Expert Speak

Recent transformative influences on India's F&G sector and the trends ahead

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Best selections on food retailing topics to commemorate the anniversary issue

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There's nothing a retailer or manufacturer likes more than a consumer happily soaking herself in retail therapy. The months of October, November and December pack a festive punch for the shoppers and retail industry. The festive season is the time when shoppers in India get into the mood to spend and splurge.

The festive months offer a wonderful opportunity for retailers, brands and manufacturers to pull out all the stops and bring out newer products and promotions, and lay out the special festive spread for consumers. In anticipation of the good times, businesses start planning for the months ahead – fine-tuning their marketing and product strategy, allocating budgets, firming up the priorities and looking at how to make the bucks count.

To cash in on the exuberance, this festive season too, food and beverage companies have stitched up well-planned marketing strategies with the aim of showcasing their products as ideal gifting and shopping options. Today, gift-ready packs, high on hygiene and variety, have successfully engaged the consumers, and help F&B companies gain a bigger market share during the festive season.

As a magazine for the modern trade, we bring you the inside track on what brands and retailers are doing to break numbers and bust sales during the festive months ahead. With so much to look forward to during the months ahead, the festive season this year has lots of promise in store for all – producers, consumers and retailers. Here's wishing you all a wonderful festival season and great celebrations ahead.

Amitabh Taneja Editor-in-Chief

All feedback welcome at editorpgindia@imagesgroup.in

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Expert Speak

A Peek into the Future Contours of Food Retail



Memory Lane

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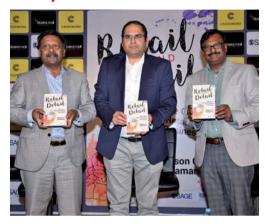




Market Update

Book released on success stories in the Indian retail industry

India's most appreciated retail author Dr Gibson G. Vedamani released his book – 'Retail Beyond Detail' as a guide to establishing a successful retailing business in India. The book encompasses the growth and successful development of the retail business industry and offers insight into the interesting environment of the retail landscape in India. It discusses the emergence of modern retail in India as one of the fastest growing industries with the entrance of world renowned giants like Walmart, Ikea, and others. Commenting on the book launch, Dr. Gibson said, "Retail Beyond Detail depicts the uniqueness of the great Indian retailing business. Unlike anywhere in the world, coexistence of all forms of retailing is a virtue and retailing in India is a big opportunity sector for one to succeed in. Today's youth need to know the instances of successful retail journeys that had humble beginnings. Readers can draw inspiration from the numerous success stories explained in the book."



New EIU study documents the impact of food system transitions in India

Cargill, along with FICCI and The Economist Intelligence Unit, launched 'Fixing Asia's Food Systems', a five-part research programme that explores a range of issues in regional food systems and is centred around a survey of 400 business leaders in the region. The first report was unveiled by Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Hon'ble Union Minister for Food Processing Industries. The introductory piece, Separate Tables: Bringing together Asia's food systems, is a deep dive into six key megatrends: urbanisation, the double burden of undernutrition and obesity, technology constraints, the need for transparency and sustainability, and the politics surrounding policies on food. The research shows that business leaders overwhelmingly agree that there is cause for alarm around Asia's food security. 90% of survey respondents are concerned about their food systems' ability to maintain local food security while only 32% feel they have the ability to determine the success of their food systems. The study further emphasizes on the need for stronger partnerships between public and private sectors and across countries along with tighter integration of local and regional supply chains.



Launch of EIU Report on Fixing Asia's Food System L-R: Krish Iyer, Prof. Ramesh Chand, Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Siraj Chaudhry, Madhvi Das, Suresh Narayanan and Debashish Mukherjee

Crystal Crop acquires four FMC brands

Crystal Crop Protection Limited, an R&D based crop protection manufacturing and marketing company, has strengthened its insecticide and herbicide portfolio by acquiring the brands Furadan, Splendour, Metc-il and Affinity Force from FMC Corporation. The company has also signed a Letter of Intent with KeyGene N.V., Netherlands to explore a strategic collaboration for developing products through sharing of technology and novel breeding techniques that benefit farmers by increasing farm profitability. Commenting on the acquisition, Managing Director Ankur Aggarwal said, "We believe in acting as an enabler for Indian farmers to improve their farming income and this acquisition is a step in that direction. Staying true to our philosophy of inspiring growth for all our stakeholders, we are open to such inorganic growth opportunities in the future too." This is the company's third acquisition in 2018 and these collaborations are part of Crystal's strategy to add value to its business and grow its market share.

Jacqueline Fernandez as brand ambassador for **Dabur Honey**

Dabur India Ltd. announced the signing of Jacqueline Fernandez as the new brand ambassador for its health supplement brand Dabur Honey. A new campaign, 'Stay Fit, Feel Young' featuring the actress, will be launched shortly. Over the last few decades, Dabur Honey has stood for fitness and has constantly nudged consumers to adopt Dabur Honey as part of their fitness regimen - be it by way of having Dabur Honey with warm water everyday morning, as an additive in food and breakfast items or as a replacement for sugar. Commenting on her association with the brand, Jacqueline Fernandez said, "When I was approached by Dabur for this association, I found this to be something that I would love to communicate to Indian consumers.



The brand proposition of 'Stay Fit, Feel Young' was something that I immediately connected with. Fitness involves regular exercise, balanced nutrient intake and adequate sleep but the start of fitness is the addition of healthful elements like Dabur Honey to your diet."

LEAP India receives funding of upto INR 200 crore

LEAP India, a leading enterprise in advanced pooling, has raised INR 200 crore in funding from Piramal Capital & Housing Finance (PCHF). PCHF has extended a credit line to LEAP India to meet the company's growth requirement over the next 2-3 years. The enterprise was founded in 2013 with an aim of providing solutions to businesses with the help of equipment pooling and returnable packages. LEAP India currently supplies 1.7 million pallets made of wood imported from Russia and Ukraine, and 40K FLCs (Foldable Large Containers) to over 370 FMCG, beverage, auto and pharma companies on a daily rental basis.

Harmilapi Impex gears up for festive rush

Harmilapi Impex has shored up resources and put distinguishing customer propositions in place to prepare for the hike in sales during the upcoming festival season. Operating under the brand name Dnuts, the firm specializes in supplying dry fruits, dehydrated fruits, berries, seeds, etc., to Indian consumers. With over five generations of experience, Harmilapi is expecting the predictable jump in product sales as more consumers look to purchase innovative and healthful gift packs for their loved ones. The brand is offering newer flavour combinations in attractive packaging as part of an extended, improved product line and is also looking forward to the prime-selling period of dry fruits and dried nuts as witnessed in the winter season. To further profit off festival sales, the company has placed its varied product range at key strategic points and retail outlets across the country.



Gurgaon-based startup introduces dips and sauces



Fric Bergen, a Guragon-based enterprise, recently launched a range of dips and sauces to bridge the gap between local players and international brands in the segment. The new product line is moderately priced and is available in easy-to-use, convenient portion control sachets. Consumers have the option of trying out different variants of dressings, dips, mayonnaise, sauces for just INR 10. Founded by Vivek Singh, Vandana Singh, and Rohit Agarwal, Fric Bergen is currently engaged in the manufacturing and marketing of processed food categories that include sauces, dips, jams, and mayonnaise. Commenting on the campaign

launch, Vivek said, "After obtaining a clear understanding of the needs of our target audience, we decided to come up with the brand Fric Bergen which translates to saving money. We wish to establish ourselves as a company that offers premium quality sauces at an affordable price. All of our products are available in single serve sachets that can be consumed on the go without the consumer having to worry about them spoiling." The company plans on further expanding its presence in various segments such as honey-based products, sugar-free sauces, and juice concentrates.

GreyOrange closes \$140 million in Series C funding



GreyOrange, the global leader in AI-powered robotics systems for flexible automation across fulfillment centers in supply chain, has announced US\$140 million in Series C funding, marking the largest round ever raised by an industrial robotics company. Mithril Capital, co-founded by Ajay Royan and Peter Thiel, led this round, which included Binny Bansal and other existing investors such as Blume Ventures. They join Mitsubishi, Flipkart, and the Project Verte as investors in the company. The new funds will enable the automation giant to fulfill its vision of developing and deploying intuitive, flexible and scalable solutions for endto-end automation across the supply chain, from factories to fulfillment centers, and beyond. The firm plans to build on the strong growth it has experienced over the past five years by expanding operations across Asia, Europe and the U.S. To that end, the company recently established its U.S. headquarters and manufacturing facility in Atlanta, Georgia, and launched a major R&D center in Boston, Massachusetts.

Uflex's holography business develops lens transfer paper

In a big boost to Uflex's commitment towards innovation and sustainability, their holography business developed premium lens transfer paper/paperboard for carton packaging, with the use of different technologies of fresnel lens. The dominance of registered printing on the exclusive lens carton provides a premium 3D effect and has transformed the appearance of products, both in terms of aesthetic value and brand protection. This comes as a substitute for Met PET laminated packaging and offers an environment-friendly, sustainable solution for green packaging. Commenting on the innovation, G.P. Pathak, Vice President of Holography Business at Uflex Limited said, "Uflex Holography delivers new innovation to its customers in a way that radically improves the profitability equation and the brand as well. The unique feature about this product is that there is no film attached to the paperboard. In fact, it is a direct impression on the carton/paperboard, saving hugely on the lamination cost for the customer. Moreover, this revolutionary packaging appearance is difficult to produce and provides admirable aesthetic and anti-counterfeit solution to the customers."

Vezlay Foods earns listing in India Book of Records

Vezlay Foods Pvt. Ltd. won the title of Best Manufacturer in the category of Soya Innovation and is now listed in the India Book of Records as a pioneer in the concept of manufacturing product substitutes for non-vegetarian foods. Established in 2010 under the directorship of Amit Bajaj,

the company offers an extensive product line comprising soya-based products such as kebabs, samosas, vegetarian chicken, nuggets and noodles. These food items are widely used



to replace protein meats like chicken in a number of food preparations meant for vegetarian consumers and are replete with nutrients that constitute a balanced meal. One of the first brands to introduce soya-based vegetarian substitutes in India, Vezlay Foods leads the market in terms of duplication of non-vegetarian flavour and texture without compromising on the healthful composition of products. These products are rich in proteins, dietary fibers and calcium, and encourage low cholesterol levels. The company received the unique listing at the IBR Head Office in New Delhi for consistently displaying these unique product attributes.



New tests reveal dangerous levels of fluoride in high end teas

As part of an independent study conducted by Newby Teas, globally recognized laboratory, Eurofins was commissioned to conduct lab tests for fluorides at their center in Wolverhampton, UK. Focused on community health and consumer awareness, the project used 31 samples of teas from popular international brands. The testing revealed that some premuim brands have fluoride levels up to 1.06 mg per cup and that, if drunk in quantity, could compromise bone health. Out of the samples tested, 95% of products by Newby Teas were recorded to have the lowest fluoride levels from 0.25-0.35 mg of fluoride per cup of 200 ml. Nirmal Sethia, Founder of Newby Teas stated, "While the figures don't look too bad for someone drinking the occasional cup of tea, several cups consumed per day could lead to significant negative effects on an individual's health. We will continue to monitor the situation for the purpose of product control and comparative analysis. While this has not been deemed compulsory, we believe it is our ethical duty to do so."



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E-commerce companies losing money as Indians ditch shopping carts, says SAP study

According to new research from SAP, more than half (56%) of Indian shoppers ditch their online shopping carts sometimes or all the time. The SAP Consumer Propensity Study focusing on online shopping behavior found that this is because they use online shopping carts to compare prices of similar products with no intention to purchase (45%). They also stop short of clicking 'purchase' as they are put off from higher than expected shipping costs (54%), or face issues with out-of-stock items (42%), 1,000 consumers in India were surveyed on their behavior at checkout stage and motivations to complete the purchase, with the results revealing that Indian consumers tend to procrastinate when making online purchases.

"The e-commerce journey is not a linear path, with multiple factors and touchpoints influencing purchase behavior. Cart abandonment data such as items selected and discarded, navigation steps, amongst others, provides a valuable trove of insights for retailers to identify friction points, map out the consumer journey, and make improvements to the overall purchasing experience", said Krishnan Chatterjee, Chief Customer Officer and Head of Marketing, Indian Subcontinent, SAP. Almost a third of Indian consumers surveyed are also more likely to leave their items in the shopping cart for more than a week and have a higher tendency to forget about their intended purchases, with close to a third (32%) forgetting about the items in their carts, as compared to a fifth (21%) in other APAC countries.

DS Group wins India Star & Asia Star Awards in consumer packaging category

DS Group is the proud winner of the India Star & Asia Star Awards in the consumer packaging category organized by the Indian Institute of Packaging and Asian Packaging Federation, respectively. The packaging for Pulse mango candy won the India Star Awards, while the Rajnigandha Pearls' compact dispenser won both the India Star and Asia Awards. Both the packaging options have qualified for the coveted World Star awards. These awards recognize excellence in packaging design, enhanced user experience and innovation in product handling. The packaging of the Pulse mango candy box is as distinct as the candy itself. Consumers looking for a unique table



top pack find this candy box very appealing. The new compact user-friendly Rajnigandha Pearls dispenser allows controlled release of the elaichi pearls hygienically. The packaging enhances the functionality and the feel of the product, while offering ease of use while travelling.

Axis Communications showcases range of retail solutions

Axis Communications is driving the shift from analog camera to digital surveillance by tapping into the burgeoning Indian retail segment. At



Sudhindra Holla, Sales Director, India & SAARC, Axis Communication

this year's India Retail Forum, Axis showcased its integrated solutions - store reporter, people counter, queue monitor, demographic identifier and occupancy estimator. These data and analytic technologies provide business intelligence to retailers and help in optimizing the store performance. Speaking on the occasion, Sudhindra Holla, Sales Director, India and SAARC, Axis Communications, said "Retail is seeing an increasing trend of intelligent building systems helping in the convergence of multiple networks and this sector is ready to invest in high-end quality security solutions."

Trade welcomes delay in implementing retaliatory tariffs

The Government of India has delayed the implementation of higher tariffs against agricultural goods such as almonds and walnuts from the US. The increased tariffs will be in effect starting 18th September 2018. Although trade organizations welcomed this delay, a number of them have requested the government to revoke any ambiguity in order to ensure a continuous, smooth flow of business. In a press release, Forum of Food Importers said, "We need to have an environment of stable

trade and we urge both countries to understand the power of firm long-term trade relationships." The forty-five-day delay in the implementation date postponed a hike in the retail prices of these products but led to a rise in the uncertainty surrounding future tariff rates and their impact on firms looking to enter and exit these particular markets.

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Channel Integration for Better Retail Margins

The average modern retailer in India seems to be coping with the evolution of a number of different retail channels now available to the consumer.

Online retail has made shopping experiences more convenient and unambiguous but has also placed greater emphasis on the importance of informed buying decisions made possible by increased consumer awareness. Challenges pertaining to high investment costs and low retail margins can thus be overcome by integrating online and offline retail to provide the modern shopper with a personalized and educational interaction with retail businesses.

By Sunil Kumar

ndia has an expanding retail space and is an emerging market assisted by increasing spending capabilities of the middle class. Revenue born out of the retail industry in India exceeds USD 600 billion and matches the market demands of a market carrying over 1.25 billion consumers. However, retailing in India has its own challenges and limitations. Unorganized retail still accounts for over 80% of the market share and stand-alone kirana stores spread across the country are more than 90 lakh in number. The cost of retailing has also grown exponentially and sky rocketed mainly due to real estate and rental costs. Overhead expenditures including electricity bills due to air conditioners, refrigerators for frozen produce, manpower costs and handling costs also add to the investment involved. A modern trade retailer is approached by at least three to four new brands every day but due to space constraints, innovative products don't receive adequate shelf space and end up falling short of meeting existing customer demands. Customers have also found easier ways to shop that includes browsing products online and quick home deliveries. There are a handful of such factors that lead to complications in running a retail business in the current market conditions. The overall impact has retailers complaining of falling footfalls and decreasing profit margins. Hence, the pressing question that arises is related to how retailers can cope with the evolving market and customer needs to successfully



overcome these challenges. The best way out is to strategically place business decisions in various baskets and integrate online and offline retail in an engaging and efficient manner.

A retailer looking to profit off an integrated online cum offline selling channel has to create a virtual online store which offers a seamless shopping experience and which has a divided and varied product listing. The 50:50 composition ratio works best while serving a provident yet conscious consumer. Half of the product range must include the top 100 SKUs which are fast moving and discounted using attractive offers. The other 50% of the product line must focus on healthy, natural and organic products. There has to be a clear categorywise classification of products that makes browsing for related items easier and imparts consumer education on the health benefits and appropriate usage of certain products. Product recommendations and testimonials must come from industry experts, nutritionists and leading consumer product analysts. Clear product differentiators must be put into place to assist the buyer in making an informed and responsible choice. For example, there are more than 17 different varieties of honey and each has a unique taste, aroma and healthful quality to offer. Similarly, there are multiple local grains that used to be popular with Indian households in the 20th century and that have recently made it into the retail landscape. Retailers must profit off online campaigns that market the benefits of such exclusive and salubrious products that are custom crafted for Indian consumers. Marketing campaigns and outreach initiatives must also include suitable recipes to go along with a unique ingredient or raw product.

To aid offline channels, retailers can partner up with brands and companies to increase footfalls and bill values, and expand product baskets. As part of such collaborations, retailers and brands can jointly invest in shifting from a high





listing fee to better-performing displays, free tastings, product demonstrations and improved merchandising. Another method to mould better shopping experiences can include making them more convenient by installing escalators, electronic product displays, more billing counters during festival rush and skilled manpower on the retail floor. Category managers should focus on better understanding the origin and sourcing of products rather than chasing margins and top lines. The most effective way to manage a category is to think like the consumer. What can a product be used for? What cheaper alternatives are there outside the category? What ingredients can be paired with certain products to improve impulse decisions?

The biggest challenge for many new and even existing products which have immense potential and consumer demand is high selling and marketing costs that scale up to as high as 60-65% of the product cost. Retailers and companies must work together to bring down these costs to a workable 40% so as to pass on more benefits to the consumers and employees involved in the retail chain. Indian retail, which consists of both modern trade and e-commerce, needs to be more product-oriented and consumer-led instead of working on a discount-led approach. To realize a new and improved approach to retailing, progressive industry leaders should place a more structured emphasis on integrating online and offline retail in a way that one channel complements the other. That is the future and the solution to the numerous challenges that litter the retail landscape in India today. PG

Sunil Kumar serves as the General Manager at Kejriwal Bee Care India Pvt. Ltd. The company supplies honey products and hardware tools to major retail brands in India.

Half of the product range must include the top 100 SKUs which are fast moving and discounted using attractive offers. The other 50% of the product line must focus on healthy, natural and organic products.

Palletization in Logistics Management

In food transportation, pallets with the ability to maintain a clean, contaminationfree environment are garnering attention. In addition, more shippers are looking for technical capabilities that enable them to monitor movements through the supply chain. The use of pallets along with the palletization of materials is considered to be a powerful component of materials handling strategy today.

By Sunu Mathews

he landscape of Indian warehousing and transportation of consumable goods, which constitutes a major part of logistics management, is changing for the better after the implementation of GST in the country. For improving logistics in India's food and grocery industry, there is a pressing need for the increase in the use of technology and the availability of advanced equipment and tools. The use of wooden pallets and forklifts is reshaping the way goods are stored and transported to different points in the supply chain. The basic problem the method addresses is how the unit load is handled in various stages of the chain in the distribution and retail environment.

Palletization has become a boon for the food and beverage industry, particularly in areas where

The concept of pooling of resources has revolutionized **business** practices as it helps in reducing carbon footprints left behind by various energy-intensive processes.



automation was the need of the hour. We see a number of companies foraying into this goods category and we also see an influx in the volume of goods being transported. Since packaging and storage plays a dominant role in the quality of the end product, the usage of pallets and forklifts for storage and movement of goods from one place to another is vast and multifarious. The Indian market is slowly gearing up for a transformation to completely automated machinery for the same. In an age where technology is an integral part of human existence, developments in this sphere have blended in seamlessly with all functions of business and its basic day-to-day operations. Technology has now swiftly moved towards automation as is visible in various sectors, which has led to enhanced productivity and growth of businesses. Technological advancements are redefining the way business is conducted nowadays.

The adoption of palletization for storage of goods is helping different businesses, both large and small, to store their products vertically and move them for one point to another in an efficient and time-conscious manner. The concept of pooling of resources has revolutionized business practices as it helps in reducing carbon footprints left behind by various energy-intensive processes. This is done by ensuring that there is some stipulated reuse of the same product multiple times by different businesses or services. The most prudent way to account for the method's success is by leasing and pooling these resources in a planned fashion and maintaining prompt records of users that can be entrusted to use different tools. One way to do this is by utilizing technology-based softwares that are devised to monitor the use and allocation of these products by business affiliates.

The use of MHEs (Material Handling Equipment) i.e. forklifts, stackers, reach trucks etc. is another major development in human



engineering as these machines can reach any height at any given location. Additionally, they can also be used for transportation and movement of large volumes of goods from one place to another without involving additional manpower. This method does not allow any damage or wastage of goods as foldable containers of varying sizes ensure that fragile items are stored and transported carefully. Following the introduction of GST, all warehouses and transportation units have become modern and tech savvy. Consolidation of warehouses, a direct result of utilisation of vertical storage space, is also saving costs for large corporates and small businesses alike. Storage and transportation of goods on pallets has increased the efficiency of businesses and has

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eventually saved costs and resources. The end result has seen a higher visibility of multiple brands in retail stores and on supermarkets shelves and has led to increased consumer connect. Palletization is highly recommended for the food and beverage industry, where the primary concern is related to handling of fragile items and maintaining quick retail cycles of perishable items. In both these circumstances, the use of storage solutions like pallets, crates, totes and MHE-managed movement becomes crucial as they ensure faster deliveries and reduces wastage of time, energy and goods. As is clearly evident, the need of the hour is smart automation to drive larger businesses, and save on tangible resources. PG

Sunu Mathews is Managing Director at LEAP India. The start up is amongst the 7 companies in the world that provides equipment pooling and returnable packages, efficiently reducing the number of labor requirements and time. Leading Enterprise in Advanced Pooling also

provides services in strategic management, business and operations management, lumber sourcing, distribution business, channel marketing, sales and supply chain.

Palletization is highly recommended for the food and beverage industry, where the primary concern is related to handling of fragile items and maintaining quick retail cycles of perishable items.





t's that time of year again. With Rakshabandhan, Onam and Janmasthami acting as precursors to the great Indian festive season that will peak around Diwali and culminate with Christmas and New Year, the air's abuzz with the celebration of good food, drinks and more retail therapy than usual. While festivals and holidays occur throughout the year in India, the second half of the year is widely considered the festive sales period, as it fits in nicely with a lot of celebrated holidays. Traditionally, customers in India wait for the festive season to make bulk purchases and indulge in premium purchases. Taking this behavior into account, brands and retailers set in motion their plans to cash in on the festive spirit by launching new promotional campaigns, product lines, attractive product assortments, great deals and sales strategies. The season is particularly important for the retail business, given the fact that sales volumes go up significantly during the period, thus boosting the yearly performance.

