in GST. What we get to hear of the GST impact is primarily from the perspective of large corporate or multinationals. For SMEs and companies like ours, it is difficult to abide by all GST compliance due to several reasons – from high tax slabs to ambiguity in the rules to lack of qualified man-power, and several others.

Sunil Jindal, Managing Director, SRS Limited: The Indian government has taken some steps recently

to usher in greater clarity in GST, which will make it easier for businesses to negotiate the system. The introduction of GST was expected to encourage transparency in business dealings and transactions. Businesses are moving in that direction and things are bound to improve on this front. Still, it is a bit early to comment on how effective GST will be in turning the business landscape towards better transparency and a more efficient transaction system. But we do expect it to have a positive effect.

Rishabh Asrani, Director, Sri Roda Foods: GST has resulted in an increase in tax percentage on our products. However, the removal of CVD from the duty structure has been beneficial for us and reduced the costs of our products.

What challenges are you facing since GST came into force?

Amit Lohani: It is a situation where you learn while you work as it is not possible for small stakeholders and SMEs to hire consultants. Since it came into effect, we are trying to define the GST slabs basis

our understanding of the definition of various rules and clauses. Also, we have limited manpower and their understanding of the changed system is also limited. There is always the possibility of people offering suggestions that are not fully informed and those suggestions could get implemented or acted upon by most of us. This is bound to lead to further ambiguity and confusion and create more chances of errors. There are just too many confusing provisions that exists in the GST such as the one about e-way billing. The procedure for compliance and implementation of the provisions are just so confusing. The changed tax regime has no room for accommodating human error and this is demotivating for us. Even though we are trying our best to be on the right side of GST provisions, we can be treated as offenders. Just imagine how it can feel for legitimate players to be put on the dock as wilful offenders? It is necessary for the authorities to understand that in the observance of the new laws it is important to leave some scope and room for genuine human error and be considerate and understanding of such lapses.

Sunil Jindal: For every positive change in the works, one faces a mountain of challenges and that needs to be addressed. Of course, many such challenges have come to the fore in the wake of GST implementation but many of them are not of a severe nature. As far as retail operations are concerned, there could be some challenges with finance but hopefully that will be solved soon.

Rishabh Asrani: Paying IGST beforehand at the port on the full value of goods without even selling them is a major drawback. Also, many people are still unfamiliar with the protocol of filing of GST returns. A confusion regarding HSN codes on products also exists among the customers, with the same product falling under multiple HSN codes.

Do you think there is a need for tweaking and making more changes do so as to make GST more efficient and business friendly?

Amit Lohani: The government should roll out intense training sessions. For us, reading about the regulations and the changes and modifications on the government web portals is not helping much. SMEs and small stakeholders are suffering as it is not financially viable for them to hire consultants. Also, the available man-power with us is at a semi-skilled stage in handling the GST provisions as they have not received any official training and are learning the ropes gradually through on-ground practice. They do not intend to misguide the tax authorities but their lack of knowledge on many GST issues poses challenges for compliance.

Under such circumstances, tax authorities should show flexibility before penalizing genuine oversights by legitimate players. At this early stage of GST implementation, the system should be run in way that motivates the trade to function smoothly and efficiently by taking a lenient attitude towards human errors, which at this early stage of GST, is unavoidable. The government should



“

It is a bit early to comment on how effective GST will be in turning the business landscape towards better transparency and a more efficient transaction system. But we do expect it to have a positive effect.

— Sunil Jindal
MD, SRS Limited





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How to make big payoffs from execution of great concepts

The concluding session on Day two of India Retail Forum celebrated innovation in retail and feted those retailers that have introduced unique retailing concepts, showed excellence in execution strategy, demonstrated grit and perseverance through the implementation stages and brought it all to a successful fruition with exemplary returns and payoffs.

