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PROGRESSIVE GROCER

February 2019

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INDIA EDITION



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INDIA FOOD FORUM 2019

KEY TAKEAWAYS, PERSPECTIVES, INSIGHTS, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN



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 Editorial Director: **R S Roy**
 Publisher: **S P Taneja**

Editorial

Editor in charge: **Sanjay Kumar**
 Reporter: **Aliya Jamal**

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Priti Kapil, Deputy Manager
 pritikapil@imagesgroup.in

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What can you expect at a gathering that attracts the most eclectic bunch of cognoscenti from the Food Retail industry? As is customary at the annual India Food Forum (organised by IMAGES Group and publisher of Progressive Grocer), the Conclave this year rippled with energy and its usual share of heat and light that the conferences, workshops, exhibitions, live shows and networking sessions radiated. Industry mavens who spoke on different themes and topics at the numerous panel discussions threw up interesting insights on the F&G industry. Discussions also led to information on trends, emerging product categories, understanding consumer behaviour, and on marketing and in-store promotion strategies – all of which, as everyone agreed, require joint efforts of both manufacturers and retailers.

Pages 22 to 52 of this issue of the magazine offers a conspectus of the action at the India Food Forum. For those who were not there, we bring you interesting bytes and loads of information exchanged at the Forum. Turn to pages 42 to 52 to find out the achievers who won the Coca-Cola Golden Spoon Awards powered by Kissan for excellence in grocery retail across multiple categories. My congratulations to the winners and my heartfelt thanks to all the participants at the Forum for making the show a great success.


 Amitabh Taneja
 Editor-in-Chief

All feedback welcome at editorpgindia@imagesgroup.in

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Eat a healthy diet to beat the depression blues

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Adding appropriate edibles to your diet along with an adequate amount of sleep is of prime importance for maintaining good mental health. But you must understand which foods encourage mental health and which ones send an alarm to your limbic system (emotion center), causing irritation. Consuming the right kind of diet will definitely make you feel more emotionally strong and less susceptible to the impact of stress and mood anxieties.

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Snacking Gets Sweeter



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MDH Masala
Owner Mahashay Dharampal Gulati
Conferred With Padma Bhushan





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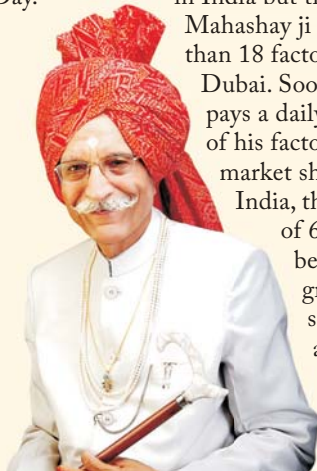


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Market Update

MDH Masala Owner Mahashay Dharampal Gulati Conferred With Padma Bhushan

Mahashay ji Dharampal Gulati, the 95-year-old MDH Group owner was conferred the third highest civilian honour Padma Bhushan on the eve of the 70th Republic Day. Mahashay ji is famous as the face of the INR 2,000 crore MDH Group and is a household name for the ads he has done for his MDH Masala brand. Born in undivided India, Sialkot, now Pakistan, on March 27, 1923, Gulati came to India, along with his family, with a meagre amount of INR 15,000. Before they started a spice shop in Ajmal Khan Road, Karol Bagh



in New Delhi, he even worked as a tangewala (horse carriage puller).

Business grew to new heights, so that, MDH spices are sold not just in India but the whole world. Now Mahashay ji is the owner of more than 18 factories in India and Dubai. Soon to be turning 96, he pays a daily visit to at least one of his factories every day. With a market share of 80% in North India, the company has a total of 62 products. Initially beginning with manually ground spices, MDH soon switched over to automatic machines to meet the fast growing demand for MDH Spices.

In the present day, the group is manufacturing spices worth crores of rupees. The spices come packed by modern machines and are sold across India and the world via a network of more than 1000 stockists and more than 400,000 retail dealers. MDH factories now have the capacity of producing 30 tonnes of spices in powders a day, which are then packed in consumer packs of different sizes (10g to 500g) with the characteristic image of 'Mahashay ji' on each pack. A class V dropout, Mahashay ji is also known as the most profit-making CEO in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, drawing a salary of over INR 25 crore in 2018.

Cornitos celebrates its magnificent 10 years journey

India's leading Nachos brand Cornitos is commemorating its 10 glorious years in the industry. The flagship brand of Greendot Health Foods Pvt Ltd dedicates this milestone solely to its loyal customers and their trust on the brand. As a gesture of appreciation, Cornitos plans to launch special offers on their favorite flavors soon. Vikram Agarwal, MD, Greendot Health Foods, Cornitos, says, "We are extremely delighted and happy to complete 10 glorious years in this industry. When launching Cornitos, the focus was on entering an uncontested space where competitors were yet to step in, thus reducing entry costs and getting better value. Our journey is the result of the love and trust that patrons

have shown us over the years. We will continue with our endeavors to provide best quality snack to our patrons and work more diligently towards the same".

Cornitos started its journey with just five flavors in Nachos Crisps and it is the first Indian snack company to have forayed into the Nacho Crisps category in 2009. In a country where traditional munchies still rule the taste buds, bringing in the quintessential Mexican snack was a leap of faith. Today, Cornitos has over 10 flavors of Nacho Crisps with an expanded brand portfolio that includes Taco Shells, Specialty Sauces, Roasted Nuts and Seeds, and Pickles - Jalapeno Peppers & Gherkins. With the brand's commitment to offer



premium quality and taste to its consumers, Cornitos has been felicitated with Indian and International awards like SIAL China Innovation Awards, CMO Asia Awards and ET Now Global Awards.

What makes Cornitos nachos contradistinct is its unique flavours, healthy ingredients and its Mexican lime - the treatment process of making traditional masa using stone ground non-GMO Corn. Cornitos is 100% corn snack, cooked and baked in corn oil. It is a gluten free snack which has zero cholesterol and zero trans fats.