For most retail businesses, the season is a financial windfall, and there's plenty of revenue for the taking. Festive shopping accounts for about 40 per cent of annual sales for most retailers. Delhi-NCR based 24 SEVEN convenience stores chain anticipates a surge in business during the festive season this year as has been customary in the past as well. For the retailer, business fares much better this time around as the consumer sentiment is more upbeat and shoppers spend not only on gifting to others but on self as well. That is why retail sales during the festive months have traditionally outperformed business activity in rest of the year and this spike in consumer activity bodes well for businesses in general and the retail industry in particular. Shoppers enjoy the mass festive sales as many of them hunt for good bargains and merrily part with their money in festive cheer. To meet this trend, 24 SEVEN portfolio will also be brimming with new items and will see the return of favorite hot sellers from last year to satisfy the overall gifting needs. The stores will also be decked up during this period to convey the joy, happiness and spirit of the season. The chain is also working on joint business plans with brands – from creating unique assortment to special offerings and to bring about improvement in its fill rate – with the sole agenda of connecting more meaningfully and reaching out to its customers in bigger ways this festive season as compared to the previous years.

Likewise, Ludhiana-based Kipps Mart is preparing to roll out the red carpet this festive season. "Every year, we expect something new and exciting to enter the market in the festive season. This year too, we are planning some innovative ideas for the coming months and expect a good response from customers. We are looking to combine the occasion of Diwali with the wedding season this year, which witnesses a gifting spree and a boom in the demand for items like gift baskets. Mid-November is the timeframe we are targeting to roll out our festive offers. At the moment the market is dull but we expect things to pick up soon. We witness slow business traction around Dussehra and the nine-day Navratri celebration as consumers seldom purchase market products during religious fasting. This is an obstacle in an otherwise profitable season," says Hitesh Arora, Director, Kipps Mart whose product range mostly focuses on gourmet items with almost all its products imported and sourced from international brands.

According to market surveys, shoppers resort to a higher spend in almost all key categories – a 25 per cent increase in average monthly spend on staples and packaged foods during the three months of the festive season (October-December), compared to the average monthly spend in the previous six months till September. It is estimated that there is





We are looking to combine the occasion of Diwali with the wedding season this year, which witnesses a gifting spree and a boom in the demand for items like gift baskets. Mid-November is the timeframe we are targeting to roll out our festive offers.

Hitesh Arora
 Director, Kipps Mart



a 12 per cent increase in spending on groceries and a 50 per cent increase in spending on apparel in the October to December period compared to the three months ending September. Sometime ago, industry body Assocham came out with a report that said consumers expected to splurge about Rs. 52,000 crore on shopping during the festive season, beginning with Navaratras and continuing well up to Christmas. Historically, shoppers tend to spend more during the festive season and their spending during the holiday season is often exuberant and unrestrained. A large percentage of consumers set aside a budget for their festival spending for buying gifts for themselves, children, family, friends and relatives.

Gifting: A Big Pull Factor for Retailers and **Brands**

According to retail consultancy Technopak, the gifting industry in India has registered a strong growth over the past decade thanks to the rising income levels and aspirations. Also, aiding this growth are such factors as (on the demand side) the



widening of the customer base, and (on the supply side) the offering of innovative products at attractive prices. The gifting market's size is estimated at USD 42 billion, with many industry players reporting annual growth in the range of 20-40 per cent during the festive months. With gifting being an indispensable part of the festive season, the category has traditionally been dominated by sweets, dried fruits and chocolates. However, in recent years, the gifting segment has grown and expanded considerably and now includes myraid product categories, even within the food segment. No wonder that markets suddenly come alive with an array of 'giftables' during the festive months. Though the season continues to be strongly dominated



by sweets, chocolates, dry fruits and snacks, sales of non-traditional products like tortilla packs, exotic teas, coffee and fruits, jams, honey, saffron, marshmallows, crackers, sauces, wines, etc, have picked up sharply in recent years.

"Flavorful and exotic drinks are popular with health-conscious and well-traveled consumers. Chia-based products have become best-sellers. Tea and coffee gifting items have also received a good response. We have a special gifting basket for tea, which has a selection of different flavors of tea and is packaged with a kettle. This particular hamper is expected to work well this season as the winters are around the corner and consumers like to gift loved ones an exotic hot beverage to spread warmth. We also operate a separate bakery segment that has its own gifting range, which includes hampers of popular bakery items like mini cupcakes. Dry fruits have always been a popular gifting choice but we see an inclination towards healthy eating and that shows up even in the sweets category. Seeds and nuts gifting baskets are also common now as they speak to consumers by way of their health benefits. We also have a catering company that sees a lot of business at this time. Starting October, we will be launching the gifting range at our retail outlets," informs Kipps Mart's Arora.

Retailer 24 SEVEN believes that gifting is a pull factor and stores can differentiate only by upgrading to better options, bulk deals and corporate gifting. In keeping with this approach, it will offering specially created baskets in different categories such as snacks, fruits, dry fruits, juice, chocolates & sweets and many other unique products and tailor made gift baskets depending on customer demand. The focus would be on offering healthy options with unique packaging and at price points ranging across Rs. 150 -200, Rs. 400-600, and Rs. 1,200-1,500. In fact,

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Paras Spices Private Limited

Shoppers enjoy the mass festive sales as many of them hunt for good bargains and merrily part with their money in festive cheer. To meet this trend, 24 SEVEN portfolio will also be brimming with new items and will see the return of favorite hot sellers from last year to satisfy the overall gifting needs.

one way for food grocers to offer great value and also nourish their bottom lines is to focus on helping shoppers make the most nutritious choices for the season. The festive season shouldn't be an excuse to jettison one's commitment to healthy eating entirely, although smart indulgences can certainly be permitted.

What can brands and retailers do to encourage shoppers not to fall off the healthy-eating wagon? For a start, they can stock plenty of lower-sodium, no-sugar-added, gluten-free and reduced-fat versions of holiday favorites, place them on prominent display, advertise them in circulars and further sweeten the deal with discounts and crosspromotions. Additional incentives include recipes

using the healthier products, in-store sampling, and spotlighting better-foryou items in social media forums. Such moves may not convert all consumers, especially during periods that many view as prime time for festive food free-foralls, but they will aid those who are trying to stick to healthier eating habits and maintain their diets (and waistlines) during a time normally fraught with culinary temptation. Perhaps most important for grocers, these tactics will inspire lasting loyalty in shoppers, who'll know

comes to health and wellness.

Festive season, through the medium of gifting, establishes connect and this is a theme present across all product categories. This trend helps brands to create buzz by launching new products in the market. Also, launching gift packs is always beneficial for both the producer and consumer. Consumers get more options and choices and the manufacturer gets the benefit of placement of the product. That way, the quality of products gets tested and ultimately the good quality product is able to carve its identity in the market. Once the product is accepted, the manufacturer can convert the gift pack into regular business. "We have theme-centric gifting options for our customers. For example, as part of a range meant for baby showers, we introduced a cake special basket that included products related to baking and confectionery. Elements in the cake basket included items like baking powder, chocolate chips, Nutella, cooking instruments such as oil brushes, spatulas and ovenfriendly containers used for packaging the basket. The concept behind such innovative baskets is to

that their go-to grocery store has their back when it

have the customer be able to use every product in the basket. Every item is carefully selected so that the customer can make everyday use of it. Even the baskets themselves are reusable and offer an additional product attribute," informs Arora.

His store is also known for introducing cuisinecentric baskets that come packaged in a non-stick pan and have the same 'use everything' philosophy. One example is that of a specially curated gift basket for consumers who enjoy Italian cuisine. The Italian basket comes packed with goodies such as olives, different types of pastas, varieties of cheese, healthy cooking oils etc. Some of its gift items come packaged in wooden trays that can be used in each

household for several different purposes. This concept also reduces disposable trash

> and is an eco-friendly approach. "In my opinion, a gift item should be such that it is usable on a regular basis and must have functional attributes. A decorational item may be more pleasing to look at, but the person who receives a gift like that often places it somewhere and forgets about it," savs Arora.

According to various studies on consumer spending habits during the festive season, the largest portion

of a consumer's holiday budget go toward gifts for family members, on kids, parents, friends and co-workers. Shoppers wanting to treat their loved ones to something special are tempted to take advantage of special promotions and discounts to treat themselves and their loved ones. Retailers slash prices with the expectation that festival promotions will motivate shoppers to buy more of their products as gifts for family and friends. Companies invest heavily to promote the sales they are having, leading to a disproportionate amount of spending during this season among brands and consumers. According to Nielsen's Shopper Trends Study conducted two years ago, about 38% of shoppers claimed to be actively seeking products at discounted prices as against 35% in 2015. Shoppers are consciously seeking deals; hence effective promo communication at the point of purchase becomes extremely important for brands and retailers.

Deploying Strategies for Consumer Connect

As consumers around this time are in the mood to spend - whether shopping in-store, online or on their phones - brands and retailers are only too happy to offer them good value for their money. So,



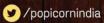




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While there will be plenty of popular items on consumer wish lists this festival season, but the most soughtafter category appears to be gifts in the form of chocolate, snack, beverages, sweets, dry fruits and nuts and especially prepared food gift hampers.

many retailers and brands compete on price, causing the holiday season to be very promotional and making the period a tremendous win for consumer. Another surefire way for businesses to connect with consumers and make them embrace the holiday spirit is to launch and come out with festival themed and gifting products. Fortunes have been made by retailers and brands that are able to successfully predict new trends that break from previous patterns. But retailers and brands also need to work overtime to streamline their forecasting and ordering systems to control their inventory, which is crucial to their success. They need to exercise discipline and sharpen their strategy for the rush festive season to emerge as winners. ""Our plan is to exceed guests' expectations, surprise them through selection, taste and overall shopping experience, truly making it a great festival shopping experience. We are always researching trending opportunities and for this year festive season, we will have attractive merchandising displays showcasing different varieties of products," says Arora.

Gift packs for chocolates and banded salty snacks are normally big selling items during festivals like Diwali. "Chocolates have always been popular and any new format of flavor proves successful with consumers. We carry gifting hampers with popular and mixed chocolate samples from Lindt USA and Godiva. Our Lindt chocolate collection starts from Rs. 800 and has packages available in different sizes for different price points. Our gifting range tarts from Rs. 1,500 and extends to Rs. 5,000. We also have premium ranges available for Rs. 8,000. In more recent times, gifting trends have moved away from just stand-alone chocolates and have focused on combined baskets with a central theme. One can also see how the gifting category now includes

savory components in addition to traditional sweets," informs Arora.

Shoppers are increasingly becoming deal seekers with the objective of maximizing their savings. Bulk packs with large discounts tick all the relevant boxes on saving, value and discount for the shopper. As expected, most budgets will be allocated to holidaythemed products with a gifting appeal. While there will be plenty of popular items on consumer wish lists this festival season, but the most sought-after category appears to be gifts in the form of chocolate, snack, beverages, sweets, dry fruits and nuts and especially prepared food gift hampers. It has been observed that consumer spending on during festivals on confectionaries, bakery products, snacks and beverages, etc. increases significantly. According to Nielsen, Foods which include packaged foods, staples and beverages generally make up 65% of urban India's annual retail modern trade sales. This contribution remains the same during festivals like Diwali, when we see almost two-thirds of the sales coming from this segment. Packaged foods and staples are the largest contributors to the food segment.

Packaged foods' contribution during all big events and occasions is 29%, but during Diwali, it goes up to 35%. Categories like ghee, salty snacks and chocolates peak in sales during Diwali, though, according to Nielsen, this increased contribution does not completely hinge on price promotions. But this is the period when food and beverage companies have the biggest opportunity to connect with the Indian consumers with their new product offerings for the festive seasons through innovative advertisements and marketing campaigns, lucrative discounts and offers such as buy one get one free. For example, Cadbury came up with a new ad campaign for their product Dairy Milk during Diwali through which they advertised chocolate as a substitute for the Diwali sweets. Coca-Cola India had in last quarter of 2016 released its Social Occasions campaign for the festival season featuring actor Deepika Padukone.

With consumers out in the stores looking for holiday gifts, retailers are encouraged to promote holiday merchandise, unique private-label offerings and respond to the needs of their shoppers who are also actively scouting for bargain hunting. It is customary for companies to devise and come up with different ways of demonstrating great value to their customers by making offers that protect the brand integrity but also provide value to the consumer. As consumers become more price- and- value-conscious, the key to winning them over is having the right

price and promotions strategy in place in the build-up to the festive season and the New Year. Retailers also need to invest in other sources of value beyond discounts – unique merchandise, customer rewards, added services, engaging in-store experiences – that help build loyalty and sales. At the same time it is also important to listen to customers and measure their behaviors through testing and scaling. One also needs to keep an eye on longer-term trends versus just short-term reactions and be agile enough to tackle the change – from design to messaging, technology requirements and training – with crossfunctional teams rather than hand-offs across silos.

In a country like India, where purchase decisions are mostly driven by emotions, the festive season comes with a big bonus of reminding customers about the Indian culture by associating it with festive goodies and products. Festivities provide companies with a very good opportunity to reconnect with their current and prospective clients or customers. Companies, therefore, plan out effective marketing strategies during the festivals that will help them make a better connect with customers or clients. For most retailers, the festive season can prove to be crucial in terms of a make or break sales season. As the festivities get under way, companies also face intense competition to win sales as consumers go bargain hunting and seek out the best deals. As such, most retailers are only too willing to roll out huge discounts, bundled offers, freebies and cashback to lure shoppers. Across sectors, from food and groceries to apparel and lifestyle, retailers are expecting double-digit sales growth this festive season.

Going Beyond Offers, Discounts, Cashbacks... However, some retailers like Ajay Dhar, Director of NCR-based Needs Supermarket, feels the hype and hoopla around gifting during the festive season to be slightly overrated. He says that until ten or



fifteen years ago, it was a known fact that Diwali had the potential to double or triple your sales. But over a period of time, people have become smarter and more intelligent. For instance, in a niche market like Gurgaon where Needs is present, the gifting trend is not too much visible during the festival season. "I don't believe gifting is restricted to Diwali festive period alone. The tendency to spend huge amounts of money on gifts on Diwali has died down. Earlier on, there was a clear 30-40% increase in sales during festival season. Now, one observes a slim 15% growth in sales. We did see a little bump in sales around this time last year. However, as a retail brand, we don't depend on festival sales and don't focus on promoting the same," says Dhar adding that customers in his stores catchment area are not very price-sensitive but are conscious of what brands they pick up while shopping.

"For the past six or seven years, our customers in Gurgaon have shown no increase in purchase of gifting items around Diwali. So rather than spending on gifts to give to their extended family and friends, they have chosen to spend their money buying gold or investing in assets for themselves and their children. So those big spendings on gift hampers worth ten thousand or five thousand bucks





Our in-store campaigns involve our team of chefs and bakers that make possible sampling initiatives for new and existing product lines. We believe in keeping specific brands in stock and not filling our shelves with everything in the market and then attempt at selling them in a discounted way, during festival season and otherwise.

— **Ajay Dhar** Director, Needs Supermarket



People are generally interested to buy new things during the festive season, and brands and retailers target this propensity of customers to introduce some very attractive offers. This is done mostly in the form of discounts, free samples, buyone get one free offer, discount on second purchase and so on. have come down drastically. As far as companies are concerned, most of them have pared down their budget for gifting and it is now restricted to only select clients now. Since Gurgaon has a nuclear market, gifts during this time are limited to very close friends and family. A lifetime ago, Diwali used to be synonymous with meeting a 100 people. Nowadays, that number is restricted to ten or maybe twenty people. Our brand sees more traffic during the Christmas season and we do a number of authentic plum cakes for which soaked ingredient preparations have already started," reveals Dhar.

To make the most of the festive period, Needs Supermarket will mainly focus on in-store marketing. As most of its customers are regulars, Needs Supermarket runs an effective loyalty program that gives it a wide enough audience base. It won't advertise aggressively during the festive season because it wants to give that sort of money back to the customer rather than spending it on marketing campaigns outside the store. "Our instore campaigns involve our team of chefs and bakers that make possible sampling initiatives for new and existing product lines. We believe in keeping specific brands in stock and not filling our shelves with everything in the market and then attempt at selling them in a discounted way, during festival season and otherwise," says Dhar.

But by and large, people are generally interested to buy new things during the festive season, and brands and retailers target this propensity of customers to introduce some very attractive offers. This is done mostly in the form of discounts, free samples, buy-one get one free offer, discount on second purchase and so on. Retailers can launch 'Diwali Special' by introducing some combos and packages, etc. It depends on products and their unique idea that creates the difference. Retail analysts point out that consumers have important priorities and various considerations when it comes to festive shopping for gifts and other products for Puja celebrations and Diwali. Among the biggest "very important" consideration is "Finding the best sales and discounts", "Shopping where it's most

convenient", "Shopping where I can get the best customer service" and "Shopping where

> I can find the 'hot' products of the season". As in the previous years, the most important factor when shopping this festive season is sales or price discounts but customer service and quality of merchandise



continue to be vital components in consumers' decision making processes, highlighting the growing importance of value when it comes to gift and festive shopping.

Retailers like Kipps Mart are looking to keep its regular customers happy by giving them additional benefits and thank-you gifts. At the same time, it also wants to draw in new customers to the store. "We recently launched a bunch of discounted offers such as products at Rs. 999, 10% off on bills above Rs. 3,000 and other offers. These schemes were also advertised well. However, we saw that most of our loyal customers didn't pay heed to these and didn't ask for the discounts we were offering. I feel that specialty stores like Kipps don't function on discounted offers as we are more product and quality-oriented as compared to other value-oriented brands. We are more popular for the variety of products at our store and their high quality rather than our discounts. Good customer service is of top priority to us and we aim at pleasing our customers. This season we are planning on handing out small tokens and gifts such as money plants and indoor bamboo plants," discloses Arora.

The insights allow multichannel retailers to refine their marketing, merchandising and promotions strategies to effectively reach festive shoppers. Retailers that are in tune with the mindset of their shoppers are poised to achieve the strongest results during the festive shopping season. The insights also help to inform retailers in driving greater results and enhance their profitability. So even though retailers are experiencing momentum as the festive season approaches, it is critical to engage customers with relevant offers and compelling shopping experiences to entice them to make a transaction. One-toone marketing, segmentation, sophisticated email promotions and new avenues of reaching shoppers such as social sites and smartphones will draw shoppers to retail sites. The most compelling on-site experiences will then convert browsers into buyers, and will deliver optimal results this season.



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Leveraging the Internet and Social Media **Platforms**

As the Internet quickly becomes a destination for time-strapped shoppers, more people will seek out retailers' holiday deals on the Internet this year and nearly half of them will buy online. Additionally, the average holiday shopper plans to do some part of their shopping online, whether they're comparing prices, researching products or actually making



As per estimates, more than 50 per cent of all festive purchases in the upcoming season would be influenced by digital engagement and interactions. **Understanding** the importance and utility of the digital tool is therefore paramount to the success of brands and retailers.

a purchase. Online shoppers plan to spend more as well; the average person who will shop online this holiday season will spend more than those consumers who only plan to shop in stores. Adults age 25 to 34, many of whom have small children and crave convenience, will complete a significant per cent of their holiday shopping online, the most of any age group. Nearly four in 10 shoppers today cite convenience as the primary reason for preferring to shop online and this trend is expected to gather momentum during the rush festive season when the desire to fight crowds in the stores and the curiosity to compare prices will be at its peak.

Some time ago, Retailers Association of India (RAI) commissioned a customer sentiment index for the festive season. Of the 50, 000 Indian consumers surveyed in the customer sentiment index, 86% respondents said they looked forward to shopping during the festive season. Among the respondents, 57% have said they will shop online whereas 49% preferred malls to shop for the festive season. Also, 61% respondents said they would make their buying decision based on available information on social media, whereas 57% said they would make their purchase decision from different discount announcements made by companies. What is important is that increasingly shoppers want to shop at their favorite stores, whenever they want and however they want and retailers have to decide how they are going to respond to this demand.



MODERN TRADE TRYST WITH THE FESTIVE SEASON

A Nielsen study says that today, almost 50% of shoppers visit modern trade, resulting in a 13% increase in store visits. There is also a significant overlap between a traditional trade and modern trade shopper. Nearly half of traditional trade shoppers also visit a modern trade store today. Increasing personal disposable incomes and the rising levels of women in the workforce has also led to more families opting to shop in modern trade, which offers greater savings on their entire shopping

In addition, the shoppers sitting at the lower end of the economic spectrum have started coming into modern trade. Termed as LIVE (Low Income Value Explorers), these shoppers, on an average, spend substantially on FMCG products in a modern trade store, and one in two visit a modern trade outlet in a year. This consumer segment has shed its diffidence in terms of its buying habits. For shoppers seized by aspiration and insecure about their well-being, modern trade is an indulgence that imparts a sense of

The retail environment today sees constant and intense competition. Every retailer wants a high share of the customer's wallet because it will ultimately impact their valuations. Nobody wants to be seen as losing market share to a competitor. For retailers, big events represent a big sales surge; therefore, accessing the shopper spend becomes most important as it will bring a jump in the GMV (Gross Market Value) and enable higher customer acquisitions.

Modern trade has an edge over general trade in terms of convenience, proximity and promotions and these need to be leveraged to ensure that greater business and growths can be juiced for this format. Big festive events are an ace in the modern trade retailer's pack, which they need to harness better to truly stand apart from the crowded general trade market.

As e-commerce growth rate is much higher than the overall rate of growth for retail sales, brands and retailers will have to drive rapid adoption and usage of digital shopping tools. According to one recent research survey, 73% per cent of mobile device owners plan to use their devices for festive shopping. And 84 per cent of shoppers use digital tools before and during their trips to stores. As per estimates, more than 50 per cent of all festive purchases in the upcoming season would be influenced by digital engagement and interactions. Understanding the importance and utility of the digital tool is therefore paramount to the success of brands and retailers.

Time-starved shoppers facing bewildering numbers of product options rely on digital to help them make choices. One of the most used in-store apps is Amazon, but not for the reason one commonly thinks – 90 per cent of Amazon. com visitors could be purchasing elsewhere. Yes, shoppers are price comparing but rating and reviews are pivotal - research demonstrates that products with an average 3+ star rating are 45 times as likely to be purchased as those without. Amazon is also influential in another utilitarian development visual search – setting a new behavior in motion, one that is bound to further grow in coming years. Then, there is also the aspect of the digital wallet. Not only do digital payment solutions push customers through checkouts faster, but they also can increase customers' confidence in the buying experience. It's unlikely that shoppers will use multiple formats, so which one will win out? It is quite likely that the one that offers the greatest simplicity in transacting will attract the biggest numbers.