By Premjit Mohapatra

The high octane session that marked the IRF grand finale saw an eminent jury shortlist 10 outstanding performers from a fray of 28 leading retailers across various categories – food, fashion, beauty, apparel, etc. The selection of the 10 retailers was made on the basis of innovation in retailing concepts and ideas and their dexterity and finesse in executing and implementing these ideas to great results.

The 28 retailers in the fray were: Adidas; Alcisi; Atesber INC 5; Ayesha; Being Human; Bestseller; Burger King; Burger Singh; Enrich Salons and Academy; Haldiram's; HyperCITY; Levi Strauss India; Limeroad.com; Manyavar; Max Fashion; My Fit, Van Heusen; Neerus; Pepe; Pizza Hut;

Shaze; Smaash; Spar; Spencer's; Twenty Four Seven; Fabindia; V-Mart; Wow Momos; Yum Restaurants.

The 10 that made the final cut were: Spencer's Retail; 24 SEVEN; Godfrey Phillips India; Enrich Salons and Academy; Adidas Group; HyperCITY; Levi Strauss India; Wow! Momo; Fabindia; Max Fashions, Landmark Group; Pizza Hut.

The members of jury that voted the 10 top retailers for their thought-provoking ideas, brilliant execution strategy, successful implementation of the various stages and its payoffs and results were: Abheek Singhi, Senior Partner and Director, The Boston Consulting Group; Ajay Kaul, Senior Director, Everstone Group; B.S. Nagesh, Founder, TRRAIN; Debashish Mukherjee, Partner and lead,

Consumer Industries & Retail Products Practice, India and Southeast Asia, A.T. Kearney; Jonathan Yach, Director - Operations, Virtuous Retail; Pushpa Bector, Executive Vice President and Head - Premium Malls Division, DLF Utilities; Rajneesh Mahajan, CEO, Inorbit; Roosevelt D'souza, Managing Director - South Asia, Nielsen.

The session was moderated by Damodar Mall, CEO, Grocery Retail, Reliance Retail. "When retailers choose to share their innovation so that other retailers including their competitors can learn from their experience, it is very special. It is special because they have created an innovative idea and concept and have taken it all the way to execution and are willing to share their ideas and execution for all to benefit from," said Mall. Progressive Grocer brings you the case studies of three food and grocery retailers that made the final list of 10 winners chosen for driving excellent strategies to perfect execution with great outcome and payoffs.



24 SEVEN, GODFREY PHILLIPS INDIA

→ Concept:

Digitization of 24 SEVEN

→ Execution:

The idea was to transform a convenience store to a digitized store that is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. A one-stop shop offering food, groceries, supplies and services and always open to make life easier for its customers.

→ Challenge:

The challenge was to create a high end place for hanging around and one that appealed to all – be it the young, family or office goers. A larger than life aspirational place, which is modern, has a little bit of perkiness and attitude, but is always welcoming. A digitized store for the community with flexible timings and which brings about a positive change in the lives of the communities. Going forward, the challenge will be to make this presence felt in every city of India.

→ Result:

After the changes, improvement in sales has been significant.

SPENCER'S RETAIL

→ Concept:

Introduce fast moving fashion goods. Fashion is a constant that keeps changing. With that in mind, Spencer's Retail introduced a new fashion concept – fast moving fashion goods.

→ Execution:

The execution was set in motion by reimagining the entire supply chain beginning with design to raw materials to fabric production to garment production to transport to sales to end use and finally to recycle. With a new product cycle, the store saw a new fashion collection every three weeks. The earlier model was more like a trading model where products were purchased and sold and the ranges in the fashion segment changed every three to four months. FMFG is very high on fashion, has the latest trends in fashion and is priced well to engage the customer when they come for shopping. So from that perspective the positioning of the category was very different, the engagement was very different and it was targeted at the Spencer's customer to increase her indulgence and share of wallet.



→ Challenge:

Though Spencer's customer loyalty for the food business is huge, there was disconnect with the fashion business and the customer engagement with the fashion category. The challenge was how to get the food customer start engaging with fashion and develop the indulgence of Spencer's women customer.