Currently, the nacho provider is available in 300 Tier I and II cities through a network of over 30,000 plus retailers, and the brand is following a rapid expansion plan in Tier III cities as well. Also, Cornitos products are exported globally to over 25 countries like the USA, Australia, China, Russia, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, the Maldives, Hong Kong, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and South East Asia. Internationally, the brand has been gaining eminence by winning over the palates of customers and is now targeting to win over the UK and parts of West Asia.

Soha Ali Khan launches Pride of Cows in Delhi

In recent years, there has been a rise in the preference for natural and unadulterated products. A healthier life is a reflection of our diet and the quality of milk certainly plays a very important role. Bollywood Actress Soha Ali Khan on behalf of Parag Milk Foods Ltd., one of India's leading private dairy company, launched premium milk 'Pride of Cows' in the national capital for consumers to experience the goodness of cow's milk, which is rich in nutrients and is delivered to their doorsteps.

Priced at INR 120 per litre in Delhi-NCR, Pride of Cows strives to encourage people who believe in the finer things of life and wish to lead a high-end lifestyle by providing milk that defines the edge of purity and high quality. It involves zero human intervention and is unadulterated. The brand maintains its exclusivity by following a subscription



(L-R) Ms. Akshali Shah, Senior VP, Strategy-Sales & Marketing, Parag Milk Foods, Ms Soha Ali Khan with Mr. Devendra Shah, Chairman, Parag Milk Foods at the launch of Pride of Cows in Delhi

based model. With today's hectic schedules, it's important to maintain a healthy lifestyle which can be supplemented with a glass of pure and fresh cow's milk, which is a rich source of calcium, proteins and Vitamin B12. Pride of

Bollywood actress and mother, Soha Ali Khan participated in a panel discussion with renowned nutritionist Kavita Devgan to discuss the importance of consuming milk, which is fresh and pure without any additional water or additives. Speaking at the panel, Soha said, "Since milk is one of the most powerful foods in our diet chart, I believe it's important to be careful about the quality of milk we choose for ourselves. To receive the benefits of milk, it's essential to consume milk, which is fresh and without any adulteration. As a health-conscious person I always prefer Pride of Cows for my family. I am assured this premium quality milk is fresh and full of nutritional goodness".

Kavita Devgan said, As most Indians consume a vegetarian diet, we generally lack good quantity of proteins in our diet, which can be fulfilled through a glass of fresh and pure cow's milk. Also, Casein – the protein derived from cow's milk – is easier to digest by the human body over animal based protein."

Since its launch in 2011, Pride of Cows has been supplying pure cow's milk produced at the company run Bhagyalakshmi Farm in Manchar, near Pune to cities like Mumbai, Pune and Surat for consumers who believe in leading a healthy lifestyle and consuming natural and unadulterated products. In order to meet the demands of connoisseurs of quality milk in Delhi, the company will be airlifting the farm fresh cow's milk from Pune to Delhi every morning and delivering to consumers' doorstep.

The world's leading voices on food safety at AOAC-India conference, 2019 in New Delhi

AOAC-India has announced its 6th annual conference Towards Collaborative Leadership to Ensure Food Safety during February 28 - March 1, 2019 at The Park Hotel, New Delhi. This year's conference convenes over 200 leading specialists, including prominent scientists, and regulators to debate on various challenges with regard to food safety, says the executive committee of AOAC-India. As in the past, this year's conference will comprise keynote lectures, plenary presentations, young scientist talk and poster sessions, a platform for

information exchange and knowledge transfer amongst its participants.

The eminent speakers at the conference will include

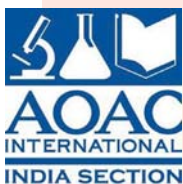
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The lectures are designed on present and emerging broad areas of research, such as food safety and security; food safety laws and regulations; analytical residue method development of pesticides; veterinary drugs and antibiotics; food nutrition and food allergens; botanicals and dietary

supplements and microbiological methods, to name some. Interactive sessions and workshops are also included on request.

An exhibition by global equipment manufacturers and distributors will display novel trends and technologies in the domain of analytical instrumentations. The conference will also host a brief session to announce a book project, to be out in 2020 by AOAC-India, covering a wide range of analytical methodologies in various matrices and would be of interests to academics, industry professionals and students.

By strengthening the cord between governmental bodies and private sectors, this two-day conference will result in new recommendations about how to solve exceedingly complicated food safety problems and make our planet a safer place to live.



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SPAR India to partner Himachal Pradesh in promoting fresh sourcing and manufacturing

As part of "The Global Investors Meet" in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh on 10th-11th June 2019, which will have the CII as key national partner, a road show was organized in Bangalore recently that saw senior leaders from various industries participate in the event. SPAR was one such participant at the show as a representative of the retail industry. At the event, SPAR India's MD & CEO Rajeesh Krishnan and Solai Shakhivel, Senior Vice President - Buying and Merchandising Foods, had the opportunity for a one-on-one interaction with the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Jai Ram Thakur and Industry minister Bikram Singh.

Himachal Pradesh, known as the "Fruit bowl of India", is famous for its manufacturing and SME development. With its ideal weather conditions, there are different varieties of fruits and vegetables grown in Himachal Pradesh. The state is famed for its abundance of crisp, juicy apples as well as for its pears, peaches, plums, grapes, apricots, mangoes, strawberries and citrus fruits.