Given the fact that consumers are eager to hit the Web this festive season, retailers and brands have their task cut out. The priority will be prepping and optimizing their sites, beginning their marketing and promotions early, and planning plenty of incentives and offers aimed at provide value and

convenience for their shoppers. They will also need to leverage their social media and mobile platforms for savvy shoppers on the go, knowing how important customer reviews and comparison shopping applications are to holiday shoppers. When it comes to retailers' festive season online priorities, many have already invested in new technologies and site and service features. Plans are under way to significantly invest in mobile-optimized websites and also invest in tablet device apps. Additionally, some are planning to significantly invest in QR codes in offline advertising, such as magazine ads and billboards. Of those who regularly use social media platforms, a significant majority say they have already invested in Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Apart from investing in technology and digital platforms, companies will also need into look into





With the right digital tools and technology, retailers are in a position to exponentially increase their potential to serve the right message to the right shopper in the right place at exactly the right time.



FESTIVAL SHOPPING INDEX

Last year RAI conducted a survey with over 50,000+ Indian consumers to measure the shopping sentiment during the festive season



86% respondents said they looked forward to shop during the festive season

Respondents said they looked forward to shopping across the following categories



56%

respondents will shop for

20%

respondents will shop for

respondents looking to shop for clothes and fashion

respondents looking to shop for mobile phones

home appliances & electronics

jewellery



18%

18%

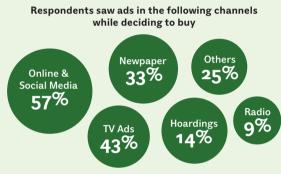
15%

respondents looking to shop for others

respondents looking to shop for home furniture respondents looking to shop for automobiles and two wheelers

respondents looking to shop for holidays





Source: Retailers Association of India

In order to maintain their budgets, more shoppers are expected to use the Internet to conduct research on products and pricing before making purchases.

the concerns of digital security and saturation. Shoppers are starting to rethink how they shop given the recent breaches of personal data.... Ultimately, consumer patience will wear thin and retailers that fail to prevent and proactively address security breaches will risk the loss of substantial brand trust as consumers look to shop elsewhere. The reality is, consumers and retailers need to be more vigilant with their data. Saturation is the other sleeper trend to watch. With digital advertising expenditure constantly on the rise, consider that the cost per '000 can be as low as 1 per cent of traditional TV – or put another way for the same expenditure one can deliver 100 times as much advertising. So expect more digital ads, which is set to grow 30 per cent in India this year, according to media agency GroupM estimates. With the right digital tools and technology, retailers are in a position to exponentially increase their potential to serve the right message to the right shopper in the right place at exactly the right time. Get it right and the shopper will value the brand and retailer for understanding them and their needs. Get it wrong and cross the line from interruption to intrusion and shoppers will

block you out of their digital eco-system as fast as you can say "spam." So, the conclusion that embraces all these trends is value – provide real utility that is valuable to the shopper, demonstrate your value by being an active part of their everyday lives, value their privacy, and value their time and attention.

In order to maintain their budgets, more shoppers are expected to use the Internet to conduct research on products and pricing before making purchases. With the growing proliferation of smartphones and availability of Internet, consumers will most probably conduct online research in advance to find the best deals. As consumers today are well informed and educated, brands and retailers will do well to keep in mind the afore-mentioned priorities. A holiday-shopping study notes that consumers' "new habits are now firmly entrenched. . . . They are cautiously writing their lists, checking them twice, and only spending if they deem the value is right." With customers now more focused than ever on value and meticulously calculating the best ways to stretch their wallet, retailers will need to entice shoppers with promotions that go beyond discounts, whether

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Many retailers have plans to keep consumers informed of their in-store offers through the use of social media in the hopes of integrating their digital and in-store promotions, working to create that seamless shopping experience that they know consumers demand and expect.

they're promoting free gifts with purchase, an extended warranty, or stellar customer service.

According to a recently published report by research firm Red Seer Consulting on online festive shopping this season, top online retail firms led by Flipkart and Amazon are expected to generate as much as \$3 billion of sales during their special five-day festive season sales next month. The gross merchandise value (GMV) generated in India's e-commerce business during Diwali may touch \$2.5-3 billion this year, according to the report. This would imply that sales during this festive season would effectively double from last year. E-commerce firms typically generate a majority of their annual sales in the festival-filled Diwali quarter when customers spend on a host of products.

Like their online counterparts, offline retailers will also need to readjust their strategies to reflect the coming retail environment and consumer purchasing power. Even in stores, digital looms large as consumers use smartphones to compare prices and read product reviews before making instore purchases. Stores can reduce their exposure to negative consumer spending factors by reexamining inventory commitment, focusing on in-store promotional plans, and offering creative purchasing options or associated value added services. One advantage stores have over e-commerce is brickand-mortar offers the chance for consumers to get that festive cheer feeling. There is a social aspect to shopping. Go in there and you feel that holiday cheer. That's what the retailers can do.

Retailers must also put special emphasis on maximizing their conversion rate. It will be critical for retailers to carefully manage their talent and align their seasonal hiring plans and training to ensure a high level of customer service. These

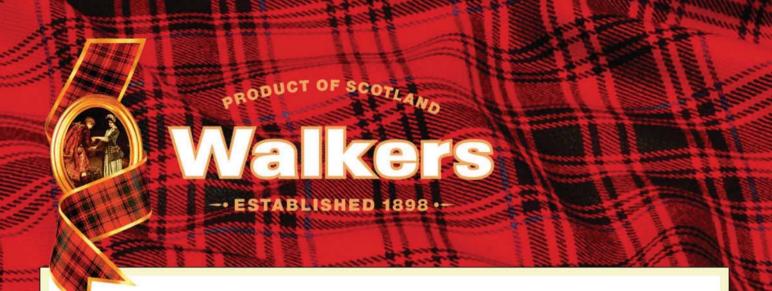




WHAT MOTIVATES HOLIDAY PURCHASES? of consumers say deals and promotions Source: PwC

aspects assume greater significance in light of the fact that consumers will increasingly shop and buy both online and in-store this festive season. Many retailers have plans to keep consumers informed of their in-store offers through the use of social media in the hopes of integrating their digital and instore promotions, working to create that seamless shopping experience that they know consumers demand and expect.

Retailers and brands should expect two key themes for the holiday season: timing and targeting. They need to be ahead of the curve in terms of trend information, predictive benchmark data and analytical insight from across the marketing landscape. That is necessary in giving marketers a more accurate and complete understanding of how consumers respond to festive offers and when they begin thinking about their festive shopping. Channels such as e-mail, mobile, search, direct mail and social media should be carefully analyzed so as to provide insights on the multichannel attitudes and behaviors of consumers. To make their marketing investment count, companies must ensure that their campaigns are affordable, executable, measurable and effective. Segmentation systems will be key to sorting and making sense of the myriad of consumer data needed to understand buyers and their behaviors. By leveraging the data and best practices, marketers can better align offers to their customers and engage them more effectively.



From our Speyside home



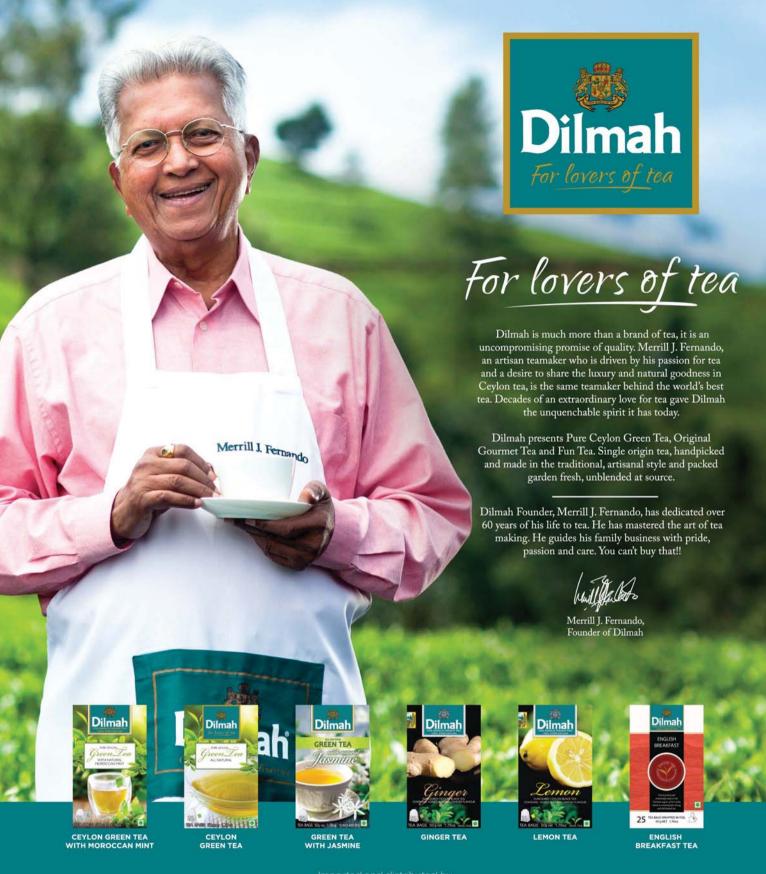
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Organic Gifting to Strengthen Bonds

Company Profile: Gardner Street is a luxury tea company that offers whole-leaf, high-quality tea leaves blended with real fruits, flowers, herbs and other botanicals.

Gifting Portfolio: In addition to the brand's retail ready tea tins, it has an entire range of products dedicated to meeting the gifting requirements of those who are looking to gift something in line with the shift towards making healthier choices. Each gift set is thoughtfully curated and designed to make sure the customer finds the perfect item.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line: High-quality, whole leaf tea blends from Gardner Street make for the ideal gifting choice because it helps the gifter stand apart from the crowd of sweets, chocolates







Specialty Tea is a Rs. 1000 crore market and a very small percentage is by way of sales during the festive season. However, this is fast changing as more people are looking at specialty tea as a classy and thoughtful alternative to the standard gift offerings of chocolates, mithais and so on.

— **Rashi Sanghvi** Founder, Gardner Street

and other thoughtless gifts that are either given away or recycled over and over again. Gardner Street whole leaf teas manage to strike that perfect balance of being an edible gift that the whole family can enjoy and yet non-perishable so as to ensure ease of transport and storage. This becomes specially important when it comes to larger corporate gifting. The brand acknowledges various budget requirements and makes sure it has options that fit every budget. It also offers various options for customization so that clients can tailor the gifts to fit their requirement exactly.







Product Classifier: Gardner Street teas fit into the healthy gifting trend and make the receiver feel like the gifter has gone out of their way and put in thought into the receiver's health, well-being and lifestyle. Not only is the gift consumed during the festive period but also continues to be used after as people try to get back to a healthier lifestyle post their holiday binge. This idea of a thoughtful gift stays in people's minds longer than the festive period and gives the gifter the benefit of a longer recall.

Brand Connect: Word of mouth has been an effective marketing tool. In terms of marketing efforts, the brand has been doing relevant shows, running digital campaigns and tying up with gifting partners to spread the word.

Target Demographic: The brand will be targeting discerning individuals who believe in gifting good quality products and aspire towards a healthy lifestyle, and corporates who believe in responsible gifting.

Price Range: Rs. 400 to Rs. 2,000

Promoting Healthy Snacking Habits with Fox Nuts

Company Profile: Rishav Global Industries Pvt. Ltd., a subsidiary of Mahak group, was incorporated in 2014. The company is primarily focused on developing innovative products using the latest technologies and the freshest, healthiest ingredients.

Brand: Mr. Makhana services the healthy snacks market with an aim to provide snacking options to the modern, calorieconscious consumer.

Gifting Portfolio: The brand offers a range of fox nuts (makhana or lotus seeds) in different flavors packaged in tin containers and gift packs of various sizes. The six variants include lime chilly, peri peri paradise, butter tomato, pudina party, Himalayan salt pepper and cream & onion.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line: Mr. Makhana, as a brand, wants to convert bad snacking habits into healthy ones. The brand works on the principle of providing an enjoyable yet healthy snacking alternative to ghee-laden items popular in the festive season. The range envisions an upcoming trend wherein shoppers will



their loved ones. This gift item implies that the receiver's health is cared for and is considered valuable. The healthy snacking brand is expecting a 20-25% jump in sales.

Product Classifier: Fox nuts is a healthy snacking choice and propagates the need for a healthy and active lifestyle. In the upcoming season, the firm sees shoppers wanting to pick up a makhana gift pack because of its salubrious nature and the diverse range on offer. Consumers can enjoy lip smacking flavors without the guilt of festival induced binge eating. All flavors are customized to fit the Indian taste palate and work well with accompaniments such as dry fruits. The product range offers a combination of Indian ingredients roasted in olive oil.



don't include staples like chocolates. Mr.
Makhana is carefully placing its products at retail locations across trade centres and is banking on their products being more affordable than luxurious. Since this is the brand's first festive season in the market, it is concentrating on collecting



The brand works on the principle of providing an enjoyable yet healthy snacking alternative to ghee-laden items popular in the festive season. The range envisions an upcoming trend wherein shoppers will choose to gift something like fox nuts to their loved ones.

— Abhinav Biswas

AVP, Sales and Marketing, Rishav Global Industries Pvt. Ltd.

feedback for R&D and is using general trade channels and traditional retail formats.

Brand Connect: The firm is focusing on ATL as well as BTL activities to promote the brand in association with channel partners across the country. It is also using sponsored events as a medium to reach out to potential consumers.

Target Demographic: The range is meant for all consumers looking to follow a health-conscious regime even in the festival season. Consumers of all age groups are included in the target bracket.





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Gui<mark>lt-free Indulgence with Delig</mark>htful Baked Goodies

Company Profile: Lovely Bake Studio is a premier European inspired bakery and India's first-of-itskind home of 100% eggless baking offering an international range of cookies, dry cakes, rusks & biscuits, Turkish baklava, chocolates, festive gift hampers, mithai, desserts and much more.

Gifting Portfolio: Will be debuting its new range - chocolate dragees, baked mithai, baked namkeens, premium granola mixes, fusion Indian desserts, trio rasgulla/ gulab jamun packs - aimed at today's digital generation. Also, on all its products, Lovely is offering corporates/ individuals the option to customize and personalize their festive gifts for a more enjoyable experience. It has introduced new pack sizes to cater to big and small pocket sizes.

To ensure fresh and flavorful products that continually meet the consumer's expectation for brand quality, consistency and freshness, the company has invested in and introduced Italian M.A.P (Modified Atmospheric Packaging) technology for the Indian sweets category. M.A.P. technology extends the shelf life of products naturally without the addition of chemical preservatives or stabilizers.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line:

Sales take-off is much higher during the period. The brand sees ten times more sales during the festive season compared to any other month. The company has

many exciting offerings, including new gift hampers and products; special plans and packages for Corporate Gifting this year with its team already in touch with some of the biggest business houses for their festive gifting needs.

Product Classifier: Its festive gift packs come in premium International tin packaging. It was one of the first in the country to introduce luxurious tin box packaging to the cookies category. Each cookie is pillow-packed to retain freshness and deliver a perfect taste in every bite and offer better shelf life for retailers. It was also one of the first in the country to introduce an innovative range of baked mithai, chocolate dragees, granola mixes, flavoured dry fruit, easy-to-carry three piece rasgulla/ gulab jamun packs.

Retail Approach and Channel Focus: Looking at 90% sales from traditional mediums and the rest from digital avenues. For this festive season, in particular, the focus is also on beefing up its retail presence across the country. The company is looking at increasing its distributor base to reach new audiences across the country and overseas. Its products are currently available across the country with top retailers such as Reliance Market, D-Mart, Big Bazaar, WH Smith, Walmart, Godrej Nature's Basket and many more with rising exports to Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and the Middle East. In the next couple





Normally, our sales go up 10 times during the festive season especially around Diwali period. We just had a terrific Rakhi gifting month where we did almost 7x more sales than our normal monthly sales. Given the favorable response we received on Rakhi during which we introduced many of our new products and pack sizes, we are expecting a big festive season ahead this time around too.

> — Shaishav Mittal CEO, Lovely Bake Studio

of years, it aims to own 10% of the cookie market share nationally.

Brand Connect: Looking at an optimal mix of native and digital advertising and focus on growing its community by communicating with its audience across its social media pages and blogs. It has initiated a few online tie-ups and is looking to explore e-commerce in a bigger way. For traditional media, it has planned campaigns across print, radio and outdoors largely.

Target Demographic: Individuals, families and corporate houses seeking better 'value for money' for their gifting experience and all those looking for better deals/ packages/ presentation and wishing to surpass their previous years' gifting experience.

Price Range: Product caters to a wide range of pocket sizes - from Rs. 200 -Rs. 1,000.



At The Good Life Company (TGL Co.), we emphatically believe that world's finest teas and coffees should be a luxury celebrating sophistication, tranquili-tea and good health on every occasion. And hence, we are devoted to bringing an articulate revival to the known gifting experience with aesthetically crafted TGL Co. gift boxes, containing the most luxurious teas and coffees sourced from around the world.

Beyond the blends and brews, our passion also extends to the premium packaging, enabling us to offer a range of thoughtfully designed gift boxes suitable for every budget. Available in a variety of color and patterns matching the festive mood, these boxes make a perfect standalone gift, or as a part of a spectacular gift basket.

We're happy to personalize the gift boxes with your choice of text or logo embossed on the top in gold, for an incredibly small Minimum Order Quantity (MOQ). You can further customise the box as per your preference by selecting any teas, coffees, or a mix of the two from our menu. Additional accessories such as tea infuser, coffee candle and teapot in the gift boxes make it an aptly thoughtful and a comprehensive gifting solution.

This season, transform a simple gift into a memorable experience with gift sets from TGL Co., perfectly suited for corporate gifting, festive gifting, wedding favours, seasonal gifts, or for any other personal gifting.



TGL Co.

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-3 AVAILABLE AT 6-







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Creating a Winning Proposition in the Snacking Space

Company Profile: AFP Manufacturing Co. Pvt. Ltd., incorporated in the early 1980s, has been a pioneer in establishing a tradition of delivering delectable namkeens and snacks to the Indian market.

Brand: MunchhOnn

Gifting Portfolio: AFP is a leading name in the Indian snacks industry and is into manufacturing all types of namkeens and snacks such as Bikaneri bhujia, aloo bhujia, Punjabi tadka, navratan mix, khatta meetha, chatpata mix, magic mix, royal treat, moong dal, chana dal, peanut, nut cracker, extruded snacks, rings and puffs, pasta, nautanki, wheels & diet mixture, jhal muri and many more high quality products. MunchhOnn will be available in all new and more attractive looks with improved taste and quality for the palate to keep loved ones smiling during this festival season. The brand will also be available at special price points of Rs. 5 and Rs. 10. Then, the special family pack will be an added attraction during this festival season also. A very special premium pack range at Rs. 15 will be



Our innovation approach identifies what consumers say they need as well as the needs they haven't articulated yet. This festival season will also see many more attractive offers backed with ATL/BTL promotions in electronic channels.

> - Manoj Gupta Executive Director, AFP Manufacturing Co. Pvt. Ltd.

launched this festival season to cater to the long awaited demand of customers. The Diet range will come with 25% extra quantity as a limited period offer.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line:

Consumption as well as gifting of namkeens and sweets is an old tradition during the festive season, which sees a significant spurt in sales during the period. Adaptation of region-wise flavors of local tastes will help to match demand and supply.

Product Classifier: MunchhOnn's attractive packaging and its products that are soft, chewable, spicy, and also come with offers of freebies are a big hit with kids, teenagers, and adults. Kids are always ready to adopt MunchhOnn's new flavors and due importance has been given to this aspect with offerings of new Indian and Western flavors. Teenagers, being health conscious, are also attracted to the healthier and high-grade (low fat and baked) products, and the brand's new offerings hold a special attraction for them. For adults, MunchhOnn's price preposition is the main attraction and they are satisfied with their money spent well. The brand's higher quantity offering forms a key consideration in adult's choicemaking and gives the brand a value for money appeal.





Retail Approach and Channel Focus:

Currently, Modern Trade contributes approximately 7% of its overall sales. The major percentage of sales comes from General Trade with some share coming from online channel partners. Therefore, in the first phase, the company will be concentrating more on General Trade followed by Modern Trade. The company believes that the snacks category's share contribution to retailer's overall sales/ margins has been increasing leading to greater willingness on the part of retailers to allocate more shelf-space and give more weight to the category through smart combo offers, etc. At the same time, it feels that organized trade needs to develop a fair understanding of reasonable margins from the category.

Brand Connect: Attractive packaging and better quality products backed with ATL/ BTL activities and promotions in electronic channels to reach out to all consumer segments. For online buyers, the brand has special tie-ups with some leading online retailers. The brand will also run exciting contests for shoppers to win special prizes. Besides, the brand is planning to offer "extra" at the same price and will be offering 20% extra promotional quantity to its customers during this festival season.

Target Demographic: Kids, teenagers, and adults.











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Healthy Sweet Treats for Celebrations

Company Profile: Lal Sweets Pvt. Ltd. is a Bangalore-based brand dealing in packed Indian sweets and markets its products Pan India.

Gifting Portfolio: Apart from its normal range, it will launch a special gifting range for the season in the first week of October; Every year, during the festive season, it launches 8-10 new ranges in sweets and dry fruits category; Value for money products that offer quality, come with attractive packaging and have a long shelf life. Popular products include Besan Laddoo, Dry fruits Halwa Bites, Shahi Soan Papdi, etc.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line:

Sales growth expected from festive season is 300-400%. The company expects to achieve 25% of its turnover from festive season. It is coming up with a new and exciting range of gift packs at affordable price points in quality, world class packaging. Will be introducing its "Royal Treat" pack at Rs. 250 - offering two



varieties of Indian sweets and one variety of savory.

Product Classifier: Innovative new designs of gift ranges every year, totally different from the earlier versions.

Retail Approach and Channel Focus:

Traditional Retail; Currently, the online business contributes 2%-3% of overall sales, which it is targeting to raise to 5% by end of this financial year.

Brand Connect: Lal Sweets will also engage in different modes of marketing and advertising - radio commercial and



Our marketing spend increases during the festive months as the sole purpose is to intimate consumers about our festive range. We are coming up with new and exciting ranges of gift packs at affordable price points in world class packaging.

> — Prateek Athwani Managing Director, Lal Sweets

online; Coming up with offline bumper offers such as buy 1 get 1 free, and more.

Target Demographic: Regular buyers; Corporates engaged in bulk buying for internal distribution among employees.

Price Range: Rs. 150 to Rs. 1,000

Gourmet Items for Diverse Gifting Needs



Company: D C Johar & Sons

Gifting Portfolio: In the gifting category, the company has a range of Dilmah teas, Walkers shortbread biscuits and cookies, and Sprig premium gourmet products. Each brand operated by the company is iconic and the best in its category. D C Johar also has customized gift baskets and festive packs.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line: The product line has a number of pack sizes available and suits all gifting needs and occasions. The brand is also launching six new SKUs in Walkers shortbread biscuits and cookies.

Retail Approach and Channel Focus: During festive months, the brand sees



Our gifting items are customized to suit the consumer demand and our products are available in a number of pack sizes to meet all types of gifting needs.

> — Y.V. VIJAY KUMAR GM, D C Johar & Sons

a 25% hike in sales. Traditional retail consists of General Trade (60%) and Modern Trade (35%). Online retail channels contribute about 15%. Once



products and gift baskets reach the customer's home, the company estimates a repeat purchase soon.