→ Result:

With the FMFG model in place, the customers of Spencer's are shopping more than once in a month. Sales per square foot have gone up 3x and sales trends are showing encouraging signs and growing 2.5x.

“

When retailers choose to share their innovation so that other retailers including their competitors can learn from their experience, it is very special. It is special because they have created an innovative idea and concept and have taken it all the way to execution and are willing to share their ideas and execution for all to benefit from.

— Damodar Mall
CEO, Grocery Retail,
Reliance Retail



“We serve a premium niche in food & home needs retailing”

Hyderabad-based retailer Q-Mart has changed the retail landscape of the city by being the first to introduce gourmet, organic, imported and specialty food categories, way back in 2001. Its promoters have also brought in new concepts in merchandising and technology, in-store display and consumer engagement, all of which have helped the store build a large and loyal base of customers. Nibedita Roy of Progressive Grocer spoke to promoters B.V.K. Raju and B.H. Rao about the store's retailing philosophy and its plans for the future.

How would you describe the journey of your store over the years and its growth until now?

B.V.K. Raju: The store commenced operations in 1997 when organized retailing was in a very nascent stage in India. The current promoters bought out the store in 2001 and turned it around into a modern trade outlet with innovation in technology, better merchandise display, enhanced in-store experience. Since we took over, Q-Mart has been consistently flourishing and has emerged as one of the leading supermarkets of Hyderabad. This is the 16th year and we continue to be the leader in gourmet, imported and specialty food retail in this region.



B.V.K. Raju
Promoter, Q-Mart Retail Ltd.

The business has grown very substantially from a humble turnover of Rs. 30 million in 2001-02 to its current levels of about Rs. 360 million annually. The year-on-year growth has been in double digits since 2001 and profits have been stable all through.

The store services a premium niche in food & home needs retailing. Q-Mart has been one of the first stores in the country to introduce gourmet, organic, imported and specialty food categories, way back in 2001. Q-Mart was also one of the first to have introduced retail sale of bulk cheese in its delicatessen. Gourmet & imported food and health and organic food are significant contributors to the sales of Q-Mart.

What is the product portfolio at your store?

B.H. Rao: Q-Mart's food product profile extends to gourmet & world foods, health & organic,



delicatessen, frozen & chilled, fresh, ready to eat, confectionery & bakery, groceries, juices & beverages, etc. The non-food category includes specialty cookware, bake ware, crockery, cutlery, child care, personal care, plastics and other home needs.

What is the sales contribution from your major product categories?

Rao: Our maximum sales contribution comes from food, which is about 55 per cent and it covers gourmet, bakery, grocery, fruits and vegetables, RTE, etc. About 45 per cent of sales is from non-food categories like personal care, home care, child care, crockery, cutlery, etc.

Which are the fastest-moving product categories in your store?

Rao: Ready to eat, gourmet foods and world cuisine are the fastest growing categories. Organic and health foods, specialty foods and cookware &

Q-MART AT A GLANCE

Name of the store and location: **Q-Mart; Hyderabad**

Date of Start of Operation of store: **1997**

Format of the store: **Lifestyle supermarket; gourmet/ destination store**

Number of stores currently in operation: **One large store – 18,000 sq.ft., 2nd store of 33,000 sq.ft. in the pipeline**

Operating model - company owned stores, leased or rented: **Partly owned, partly leased**

Average daily/ weekly footfall at store: **1,500 daily**

Average bill size/ transaction: **Rs 750/-**

Sales per sq.ft.: **About Rs. 20,000 per sq.ft. annually**

Average monthly turnover of store: **Rs. 3 crore approximately**

SKU count in store: **23,000 SKUs**

Catchment of customers: **City-wide destination store**

Sales growth y-o-y: **9-10% average**

Latest revenue/ sales figures: **Rs. 36 crore approximately**



“Our maximum sales contribution comes from food, which is about 55 per cent and it covers gourmet, bakery, grocery, fruits and vegetables, RTE, etc. About 45 per cent of sales is from non-food categories like personal care, home care, child care, crockery, cutlery, etc.”