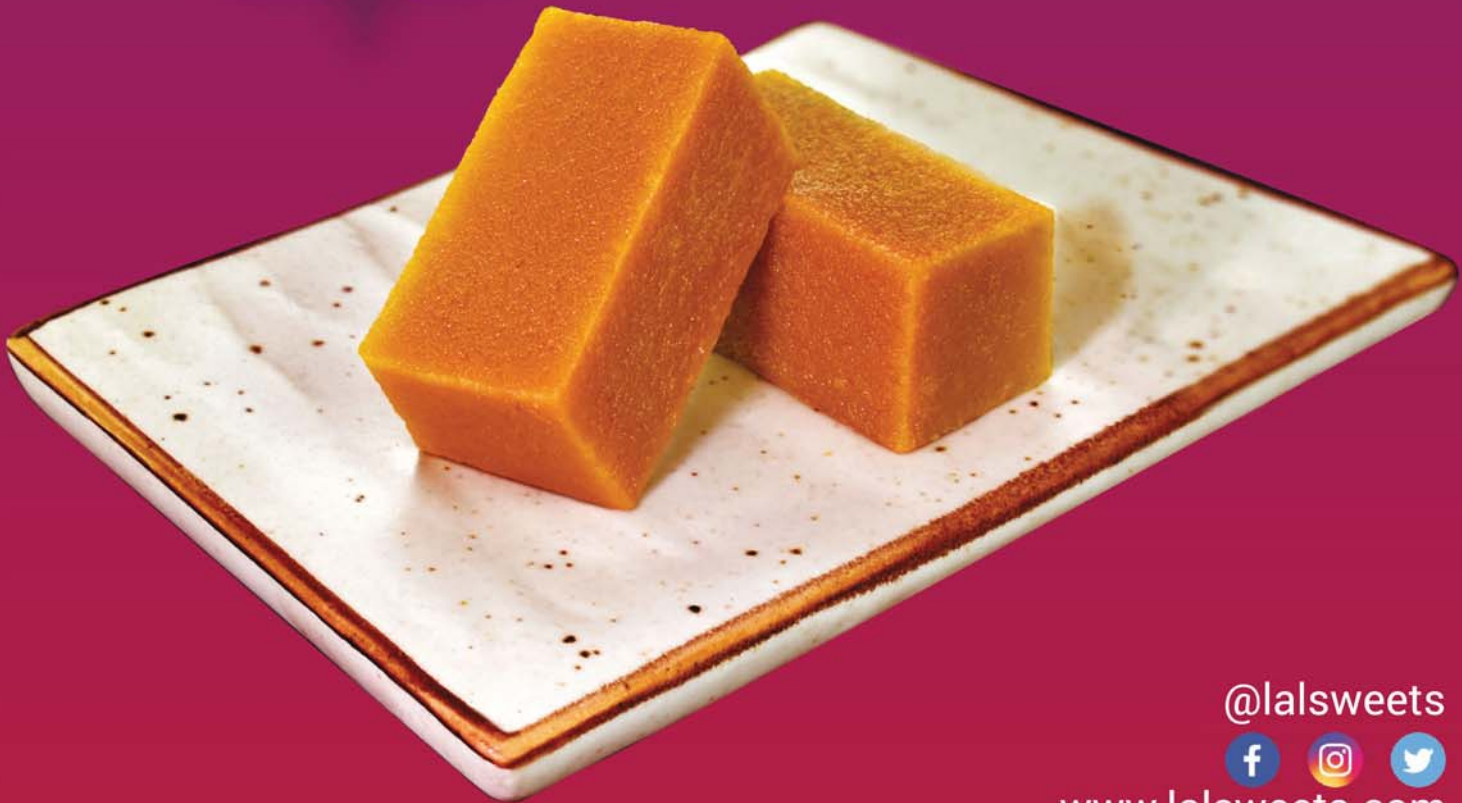
SPAR India offers a variety of fresh produce to its customers, which are mainly sourced from Himachal Pradesh. These include apples, green peas, oranges, honey, organic produce, among other products. According to Krishnan, "SPAR India is committed to continue building strong farm to fork relationships. We will be working jointly with the State on sourcing and developing our private label products - soaps, handicrafts, etc which, in turn, will support the growth of SMEs."

In its endeavour to continue making a difference in the lives of farmers, customers and communities, SPAR wants to be a strong partner to Himachal Pradesh in promoting fresh sourcing, manufacturing and tourism in the coming years.



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Walmart successfully completes 3rd Edition of Women Entrepreneurship Development Program



Walmart India, the wholly owned subsidiary of Walmart Inc., has concluded the Third Edition of its Women Entrepreneurship Development Program (WEDP) with 75 high potential, women-owned businesses (WOBs) graduating from the program. Training was delivered to 40 WOBs in classrooms and 35 WOBs attended the virtual sessions. The cohort represented both product categories, such as edible cutlery, eco-friendly stationary and gift items, apparel, herbal cosmetics, spices, processed food, tea, nutrition bars, as well as services sectors such as AI consultancy, energy efficient solutions, travel management solutions and research and insights, among others. The graduation ceremony was attended by women entrepreneurs, representatives from industry associations and the NGO sector.

WEDP is aimed at enhancing the participants' skills and capability to build robust and sustainable businesses. Supported by Walmart, WEConnect International led the overall coordination and conceptualization of the program, selection and assessment of participants while the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) customized the training curriculum and imparted the training. During the three-month program, the WOBs underwent a structured capacity building training, mentoring and technical support customized to the needs of their businesses. These training modules covered all key areas of

business including replenishment, logistics, supply chain, product marketing, financial planning, resource management, marketing, finance, business strategy, operations, legal and compliance. The program was a successful blend of instructor-led training with faculty from EDII, industry experts, subject matter experts from Walmart and included a visit to the Best Price Modern Wholesale Stores owned and operated by Walmart India, to provide the WOBs added insights into the format and store operations.

Krish Iyer, President & CEO, Walmart India, said, "I am pleased to announce the successful completion and graduation of high potential women business owners in the 3rd edition of the Women Entrepreneurship Development Program (WEDP). Walmart is deeply committed to women's economic empowerment and this year, we harnessed the power of technology to reach even more women entrepreneurs. We congratulate the graduates of this program and wish them success in their entrepreneurial journey."

Walmart is committed to supporting efforts to empower women around the world and further strengthen the foundation where WOBs can succeed and grow. In September 2011, Walmart launched the Global Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) initiative, a five-year initiative to use its unique size and scale to improve the lives of under-served women around

the world. As part of the initiative, Walmart committed to source \$20 billion from women for its U.S. business and double sourcing from WOBs internationally. While the commitment has concluded, Walmart will continue to source from WOBs.