Brand Connect: D C Johar will be running trade schemes and consumer offers at both general and modern retail outlets to boost sales. Online channels will also see discounted sales.

Target Demographic: Corporates; Consumer groups looking to gift gourmet items.

Price Range: Rs. 199 to Rs. 1,200.





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Healthful Nutty Delights in Attractive Gift Packs



Company: Harmilapi Impex

Brand Profile: Dnuts is an established name in supplying quality dry fruits, dehydrated fruits, berries, seeds and more.

Gifting Portfolio: The brand provides customizable gifting solutions for retail shoppers and corporates. Its entire product line is a viable gifting option for festival enthusiasts and can also be used as a healthy snack and a key additive in festival sweets and chocolates. It has also introduced new, customer-friendly packaging in attractive formats to heighten product appeal.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line:

The brand experiences a surge in sales during the festival season and also targets the winter season as it is best suited for consumption of its products. To make the product line increasingly diverse, Dnuts recently introduced 30 new products

and plans to extend its product range to include 300 products.

Retail Approach and Channel Focus: The brand focuses on placing its diverse range of products at key strategic points across all major retail outlets in India. The festival season is also when retailers allocate more shelf space to products like dry fruits and nuts, giving more weight to the category.

Brand Connect: Dnuts conducts extensive sampling activities and a number of promotional initiatives to increase product recognition.









Our consistency and uncompromising lookout for quality is what has made us a renowned brand in our category. These attributes are ensured by the stringent quality checks we place on our products.

> — Atin Monga Proprietor, Harmilapi Impex

Target Demographic: Since nuts and allied products are rich in nutrients, the brand targets consumers from all age groups looking to consume healthful delights.

Promoting Safe and Healthy Celebrations

Company and Brand Profile: Treta Agro (P) Ltd., an agriculture produce-oriented group operates Just Organik, a brand signifying ethical supplies of organic produce.

Gifting Portfolio: Aassorted grocery combos of jaggery pearls, honey, seeds and dry fruits such as cashews, almonds and raisins.



Distinctive Vision for **Product Line:** Being free from chemicals, pesticides and GMOs, Just Organik products can also serve as a great initiation towards



Gifting organic foods is not about gifting something new, but something better. Our entire inventory can fill a customized basket as per the customer's need and budget.

— Pankaj Agarwal MD and Co-Founder, Just Organik

a healthy lifestyle. The brand's various blends of organic green tea and jaggery pearls are extremely popular with the younger age group.

Product Classifier: Just Organik offers the customer the option to pick an assortment of his/her choice, and every buyer can bring in their own creativity and preference in choosing a gift basket.

Retail Approach and Channel Focus:

Products are readily available at all premium stores and online channels to make ordering easy for customers. Orders for assorted baskets can be placed by accessing care@justorganik.com. Since gifting is heavily dependent on the visual appeal, most sales happen through traditional retail channels.

Brand Connect: The brand plans to conduct sampling/promotional campaigns with retailers. It will also be designing campaigns for social media and has started reaching out to consumers for feedback to make customization possible.



This Festive Season

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Chocolate Hampers with Customizable Packaging

Company Profile: Pee Pee Appliances Pvt. Ltd. is a diversified trading and manufacturing company under the Pee Pee Group banner. It started its Food Division seven years ago, with the manufacturing of a variety of cocoa-based premium chocolates under the brand name "Jumbo" & "Nature N Nature". The product portfolio includes premium cocoa chocolates in formats such as bar chocolates, coin chocolates, and innovative gift packs and boxes.

Gifting Portfolio: Coin Chocolates, Bar Chocolates, Choco Nutties, Choco Crispers, Choco Dates, Nutty Dates, Osmo De- Hyderated fruits & Real fruit squashes. These products are ideal for the gifting season as they come in different flavors, shapes and sizes and are customizable.

Distinct Vision for Product Line: The products enjoy a large customer base as they provide a number of options in terms of size, shape, flavor and prices also. Special combo gift packs can be tailored to suit personal gifting needs. Coin chocolates are the company's best selling product, and it currently manufactures 10 million coins monthly with the target of reaching 25 million coins shortly. The festive season is a high-selling period for the company as chocolates are ideal for gifting and make up a popular segment in the gifting spectrum. As modern consumers move from sweets



Customization is key for the company and it ensures that all types of customers are taken care of. Big corporates and institutions are on the lookout for exclusive gifting ideas for their employees and clients. Pee Pee Group offers options to customize product packaging with the respective client logos and aesthetic designs.

> — Pravin Kumar P. Jain MD, Pee Pee Appliances Pvt. Ltd.



to chocolates in the gifting season, the company is expecting sales to double.

Product Classifier: All chocolates are 100% pure vegetarian and use high quality cocoa butter raw materials. Customers can find innovative value in its mix of choco and dates combined along with almond stuffed inside as well as a variety of nutty dates where nuts & dates are mixed together. Customization is key for the company and it ensures that all types of customers are taken care of. As big corporates and institutions are on the look out for exclusive gifting ideas for their employees and clients, the company offers options to customize product packaging with respective clients' logos and aesthetic designs. The company also specializes in catering to bulk orders and providing it in a limited time frame.

Retail Approach and Channel Focus:

With a new range of chocolates launched recently, the company is expecting a steep hike in sales. Diwali is considered as a start to the new year period and innovation is key during this time. New products get a good platform and an opportunity to garner market share. Therefore, the new range is expected to do well across all retail outlets. Most of the company's business happens via offline retail but Internet advertisements give a definitive boost to online sales as well.

Brand Connect: A number of advertisements have been planned for the print media. The company is focusing on promotions and featuring in corporate and family magazines. It also has various instore activities planned in the upcoming months.

Target Demographic: Consumers from all age groups and socio-economic backgrounds, as gifting items are available at variable prices.

Price Range: Rs. 79 to Rs. 1,200





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Elevating The Beverage Experience

Company Profile: The Good Life Company (TGL Co.) aims to uplift the quintessential tea and coffee experience with fine ingredients like exotic fruits, flowers and spices, bespoke blends, and gourmet gifting.

Gifting Portfolio: The company's gifting range comprises gift sets in premium festive packaging. On offer are specialty teas and coffees in luxe gold caddies in sets of 3/4/6/9 and an accessory. Imperial treasure, bridesmaids bouquet and contemporary classic ranges are some of its best-selling gift sets. Aesthetically crafted TGL Co. gift boxes are available in distinct shapes, colors, flavors and patterns, and are specifically designed to lend a festive appeal to the gift sets. For premium high-end gifting, the Eclectic Expedition leather case comprises four



We will be offering gift baskets that can be customized to include teas and coffees in tins. pouches, sachets and tea bags in luxe gold caddies in sets of 3/4/6/9 along with accessories as per the budget for the hamper.

> — Bhuman Dani Co-Founder, TGL Co.



Our coffee beans are sourced from award-winning plantations across the world, micro-roasted in small batches to extract the best flavors, and then groundon-demand live in front of the customer to redefine the concept of fresh coffee.

> — Shariq Ashraf Co-Founder, TGL Co.





teas and a ceramic teapot. TGL's line of specialty coffees also enables a customer to choose a gift box comprising either teas or coffees or a mix of the two.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line: Inspired by global trends, the brand has mimicked popular desserts and cocktail profiles with teas from its dessert collection, which includes variants like Irish cream, ice wine and strawberry & cream. This year, TGL has also introduced freshly roasted and ground premium coffees from Colombia, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Peru, Brazil, Cuba and South India. The range also includes instant coffee and flavored grounds like vanilla, cardamom, coconut, chocolate and orange.

Product Classifier: The brand offers several levels of customization. One can modify the shape and color of the gifting box, design the top of the box with logos and festive greetings, modify labels on tin cans and create an assortment of the contents of a box. The teas and coffees are also available in standalone tins of 15 gm, 25 gm, and 50 gm and gift-packed in bigger hampers. A typical blend that TGL Co. offers is green sencha tea mixed with mango, banana, melon, guava, sunflowers, cornflowers and passion flower leaves. Eight ingredients in one tea make it flavorful. There are also less than six calories in a cup of TGL tea.

Retail Approach and Brand Connect:

Traditional retail accounts for 45% of sale as compared to 12% by online retail. TGL's online strategy for gifting mainly revolves around targeting customers by offering premium discounts and festive offers through sponsored advertising, e-mail marketing and social media promotions.

Price Range: Rs. 349 to Rs. 5,999

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Trail Mixes with the Finest Ingredients



Gifting Portfolio: The brand offers unique healthy snacking options and the product range includes nuts, berries, fruits, trail mixes and Indian savory snacks such as makhana, khakhara and roasted namkeens. They have over 30 varieties of khakhara.

Product Classifier: The products are unique in quality, taste and packaging. The Trail Mix is made by combining the finest ingredients to create a product of the highest quality and is also unique because of its flexibility. New Tree has customized its products as per the requirements of different groups of customers and advocates a more healthier lifestyle.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line: In offline retail, the brand is in the process of setting up distributors in Tier 1 and



Tier 2 cities. Online retail is also a focus area and the brand expects the channel to contribute to 40% of the entire business by 2020.

Retail Approach and Channel Focus: While offline retail contributes to 80% of sales, online retail marks up 20%. In offline trade channels, sale via modern trade results in 40% of total revenue and general trade generates 30% of it. 10% of the brand's revenue also comes from corporate sales.



Traditionally, people in India used to consume nuts, berries and seeds only in the winter season. However, with growing awareness on these items' health benefits, we see good sales throughout the year.

> — Savinay Jain Founder and CEO, New Tree

Target Demographic: With a diversified product range, New Tree caters to consumers of the young working population between the ages 25 to 45.

Giving Health Foods a Colorful, Visual Appeal

Company Profile: Happilo International Pvt. Ltd. is a health foods company headquartered in Bangalore.

Gifting Portfolio: Gift packs of trail mixes, nut mixes, almonds, walnuts, super berries, apricots, blueberries, cranberries, salted party mixes and other dried fruits. Designer packs for corporate gifting are also being introduced.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line: Products by Happilo have a shelf life of 6-12 months. The brand is also working on the discounted launch of new products like vinegars and boxed nuts.

Product Classifier: Dry fruits are a healthy, all natural snack with health benefits such as being gluten-free, cholesterol-free and trans fat-free. All products are packaged in convenient laminate pouches to retain freshness. All nut-based products are oven roasted with no added oils and minimal salt content.



Our gift boxes are full of a variety of dried fruits that provide a riot of color. Some items include green raisins, deep orange apricots and vibrant green kiwis.

— Vikas D Nahar Founder, Happilo International Pvt. Ltd.



Retail Approach and Channel Focus: Gifting sales account to a 75:25 ratio wherein 75% comes from traditional retail and 25% from online channels.

Brand Connect: For the special festive season, Happilo has planned various offers, especially for offline outlets and e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Paytm, BigBasket etc. It is also conducting banner and sponsored promotions via major media houses.

Gardner Street

Premium Whole Leaf Teas



HEALTHY festive GIFTING

Sweetening the Festive Mood with Honey

Company Profile: In 1996, Kejriwal Bee Care India (P) Ltd. became the first organized exporter of honey and within a short period, has scaled up exports to Europe, the USA and the Middle East along with a domestic supply chain.

Brand: Nature's Nectar

Gifting Portfolio: The company has come out with ideal gift packs for both retail as well as corporate gifting options. The Nature's Nectar Select range offers six variants of unifloral honeys-acacia, forest, litchi, tulsi, sidr and himalayan. It offers two packing options, which are 28g x 4 and 400g x 2 and provides the option of customization according to taste profiles, design and budget.

Distinctive Vision for Product Line:

Honey sales in India pick up around September i.e. the beginning of the festive season. The company is expecting a sales jump of approx. 35% in the season. Consumers are shifting away from traditional gifting like sweets, chocolates and bakery products and lean towards healthier options which can be used in day





The category is growing at 20% p.a. with change in income levels and health concerns. However, there is still a lack of awareness around good quality honey in India.

> - Prakash Kejriwal Director, Kejriwal Group

to day consumption, rather than a pass on gift. Honey, as a product, is increasing in our daily consumption and finds a permanent place is most kitchens due to growing health awareness and changing eating habits. Nature's Nectar provides various gifting options in the form of a wide range of select unifloral options so that the customer can experience the different varieties of honey that India has to offer, available in various pack sizes and

honey packs for gifting as part of wedding birthdays, baby announcements etc. It has



packaging for each occasion. These can be developed as per individual customer requirements and budget. Kejriwal Bee Care sources honey from bee farms across the country and has the largest network of registered bee keepers. The Indian, 100% pure honey is one of the most sought after honey varieties in the world.

Retail Approach and Channel Focus:

This is a good time to launch new products as the market is positive and vibrant, and retailers are more open to trying new SKUs due to better sales and product movement. There is an opportunity for new brands and products to penetrate the already existing market space during this period through product offers as customers are often willing to try new products during these months. Kejriwal Bee Care is also looking to benefit from these seasonal sales.

Brand Connect: The company is promoting its products through various online channels like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. It is also conducting in-store promotions and sampling activities while offering special festival discounts at select offline outlets and online sales via partners like BigBasket and Amazon.

Price Range: Rs. 200 to Rs. 725

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Assorted Cookies

Indian Sweets











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Sunny changes the way you look at cooking oil.

Over the years edible oil category has coached consumers in believing that edible oil is bad for your health. And by linking modern lifestyle related problems like increasing cholesterol & blood pressure, category has further re-established this belief. Oil is now scientifically designed to avoid getting into food i.e., 'Low-Absorb' has resulted in edible oil being reduced to a medium of cooking rather than being a core cooking ingredient for a majority of Indian cuisines.





International Sunny Oil's latest campaign is designed to highlight the growing modern mothers' need to build immunity in light of frequent weather changes & pollution, a reality which children face every day. And while these external elements are beyond her control, the power to mould her children and make them stronger from within lies in her hands.

हर निवाला, अन्दर से टफ़ बनाने वाला

Targets the progressive homemaker looking to give the best protection to her child. The benefit of 'Fight-O-Mins' that the oil offers has helped in lending credibility to the Sunny promise.







The Arrival of 'Free-of' Food

Consumer desire for transparency is behind this up-and-coming trend.

By Carol Radice

nowing where their food comes from — including how it's grown or raised, and what went into it — is increasingly important to consumers, who are just as attracted to what's in a product as what's not. When it comes to purchasing fresh foods such as meat, seafood, dairy, produce and deli/prepared foods, the cleaner and simpler the profile, the more appeal it holds.

Some are calling this burgeoning trend the "free-of" movement and predict that its ability to positively affect fresh food sales will be significant in the coming months.

According to Meagan Nelson, associate director for Nielsen Fresh's growth and strategy team in New York, the overarching theme driving this movement is consumers' need for transparency. "People just want to understand what's in their food and how it is produced," Nelson says. "They want to know where the produce was grown, who the farmer is, how the beef cows or chickens were cared for, and what they were fed."

Consumers are clearly aware of, and making conscious decisions about, what they put in their bodies these days. Research conducted by Schaumburg, Ill.-based Nielsen in 2016 found that 67 percent of consumers want to know everything that's going into their foods. In addition, nearly three-quarters of consumers — 73 percent — feel positively about companies that are transparent

about where and how their products are made, grown or raised. More than half of consumers — 68 percent — said that they're willing to pay more for food and drinks that don't contain undesirable ingredients.

Seeking Clarity

While it's true that Millennials and Generation Z are a key force behind the free-of movement, Nelson believes that what's happening is bigger than that, pointing out that consumers of all ages are looking to have more clarity in what they purchase. "People are so disconnected [from] the food system that knowing where a product is coming from, what's in it and what they are putting in their body gives them some piece of mind," she says. "Ultimately, it is about feeling good about the decisions they are making and being confident that the food they are spending their money on is safe."

Food fear is a real issue today, notes Mindy Hermann, a New York-based registered dietitian nutritionist. She adds that social media is playing a key role in much of the fearmongering happening today and driving consumers' desire to learn as much as they can about the food they eat. "People want to know if products have been exposed to or contain things such as trans fats, hormones, antibiotics, pesticides or added sugar, so they can make educated decisions about what they are buying," Hermann says. "The more they know about where the steak came from, or the salmon, or the milk, or their produce, the more assured they are that the food they're buying is fresh and safe."

When he looks at the trends driving dairy and meat, David Browne, a Sacramento, Calif.-based market research and retail consultant specializing in the natural and specialty food industry, finds that aspects such as grass-fed, humanely raised and



People are so disconnected [from] the food system that knowing where a product is coming from, what's in it and what they are putting in their body gives them some piece of mind.

— **Meagan Nelson** Nielsen Fresh

CONSUMERS ARE AWARE OF WHAT THEY PUT INTO THEIR BODIES

67%

I want to **know everything** that is going into my food



I'm concerned about the long-term health impact of artificial ingredients

Top-growing Claims on Food (Total Store)Based on Absolute \$ Growth



Gluten-free No Artificial Colors/Flavors GMO-free Natural Organic Content Presence



Organic
Preservative Presence
Protein Presence
Hormone Presence
High-fructose Corn Syrup-free

Sources: Nielsen Total U.S. xAOC 52 Weeks Ending June 10, 2017; The Nielsen Global Health and Ingredient Sentiment Survey, Q1 2016; Nielsen two-week online survey (April 2016) of 1176 respondents

'FREE-OF' VERSUS 'FREE-FROM'

Free-from: This ingredient-driven term is more commonly associated with food products that don't contain ingredients known to cause a reaction in people with food allergies or intolerances. Given that people who are intolerant or allergic to one ingredient are often affected by others, they often need to study ingredient profiles to determine whether the product is safe for them to consume. When free-from is used on packaging, it signals to these consumers that the product is free from the top eight allergens: wheat, dairy, peanuts, tree nuts, egg, soy, fish and shellfish.

Free-of: This new movement is driven by a growing number of consumers looking for clean, simple ingredient profiles in the foods that they consume. Top concerns for this group are identifying products that are free of unwanted elements such as trans fats, antibiotics, hormones, added sugars, and artificial colors and dyes, to name a few. Free-of consumers also possess a deep desire for authentic and transparent products, which includes understanding the backstory of where their food came from, how it was raised and whether it was treated humanely during its life.



animal welfare are leading the charge. Supporting his assertion are data from the most recent "Power of Meat" survey from Food Marketing Institute and the North American Meat Institute, which found that consumers' desire for transparency in meat and poultry production is behind the double-digit growth in grass-fed, organic, and hormone- and antibiotic-free meats. "What this tells me is that clean, simple foods are beginning to show up on consumers' radar," Browne says.

While the free-of movement has been brewing in the natural channel for a while, Browne notes that it's just starting to make its way into the mainstream. "Planned or not, this is playing right into the hands of Millennials, who want this transparency and thrive on the backstory of who this farmer is and how was this turkey or pig raised," he says, adding that the free-of concept may be sustainable in the



natural channel, but translating it to grocery — where volume demands are much higher — could pose a challenge.

Regarding current trends, Browne says that non-GMO and even gluten-free are still experiencing what he would call a growth phase, and predicts that it will be several years before consumer interest maxes out. "It may be nearing maturity, but we are

CONSUMERS ARE EATING WITH A HEALTH CONSCIENCE



59%Think environmentally friendly and sustainably grown foods are important



75%
Think foods made at home are healthier than industrially prepared foods



51%Choose local,
natural and organic
when possible



43%
Are willing to sacrifice taste for a healthier option

More than half of people use their **own personal definition** to determine which foods are "healthy"

Sources: Nielsen two-week online survey (April 2017) of 1,163 respondents; The Nielsen Global Health and Ingredient Sentiment Survey, Q1, 2016; Label Insights 2016 Transparency ROI Study

CONSUMERS FEEL POSITIVE ABOUT TRANSPARENT COMPANIES



68%

Willing to pay more for foods and drinks that don't contain undesirable ingredients



73%

Feel positively about companies that are **transparent** about where and how their products are made, grown, or raised

64%

Read labels on packaging

56%

Buy only from producers they trust

54%

Always buy the same food brands

41%

Trust health claims on food packages

Sources: The Nielsen Global Health and Ingredient Sentiment Survey, Q1 2016; Nielsen two-week online survey (April 2016) of 1,176 respondents; Nielsen two-week online survey (April 2017) of 1,163 respondents





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still a long way off from seeing either of these trend downward," he observes.

Shout it Out Loud

For free-of to take off, products will need to be aggressively merchandised on-pack and in-store. "I've seen this happen in other departments, such as

bakery, where retailers really struggle with how to identify and properly merchandise certain so-called 'healthful products' in a way that makes them clearly distinguishable from the other offerings," Browne says. The other roadblock to growth, he adds, may be store personnel: "Consumers are willing to pay more for products they feel resonate with their values and beliefs, but if none of the employees are able to answer shoppers' questions about the item, then you risk losing the sale."

Above all, Browne advises that for the free-of movement to work, there needs to be buy-in from the top and consistent messaging across all fresh departments.

To promote free-of, Hermann suggests that retailers consider using limited-time offers (LTOs) as a way to convey features such as freshness, seasonality, grown locally, made in small batches and available for just a short period of time. "LTOs are well suited for an end cap or specialty refrigerated case, and can be marketed in a way that encourages shoppers to check back with each shopping trip, she says, noting that developing an easy-to-identify in-store or on-pack free-of symbol would also be a move in the right direction.

"Consumers want short cuts," Hermann asserts. "They may have a long list of product attributes that appeal to them — or don't — but at the end of the day, they want a quick and simple way to distinguish who the good guys and bad guys are." Emphasizing the free-of aspects, she adds, is an ideal way to market to these consumers.

True Value

Further, given the declining interest in purchasing meal kits from online companies, this is an optimal time for grocers offering their own meal kit programs to boost their value-added appeal. Hermann notes that as a group, Millennials may not cook much, but prepared foods are an attractive substitute because they look like something that they would make



themselves if they could cook. Giving them the backstory about the ingredients used in a dish, in a way, replaces having their own story, Herman says. "Instead of telling their husbands, wives or dinner guests that the meat loaf they are serving is grandma's secret recipe, they can

say the meat loaf is store-bought but comes from award-winning, grass-fed cows that have been pasture-raised since birth at McDonald's Farm in Paducah," she offers as an example.

Convenience, Hermann adds, doesn't negate consumers' interest in knowing as much as they can about where their food comes from. "If you want consumers to pay a premium for your fresh program, you need to do more than simply provide product you need to stress authenticity," she points out.

But more importantly, for food retailers to benefit from the free-of movement, industry observers such as Nelson stress that they must make sure to communicate the products' value proposition. She reminds us that the more consumers understand about what they're buying, the more connected they feel - something that's particularly true in fresh departments. Also, given the number of options consumers have today, Nelson says that it would behoove grocers to tout the specialness of the products they carry.

"Highlighting or showcasing what is and isn't in the food, how it's made and produced, would go a long way in helping retailers distinguish themselves in the overcrowded, highly competitive prepared food market," she observes. "At the end of the day, consumers still want convenience, but they want to understand what is unique about the prepared food their grocer is selling. The more distinctive it is, the more likely they are to buy it from their grocer versus another merchant."