— **B.H. Rao**
Promoter,
Q-Mart Retail Ltd.

bake ware in the non-food category are also star performers.

Which are the new and emerging categories and what is your assessment of their market potential?

Raju: Organic, health foods, specialty tea, exotic vegetables and fruits, etc, are the few emerging categories. I feel there is immense market potential for these products and these will surely see a substantial growth in the years to come.

Tell us about the customer profile at your store.

Rao: Our customers are well-heeled and travelled Indians, NRIs, gourmet food lovers, health food patrons, high income individuals, aspirational individuals, connoisseurs, cooking enthusiasts, expats and the elite of the city. They are our core customer segments over the years.

What are the marked differentiators for your store that puts you apart from the other retail players?

Raju: Q-Mart offers a plethora of domestic and international brands. We are known for the quality of our products, variety and uniqueness of assortment. These are some elements that are the hallmarks of our store. Apart from that, we have

“We can create many synergies in the F&B sector”



Luis Cabello

Spokesperson and the Commercial Counsellor for the Commercial Office of Peru in India



India and Peru, like the majority of countries around the world, are looking out for the internationalization of their companies with the aid of strategic partners, especially in the food and beverage industry where the two companies share many complementarities.

Luis Cabello, the spokesperson and the Commercial Counsellor for the Commercial Office of Peru in India, speaks to Progressive Grocer's Sanjay Kumar about the growth in Peruvian food exports to India and how the two countries stand to benefit mutually by harnessing the many complementary attributes in sectors such as food processing, agri-tech and food and beverage production.

Do Peru and India share any goals about expanding trade relations in the food sector?

In March 2017, both countries started working towards the signing of a Trade Agreement. This agreement is set to benefit companies, both Indian and Peruvian. India and Peru are complementary in many aspects when referring to the food and beverage industry. The two economies are aiming to strengthen their agricultural and livestock industry, as well as food processing. Both countries have clear strengths in the food and beverage industry. They are also conscious of the aspects that need to be worked upon and strengthened in the context of the international food industry.

India has large agricultural areas, which allow it to be more than self-sufficient in the production of cereals and horticultural products, and is working towards the development of the food industry.

However, it faces the major challenge of improving its post-harvest processing in order to improve the yield of many products. The great advantage of Peru lies in its ecological diversity, various climates and the adaptability to these climate conditions. All this, along with our abundant fishing and vegetable genetics, has allowed diversification and specialization of the production of “superfoods” with high yields and standards. In the case of Peru, our next challenge is to improve the food processing sector in order to increase value addition to these products.

We must take advantage of this complementarity by facilitating a closer cooperation amongst our companies and consumers. We must create consciousness and knowledge of everything that each country has to offer to the other. Peru and India enjoy abundant vegetable genetics and have been home to primogenial cultures, which showed the way for the cultivated crops today. In the case of Peru, we are the centre of the origin of potatoes with more than 3,000 different varieties in form, texture, color, etc. We are also the centre of origin for quinoa, which enjoys a high demand world-wide given its high protein levels. Furthermore, Peru is also the centre of diversification of various crops like corn, of which we have the highest number of varieties in the world, as is the case with our capsicums. Here, I must add that we have specialized in the production of superfoods with very high quality standards, aimed at niche markets around the world. I speak of products like asparagus (Peru is the largest exporter of fresh and preserved asparagus in the world), artichokes, avocados, blueberries, grapes, citrus, purple corn (with its tremendous amounts of antioxidants, anthocyanin specifically), amazonian nuts, maca (an amazing natural energizer), sacha inchi (seeds rich in protein, omega 3, 6, and 9, vitamin E, carotenoids - vitamin A - and fiber), etc. Similarly, India is known as the principal producer