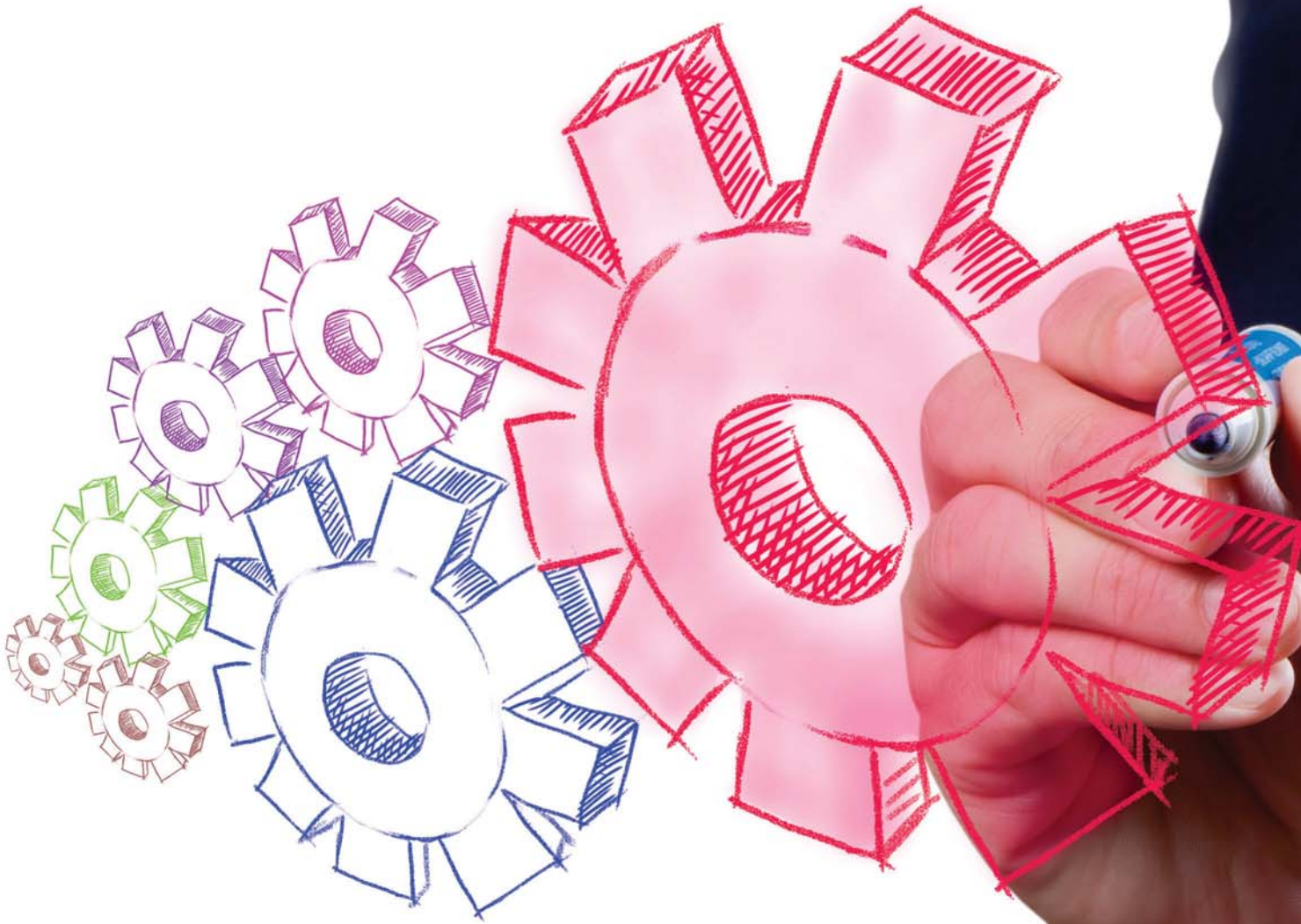
WEDP is a flagship program designed to help women entrepreneurs become more competitive, achieve higher levels of business growth and become resilient in today's dynamic business environment. It was launched in 2016 and over the last three editions, this program has touched nearly 150 women entrepreneurs directly and several more indirectly. The program has played an important role in bringing diversity to the retail supply chain in India by creating a pipeline of women suppliers for the industry as well as for Walmart India and has gradually scaled up with an increase in the number of participants every year.

Edith Cecchini, Regional Director for Asia, WEConnect International, said, "During the program, the women entrepreneurs participated in a structured capacity building training and mentorship opportunities to support business growth. In addition to the training, which included life skills, social media marketing, negotiation skills, and other topics, the participants become part of a community that will strengthen their professional and personal networks in the future, too. We are thrilled to support Walmart in their efforts to train and connect women-owned businesses in India."

"On the whole, women entrepreneurship development programs help enterprises to graduate from being basic income-generating projects to sustainable businesses at preservation levels, and then gradually to enterprises that are focused on growth and raise expectations for economic development in India. The third edition was very well curated, and I am glad we could share the responsibility as knowledge & training partner with Walmart & WEConnect International," said Dr. Sunil Shukla, Director, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) Ahmedabad.



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Cargill to invest US\$20 million to support livestock farmers in Kota, Rajasthan

Cargill plans to invest US \$20 million (Rs. 140 crore) to set up a greenfield premix plant in Kota, Rajasthan. The plans were shared at a meeting between Cargill team, led by Imre Havasi, managing director for the company's animal nutrition business in India, and Dr Subodh Agarwal, Additional chief secretary, Industries, Government of Rajasthan; Shri Gaurav Goyal, commissioner, Investment & NRIs, Government of Rajasthan and other senior government officials.

The state-of-the-art plant will be built on 15 acres of land in Tathed Village of Kota District. It will feature a monthly manufacturing capacity of 7,500 tons of animal nutrition products and supplement to serve customers in the state, entire North India and also export markets. Cargill's proposed investment supports the development of the industry, farmers and communities in and around Kota. It will also help the animal husbandry sector, including livestock farmers, by generating more than 150 jobs in the region, with both direct and indirect employment in the next three to five years.