Looking forward, Nelson predicts that as online retailers push to take a bigger bite out of supermarkets' share of business, grocers may look to cut back on center store square footage even further, to make room for more fresh offerings. "This is really where grocers shine, but to compete near-term will require them to dedicate more space to educate and demonstrate the value statements within the fresh space," she says. "This is a critical next step if they hope to keep shoppers in the store longer." PG



Consumers ... may have a long list of product attributes that appeal to them or don't but at the end of the day, they want a quick and simple way to distinguish who the good guys and bad guys are.

> — Mindy Hermann Registered Dietitian Nutritionist



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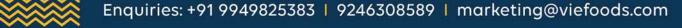








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Ready To Eat



IQBAL FAZLAN CEO, Fazlani Exports Pvt. Ltd.

Pioneering Microwaveable Packaging for Convenience

The ready-to-eat category is expected to double in size and rake in INR 50 billion by 2023 at a CAGR of 12%. Food manufacturers are looking to adapt better technologies to extend the shelf life of packaged goods and deliver on nutritional fronts as well. A pioneer in the use of high barrier retortable packaging, Fazlani Foods offers a wide range of ready-to-eat products that come in microwaveable packaging and provide a healthy alternative to fast food and take-away meals.



pecializing in ready-to-eat solutions and ready-to-use ingredients, Fazlani Exports Pvt. Ltd. provides quality products to Indian and International customers under the brand name, Fazlani Foods. Starting off as an export-oriented business, the company has a vast supplier reach in the USA, the UK, New Zealand, Australia, the Middle East, South Africa and Russia. In addition, they now market and sell their products through a strong distribution network in India as well. Due to the change in buying preferences and also in the lifestyle of Indian consumers, the firm saw immense potential in the ready-to-eat segment in Indian markets and started retailing here on a small scale in 2012. Their target customer base includes anyone that requires ready-to-eat packaged Indian food in the

modern format. This target list comprises individuals living away from their family, those with tight work schedules, people residing abroad without easy access to raw materials needed to make Indian dishes at home and individuals who simply may not have the time to cook everyday.

Fazlani Foods provides solutions in the form of ready, packaged meals that are nutritious and homemade. The firm's product line boasts of a delicious range of vegetable curries, seafood curries, rice, pickles, chutneys, combo meals in microwaveable tray packs, cooking pastes and desserts, made from recipes that are crafted from the finest ingredients and spices. With a shelf life of 18 months, their products constitute the same nutritional elements as a freshly prepared meal. With hygienic manufacturing processes, Fazlani Foods aims to provide end



consumers with only the best packaged food in the market. Emphasis is placed on preserving the natural health benefits of all ingredients and their entire value chain from procurement of raw material to final packaging and transportation of finished goods is supervised to ensure ethical and professional standards.

The company packages its products in high barrier retortable pouches, trays and bowls. A user can simply cut, open the pouch, place it in a microwave and heat it before consumption. There is no need to empty the pouch into a different container for the purpose of heating. The packaging is microwaveable and does not contaminate the food with harmful plastics or synthetic agents on exposure to microwave radiation. The technology makes the use of a product easy and quick, and enables shelf storage for 18 months without the use of refrigeration. This acts as a differentiating factor for the brand and fulfills the need of the modern consumer.

CEO Iqbal Fazlani spoke to Progressive Grocer about the growth of his company and the reformist technologies that have aided convenient solutions.

How do you view the growth rate of the RTE category? What challenges act as hindrances for food manufacturers in this segment?

This category is very nascent and has only now

WHAT IS RETORTABLE **PACKAGING?**

A retort pouch or retortable pouch is a type of food packaging made from a laminate of flexible plastic and metal foils. It allows the sterile packaging of a wide variety of food and drinks handled by aseptic processing, and is used as an alternative to traditional industrial canning methods. The food inside is cooked in a similar way to pressure cooking. This process reliably kills all commonly occurring microorganisms, preventing it from spoiling. The food-grade, FDA-approved materials used to construct this type of packaging undergo a sterilization process that extends the shelf life of the product inside while preserving all nutritional constitution of the food item.

started winning the attention of retailers and customers alike. There is a lack of awareness not only around the segment but also about the technology of retortable packaging. Consumers in countries like the USA are aware of the benefits of this packaging technique and know how to interact with products that use it. The challenge that we perceive is the mind set or perception that the average Indian consumer has toward packaged food. Indian consumers still harbour questions about the presence of additives and preservatives in packaged foods. They aren't yet comfortable with the fact that the food they are consuming has been sitting on a shelf for more than 15 months without even seeing the inside of a refrigerator. The technology of retortable packaging is not easily understood or trusted to be natural and healthful. In addition to awareness being an inhibiting factor for the category, the availability of food in India also has a role to play. A consumer looking for a quick meal late at night can conveniently call a food service outlet and get a hot, freshly prepared meal delivered to him or her in a short duration of time. That contributes to the decreased popularity of the ready-to-eat segment. Our loyal consumers are often well-traveled, aware of our unique packaging technology and trusting in the nature and quality of packaged materials.

Outline your company's vision for the future.

Our plans for the future, as a brand, are very straightforward and aligned. We want to become synonymous with the ready-to-eat food category and lead the way in terms of market share. We want to enter every buyer's grocery list and become a regular household name.

Retortable packaging technology makes the use of a product easy and quick, and enables shelf storage for 18 months without the use of refrigeration.

Which key markets are you targeting within the country?

We do a lot of business in the West and Delhi-NCR. Bangalore, Hyderabad and Pune also feature as key markets in the South. Kolkata is a key selling area in the East. Our products are available at retail





Our current production and infrastructural facilities are capable of handling increased product demand. We are prepared to cater to the growth of the RTE category and are ready to process four times the volume we handle currently.

grocery shoppers. To make the most of online retail channels, our products are also available on Amazon, Flipkart and Bigbasket across all major locations. We are planning to venture into and penetrate newer Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities in the coming year.

Describe your retail strategy and how you approach product placement.

My retail strategy is very clear and specific in nature. I focus on placing the right products at the right locations. We conduct thorough market research and believe that our entire product range need not be available everywhere. We place products at stores where we know we'll find prospective buyers. For example, my ready-to-eat range is more readily available at major modern trade outlets and my range of chutneys, pickled jars and pastes are more visible in neighborhood/next-door grocery stores. We maintain a healthy balance between our online and offline channels. Once we have a more defined product range to offer and a loyal, substantial consumer base, we also plan to open an exclusive online store.

Any plans for rural markets in India?

At the moment, there isn't a strong demand for ready-to-eat products in rural India. However, as

these regions transform, we may witness a surge in the consumption of products like ready-to-use sauces, pickles, chutneys and pastes.

Throw some light on your sourcing strategy and product certifications.

We follow global food safety standards like BRC and USFDA. We are also certified for ISO 22000:2005 and Halal. Our raw materials are procured from industry suppliers only after undergoing strict quality checks pertaining to their nutritional content, size, cultivation methods, etc. We have an entire quality check department dedicated to this purpose that maintains consistent quality, health and hygiene standards for raw materials.

What marketing initiatives and campaigns do you undertake to market your products?

We do a number of sampling activities that focus on demonstrating the convenience and health attributes of our products. Such marketing initiatives are conducted in-store at all modern trade outlets. We have also designed an intensive outreach program this year that includes TVCs, digital marketing initiatives on various social media handles, outdoor city-specific advertisements, search engine marketing, and print advertisements.

What are your expansion plans for new product lines and infrastructure?

Although we plan on investing in newer technology, our infrastructural facilities are capable of handling larger volumes of manufactured produce and are tuned to servicing increased demand. However, we plan on extending the range of products we offer. Some product lines we are looking at comprise of healthy snacking items, organic combo meals and a hummus range. It has been a balanced year for us and we are still testing the Indian market in terms of growth opportunities. Going into the future, we plan on venturing into new geographies and offer a more diverse product range to our customers. **PG**

PRODUCT PORTFOLIO

Award-winning products: Dal Makhani, Amritsari Chole with Basmati rice and Dry Fruit Mango Chutney.

Best-selling products: Shahi paneer, brinjal curry, Amritsari chole, dal tadka, rajma masala, pav bhaji, palak paneer, prawn biryani, Kashmiri prawn curry, chipotle Mexican rice, brown rice pilaf and ready meals packaged with basmati rice. Pickles and chutneys have variants such as tuna, prawn, sweet mango, spicy mango, lime and chilli, tamarind, mint, and coriander. Ready-to-use sauces and pastes come in flavors such as rogan josh, tikka masala, vindaloo, onion tomato, ginger-garlic, green chilli, etc. To provide an appetizer and dessert to their main offerings, the company produces a chocolate caramel pudding and an entire soup range under the brand name Foody Fusion.

Price Range: Rs. 70 to Rs. 260

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- 2. SME Forum Award 2013 at 100 Best SME Award
- 3. Nominated for India Mart ET Best Entrepreneur Award
- 4. Best Manufacturing Excellence Award (Food category) at Invest Karnataka Summit
- 5. One of the 20 Most Promising Food & Beverages Suppliers in India by Silicon India







A Peek into the Future **Contours of Food Retail**

To celebrate Progressive Grocer's 11th Anniversary, we spoke to leading retailers and manufacturers about what they think of the development and trend arc in F&G retailing and how various product categories are shaping up in the face of evolving market dynamics and maturing consumer behavior. The retailers and producers we spoke to agree that the food retailing landscape in India is changing and the market is abuzz with new ideas and propositions. The consensual view is that much like in the other parts of the world, factors such as convenience, hygiene and health and wellness are transforming the way Indians eat. A growing awareness and

influence of globalization in the F&B space, changing lifestyle, evolving tastes and preferences of consumers means that shoppers are increasingly moving towards purchasing healthy, branded and packaged food and beverages which, in turn, is leading to a boom in modern retail and the launch of natural, nutritious and better-for-you products.

Progressive Grocer posed the question: What have been the most impactful trends and developments in your retail format in recent years and what further changes do you envisage in your category, going ahead? We bring you the thoughts and reactions of the retailers and manufacturers that we spoke to.

Instant feedback is changing how brands and consumers interact

Over the years, with the increase in the availability and accessibility of information and educational material, consumers are becoming more health conscious. Unlike a few decades ago, today's consumers are extremely sensitive of the ingredients used in a product, the manufacturing processes followed and, more importantly, the value proposition a brand and its products represent. The end consumer wants to imbibe these big ideas and value systems into their lives. We also see an increase in public awareness around a company or brand's CSR initiatives and the need for transparency. What a brand is doing to give back to society is a frequent topic of debate and discussion. Excellence and prompt communication in these areas lead to a successful and widely accepted brand.

Additionally, social media has transformed the methodologies through which consumers and companies engage with each other. Communication



has become instant and is no longer unidirectional as there are several ways a consumer can now connect with a brand easily. Impact is measurable and data systems are frequently used to elevate a brand's communication strategy. The feedback system has become more direct, transparent and immediate. The age-old belief of the customer being always right still holds true and more businesses are adopting consumer-centric approaches to sales and marketing.

Today's consumers are extremely sensitive of the ingredients used in a product, the manufacturing processes followed and the value proposition a brand and its products represent.

— Arvind Varchaswi MD. Sri Sri Tattva

Wholesome diets over indulgence elevate the breakfast cereal market

When it comes to breakfast options, the Indian palate is still majorly catered to by traditional Indian dishes and their RTC versions. However, ready-to-eat cereals are steadily and surely making inroads into India's breakfast menu. Euromonitor International pegs the breakfast cereal market in India to hit Rs. 2,160 crore by 2020. The burgeoning Indian middle-class and double-income households hold sizeable potential for the category. The need of the hour is to provide healthy and convenient breakfast options addressing this increasing demand. That is what we aim to do with our brand, Kwality.

With increased options, price competitiveness, enhanced variety and innovation, competitors must utilize sampling processes to stand out in the customer's eye. We see more competition not only at regional levels but also across categories. As innovation becomes a vital part of the product's journey, traditional staples transform into their modern avatars and battle for a share of the market. Increasing awareness among urban audiences also accounts for more focus on quality standards and lifestyle needs, both in terms of product and



packaging. A widening consumer base means that players will have to make cereals more accessible and affordable through a strong distribution network. Due to multilevel marketing approaches and consumer-to-consumer strategies, regional players have an advantage here.

Nevertheless, urbanization, health consciousness and emergent lifestyle diseases tilt the balance in favor of the market. The maturing market opts for a wholesome diet over indulgence. Brands that develop a certain affinity by understanding and addressing the consumer's behavior and palate will prosper in this environment.



Increasing awareness among urban audiences also accounts for more focus on quality standards and lifestyle needs, both in terms of product and packaging.

— Dheeraj Jain Director, Pagariya Food Products Pvt. Ltd.



Customers are looking for an experiential journey in the brick & mortar space



66

Spencer's is looking at 'curating' the shopping experience with 'only for you' proposition, which will be the key to success as consumers are persistently looking for customized collaboration rather than generic offers in all categories.

— **Shashwat Goenka** Sector-Head, Spencer's Retail Limited

We, at Spencer's Retail, stay relevant to the customer's ever changing and evolving needs by catering to those desires well in advance. That, we believe, is the most important thing in F&G retailing. We have been able to grow our customer base by being thoughtful in terms of the merchandise range, which includes fresh produce, bakery, FMCG and grocery, beauty products, home essentials, clothing, beverages and liquor, with a dedicated focus to grow each category. Consumers today have become more conscious about what they are purchasing and it is not limited to 'value for money' only; they are looking for an experiential journey in the brick & mortar space, while also shopping online. Some other macro trends we observed are that people are becoming more health conscious - they are trying to go back to the roots and hence gaining an affinity towards local and organic items. There is also a huge demand for aspirational products. With people having higher disposable incomes, their discretionary spends are also increasing.

Spencer's has observed that there has been a shift in the chain's consumer base over the past few years. Our customers today are mostly aged between 25-35 years and constantly looking for

engagements while they are shopping. In India, with the immense penetration of smartphones and highend technology, the aspiration level of customers has gone up on average and Spencer's is trying to cater to that. Spencer's is looking at 'curating' the shopping experience with 'only for you' proposition, which will be the key to success as consumers are persistently looking for customized collaboration rather than generic offers in all categories. Digital integration in this regard will play a key role and influence the customer behavior largely in the coming years.







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Growth in 'doodhwala' categories will lead to the rise of subscription companies





Consumers will look out for retailers that provide value in different forms and not just on price. The service level that customers expect in high-end or **luxury retail shops** will become the new norm for your regular format store. We will see a lot of new formats evolve where you don't even interact with humans at all.

— **Vishal Das** National Group Category Head, Bigbasket.com There are quite a few trends and developments in our retail environment that have implications for shaping key product categories. Take, for instance, the shift in the decision making process in households today. From Gen-X to Millennial parents, they are all now being influenced by children in the household. So, first we need to understand the new consumer.

Today, consumers are more connected and they are making choices that are conscience-led. They are reading product reviews and want to understand the product. Consumers are also now looking for ingredients in a product and they are checking the nutrition claims before purchasing. With the awareness levels rising and patience level decreasing, we are becoming more of InstaPopulation as consumers seeking instant gratification.

Consumers also don't want to spend time doing mundane things. Hence, we are seeing a rise in 'doodhwala' categories. Do you remember when was the last time you changed your milk brand or even the person who delivers you milk? Unless you are unhappy with the service, 90% of time you won't because 'doodhwala' product categories are 100% need-based and consumers today have outsourced the provision of such products 100%. We think about them only when we have to stop the service or when we don't find the product outside the door.

Looking into the future, we will see a lot of categories become 'doodhwala' categories, which will lead to the rise of subscription companies. More and more products will move to the 'doodhwala' category and this trend will largely impact categories such as Fresh, Dairy, Bakery & Eggs.

With mundane grocery chores getting outsourced and consumers becoming more connected, the demand for new niche products will grow. These new demands will ride on the back of emerging trends and the virality factor. Just look at how gluten-free, organic and natural are growing in food, parabenfree in personal care and how 'free from' is trending! Consumers are opting for healthier products and also for foods that help them become beautiful. That explains the rise in the popularity of the 'Food for Beauty' category. This is evident from the sales jump in apple cider vinegar, avocado, salmon, etc.

What I personally believe in is that "Food is New Fashion" and demands constant change and new product development. This trend is helping new, smaller brands and food startups because they are agile, always connected, and fast in innovation. Gone are the days where large FMCG companies could spend a couple of years to just launch a few extra variants or new product lines. InstaPop is connected with brands through various online mediums. They want brands to hear them and create products that best suit them. This has created a lot of niche categories and products trending in the developed world now begin trending in India within a few days. As geographic borders get blurred, new categories and new indigenous brands will get created or killed just by viral videos or online posts.

Going ahead, InstaPop will demand more personalized engagement with brands and retailers.



Prices will become more transparent but that won't be the only hook for getting loyal consumers.

Consumers will look out for retailers that provide value in different forms and not just on price. The service level that customers expect in high-end or luxury retail shops will become the new norm for your regular format store. In the end, what will matter is how relevant a format is for his/her engagement and at what all touchpoints it is connected to consumers. The way I look at the future of retail is a more connected ecosystem that is plugged into the aspirations of consumers. As the world gets increasingly digitalized and interconnected, consumers are taking to the digital medium with greater fervor and they are demanding that brands have their presence on the digital platform and they want it NOW.



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Maximum growth will come from fresh and healthy products





The Health & Fresh trend is playing out strongly and driving growth across categories.

— **Avinash Tripathi**Buying and
Merchandising Head,
Godrej Nature's Basket

Health & Fresh are the major trends today in the food industry. This trend is playing out strongly and driving strong growth across categories. While the packaged juice category is seeing negative growth and people are shifting to cold pressed juices (natural), the latter category is growing at more than 50% same store growth. Eggs is one of the fastest growing category for us and the maximum growth is coming from free range chicken eggs and organic eggs (more than 100% growth) compared to very low growth in everyday value chicken eggs. In meats and seafood, we see customers moving from frozen to fresh. We are seeing stronger growth in fresh seafoods, which is growing more than 70-80% compared to the negative growth in frozen seafood. Also, we have observed customers shifting from chicken to seafoods, which is a more healthy option.

In bakery, there is stronger growth in healthier breads like gluten-free breads, Keto bread and high protein quinoa bread. In fact, quinoa bread is one of the top selling SKU in our stores. The granola bar



category is also growing huge and is one of the top performing categories with brands like Yogabars and RiteBite influencing category growth. We have seen a shift of customers from impulse chocolate options to granola bars. In milk, we have seen strong growth in fresh milk category compared to Tetra milk. Also, A2 milk is influencing category growth. Besides, there is very strong growth taking place in plant-based milk. Almond milk, too, is growing in the range of 50-60% y-o-y and is significantly contributing to the overall milk category's growth. Most of our customers are now shifting to organic grocery from normal grocery and this category is growing @40%+.





The digital age consumer today is aware, informed and keen on the health benefits in all aspects of life but especially so when consuming packaged foods.

— **Shaishav Mittal** CEO, Lovely Bake Studio

The food plate today demands new experiences, taste and international appeal

As one the top five markets for packaged food in the world, India has seen many trends come and go, but the most significant have been:

Organic, healthy and natural: India is one of the biggest exporters of organic food and is rapidly becoming a major consumer as well. The digital age consumer today is aware, informed and keen on the health benefits in all aspects of life but especially so when consuming packaged foods.

Rise of rural market: Rural India has been on the rise and provides the biggest growth opportunities for packaged food and beverages. Almost 65% of the Indian population lives in rural regions and they are demanding better products thanks to rising wages and technology.

Customer is king: Today's customer is looking at value for money. And likewise every brand wants to pass the benefits to the consumer to attract higher sales and build a loyal community. Take, for instance, GST tax, which many companies, including us at Lovely Bake Studio – home of 100% eggless, 200% delicious cookies, dry cakes, Turkish



backlava, chocolates, gift hampers and many more mouth watering offerings – absorbed internally to avoid price rise and customer dissatisfaction.

Old wine in new bottle: Nostalgia is one of the greatest flavors. As such, there is a demand for new experiences, taste and international appeal. There is also a great demand for the old and desi but with a twist. A classic case of product evolution!

Never miss an opportunity! The consumer today is busier than ever. Brands must never miss an opportunity for a brand plug-in.

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The future of frozen food lies in innovation and product differentiation





Players in the frozen food business see a very strong opportunity in the category but the future lies in making the right innovation and product differentiation.

Mithun Appaiah CEO, Innovative Foods Ltd.



Players in the frozen food business see a very strong opportunity in the category but the future lies in making the right innovation and product differentiation. We, at Sumeru, are at the forefront of bringing about this change, and are committed to offering the most innovative and differentiated product range - some of them being the first of its kind - to our customers in India. The Sumeru nonveg French fries is the first of its kind product in India. We also are the highest selling parantha brand with product extensions into methi, turmeric, ajwain, beetroot and multigrain parantha. We have recently launched chicken rolls and paneer rolls, which are new innovations that break away from the traditional potato- and -chicken players. Our kebab range has been curated by celebrity chef and Master Chef judge Ajay Chopra and is a testimony to our capability to quickly innovate and launch products. Sumeru will introduce some more outrageously innovative products into the frozen market to dazzle consumer imagination and taste buds.

Consumers in India are beginning to see freezing as a way to preserve food with fewer negatives. It is becoming a major reason to buy frozen foods, in addition to convenience factor, which was the biggest motivator before. In Europe and North

America, there is a significant increase in consumer preference for healthy frozen foods and it is a major trend in those markets. In India, there remains some vestiges of an old mental block that "frozen is not healthy". The misconception about frozen food being not healthy will eventually decrease in the coming years as a big chunk of marketing budgets of market leaders will be utilized for educating the consumers.

Even in the developing Asian countries, frozen food has seen a steady growth in recent years. This growth is mostly driven by an increase in the disposable incomes, more number of women joining the workforce, changing food habits and lifestyle changes and a significant increase in the number of large retail chains, including hypermarkets and supermarkets.

In India, too, there has been an increase in the sale of frozen vegetables, fruits, meals, etc, with strong health claims including the highlighting of nutrients and advanced techniques like "quick freeze", etc. However, the frozen market is mostly passive today with few or no innovation, barring a few exceptions. Many challenger brands are spending more of their time and energy in R&D to create innovative products to attract eyeballs and to provide consumers with more choice.





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Indian consumers have recovered their taste for traditional snacks such as bhujia and namkeens





Consumers are correlating healthy food with something inherently Indian and are starting to favor brands like ours.

— **Manoj Gupta** Executive Director, AFP Manufacturing Co. Pvt. Ltd. India has a traditional snacking culture and its prevalence is driving the growth of the snacks market. India's snacks market grew at a significant pace over the last decade, and is forecast to grow at a CAGR of more than 11% during 2018 – 2021. The contributory factors in this growth story are the rising disposable income of Indians, growing urban population, and aggressive marketing strategies and planning by companies.