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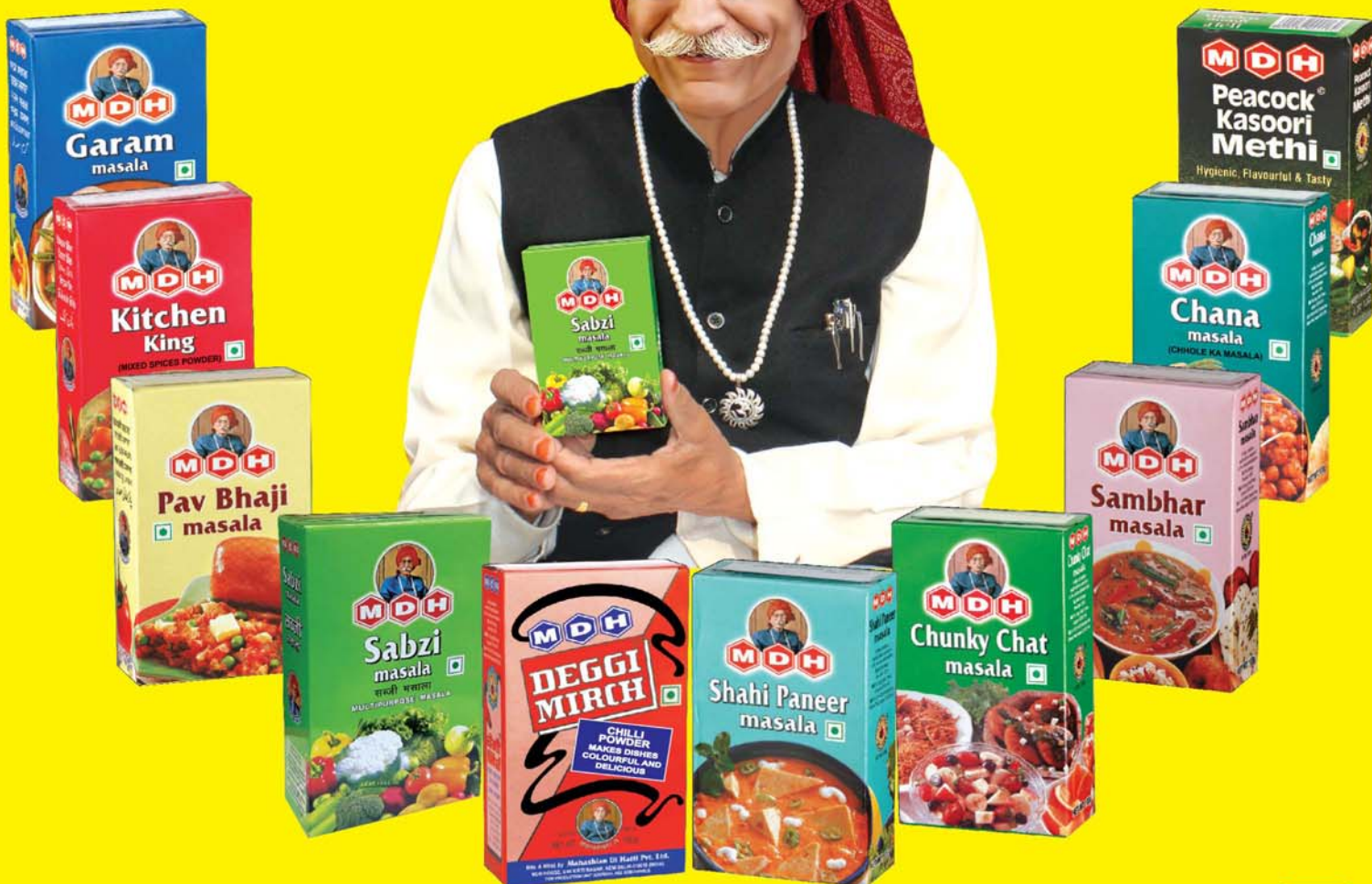


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