The company has strategically chosen the state of Rajasthan to build this plant, as it is one of the more progressive states in the country, offering a good business environment, availability of quality raw materials, required talent and a strong customer base. "As Cargill continues to expand and grow its business in the region, we recognize that India is an important and fast-growing feed market," Havasi said. "We appreciate the Rajasthan government's support to help Cargill bring our technical know-how in animal nutrition to customers, the industry and this community through our new pre-mix facility here," he added.

Cargill sells its products under some of the best-known animal health and nutrition brands like Bestmin Gold, UTPP and G-promin. "This investment is part of Cargill's US \$240 million commitment made in November 2017 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Indian Ministry of Food Processing Industries. This demonstrates our commitment to growing the agriculture and food processing industry in India," added Simon George, president, Cargill India.



Cabinet to soon consider relaxing local sourcing norms for single brand retailers

The Cabinet is expected to soon consider a proposal of FDI-linked relaxation for mandatory 30 percent local sourcing norms for foreign single brand retailers by allowing them more time to comply with regulations. According to a PTI report, the commerce and industry ministry has already circulated a draft cabinet note seeking views of different ministries including the department of economic affairs on the proposal, one of the sources said, adding that "after receiving the comments, the ministry would soon approach the cabinet for its consideration".

With a view to attract big players such as iPhone maker Apple, as per the proposal, single-brand retail firms may be permitted to open online stores before setting up brick-and-mortar shops if they bring in over US\$ 200 million foreign direct investment (FDI). But such firms would have to set up brick-and-mortar shops within two years of starting online sales. Currently, online sale by a single-brand retail player is allowed only after opening of physical outlet.

Retail traders may also be allowed to adjust the incremental sourcing of goods from India for global operations during the initial 6-10 years, from the current five years (beginning April 1 of the year of the opening of first store), against the mandatory sourcing requirement of 30 percent of purchases from India. These relaxations too would be subject to quantum of FDI one brings in India. While six years' time would be given to a retailer that invests US\$ 100 million in the sector, 8 years and 10 years time would be given to those who bring in US\$ 200 million and US\$ 300 million foreign inflows in the sector, respectively.

In January 2018, the Government allowed 100 percent FDI in the sector, permitting foreign players in single-brand retail trade to set up own shops in India without government approval. That time, the government also relaxed mandatory local sourcing requirement of 30 percent by stating that a foreign retailer would be able to get credit from incremental rise in sourcing for its global operations from India towards the mandatory 30 percent local sourcing requirement for its business in the country.

In 2016, Apple India had sought relaxation in the local sourcing norms to set up single brand retail stores in India. During April-September 2018-19, FDI in India declined by 11 percent to US\$ 22.66 billion.

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New Brand Vanantara: Organic Honey with Organic Herbs & Spices

With the vision of supplying pure organic products procured straight from their pristine source, Kejriwal Bee Care India Pvt. Ltd. has recently expanded its portfolio by adding a premium range “Vanantara – The Music Of The Forest.”

Vanantara’s honey range – The Nectar of the Forest – is a delightful blend between organic honey and specially sourced premium organic herbs and spices, which not only satisfies the taste buds, but is also a magic box of natural remedies across cultures around the world.

At Vanantara, the brand philosophy stems from the spirit of the bees, the primary pollinators of the ecosystem, giving back as much as they take, if not more. It is this philosophy that commits Vanantara as the caretaker of their social and economic environment; sourcing redefines the way organic produce is marketed by procuring from remote areas of the highlands, tribal areas and deep tropical forests that are naturally organic and bereft of any chemical influence. The brand is committed to sourcing and processing certified organic products directly from the farmers at fair and best prices and providing its customers with 100% pure, certified, traceable and naturally organic products.

Vanantara’s product range includes: **Organic Honey with Giloe**, a concoction with anti-ageing properties, which helps improve digestion and blood circulation while reducing stress, anxiety and weight; **Organic Honey with Saffron**, which has antiviral and antibacterial properties and improves blood circulation while reducing

stress, depression, anxiety and weight; **Organic Honey with Turmeric**, which is a great antioxidant with antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties and helps in weight reduction while improving immunity and digestion; **Organic Honey with Vana Tulsi**, which also helps in weight reduction, in maintaining blood sugar levels of the body, detoxification and acts as a remedy for cold and cough; **Organic Honey**, an energy booster and an antioxidant rich in vitamins and minerals and helps in weight reduction; **Organic Honey with Cardamom**, which improves blood circulation, cures stomach disorders and acts as a good remedy for nausea and vomiting and has a great mouth refreshing taste; **Organic Honey with Clove**, which improves digestion and the working of the liver along with facilitating weight reduction and provides warmth and has a refreshing mouth feel; **Organic Honey with Ashwagandha** to help in reducing stress, anxiety, insomnia and



weight while enhancing concentration and energy levels; **Organic Honey with Cinnamon**, a concoction packed with antioxidants and helps in reducing weight and promotes a stronger immunity while reducing inflammation and helpful in preventing diabetes. It’s a perfect elixir for hair as it nurtures hair and stimulates hair growth; **Organic Honey with Ginger**, which acts as an antioxidant as well as an energy booster rich in vitamins and minerals. It facilitates weight reduction and improved digestion.

With an aim to launch this unique range in the Indian Market, Kejriwal Bee Care India Pvt Ltd. participated at India Food Forum in Mumbai on 5-6 Feb,2019.The company aims to take its Vanantara range across retail stores in Delhi NCR, Bangalore, Mumbai and Goa where its Nature’s Nectar and Nature’s Nectar Select range is already available.



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The world's first digital mall launched in Noida by Digital Mall of Asia

In a revolutionary development that could potentially redefine the global retail and e-commerce industries, Digital Mall of Asia (DMA), a first-of-its-kind digital e-commerce platform merging the real estate and the digital spaces, has announced the launch of its Noida mall.