Indian consumers have recovered their taste for traditional snacks such as bhujia and namkeens, which has helped our brand

MunchhOnn to post impressive growth at a time when multinational players are struggling. As a snack company, we have introduced many regional flavors, which is helping us grow our market in the country. For instance, in the packaged namkeen segment, home-grown brands like ours are gaining market share from western snacks such as potato chips and finger sticks. Our competitive

pricing, product quality, use of the finest ingredients and state-of-the-art plant processing are the other important consumption drivers of our products.

Today, consumers are correlating healthy food with something inherently Indian and are starting to favor brands like ours that use ingredients commonly found in Indian kitchens. Once the consumer is satisfied with the quality of the product, they remember the brand identity well. That is helping us expand our customer base and I believe that our loyal customers will help turn MunchhOnn into a

National snacking brand and a name to reckon with in India's namkeen and snacks market. Our future strategy is to sew up deals with supermarket stores, marking the brand's entry onto supermarket shelves. The goal now for MunchhOnn will be to increase its footprint and visibility at the outlet level. As a company, we understand the Indian palate well and that will come in handy when launching our new products.







Consumers are realizing the importance of nutrition and are willing to pay a premium once they are sure that the food they are being served packs good nutrition.

— **Gaurav Sharma**Director-Sales,
Kellogg India Pvt. Ltd.

To tap more value, marketers should make food relevant for multiple occasions

'Health & Wellness', a global trend, is being realized in India as well. Consumers are realizing the importance of nutrition and are willing to pay a premium once they are sure that the food they are being served packs good nutrition. This trends holds true for Kellogg and we are seeing our premium portfolio in breakfast cereals doing very well on the shelves. As a breakfast food company, Kellogg has responded with new products and promotions geared toward better-for-you breakfast choices.

Kellogg has been involved in creating and developing the breakfast cereal category in India. It has played a pivotal role in growing the category of breakfast cereals and continues to hold leadership by a significantly large margin. Over the years, through a robust nutrition program, we have built the importance of breakfast and the 'goodness of grains' with the Indian consumer. We have dialed up the call

out of rich nutrition credentials in our food and accelerated our availability in the retail environment by introducing smaller packs and driving distribution on a mass scale. The other big driver for us has been our ability to adapt and customize to suit the Indian consumer. Our innovation into Indian flavors or grains like Ragi has helped us do this.

Food in India is about an occasion and not just limited to health and taste. We are seeing the rise of an 'experimentative' consumer who is looking to try out new food formats, especially outside the

three main meal occasions. There is a lot of value waiting to be realized by marketers when they make their food relevant for multiple occasions. The challenge and, simultaneously, an advantage for us is to take the current portfolio and make it relevant for multiple occasions in a day. Many offerings from Kellogg serve that purpose, for example Kellogg's Chocos Fills and Pringles. **PG**







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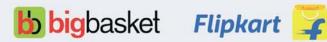
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Twists in the tale

Life can be simplified for both sides if vendors and retailers revisit their terms of trade.

The foods category within FMCG has been the centre of a lot of action in recent times. The kind of innovation seen in packaging (Maggi), tastes (in snacks), and even complete product categories has been mind-boggling.

What is heartening is that both the customer and the consumer have taken to most of these in the most positive ways. However, along with the opportunity comes a certain set of challenges. Let us take a look at some of them:

Diverse tastes - the existence of varied eating habits and preferences in India makes it a challenging but lucrative terrain for vendors and retailers alike. While consumption of milk and milk based products is extremely high in northern states, it is rice which takes the cake in southern parts of the country. Such variations call for retailers to be extremely nimble-footed and alive to the local demands. At the end of the day, for a customer, a national retailer is only as good as the range and availability it offers at a daily next-door.

Preference for home-cooked food – this one can be a nightmare for "ready-to-eat" food makers!! The Indian customer, as opposed to his counterpart from more developed nations, still prefers home-cooked fresh food and avoids ready to eat and packaged offerings. Over the years, dietary patterns and poor electricity supply have resulted in these preferences. Further, there is also resistance to paying a monetary premium for the packaging and brand.

Low acceptance of private labels - even though

private labels have been around for 4-5 years, they are still an evolving concept. While the potential for profits to retailers is huge, strong loyalties in foods category might act as a deterrent.

Possible solution for retailers:

- a) For each category, begin with a single facing in the category shelves and keep increasing the same over every three months.
- b) Retain eye-level shelves for private labels

The chances of success in private labels are higher in case of non-food products where the customer might be willing to compromise the quality-angle for a better price, packaging or promotion. Retailers often back their private label offerings in foods with aggressive promotions like a 2+1 on cheese. However, here again there is limitation on how much of a food product like cornflakes, cheese, etc. can be stored in a household without compromising the freshness.

Increasing importance of product knowledge - the foods category has been at the forefront of innovation, which has led to emergence of new concepts in packaging and labelling. This has further led to the need for store staff to be on top of the features of products placed under his purview. Lack of adequate knowledge can lead to dissatisfied customers - a pure vegetarian might feel offended if handed a chicken instant noodles pack (even if by mistake!).

Strong loyalties – as compared to non-foods, sub-categories within the foods category are

Increasing importance of product knowledge - the foods category has been at the forefront of innovation, which has led to emergence of new concepts in packaging and labelling.



Categories where customers are willing to experiment are more impulsedriven, like chocolates, confectionery, biscuits and chips/ snacks. The sheer variety and flavours attracts customers of all ages, especially kids.

characterised by extremely strong loyalties and hence, new entrants face trial resistance. Two classic examples are tea and baby food. Loyalties to tea are so strong that customers would not even want to go for "in-store sampling" as it might spoil their taste. Similarly, in the case of baby foods, one would stick to the tried and trusted offerings instead of experimenting with some of the new launches or the existing "also-rans" in the market.

Categories where customers are willing to experiment are more impulse-driven, like chocolates, confectionery, biscuits and chips/snacks. The sheer variety and flavours attracts customers of all ages, especially kids.

A 2+1 or a 'Rs 10 off' might work wonders at attracting new customers to a newly-launched toilet cleaner, but not so much in the case of butter.

Shelf life – all food products carry a "best-before" or expiry date. The time period from manufacturing date to the expiry date signifies the shelf life of each product. One of the key challenges for food retailers is to ensure freshest possible stocks on the shelves and hence, each chain has a remaining-shelf-life norm for food products, which ranges from 50 to 80 percent freshness. On the flipside, it also affects fill rates at times, as fresh stocks of some of the SKUs that are popular in modern trade may not be readily available as they are not popular in general trade. Possible solutions that can be looked at include: a) Retailers accepting direct store deliveries

(especially for hyper/super formats) b) Vendors keeping separate stocks for modern trade



c) Adopting a flow-through system of inventory management, which means stocks are not stored at the retailer's warehouse and instead, dispatched to the stores instantly

Further, it makes life easier for both vendors and retailers if the clause of shelf life norm is incorporated in the terms-of-trade or agreement.

Low fill rates – it has been observed in at least two mid-sized retail chains that the fill rates offered by food vendors are significantly lower as compared to non-foods vendors. We have already covered the case of shelf life norms, which is one of the important reasons for low fill rates, earlier.

Pilferage – food products such as chocolates, confectionery, instant popcorn, etc., are prone to pilferage at cash counters. This is a worldwide phenomenon and there is precious little that can be done here, besides having effective display units.

Despite these challenges, the foods category remains exciting enough to lead the next phase of growth in organised retail.

Store productivity, same-store growth

What is your priority no. 1?

It's quite amazing that "store productivity" doesn't grab the attention of most people in the retail trade in India, despite the fact that real estate costs are riding an all-time high. In the chase for topline growth, many retailers are stepping over the ground retailities of success.

It's become quite typical for rentals to range between 20-25 percent of sales, and in many cases even higher than that. (In those instances, a retailer could only hope to make money out of illegitimate activity or illegal merchandise, which is not part of the business plan of anyone I know!)

Many brands will (and possibly can) justify paying absurdly high rentals with the rationale that in the store portfolio, some locations will never make money, but are needed as marquee locations for "must-have" visibility. This can work if you do have a balanced store portfolio. The -question is whether the low-rent locations actually have the capability to generate enough margin to support the unprofitable locations.

While some of the rentals are comparable to expensive real estate in the developed markets, gross margins in India are typically thinner than in









Category management, efficient and responsive supply chains, optimising store-footprint and catchment to ensure maximum walk-ins... all of these are some of the issues I believe top management needs to look at carefully.

Europe, USA etc., reducing the spread a retailer has for its operational expenses. Add to the mix overestimation of consumer demand, and the scenario looks even gloomier.

In this context, to my mind, each store needs to be made as productive as it can be. There needs to be fairly sharp focus on store performance and category performance data.

However, in the last 18 months or so, conversations with Indian and international brands and retailers operating in the Indian market, showed that topline (sales) growth and new store openings were the focus for most retailers (even till a few weeks ago). Most branded suppliers have also shown unprecedented sales growth on the back of new store openings – their own exclusive stores, as well as new sites being added by department store chains carrying their brand.

For instance, in March 2007, one (new) brand said that their business plan called for 50 stores by the end of 2007, and 100 by the end of 2008. Their aggressive plans were based on a very aggressive reading of the market and its growth pattern.

Certainly, when sales growth can be achieved just by opening more new boxes (stores), productivity and efficiency don't appear to be important. Strategy, new openings, new products and even new brand launches, are more appealing and attractive, than looking at boring old operations and efficiency measures.

However, I believe 2008 will see a change in management priorities. I don't think the unnamed brand above will open its 100 stores. It is very likely that they will want their already opened stores to work harder. In a competitive market where the



growth trend is slowing, there is more to be gained by milking existing investments, than by opening increasing numbers of underperforming stores.

Achieving such productivity is obviously linked to store operations – people, process, and technology. When the merchandise and the customer are both in the store, you need to make sure the two are matched quickly and effectively, and that there is a focus on conversion, average transaction values and efficient inventory management. But that is only one part of the story.

Support functions, such as marketing, supply chain, buying and merchandising, have a huge role to play as well in ensuring that the product in the store is actually productive and saleable, rather than just filling shelf-space.

Category management, efficient and responsive supply chains, optimising store-footprint and catchment to ensure maximum walk-ins... all of these are some of the issues I believe top management needs to look at carefully in the coming 24 months.

If you are in a senior management position in a retail business, we would be very interested in hearing what your priorities are this year.

Material World

Modern retail wouldn't have grown if Indians hadn't become less spiritual.

What puts pressure for development to happen? It is a nation's populace who do this, not through a revolution or a mass uprising, but through their behaviour. Consumer wants and desires influence what manufacturers make and market, and how retailers eventually reach them to homes, offices, and wallets.

This fundamental fact of retailing is important to understand the contrast between the western model of retail development and the traditional Indian scenario. In the West, retail progressed from the Souk to the Central Market to the Shopping Centre to the Mall and on to the Retail Village. Spaces expanded horizontally as the need for retail space grew, and as the hypermarket and the big box phenomenon took birth. Simultaneously, infrastructure grew to support the retail development.







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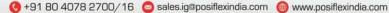


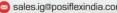




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Indian consumers like to be able to discuss the family's eating habits with the local grocer, while the latter enjoys being able to advise on alternative goods or cost-saving deals to the neighbourhood housewives.

India, on the other hand, has never known a Souk concept. The development of retail in India has always been cubic rather than lateral. Structures have grown vertically, as the availability of real estate in urban centres has consistently diminished. Typically, shops would come up in the ground floors of multi storied structures, the upper levels housing either offices or homes. Naturally, this led to a haphazard and skewed dispersion of retail spaces; and also explains why Indian cities do not offer quality high street spaces. Barring Bangalore's MG Road and 100 feet Road, the Sector 17 in Chandigarh and perhaps Linking Road in Mumbai, there are not many regulated high streets the country has to offer.

Of course, the world knows by now that India's model of retail development is very unlike what developed countries have undergone. But, what may not be as well publicised are the reasons for that distinctive pattern to have occurred.

The Indian is, by nature, an emotional being. Our movies are liberally accessorised by song and dance, our homes very often influenced by religious considerations. Indians naturally lean towards things that are familiar and accessible, if somewhat chaotic and disorganised, rather than those that are standardised and regulated. Indian consumers like to be able to discuss the family's eating habits with the local grocer, while the latter enjoys being able to advise on alternative goods or cost-saving deals to the neighbourhood housewives. It's a bond that is built in a 'friendly neighbourhood' spirit, if you like.

Needs vs wants

Now let's come to the factors that influence shopping patterns. The India of old had a simplistic - almost spiritual - way of life. Purchases were almost

completely determined by needs. Food, clothing and shelter were the primal needs, and all purchases were structured to meet these needs. Foodgrains and pulses were often bought by the kilos and often for an entire year. They came home in large gunny sacks, which were then stored in the large family kitchens or even under beds and settees. Clothing items were bought as per personal taste and convenience. The rich Indian textile heritage meant there were options to choose from for occasion wear - heavy silks, brocades and sumptuously embroidered fabrics were fairly easy to access. Bolts of cloth were ordered from the market, and then forwarded on to the family tailor to be stitched. Ready to wear and branding were unheard of concepts.

This was true for even the most well-heeled of families – of course, they could invest in pricier fabrics, have them embellished by precious or semi precious rocks, and custom tailored by upper crust drapers. Clearly, pride and honour were above material possessions. Possessions did not determine respect in society.

Cut to India of the new millennium. Liberalisation changed the way Indians valued their existence. They gradually came to acknowledge a better way of life – in terms of convenience, greater choice and a new need arising out of "peer pressure/ self esteem". This characteristic has really defined the retail revolution in India. More and more Indians now know that a higher quality of life is waiting out there to be grabbed. While Indians of the 40s, 50s and even 60s believed that wealth was meant to be put away in banks or financial instruments for a rainy day, the Indians of today believe in the adage "You only live once".

The modern Indian's self esteem needs now drive his aspiration to be a smart, conscious shopper – in anything from fashion to automobiles to consumer durables, and in even something as basic as food. In a strange twist, simultaneously, he also has lesser and lesser time to acquire these products.

Enter the mall and the hypermarket. The adjective "one-stop" is now attached to most retailers' value propositions. The hypermarket and large box concept is designed to appeal to the modern Indian consumer's most primal demands - that of wide choice, a world class shopping environment, but a retailer who is still willing to work towards saving the shopper's bucks. The savings will then be invested on acquiring the good life - fine dining, overseas holidays, expensive personal accessories, and above all, 'labels'. After all, nothing perhaps announces one's arrival into the big league as acquiring an 'aspirational' label does.

DAIRY RETAIL AT **ANANDA BECOMES** A BOOMING **SUCCESS** WITH **GINESYS** SOFTWARE **TEAM**





company owned operational stores currently. In order to realize its retail expansion, the Ananda Management felt the need of a software to control the vital parameters of retails sales - financials, inventory, and other metrics. In January this year, Ananda roped in Ginesys to help the dairy firm unleash its expansion plans. About 100 Ananda shops were identified to run on Ginesys' retail management software solution.

Based on our analysis, Ginesys zeroed down on the problem areas and decided to approach a solution by the implementation of related measures.



Problem No. 1: Workforce & Infrastructure

Solution: We asked the Ananda Management to go for a tie-up with thirdparty labour sourcing companies, which helped them get a workforce with POS experience. To deal with the technological complexities, we involved their IT team from the very start. As a result, while rolling out POS for the 100th store, the team made sure that all the systems are ready with Ginesys applications and further took care of the in-house testing for billing, etc. before sending to their respective locations. We also ensured that the IT team of Ananda was self-equipped. Their active involvement made the project completion possible within 45 days of the undertaking.

Problem No. 2: Management in Supply Chain

Solution: Ananda's Head office at the time wasn't directly involved in reporting and/or demand request & supply. As a result, they were not able to have proper accounting of sales. Therefore, handling of this entire operational management of daily distribution needed to be updated. The first thing we changed was the demand-supply routine. Stores had to send orders to their respective distribution centres by 12:30 pm, which would then be compiled at Head Office and sent to the factory by 3 pm same day for processing. The factory then sent the required items to the concerned distribution centre, keeping the Head Office updated with the same. Distribution centres then created notes for transfer of goods to their respective zonal centres. Further, we mapped delivery vehicles with the respective stores they delivered to. This ensured the tracking of orders with fulfilled demand and a way to track the non-POS sites as well.

Problem No. 3: Organizing the System

Solution: The company was trying to expand by opening COCO stores nationwide but due to no real-time control and monitoring, the execution was a challenge. It had contracts from DMRC and IOCL to open stores but the lack of an integrated system led to operational challenges. We took a few steps and started categorizing to maintain inventory in pieces while alongside processing the factory demand in crates. This got the MIS at a micro level with multi UOM, i.e. pcs & crates both. Then, we created a database to aggregate all sales data at the point of sales, i.e. DSR. The process of sending hourly sales report and product performance report was put in place. Cash control was initiated on a day-to-day basis with collection reports at the end of the day. And finally, to keep a tab on demand, daily stock visibility was to be sent by stores to the head office.

Results: As a result of implementing Ginesys' solutions, Ananda has exceeded its daily target sales quota of 25,000 litres. Recently, it created a new record by opening 202 stores in a single day in NCR and is looking to open 500 more stores by March 2019 in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab. To increase their efficiency even more, Ginesys has proposed to fully automate the process by ensuring the use of planning module and 100% POS utilization.

If a retailer

has tools to

reach more

personalised

or to process

orders faster,

or with fewer

efficiently,

must adapt

or gradually

market share.

surrender

errors, or more

other vendors

customers with

purchase offers,

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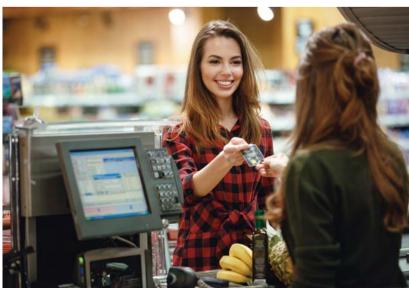
CRM will happen. It's simply a question of how long it will take and in how many ways retailers will benefit. Customer Relationship Management is important, especially for your repeat customers and for them to feel camaraderie with you. A good CRM package will provide the right framework to retailers so that they can personalise merchandise purchases, services and responses across all communication channels for the customer's satisfaction and for increased sales.

they need to ensure it comes at optimal cost, with minimal risk, high value, and a higher Return on Investment (ROI). It should install quickly, interface readily with existing systems, be easy to learn and to

India has more than 129 million mobile communication subscribers and the number is expected to go up to 300 million in 2008. This is a strong marketing channel retailers cannot afford to miss. "Truly loyal customers can't imagine doing of advertising because they've become advocates for your company. They bore their friends with stories of how great you are," writes Shaun Smith and Joe Wheeler, authors of Managing the Customer Experience.

But before retailers invest on CRM software, use, and deliver uncompromising -performance.

business with anyone else. They are your best means



To implement the right CRM, retailers need to analyse customer preferences and trends, and then merge analysis with inbound and outbound calling via CRM technology so that customers can communicate with the retail chain by fax, phone, web, SMS and the like. The CRM framework links and integrates these channels to individualise the customer's experience and ensure satisfaction.

Similarly, competition must be kept under check. If a retailer offers volume discounts, its competitors must likewise offer comparable value to the customers. If a retailer has tools to reach more customers with personalised purchase offers, or to process orders faster, or with fewer errors, or more efficiently, other vendors must adapt or gradually surrender market share.

But unfortunately, only 30 percent of companies worldwide have actually implemented a commercial CRM software package. And most of these are only a year old. Of this minority, 54 percent have implemented just one part of CRM. With so much room for improvement in meeting customer demands, CRM can only help.

Contact centres form an integral part of CRM because they directly impact how customers feel about the retailer's products, services and business. With an efficient system at the contact centre, retailers can help customers buy what they want and need. For instance, retailers are yet to utilise the opportunity of selling daily needs to a population that is using the latest technology to purchase almost everything.

If you are looking at moving to customer-centric marketing, this means that all customer functions are subject to CRM's analytical processes. This helps retailers understand both how the customer base is presently segmented and, for the future, according to what retailing values. Other analyses identify new services, evaluate their ROI, shift focus from less to more profitable customers, etc. The outcome from CRM analytics is better service, improved planning and profitability, and more appropriate pricing.

CRM analysis can help retailers make a smooth shift to a customer-focused enterprise by allowing processes like differentiating customers into segments, discovering precise needs of customers and redesigning compensation and rewards to effect behavioural changes. This process establishes the context that stimulates the customer to shop and buy. Hardcore -marketers make their own analytical



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understandings with the help of a CRM to evaluate what their customers need.

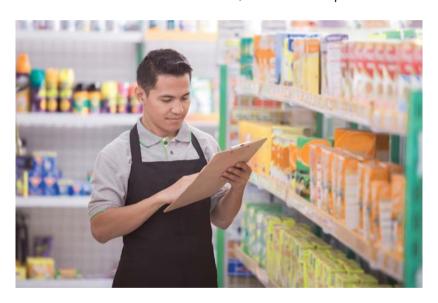
Better services imply the customer's improved ability to make purchases. They will make informed decisions and be happy with their purchase. Such efficient shopping will only mean a patronising customer. For the retailers, this means higher transaction rate, increased revenues, and a wider profit margin.

Smart retailers are looking up new and critical CRM tools such as the unified agent desktop that allows customer service agents to respond faster and

with greater accuracy and consistency every time a customer picks up the phone, accesses e-mails or chats. The unified agent desktop brings the customer into focus at the desktop and turns the agent's screen into a hub that can access all enterprise applications and databases necessary to respond rapidly to the customer. The result is increased quality and decreased operating costs, leading to one of the most handsome ROIs in the industry. It also eliminates data redundancy like repeating customers with the same requests or relying on agents to recall the correct systems to enter a new customer record or service request.

The Retail TRP

Build on trust, revenue and profit.



The Indian consumer has become global in his strategy of brand selection. In the last three years there has been a steady rise in the number of brands vying for consumers' attentions in each product and service category.

While there has been a perceptible enhancement in services being offered at retail, both in neighbourhood and structured markets, the consumer is getting more demanding and expecting better information from the brands to take informed decisions about their purchases at the Point of Purchase.

The growing disposable income, access to brands in local markets and general movement towards enhanced lifestyles is leading to the growth of a consumer base that is willing to experiment, provided the value being offered by the brands is optimal. The key challenge for brands to address this set of consumer base is to build "curiosity", leading to "impulse" at the point where the buying decision can be influenced for the final time.

Traditionally brands have used multiple media to create curiosity among the consumers. These include visibility through different ATL (Above The Line) platforms such as TV, Radio, print, outdoor visibility, BTL (Below The Line) elements at retail, direct mailers, and call centres. While the effectiveness of these media vary based on different parameters, the common feature is the "act of soliciting" without any "person to person touch" forming the basis of interaction. The call centres while initiating a dialogue are still highly impersonal in their approach towards building brand loyalty among the consumers.

LeagueOne has undertaken a unique mode of enhancing the "Effectiveness of the Reach" of the brands at the Point of Purchase through "Facilitation" rather than "Solicitation" as a basis to engage the consumer at its "Internetwork of Retail" spread across 1,500 multi-branded independent retail outlets in 17 cities.