DMA operates on a zero commission model; retailers at DMA don't have to pay anything apart from the rent, a major revolution in a space where all the major e-commerce players charge somewhere between 5-35% of the revenue. Moreover, the organization will provide immediate settlement of all payments received, ensuring complete transparency and reliability. It is also working towards completely eradicating the issue of sale of counterfeit or fake merchandize.

Going beyond the concept of a typical e-commerce portal, DMA's Noida mall will have 11 towers with 10 floors each, adding up to a total of more than 5,000 shops and an available inventory currently worth approximately INR 500 crore. The mall will incorporate visual and sensory elements to offer



an immersive, stimulating environment and will have dedicated towers for different categories such as men, women, kids, electronics, home and kitchen, education, financial services, food court, hyper market, digiplex, and online nightclub. Fundamentally, DMA Noida has all the elements that make up a physical mall, albeit virtually.

By creating a new 'digital asset' class providing attractive returns, DMA also envisions to transform the general perception towards the term 'investment' while ensuring security, profit, and convenience for investors. The shops in the Noida mall

are available for both sale (to investors) and rental (to retailers), whereas the shops in the rest of the 20 cities are available only to rent at present. Commenting on the launch and the idea behind it, Rishabh Mehra, Managing Director and CEO – Digital Mall of Asia, remarked, "We, at Digital Mall of Asia, are ecstatic to launch our Noida mall and we are certain of its potential to bring about a revolution in the digital and retail space worldwide. DMA is our effort against data colonization. In this era of data-driven revolution, we hope that DMA's disruptive innovation sets an example for our contemporaries to follow through and bring

the ownership of Indian data back to where it belongs – in our own hands."

The launch in Noida also marks DMA's first step towards a pan-India launch in 20 cities including New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Lucknow, Coimbatore etc. After a pan-India expansion, DMA plans to expand its operations across the Asian market and has already begun the process of seller registration in China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Singapore. For more information and to buy or rent a shop in the desired location, tower, and floor, please visit: <https://digitalmallofasia.com>

Organic Tattva Garam Masala adds to the spice heritage

Garam means 'warm' and Masala means 'spice'. In the Ayurvedic sense,



this spice is believed to elevate body temperature and so its origin is in the cooler climates of north India. Garam Masala has become a pantry staple, and is used to flavour everything from lentils to meat to stews and sauces. Being a chef's favourite, it is widely used in the restaurant industry in different forms and flavours – as chana masala, chicken tikka masala to name a few. It tastes best when added towards the end of the cooking process and its earthy flavour is a natural fit

to almost every kind of north Indian and South Asian cooking. Taking the heritage of spices to greater heights is Organic Tattva Garam Masala, a blend of 12 organic spices sourced from various parts of the country. To get the authentic taste, it is roasted and grinded in a state-of-the-art facility to retain the aroma and flavour.

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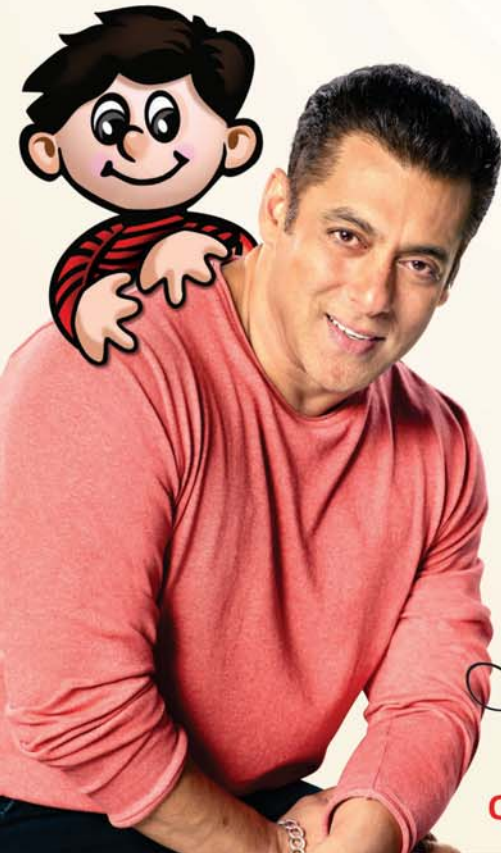
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Freshening Up

Here are 5 ways to boost your perimeter in the new year.

By Jim Dudlicek

From produce to prepared foods, the perimeter is where the action is. But as competition heats up from all directions, grocery retailers will need to constantly look for new ways to keep their fresh areas distinctive. While fresh produce, meat and seafood, and prepared foods still give brick-and-mortar stores an edge over the looming threat of online shopping, retailers will need to be proactive to make sure that they're unique, solution-focused and worthy of repeat visits.

Here are a few ways that retailers and observers say that grocers can keep the fresh perimeter fresh in the coming year:

1 Solution destinations: More often than not, consumers are shopping for meals or occasions, not random items. Create solution destinations offering value-added products cross-merchandised with complementary products to maximize convenience.

“Chopped and ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables are an easy sell, especially if by other ingredients,” says John Griesenbrock, VP of produce and HealthMarkets for West Des Moines, Iowa-based grocer Hy-Vee Inc. “Items such as sliced squash, peppers and other vegetables are an easy sell in our meat departments, merchandised with steak, chicken or pork. A lot of customers have a hard time deciding on the main course, so when they decide that chicken breast is going to be the main dish, the easy sell is the side dish, so a container of cut-up squash is the perfect accompaniment. Many stores that merchandise the side dishes next to the main dishes see no shrink — it's all extra sales and profit.”

Eric Richard, education coordinator for the Madison, Wis.-based International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association, notes three factors in play: “First, consumer interest in fresh prepared foods continues to grow (3.8 percent growth over the last four years); away-from-home food spending has surpassed at-home food spending, illustrating consumers' desire for already-prepared meal options; and continued evolution of meal occasions and rituals, as some no longer adhere to the Sunday dinner and three-meals-



a-day mindset, and whereby snacking is now part of the daypart model.”