All the outlets are owner-driven, which leads to the creation of a "Retail TRP" that is built on "Trust", "Revenue" and "Profit". In a recently concluded activity for one of the leading pharma brands for launch of their new OTC product, LeagueOne facilitated over 7,500 genuine leads from 70 LeagueOne Advantage outlets in seven days using 14 specialised retail executives.

Trust is the basis of interaction between the owner-driven retail outlet and the consumers, and something that has been built over years. Revenue

is the return earned by the brand and the retailer through various retail marketing innovations brought in by LeagueOne, while all stakeholders including the consumer, retailer and brands profit from the experience at the retail point.

An optimal mix of "in-store ATL and BTL" is essential for the consumer to experience the brand promise. ATL does add to brand visibility but does not give the same sense of belonging as a combination of BTL with in-store ATL. The entire experience gets highly elevated through "Facilitation Initiatives" built on the fundamentals of "Retail TRP". Increase in the level of interactivity with the consumer eventually leads to the consumer being a loyal customer for the brand.

A few of the innovations include a "Highly Specialised Lead Generation" programme based on the mutual trust between the outlet and the consumer. The programme is driven by the retail staff or specialised retail executives of LeagueOne at the outlets. The lead generation programme enables brands to interact with the consumers in a "facilitative

mode" and avoid mere solicitation. The owner of the retail is generally aware of the latent needs of the consumer and their buying criteria. A "Lead Generation" activity facilitated by this knowledge and supported by the trust factor enables the consumer to actively participate in the programme. The leads become invaluable assets for the brands to then interact with the consumer and generate revenue.

The other mode of creating profit or all stakeholders is to enable availability of "Service Products" at outlets of regular visits by the consumers. The service products can range from "Fault Repair bookings", "AMC solicitation" to even "offering Tickets for Events". The very fact that the Tickets/Passes could be bought or received in their neighbourhood leads to a much higher footfall at the venue thereby creating a "Greater ROI" for the brands for the event. The in-store advertisement – both ATL and BTL – further enhance the brand recall and provides the consumer with a more satisfying experience. In all, everyone "Profits" from the experience.

The growing disposable income, access to brands in local markets and general movement towards enhanced lifestyles is leading to the growth of a consumer base that is willing to experiment, provided the value being offered by the brands is optimal.

My best friend's changing!

Is unflinching loyalty possible in a dog-eat-dog world?

Consumer commitment in the form of brand loyalty is arguably the final frontier of every marketer. In India, where modern retailing has just begun to make inroads, this concept seems still too good to be sought after. The question remains, what would be the face of the Indian consumer if he has to choose between a bargain deal and, a brand?

A report by global consulting firm McKinsey & Co. on India's consumer market states that, "If India continues on its current growth path, over the next two decades the Indian market would undergo a major transformation. Income levels will almost triple and India will climb from its current position as the 12th largest consumer market to become the world's 5th largest consumer market by 2025."

The report further states that the Indian middle class would swell by over ten times from the current size of 50 million to 583 million people. By 2025, according to McKinsey, over 23 million Indians – more than the population of Australia today – would number among the country's wealthiest citizens. Three important trends that would emerge, according to the report, are: rising income levels broadly affecting India's income distribution leading to creation of a large middle class and increased per-capita

spending, a growing population and a youthful demographic profile would further contribute to spending, and, a combination of factors will cause India's household savings rate to plateau and then gradually decline. All this would contribute to a major shift in consumption patterns. While consumption would increase almost across all categories, there would be a considerable shift in spending from necessities to discretionary items. This would be the time when 'Brands' in India, would get their loyals.

Mala Morris, senior analyst, IGD points out the differences





The key to creating effective brand loyalty programs is to discover the most persuasive loyalty drivers for each customer. **Loyalty drivers** generally fall into two categories: product attributes (e.g. performance, quality and reliability) or price/promotion sensitivity.

in the behaviour of the Indian consumer when it comes to price loyalty versus brand loyalty. She states, "In the Indian market, for commoditised categories such as edible oil, price can be a key driver. However, a consumer who is apparently loyal to a brand can switch when provided with a strong incentive at the point-of-sale. Conversely, in a category such as confectionery, brand loyalty is likely to play a bigger role."

Susan Fournier in her study "Consumer and their brands: developing relationship theory in consumer research" speaks of a need for cultivating 'brand relationships'. The factors contributing to a strong brand relationship, according to Fournier, are: Love and passion, self-connection, Interdependence, Commitment, Intimacy, and Brand Partner Quality.

Love and passion, according to Fournier, are at the core of all strong brand relationships. She states that the 'affect' supporting brand relationship endurance and depth is much greater than that implied in simple notions of brand preference. She found that strongly-held brands were characterised as irreplaceable and unique to the extent that 'separation anxiety' was anticipated on withdrawal among her subjects. Self-connection, an important facet of brand relationship quality, reflects the degree to which the brands deliver on important 'identity' concerns, tasks or themes, thereby expressing a significant aspect of the 'self'.

Strong brand relationships were also distinguished by a high degree of 'Interdependence' between the consumer and his brand. It involved frequent brand interactions and an increased scope and diversity of brand-related activities.

Finally, Intimacy is the factor which comprised elaborate knowledge structures that develop

around strongly held brands. Thus richer layers of meaning reflected deeper levels of intimacy, and more durable relationship bonds. Fournier also studied 30 terminated brand relationships and developed two models of 'relationship deterioration'. In the 'Entropy Model' the relationship falls apart unless actively maintained. In the stress model, relationships are forcefully destroyed by the intrusion of personal, dyadic, or environmental stress factors.

Brand loyalty in its real sense comes close to 'brand equity' and far from spurious loyalty. A true marketing approach towards building brand loyalty may thus take Susan Fournier's study into consideration.

In the Indian context, as the organised retail industry continues to consolidate and promises to boom, it would potentially play a critical role in driving brand loyalties. "There are really two kinds of bargain hunters: those who look for discounts within a specific brand, and then those who are purely driven by bargains and hop between brands," says Vikram Thaploo, VP of Big Apple.

The key in creating effective brand loyalty programs is to discover the most persuasive loyalty drivers for each customer. Loyalty drivers generally fall into two categories: product attributes (e.g. performance, quality and reliability) or price/ promotion sensitivity. On being asked about the possibility of a bargain-hunting customer ever becoming loyal to a brand, Morris replies, "As retailers gain scale and momentum, and implement a low-price strategy consistently, consumers will tend to constantly get good value (and bargains) in the store for the brands they are 'normally' loyal to. So, over time a brand will encourage the shopper to stick with a particular retailer and a bargain-hunting consumer can be loyal to the retailer brand and FMCG brand as well!"

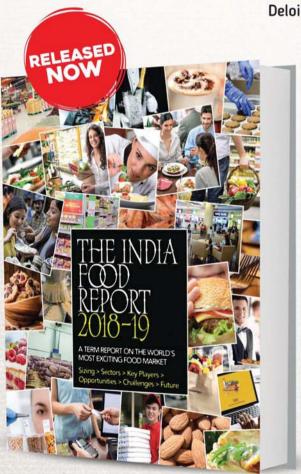
Given that the cost of acquiring new customers is approximately four times as expensive as the cost of retaining and preserving the ones we have already, developing brand loyalty becomes an obvious phenomenon. But what is more essential is the sustenance of brand loyalty. In a market scenario where consumers are bombarded with 'choice', there is an increasing need for the retailers to remain on their toes of constant innovation in terms of the products and services they offer. Or as Mala Morris concludes, "The secret of success for the international retailers is in recognising that different shoppers see value in different ways, and that they can capitalise by offering a great range of shoppers what they want."

THE INDIA FOOD REPORT 2018-19

Sizing > Sectors > Key Players > Opportunities > Challenges > Future

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Focus on consumers at this difficult time

Promotions need be aligned with the unique consumer expectations in these cautious

The current economic slowdown seems to be building panic across businesses, and no less in retail. Like businesses in all other sectors retailers also seem to be looking at controlling operational costs as the top priority. Recruitments are frozen; organisational structure and business strategy is being reviewed and viability of low-performing stores is being scrutinised very closely.

In fact, many chains have already announced that they will be closing some of their stores. It is the retailers' fear of drastic reduction in sales numbers that is leading to this panic.



If retailers are able to develop a clear visibility of what exactly consumers expect from their brand, it will help them to design and implement effective customer-service programs for the store staff.

However, no one is sure whether the September, October and November sales figures are at all indicating a slow down and whether the cash registers have been affected – yet.

The industry target of achieving over US\$ 50 billion revenue from modern retail by 2011 still seems to be realistic which means modern retail is here to grow. However, a change in consumer buying behavior is expected to emerge very soon, and every consumer will be much smarter with their wallet and look for higher value for money spent. Consumer traffic in modern retail is irreversible and consumers will continue to explore destinations to extract the best value for their shopping spend.

Large players which have invested in their core infrastructure including supply chain network will be looking at revised growth strategies. This should be seen as a phase in which some exciting opportunities have emerged for retailers. Since the panic has been triggered by an anticipated drop in

consumer spend, this can be a great opportunity to take another look at the business strategy with the consumer firmly at the centre this time.

Retailers must now begin to start giving importance to in-store service as the first step in this direction. If retailers are able to develop a clear visibility of what exactly consumers expect from their brand, it will help them to design and implement effective customer-service programs for the store staff. They will also be able to put in place an effective system to deliver consistent and measurable service.

Consumers are likely to choose shopping destinations with pleasant memories and avoid those where they have had not very good experiences. The financial effect of a poor consumer experience can be very damaging even though it may not be visible in a short span of time. Consumers are typically likely to visit a department store only once in 3 or 4 months and it would take a few months before the bad experiences are reflected in lagging sales. By then it would most likely be irreversible, and would certainly require a great deal of effort and expense to address.

To prevent such consumer erosion, retailers must put a complaint management system in place. This would provide a listening post for issues at the store, city and regional levels. To be truly effective, such a system must promptly route complaints to the appropriate business role and ensure timely response and management accountability.

The next step retailers must take is more critical. They must set up a sensitive measurement system which is alert to unwritten complaints that occur when the promise of a great shopping experience is not met. While a complaint management system picks up only routine failures (such as non-availability, staff service etc.) failures in providing excellent service during each and every consumer transaction creates silent complaints. As these complaints accumulate they can become potentially very damaging for the business.

Having covered in-store service aspects and related practices, retailers will need to now focus on making efforts towards consumer-oriented merchandise-planning, merchandise allocation and pricing and promotions practices. During this time when every consumer is actually counting the basket

value while shopping, we expect that consumers would not indulge much in impulse buying, and most of the money they spend in a store will be as per their planned shopping lists. This can be a great opportunity to enhance basket value by delivering a great consumer shopping experience. Using historic shopping data of different consumer groups and profiles, retailers can drive accurate merchandise planning and allocation models to ensure that merchandise available in the store will lead to a near match of the planned shopping list each consumer carries. This will not only enhance the consumer shopping experience but also help to make inventory and supply-chain cycles more efficient.

This deeper insight into consumer needs will also help retailers design targeted pricing and promotions for each group and profile of consumers. Today,

consumers are used to shopping as per general pricing, or on promotions intended for all consumers visiting the store. Many of these promotions are not popular since they do not meet consumer expectations nor align with shopping lists.

Once the promotions are designed based on consumer needs they will not just be more effective but also enhance trust between the consumer and the retailer.

Finally, this deeper understanding of consumer buying habits will also build sufficient knowledge at the retailer end to develop a consumer-specific private label for each category, and this can help retailers to broaden their private-label portfolio. This will not only lead to meeting consumer demands competitively but also create new opportunities for increased profitability.

Retailers vs Brands

Don't expect branded suppliers to roll over and play dead as retailers grow.

The relationship between brands and large retailers is truly one of the "love-hate" kind. There is no doubt that brands love the scale that large retailers provide them, with the quick access to a large footprint in the market, and the high visibility. On the other hand, as a vendor, they hate the negotiating edge that this scale gives the large retailer. Brands generally rule fragmented retail environments such as India. Large retailers squeeze out more margins in the form of bulk discounts, placement fees and the like. There's more: special promotions, differential merchandising and delivery needs... the list of demands seems endless.

On the other side, retailers love brands for the footfall they bring. The brand typically creates a "need to buy" on the consumer's part, and invests in creating a distinctive proposition, which is valuable in a cluttered market. In many cases the brand would have also advertised where it is available. This is all good stuff for the retailer, who then essentially has to make sure that the brand is available and visible in-store to the customer to convert the walk-ins into sales. However, what retailers don't like is the fact that brands will generally charge a premium of 10-50% over a comparable generic product. In some cases the premium may be so high that the brand product's price itself is a multiple of a generic product's price.

The retailer-brand partnership is a very powerful one, even from early days. Many consumer brands



and branded companies have scaled up significantly with the growth of their retail customers. The US market due to its sheer size and its evolution offers numerous examples including companies such as Levi Strauss, Hanes, Fruit of the Loom and Proctor & Gamble that grew on the back of discounters such as Wal-Mart and K-Mart as well as retailers such as JC Penney, Macy's and Sears.

An established brand provides the new retailer credibility, even as the retailer provides the brand new shelf-space. Or the other way around: even a new brand provides value to an established retailer by identifying the market need, developing the product, managing sourcing and production, and establishing the consumer's interest in the product, while it is the established retailer who provides the much-needed credibility and presence to the new brand.

What retailers don't like is the fact that brands will generally charge a premium of 10-50% over a comparable generic product. In some cases the premium may be so high that the brand product's price itself is a multiple of a generic product's price.

There is place for the branded suppliers in the market, and for them even to lead the market. **Even as retailers** grow, branded suppliers won't lie down or die quietly. Many of them are also actively engaging with smaller retailers, to help them improve their business processes and competitiveness.



For most, this remained a happy relationship for a long time even as the retail environment grew and evolved. Retailers focussed on creating shelf-space and managing it, while the brands focussed on creating products and desirability.

However, at various times economic shocks and the rise of low-cost imports raised questions in retailers' minds about the value added by the brand compared to the margin they supposedly made on the higher prices. At the same time, better communication and travel infrastructure as well as falling costs made it easier for retailers to consider approaching factories directly.

Enter private label, the "other" in the love-hate triangle.

Over the last couple of decades, department stores, hypermarkets, grocery stores and even discounters have worked seriously on private label development. The opening premise was that you could entice the customer with a lower price (sharing some of the margin earned by direct sourcing), and as long as you gave a comparable product the consumer was happy. Many Indian retailers followed a similar route when they began exploring private label routes.

The strategy has had a varied degree of success, much of it to do with how the private label has been handled (indifferently, in most cases). Recognising this flaw, many retailers around the world have attempted to improve their handling of their private label product development and also presenting it also in a manner (including advertising) similar to a national or an international brand. Some of these retailers' own labels are now serious brands in their own right even though they are restricted to only one retail chain.

The difference between a "label" and a "brand" is the inherent promise that a brand has built into the name, the repeated experience that the customer has had with the brand that reinforces this promise, and the relationship that develops between the consumer and the brand. All of this requires structuring, nurturing and careful management, and it costs time, effort and money.

However, brands get into trouble if income and spending perceptions turn downwards, and comparable products are available. The 10-plus per cent premium between branded and generic begins to look like an important saving to the customer. Or, conversely, due to the growing market more suppliers for the same product appear that the retailer can use as a foil to the branded market leader. With falling import barriers, more diverse contract manufacturing becomes available for sourcing private label merchandise. The scenario becomes

particularly grim if the relationship between the brand and the consumer is not old enough to have become lasting – in this case, replacement of the brand with an alternative or a retailer's own label is truly feasible.

The growth of the market over the last few years has attracted several companies with alternative products and brands. In many cases, the brands that most want to be on the modern retailer's shelves are new to the market, and don't yet have a strong imprint on the consumer's mind.

However, at the same time, retailers themselves are still developing the systems and disciplines to manage their relatively new businesses. They are more than fully occupied with rising real estate costs, and managing the front end. If a brand can handle the product and supply side for a reasonable margin, they are more than happy to ride with the brand.



There is place for the branded suppliers in the market, and for them even to lead the market. Even as retailers grow, branded suppliers won't lie down or die quietly. Many of them are also actively engaging with smaller retailers, to help them improve their business processes and competitiveness. On the other hand, they are also reconciled to the inevitable growth of modern retailers, and are developing "key account management" functions, parallel distribution processes etc. to cater to the large retailers differently from the rest of the market.

So, will brands survive, or will it be the retailer – with the muscle of the storefront – who will relegate them to a small portion of the market?

As long as the competitive pressures and economic cycles remain, the relationship between retailers and their branded suppliers will inherently be a tug-of-war for margin.

In either case, whether individual brands or retailers win or lose in the short term, the consumer will hopefully be a beneficiary in terms of better product, more variety and some sanity in terms of prices. **PG**

BRANDI

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Instituting Quality in Affordable Products

Originated in Khapuria, Cuttack, in 1976 with an initial investment of only Rs. 5000, Om Oil & Flour Mills Ltd. has traversed a steep road to success and is now a staple name in every Indian household. Operating under the brand name Ruchi, the company currently employs over 1200 people and has around 300 products across various segments. Progressive Grocer observed the dynamics that elevated the once-modest organization to the highest rung on the ladder of F&B business.

By Nimisha Gautam





The company is now one of the leading manufacturers and exporters of quality spices, vermicelli, pasta, noodles, frozen produce, readyto-eat beverages and non-CSD products in the country.

— Rashmi Sahoo Director, Om Oil & Flour Mills Ltd

m Oil & Flour Mills Ltd. (Ruchi Udyog) was birthed in Cuttack and conceptualized in the year 1976 despite the industrially backward landscape of the F&B industry around that time. After 41 successful years of commanding a profitable business, the company is now one of the leading manufacturers and exporters of quality spices, vermicelli, pasta, noodles, frozen produce, ready-to-eat beverages and Non-CSD products in the country. Having established itself in every kitchen, the brand's working principle is ensuring no compromise is made on the quality of a product. This has lead to the firm enjoying a vast and loyal consumer base over the years and has also rendered it synonymous with tradition, rectitude and authenticity.

Although the Ruchi brand saw a humble start in terms of distribution figures with an even humbler initial investment, Founder Sarat Kumar Sahoo has entrenched the brand as a major competitor in the F&B market both in and outside the country. While servicing a wide network spread across almost all states in India, the company also ships sizable exports to foreign shores in the USA, Oman, Dubai, Tanzania, Nepal, Bangladesh, Kuwait and

Singapore. With efficacious and ethical business practices firmly in place, Ruchi continues to strengthen its presence across various geographies in a number of food segments.

Mr. Sahoo believes that indolence is a living man's crematorium and continues to put in 16 hours of work every day. His business goals are born out of philanthropic ideology and center around not only producing food items to fill a consumer's stomach but also providing functional benefits via Ruchi products which prevent and help cure ailments such as cancer, and stomach and skin diseases. The company is now being steered by the founder's skilled son and daughter, Arbind and Rashmi Sahoo. Under their directorship, new vigor has been infused into all business functions and the firm is on a course to scale greater heights. The inclusion of two brilliant, young minds has caused the R&D department to deliver exceptional innovations in packaging, food processing technology and marketing schemes.

The brand manufactures Italian pasta using twin technologies from South Korea and Italy, and also markets frozen ready-to-eat items under a cold chain project. The quality of finished products is ensured by adapting a packaging technology using five-layered vacuum packs. The company is also the sole holder of the Spice House certificate issued by Spices Board in eastern India and is accredited with Agmark and an ISO 22000:2005 certification. With a strong focus on hygiene, health, innovative packaging and affordable prices, the organization's growth can be attributed to hard working employees, integrity of management and the consistency in quality of all Ruchi products. The firm now aims to build an organic spices cultivation program in Orissa to meet emerging market demands. PG





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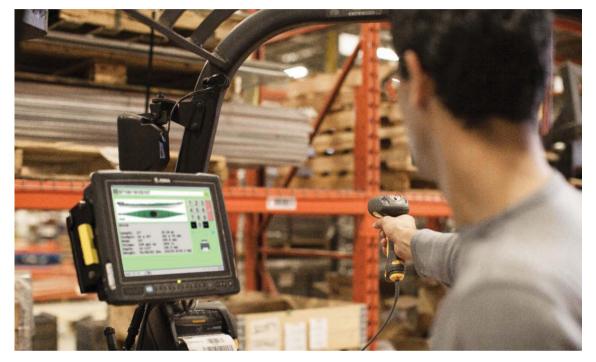
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A Warehouse Space Odyssey

New technology is bringing a sci-fi spin to the back end of the retail supply chain.

By Jenny McTaggart



FAR OUT

New imager-based scanning devices can read barcodes from up to 70 feet away.

> f someone made a science fiction film about grocery warehousing, the scene might look something like this: drones flying through the air counting inventory, automated guided vehicles taking contents off trailers and putting them away, and lit-up tunnels equipped with RFID sensors, taking pristine records of every perishable product that travels through their dark confines.

This scenario might actually happen in the nottoo-distant future, according to some of the grocery industry's warehousing technology pros. As well as exciting new technology applications on the market, they cite the promising integration of systems and technologies already being combined to tackle two of the industry's most pressing needs: accuracy and speed.

Today's own "warehouse space odyssey" features voice technology, wearable technology, imager-based scanners, and warehousing systems that tie into transportation and labor management systems, as well as retailers' ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems, to offer the ultimate in visibility and planning.

"Accuracy and speed don't necessarily go together," notes Tod Hummert, product manager, warehouse and transportation systems for Duluth, Ga.-based NCR Corp. "We typically have to put more validation within our applications, but we try to do it in a way that doesn't slow down the users from a productivity standpoint. One of the ways we do that is by using different technologies at the same

One of NCR's recent developments in this arena is a clever integration with pallet jacks, which is currently being used by Associated Grocers, of Baton Rouge, La., and Merchants Distributors (MDI), a wholesale grocery store distributor based in Hickory, N.C.

"We worked with a forklift and pallet jack manufacturer to integrate voice in with the pallet jack," explains Hummert. "The manufacturer then added light to the pallet jack for each pallet position. Through voice, we're sending a command to the pallet jack to light up the pallet position where the selector's going to place the product. So, as we tell a selector to go to a location, then confirm the location, we tell them how many to pick, and then

we tell them to place it on position A. Then we send a command to the pallet jack to light up position A. This is just another way we can help companies to achieve even better accuracy."

In addition to this futuristic-sounding technology combination, NCR is offering automation technology through formation systems, as well as automated storage retrieval systems (ASRS), continues Hummert. "One of our larger customers that's using the ASRS is Associated Food Stores, out of Salt Lake City," he notes. "They actually have two different versions in place ... a pallet-level ASRS, as well as a unit-level or case-level system. They have a large sortation system that feeds off that as well.

"Any time you can utilize automation, your productivity is going to go up, your accuracy is going to go up and your utilization within the warehouse is going to go up," adds Hummert.

By integrating different applications within its warehouse management systems, NCR can help companies increase their productivity, he continues.

TOP 5 TECHNOLOGY **EXPANSION PLANS**



Zebra Technology's latest Warehouse Vision Survey reveals transformational changes in North America for asset visibility, warehouse productivity and supply chain integration in various industries, including grocery. According to the survey, the No.

1 technology in which executives plan to increase their investment is barcode scanning.