Winning retailers will understand and implement current trends in shopper eating patterns, according to Richard. “Food is an emotional experience for many consumers,” he observes. “Retailers can appeal to these shoppers by marketing meal solutions in their in-store delis and focusing on how they can help families better connect through eating occasions.”

Richard's suggestions:

- Employ in-store messaging, advertising and social media that position the store as the best option for prepared food solutions.
- Offer a variety of prepared-meal dinner options that are quick, convenient and innovative.
- Focus on messaging that reminds shoppers of meal occasions with families and friends, and how a store's foodservice options are the perfect solution.

Additionally, eating healthy is increasingly top of mind, Griesenbrock observes. “Our focus is to get produce out of the traditional aisle and incorporate it into other departments,” he says, suggesting berries with yogurt (dairy case) or angel food cakes (bakery).

Consumers are increasingly turning to ready-to-eat meals and meal kits, notes Michael Falck, co-founder and U.S. president of Atlanta-based retail-planning firm Relex Solutions. “Grocers seeking to pull shoppers into their stores should focus on offering healthy and convenient meal options, including in-store restaurants,” he says. “Convenience offerings are a great way for traditional grocery retailers to compete with online grocers and meal delivery services.”

“
Our focus is to get produce out of the traditional aisle and incorporate it into other departments.”

— John Griesenbrock
Hy-Vee



Such offerings focus on the consumer's need for personalization as well as convenience, points out Sarah Schmansky, director of fresh for Schaumburg, Ill.-based Nielsen.

Falck further recommends intra-day space resets; for example, refrigerated space near the front of the store to offer breakfast items in the morning, lunch items at midday and dinner options in the evening.

2 Fresh experience: Despite its recent and projected growth, Richard asserts that grocery ecommerce lacks one important characteristic that brick-and-mortar can deliver on: experience. It's an opportunity, Schmansky further notes, to engage consumers.

"Shoppers no longer view supermarkets as simply a place to purchase groceries; rather, they see them as places to learn about their food, get ideas on how to prepare meals, sample products and learn about food-and-beverage pairings," Richard says. "The sights and smells of fresh departments already lend themselves to this concept; for example, the smells of fresh bread baking in in-store bakeries."

3 Local focus: From food to outreach, consumers appreciate when retailers demonstrate a connection to the local community.

"More and more consumers are looking for locally grown and produced food, from ingredients like locally grown wheat in baked goods, to locally raised and produced beef, pork and chicken products found in deli and prepared food departments," Richard says. "Retailers can capitalize on this trend by working with local producers and growers in getting their products to their store."

It's also important to tell the products' stories through in-store messaging and external marketing channels like social media. "Transparency is a very important consideration among many shoppers," Richard says. "Storytelling really helps retailers connect with shoppers who value the integrity of the food they purchase and consume."

Joe Watson, VP of domestic business development for the Newark, Del.-based Produce Marketing Association, agrees. "Consumers are looking for those types of connections, and they want to know more about where their food and floral products come from," says Watson, former produce director for Thibodaux, La.-based grocery store chain Rouses Markets.

Retailers can communicate about their community support through activities with schools, churches, food banks, civic groups or other avenues. "Make that 'caring' connection," Watson advises, "and,

because produce and floral are so important in the diet and the happiness factor, that connection is strong."

4 Sustainability: The increased desire for transparency also includes care for the environment.

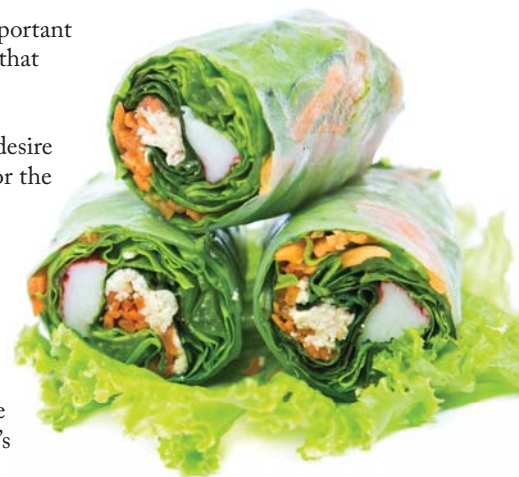
Hy-Vee has had success with its Misfit program in the produce department, Griesenbrock notes: "These 'cosmetically challenged' fruits and vegetables increase landfill diversion while offering discounts to our customers. In a time when up to 40 percent of the farmer's harvest goes unsold, this is a way to sell 'ugly' produce to the consumer who doesn't care what it looks like, while the product tastes just as good as anything else in the aisle."

According to Watson, retailers can communicate how they're working to reduce waste through specific company initiatives, among them offering reusable shopping bags to customers, using returnable packaging containers to limit their landfill needs, and even working with local producers on composting programs. "Today, customers want to know that their store cares as much about these issues as they do," he says.

5 Authentic flavors: Today's fresh-department experience is all about exploration, Richard says. "Driven by the diverse ethnic makeup of Millennials and Gen Z, all generations nonetheless are looking beyond traditional products and flavors to try cuisine, tastes, flavors and ingredients originating from different cultures such as Southeast Asian, African and Middle Eastern," he notes. "Prepared food departments can quickly incorporate these taste trends into their offerings; other fresh departments potentially follow suit as well, both in terms of products and ingredients."

Further, an increasing number of consumers want those flavors to come with food that's better for them, or that addresses specific dietary needs such as being gluten-free.

"If you can make their shopping trip just as easy for them as for others, then you have won a primary customer," Griesenbrock asserts. "Lettuce wraps instead of bread seem to be gaining momentum, and so is the need to merchandise lettuce and other varieties of greens. If you can bring the recipe to life with the marinades, steak, greens and other items such as peppers, the trick is marketing it as a gluten-free option." **PG**



Shoppers no longer view supermarkets as simply a place to purchase groceries; rather, they see them as places to learn about their food, get ideas on how to prepare meals, sample products and learn about food-and-beverage pairings.