"There's so much that could be and should be done with the barcode in a lot of operations," notes Mark Wheeler, director of supply chain solutions - North America for Holtsville, N.Y.based Zebra Technologies. "Good, disciplined supply chain management, enforcing the use of the GS1 standards ... blocking and tackling with barcodes is a huge opportunity for a lot of people."

The top tech priorities identified by the survey are as follows:

Equipping Staff With Technology	76%
Barcode Scanning	67
Tablet Computers	66
Big Data/Analytics	61
Warehouse/Truck-loading Automation	56
Internet of Things (IoT)	52

"With warehouse management systems, obviously we manage the inventory," observes Hummert. "We also manage the labor, as we have an embedded labor management system within the WMS [warehouse management system] that very tightly impacts the operation. And we take advantage of the fact that it is integrated to make better decisions so that we get increased productivity. We also manage the space within the warehouse, as well as the labor itself."

In fact, Hummert says that he's seeing a lot of focus on having tighter integration with transportation on both the inbound and outbound sides of the business. "On the inbound side, it's making sure the product is coming in when you need it and having visibility to what's coming in,"



he notes. "On the outbound side, it's ensuring that trailers are in the doors before you need to load them and making sure you're optimizing those outbound loads not only from a cube and weight standpoint, but also from a delivery standpoint — making sure you have the right routes configured so you can reduce your overall mileage and increase the productivity of the drivers themselves."

Built for Speed

Integration is a key business goal for many thirdparty logistics providers as well. Reading, Pa.-based Penske Logistics sees warehousing as just one part of the supply chain that must be closely linked to other facets. "In most instances, we have integration between our customers' ERP systems and either our transportation management or warehouse management systems," notes Andy Moses, Penske's SVP of global products. "So information is coming in to us, we're doing various types of processing



VOICE OF REASON

NCR Corp. is combining voice with other technologies to improve load accuracy.



LABOR GAINS By syncing WMS with labor management systems, companies are able to see more visible metrics around productivity.



and transactions, and then we're normally feeding back some information into the customers' systems through these integrations."

Moses observes that the fresh channel has "exploded" across the food industry, and that has brought a lot of change in the way business is done on the back end. "We're seeing more frequent deliveries of fresh goods, and often front-door deliveries in the store, versus loading docks around the back of the store," he explains. "We see this as a kind of segmentation within the supply chain, as some grocers are taking smaller, fresh items and moving them out of their mainstream supply chain."

These changes have ramped up the need for speed in the supply chain, including the frequent replenishment of fresh goods.

Don Klug, VP of distribution center management for Penske Logistics, says that technology is playing a key role in how retailers are adapting to these changes on the back end of the supply chain. "One example is having slotting as a functionality within a warehouse management system," he notes. "So you slot your fast movers, or items that need to get out of the building as fast as possible, closer to the dock. Then, when you receive those products, you can put them away more efficiently, and the same goes for when you pick them."

Other newer, promising technology he mentions includes a "speedline concept," in which orders can be picked in smaller quantities for a particular store or for a particular truck route, as well as task interleaving, which is a function within the WMS that allows the user to send tasks via an RF-based system, which ultimately keeps forklifts full.

Both of these concepts help to increase productivity, as well as speed to market and even labor reduction, notes Klug. And in an economy where warehouse workers have been hard to come by, technology's power to take over menial tasks requiring accuracy has been particularly powerful.

The Mobile Edge

In addition to the impressive features being added to warehouse management systems, the hardware side of technology is seeing some exciting changes. Mark Wheeler, director of supply chain solutions - North America at Holtsville, N.Y.-based Zebra Technologies, says that "systems of reality," or industrial IoT solutions such as sensors and analytics, are helping to drive operational visibility at different processes, including yard management for trailer loading.

"As we're seeing more frequent replenishment for stores and more cold-chain requirements, it filters down to the solutions side, where we're working with customers to design new workflows and to implement them in the optimum way," he notes. "There's a major transition at the operating system level from Windows CE to Windows Mobile to Android. And there's a user interface transition that's linked to that, in which we're moving to more touch-oriented user interfaces."

In the warehouses, he sees a transition from laserbased to imager-based scanner devices, largely driven by the industry's enhanced focus on food safety, and food traceability in particular, which warrants the need for tracking two-dimensional barcodes and multiple barcodes at case level and even at each level.

Meanwhile, more people are relying on wearable scanning to confirm that they're not only handling the right product, but also handling the lot number that they allocated to fulfill from, he says.

For cold-chain requirements in particular, more suppliers are integrating temperature sensors into "smart tags" so that they can track not only the temperature of products, but also the temperatures that the product was exposed to throughout its shipment, continues Wheeler.

This past April, Zebra Technologies rolled out Smart Pack Trailer, an analytics-based solution that provides visibility into how trailers are loaded, what percent capacity is being used, what percent complete the load is and how to project the completion time on a particular trailer. All of this information is immediately available to the mobile manager in the warehouse, he notes.

"These products are always on ... always looking at processes and keeping decision-makers in sync with reality," observes Wheeler.

"Reality" is the ideal word, since the need for real-time accuracy and productivity makes grocery distribution tech anything but science fiction. PG





As we're seeing more frequent replenishment for stores and more cold-chain requirements, it filters down to the solutions side, where we're working with customers to design new workflows and to implement them in the optimum way.

> Mark Wheeler Zebra Technologies



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How are we going to feed Asia?

Cargill, along with FICCI and The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), launched Fixing Asia's Food Systems, a five-part research program that explores a range of issues and is centred around a survey of 400 business leaders in the region. The first report, "Separate Tables: Bringing together Asia's food systems", is a deep dive into six key megatrends: urbanization, the double burden of undernutrition and obesity, technology constraints, the need for transparency and sustainability, and the politics surrounding food.

By Nimisha Gautam



The central government plans to invite proposals from private players to set up a non-banking financial company (NBFC), which will exclusively cater to the credit and lending needs of the food processing sector. The NBFC will be set up with an initial corpus of Rs. 2,000 crore.

- Harsimrat Kaur Radal Hon'ble Union Minister for Food Processing Industries, Government of India

he report was unveiled by Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Hon'ble Union Minister for Food Processing Industries, GoI, and highlighted the need for regional co-operation to make food supply chains smarter, better integrated and more efficient. The launch of the report set a pivotal discussion in motion, encompassing industry captains and policymakers and revealed the central government's agenda for encouraging investment in the food processing sector.

The food system today is facing the pressure of producing about 70% more food to feed a population that will cross 10 billion people by 2050. We need to do this with diminishing resources. Producing more





with less and ensuring the highest safety standards are key challenges facing the food and agriculture industries to feed Asia. Tracking the megatrends driving the divides in Asian food systems and finding creative solutions to the challenges faced in improving food-security in the continent is a Herculean task.

That's because Asia encompasses a complex mix of countries, divided by borders, policies, cultures, uneven development and other socioeconomic differences. However, as existing food systems evolve and Asia urbanizes to grow ever more populous, discussions around diet, food supply and food security often focus on Asia as a whole. The continent will be home to nearly half the world's population by 2030, with China, Indonesia and India accounting for three-quarters of Asia's new urban dwellers. This will have significant effects on food production and demand, as urban consumers have more diverse diets and typically consume more convenience food.

Diets will become more energy-dense and will move away from consumption of carbohydrates to include protein and sugar rich foods as income growth and access to higher-value categories of food increases. This increased dietary diversity will cause divergence between demand and domestic supply, increasing regional competition for food imports. Trade liberalization is likely to accelerate the convergence of health outcomes in Asia as nutritional concerns pivot towards undernutrition and obesity. The continent is likely to have significant levels of undernutrition in 2030, and this will continue to be driven primarily by South Asia, where 35.8% of children under the age of five saw

stunted growth in 2010-16. Current estimates of overweight/obesity exceed global averages in many East Asian countries like Indonesia where 12% children are overweight.

To tackle these problem areas, there is an observable interest in greater traceability and sustainability in food systems. Social media and globalization have rendered the modern consumer more aware of what goes into making a processed food item in the market. This has exacerbated the need for transparency and clean label brands in various food segments. Aiding farm productivity, research and development in food production in Asia will remain a key driver of agricultural development. However, the demand and ability to implement innovative food production techniques will vary across and within countries, depending on their level of economic and industrial development.

By 2030, Asia is projected to need 65% more water for industrial use, 30% more water for domestic use and 5% more water for agricultural use. Water scarcity will become a key issue as national interests diverge, with the advantage resting with upper riparian countries. The headwaters of six of Asia's major rivers are located in Tibet, giving China significant control over water flow to lower riparian countries. With no formal trans-boundary watersharing agreements in Asia between China and downstream countries, divergent political interests will continue to drive water nationalism.

The challenge for policymakers and companies will be to identify specific hurdles and opportunities in each market, areas of risk and evaluate existing policies based on projected challenges to the food system. As a food system covers end-toend activities, from production to consumption, retailers fulfill a vital role in the value chain. The market penetration of certain products is controlled by allocation of shelf space at retail outlets and omnichannel approaches adopted by retailers to reach out to prospective buyers. "We see a need to upgrade inventory management systems to prevent spoilage and wastage of goods. To address the problem at its roots, the industry will benefit from partnering with farmers in respective supply chains and instructing them on the kind of demand present in the market. Farmers must know what crop to plant and in what quantity to avoid overplanting and unharvested produce. We also need to challenge standard store practices and manage perishables better. This can be done by adopting a more efficient way of determining the best before and expiry dates of certain goods.", said Krish Iyer, CEO and President at Walmart India.



The report released by EIU also recognized the fact that food security can be more broadly defined to include resilience, diversity and affordability, rather than just self-sufficiency. The rise in demand for food in Asia has made it difficult for most countries to remain self-sufficient, particularly China. The solution includes setting up regional committees to aid greater collaboration and collection of more significant data. Governments could focus on building robust databases that would help them to better design and execute policies using the development of metrics assessing specific population groups' characteristics, nutritional quality, crop productivity by region, food wastage and even vulnerability to climate change.

"Current estimates show that we process only 10% of the food we produce and most of our food is wasted during harvesting, transportation and storage. Stakeholders need to come together and commit to zero tolerance of food wastage and provide all players in the food system the technology they need to make possible a food system that allows no wastage,"said Food Processing Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal. During an interaction with mediapersons at the sidelines of the report launch, the Minister also revealed that the central government plans to invite proposals from private players to set up a non-banking financial company (NBFC), which will exclusively cater to the credit and lending needs of the food processing sector. The NBFC will be set up with an initial corpus of Rs. 2,000 crore "Many international funds have shown interest. We will be able to put together a consortium of investors for this NBFC. While the government will hold a minority stake in the company, the majority stake will be held by private players," she said. This venture will function as a partnership between the Indian government and the industry to collectively address fixing Asia's food systems in a holistic manner. PG



- Krish lyer CEO and President, Walmart India





'Incentive' Begins With 'I'

Personalization, respecting data are key to driving loyalty program memberships.

By Randy Hofbauer

oyalty programs have long been a major strategy in drawing consumers to one retailer rather than another. However, while growth of loyalty program membership has continued - reaching 3.8 billion — this year's edition of Colloquy's Loyalty Census shows that it has dropped 11 points, to 15 percent, since the 2015 edition. Grocery program memberships have contributed to this, dropping to 142 million, from 88 million in 2015.

While the findings, presented by Toronto-based loyalty program and analytics firm LoyaltyOne, show that the 24 percent decrease in grocery program memberships is due, in part, to many mergers and acquisitions in the sector, it also reveals a need for grocers to continue to offer enticing reasons for consumers to become members.

For grocers in 2017, personalized incentives digital offers and deals, relevant digital ads — are a powerful way to appeal to shoppers, drive sales and build loyalty, says Mir Aamir, president and CEO of Mountain View, Calif.-based digital promotions provider Quotient.

"The reason is simple: Shoppers love digital offers and deals, either in the form of discounts on products they buy, or in terms of rewards like points, if a retailer has such a program," Aamir notes. "The

key is to make all such incentives relevant and easy to use. If a deal or offer is personalized, shoppers love it. In fact, shoppers have come to expect personalization."

Personalization Tips

Grocers have a number of ways to personalize programs, and different demographics have different ways that they want to enjoy incentives. Some of the ways grocers could better personalize loyalty program incentives to customers include:

Creating ease of participation: It should be easy to take part and simple to redeem, says Therese McEndree, VP of marketing with Hawk Incentives, a subsidiary of Pleasanton, Calif.-based Blackhawk Network Holdings. Also, the benefits must be clearly and consistently communicated. One grocer that does this is Food City, a subsidiary of Abingdon, Va.-based K-VA-T Food Stores that rewards shoppers based on the amount they spend at its stores, according to David Bishop, partner with Barrington, Ill.-based retail consultancy Brick Meets Click. Customers at the grocer earn a 5 percent-off reward that they can use on future purchases after spending \$300 at the retailer. Bishop notes that the program is personalized to shoppers by way of spending patterns affecting how quickly the reward is earned.

Linking loyalty cards to online shopping: Strong value comes from enhancing both the in-store and online shopping experiences with proper personalized incentives, David Bishop observes. West Sacramento, Calif.-based Raley's does this by allowing shoppers to build online carts and lists based not only on past online purchases, but also past in-store ones. Doing so has removed friction and enabled a more seamless and continuous experience with the grocer.

Offering variety: Consumers today want to choose their reward and how it's delivered, whether loyalty points, a physical gift card, emailed promotions, rebates, or even a reward transferred to a mobile wallet, McEndree says. While consumer preference varies widely by application, value and demographic, offering the right reward options for each creates added opportunities for positive brand engagement, bounceback and continued engagement.

Providing rapid rewards: According to research from Hawk Incentives, respondents ideally want their reward delivered in less than a week.



If a deal or offer is personalized, shoppers love it. In fact, shoppers have come to expect personalization.

> — Mir Aamir Quotient

Innovations in technology now offer near-instant rewards, allowing shoppers to redeem easily, sometimes with as little as a few swipes on a mobile device, McEndree stresses.

A Problem of Trust

The problem remains, though, that many consumers today desire privacy and are tempted to withhold their data. Bill Bishop, chief architect at Brick Meets Click, notes that while his firm doesn't have an estimate of the percentage of shoppers with that concern, some things they'll do include providing the retailer with incomplete or erroneous contact information to make connecting everything difficult.

"Withholding information that can help target offers more effectively does make the retailer's job more challenging and complex," David Bishop adds. "Mining past purchases could reveal some of these attributes; however, this isn't fail-safe, as households are buying groceries across multiple retailers."

Bill Bishop notes that most retailers have pledged not to share information they collect with others, and that up until this point, many customers have been satisfied with that. However, with data breaches and other calamities causing concern in recent years, customers' reluctance could become more of an issue.



One way that grocers can balance their need for data with their customers' desire to keep data to themselves is to apply similar approaches used by digital marketers. For example, David Bishop points to ads served on the internet, driven by sophisticated, rules-based algorithms, which capture and sort through many attributes based on past search activity.

"This collective information creates thousands of micro-segments that help determine what deals get served up in each individual case," he says. "Using a similar framework, grocers can develop



various segmentation, using past purchases, to create targeting segmentation like households with kids, health nuts, cheese enthusiasts, etc."

Relevance Removes Reluctance

But from her experience, Kate Hogenson, strategic loyalty consultant with St. Petersburg, Fla.-based Kobie Marketing, notes that shoppers are willing to give up their personal data if they get something worthwhile in return, like a discount, coupon, or loyalty points redeemable for free products or discounts.

The lesson is simple: Give first to get something. This is especially the case when the data desired from customers could help them avoid products they don't want. For instance, Cheryl Black, CEO of You Technology, a Brisbane, Calif.-based provider of digital-offer platforms, notes that Phoenix-based Sprouts Farmers Market gathers data on food interests in regard to dietary requirements such as gluten-free, dairy-free and vegan. The retailer rewards customers for sharing this information by presenting them with offers for discounts on products in these areas.

"We see very high penetration of loyalty card usage when the retailer respects the shopper's data and makes their life easier and better," Black says.

Still, no matter how data are used and what incentives are offered, it all must come down to using the information to offer savings, ease and convenience, Black emphasizes. Grocers must be sure that if they promote anything via incentives, that they not do it with things a shopper isn't interested in. Retailers must be transparent about any promotions and turn them into savings, ease and convenience for the shopper.

"It is much better to keep a loyal customer returning each week than to have them add one more item to a basket on a given week and stop shopping your stores as frequently," she says. "Shoppers will respect a 'fair exchange' and will give a little data to make their life better. But they must never feel taken advantage of." PG



We see very high penetration of loyalty card usage when the retailer respects the shopper's data and makes their life easier and better.

— Cheryl Black You Technology

Food, Beverage & Non-food Products

▼ Bagrry's launches chocolate cereal

Bagrry's, a leading brand of breakfast cereals and health foods in India, has launched Choco+, a delicious, innovative and all natural chocolate cereal for kids. The ready-to-eat cereal comprises the goodness of three great grains (whole wheat, oats and rice) with 0% maida,

making it a perfect wholegrain first meal



of the day. It is made of natural ingredients and does not contain any harmful elements such as BHA (INS320) or artificial flavors and colors. With 20% less sugar than other leading chocolate cereals in India, the product is also packed with natural antioxidants. Available in two pack sizes of 375 gm (Rs. 165) and 1.2 kg (Rs. 425), the product was launched across India.

▼ Mahou India launches premium wheat beer

Mahou India, a subsidiary of Spanish brewing major Mahou Group, has launched its premium wheat beer -Mahou Maestra Wheat in Delhi NCR. This is the first Spanish wheat beer to be made in India and is brewed at



Bhiwadi, Rajasthan. The product is a Belgian style wheat beer that comes with a golden color and thick, creamy foam. Its principal attribute is a fruity aroma and a slight hint of hops that creates a well-balanced flavor profile. Also containing tangy hints of Sevillian orange peel and herbal coriander, the signature drink goes well with a variety of Spanish and Indian dishes. The product is available in 330 ml bottles (pints) as well as in 500 ml cans and will soon be launched in other states as well.

Kwality unveils corn and choco flakes

MEGA SAVER PACE

Kwality, from the house of Pagariya Food Products Pvt. Ltd., has introduced two new products - corn flakes and choco flakes in a mega-saver pack format. Sold in attractive packaging, the products come in convenient zip lock pouches. The corn flakes are 99% fat-free and rich in iron and protein, with 800 gm of the product selling for Rs. 270. Combining the richness of chocolate and the healthful nature of whole grain, the choco flakes are sold at Rs. 400 for 1,000 gm of the product.



▲ Cornitos introduces Dip O' Treat and Nacho Fiesta gift packs

Cornitos has introduced Dip O' Treat and Nacho Fiesta collective packs to provide gifting solutions for festival shoppers this season. The Dip O' Treat gift pack contains nine packs of 30 gm nacho crisps in new, vibrant packaging along with a salsa and cheesy jalepeno dip in 40 gm blister cups to accompany the crisps. The variant flavors offered within the pack are cheesy sour cream and onion, peri peri, sizzlin jalepeno, cheese and herbs, tomato mexicana, tikka masala, lime and mint, spicy sweet chili, and barbeque. The entire collection retails for Rs. 240. The Nachos Fiesta gift pack includes a salsa four-in-one tray, two 150 gm and two 60 gm nacho crisps packs, each in different flavors. This pack retails for Rs. 350. Both gift packs are available at major retail outlets across India.

KronoKare releases hair and body oil kits

Leading cosmetic brand KronoKare released a new range of products as part of their hair and body oil kits. Affordably priced, these products are inspired by natural beauty remedies and form a protective screen over the face or hair to prevent toxic pollutant particles from penetrating and damaging skin pores as well as hair follicles. The hair oil range consists of variants pertaining to anti-dandruff, color repair, and growth boosting formulas whereas the body oil kit contains products such as anti-blemish, city detox and age-repair. All products are 100% natural, silicone-parabensulphate-free and are sold in 30 ml containers.



Makhanawala's forays into healthy snacking segment

Makhanawala's has established itself as a leading manufacturer of raw makhana or fox nuts (lotus seeds) and is now classified as a healthy snacking brand. Aiming to fulfill the nutritional requirements of consumers, the brand also manufactures the product in a number of different flavour combinations. Makhana is low in fat and high in carbohydrates, and this makes it nutritionally distinct from other nuts. These nuts are rich in protein, fiber, magnesium, potassium, phosphorous, iron and zinc. Such nutritional elements give Makhana the status of a

superfood and make it a key ingredient in a number of Indian recipes. Products by Makhanawala's are available at leading retail stores in India.





▲ MunchhOnn extends its namkeen range

After the success of its products at more affordable price points, MunchhOnn's has added seven new varieties to its extensive namkeen range. The variants now made available in the family pack format include flavors such as Bikaneri bhujia, navratan mix, khatta meetha, chatpata mix, moong dal, aloo bhujia, etc. The range comes in packs of 200 gm and has been introduced at a retail price of Rs. 46 with one particular variant called mast bahaar at a retail price of Rs. 58. These namkeens are made with the finest ingredients at hygienic and modern production facilities.

▼ Pee Pee Group launches festive chocolate coins

Pee Pee Group, leading manufacturer of coin chocolates under the Nature n Nature brand, has launched new varieties in their chocolate coin range for the upcoming

festival season. The two new variants feature gold and silver coins made from premium milk chocolate. These product additions are rich in taste and have a luxurious texture pertaining to the lustrous nature of gold and silver metals. Ideal for festive and wedding gifting, the products are suitable for consumption by children and adults alike and are available at all major retail stores in India.



VKC Nuts releases premium saffron

Manufacturer of nuts, dried fruits and allied products, VKC Nuts announced the launch of its saffron product under the brand name Nutraj. Endorsed by Maschef Harpal Singh Sokhi, the product is of premium quality, contains zero moisture, and has a high color and aroma strength. Natural and pure, the Kashmiri saffron threads are packed in an airtight glass bottle. The saffron is available in two pack sizes of 0.5 gm and 1 gm at all major retail stores across the country.

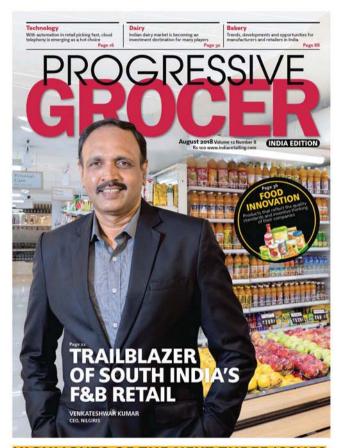


▼ Popman markets pre-popped gourmet popcorn

Popman, a brand operated by Somani Savoury Foods Pvt. Ltd., offers a range of pre-popped gourmet popcorn made using a fully automated popping technology that makes the food item a healthier snacking option. The range consists of flavors such as cheddar cheese, Indian masala, sriracha, sweet & chilli tomato, piri piri, plain salted, desi chinese and tomato burst. Available in the States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Guwahati and Jammu & Kashmir, Popman's products retail at three price points -Rs. 5, Rs. 10 and Rs. 30.



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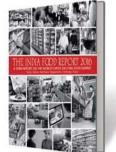
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