India Food Forum 2019 *concludes on a resonant note*

By **Aliya Jamal**

As the 12th edition of India Food Forum got up and running from 5th-6th Feb. at the Renaissance Hotel Mumbai, it once again shone the spotlight on a ground breaking agenda geared to reframe our understanding of the trends shaking up modern food retailing. Through an innovative format of Conferences, Exhibition and Awards, India Food Forum 2019 brought into play a powerful and cutting edge agenda that set an exciting tenor for two days of knowledge sharing and exchange of ideas among industry stalwarts.

The theme of the Forum this year – Charting the growth map for food grocery, food service and food startup in this fast, tech-savvy, digitally connected, demanding consumer-driven era – was aimed at building the roadmap for food retail business to accurately read the underlying opportunities and predict future consumption paths that the Indian consumer will tread. Offering unique opportunities for networking and business ideas, and for exploring growth opportunities in the dynamic world of food retail, the Forum gathered with the mission to “accelerate food retailing excellence by generating ideas, insights, innovation and opportunities for profitable growth.”

With twelve years of stellar track record as India’s pre-eminent knowledge and business networking platform for food retail, India Food Forum 2019 once

again brought together key decision makers from every part of the food retail eco-system. Chaired by Krish Iyer, President & CEO, Walmart India, India Food Forum 2019 was power-packed with interactive and focused panel discussions, workshops, exhibition, Master-classes, product launch pads, awards and an array of other highlights.

The activities at the Forum this year had a thoughtfully curated and designed five structured zones – Food & Grocery Forum India, India Food Service Forum, India Food Retail Tech, Food Start-ups Innovation Convention, and the Golden Spoon Awards for excellence in Food and Grocery, Foodservice and for demonstrating innovation in the Food Start-up category. To keep the delegates connected with the next big innovations in food retailing, HoReCa and food technology, the Forum featured a line-up of powerful conferences and eminent industry experts as speakers. This year, the stellar cast at the Forum spawned over 3,000 participants, including 100+supermarkets & grocers, 100+ restaurateurs & chefs, 300+ Food, FMCG & HoReCa professionals, 100+ global brands & retailers, 100+CIOs/CTOs/CXOs besides an impressive line-up of startups, investors and other principals from the Food Retail universe.

In his keynote address, **Krish Iyer, Chairman, India Food Forum, and President & CEO, Walmart India** said, “Retailers need to look out for the middle class India – this segment of the population is going



to matter most in the coming years – their spending capacity is constantly rising and will account for 40% of the overall wallet share which, in the long run will make for a significant contribution to the FMCG sector.” He also mentioned some important factors that could help bring about faster growth for the industry and food retailers. Among his observations were:

Tapping into rural areas: Geographies play an important role in the proliferating retail business. The growth rate and stability of Tier II and III cities are healthy and are bound to get even better – from 36% to 45% in the near future. He said that the desire among Indians for healthier consumption is increasing under the influence of the growing reach of education – whether in urban, semi-urban and rural population. There is a strong move towards value and there are more opportunities waiting to be tapped on this front.

Accepting the omnichannel approach: Along side the growth in modern trade, the share of e-commerce too is expected to rise from 2% to 12% over the next ten years. As consumers are becoming richer and digitally-savvy, servicing their needs require that the gap between physical and digital is bridged. More and more of today’s new age entrepreneurs want to launch their business through the online platform. He said that food retailers are going digital in distinct ways – they are using digital tools to elevate customer experience and are innovating around e-commerce, hyperlocal, payments, and across other consumer touch points as well. Therefore, customer engagement through digital tools is becoming quite significant and customers are looking for an on-demand delivery particularly when it comes to ready-to-eat food.

Digitization of customer data: There is a very wide pool of consumer data available today. It is increasingly important to institutionalize our organizational ability to interpret this data and convert it into something useful and exciting in the long term. Digital touchpoints have increased the bandwidth of data, therefore, helping enable a better omnichannel experience but it also requires large scale investment. Enriching physical via digital is the key. It is not about replacing the physical details – it is about enriching the experience by collaborating with both platforms to give an enhanced experience to customers.

Food security: Food security is about ensuring the right resources, technologies and distribution system to feed a community, a nation, or even a region of the world. By 2050, the world’s population will be 10 billion from 7 billion currently. Feeding this huge number of people and catering to the even growing consumer demand with scarcer land and resources, higher costs and changing climate conditions is a challenge that needs to be addressed.

Food safety and nutrition: Globally, near half of all deaths of infants under five are because of malnutrition or undernutrition. Many thousands infants die a year all over the world due to these causes. As per a WHO-India report, one-third of babies born in India every



– **KRISH IYER**
Chairman, India Food Forum 2019
President & CEO, Walmart India

year suffer from stunted growth. The FSSAI has been making efforts to spread awareness regarding food safety and nutrition.

Food waste: According to several reports, nearly 30% of food and 40% of fruits are wasted post-harvest in the country. In 2013, due to the lack of infrastructure and storage facilities, food wastage accounted for a loss of 92,000 crore rupees (13 billion USD).



DAMODAR MALL, CEO, GROCERY RETAIL, RELIANCE RETAIL



For me, the India Food Forum has always been a chaupal – a platform for ideas and discovery of new things to chase and debate, amongst my fellow supermarketwallahs and the leaders of the consumers brands. The FMCG brands and supermarkets are in the common business of shaping the consumption of tomorrow in the Indian market. At a time when urban incomes have been consistently increasing, the consumption habits of Indian consumers have however shown a lag. Modern Retail, through its design and its theatre of choices, puts the consumer in the mood to try new things. It is open for discovery and to adopt. Therefore, it is a juicy opportunity to up the consumption, both through uptrading in terms of the depth of consumption and upgrading in terms of premiumization and new opportunities.

The upside opportunity of selling more to Indian consumers is real and discovered faster at modern retail. The Supermarket of India is large – 60 million people with a per capita income at PPP of around \$15,000. It is where new brands can find the India opportunity and their success formula, minus the friction that exists in the conventional trade.

Brands and ideas that are tuned into this reality and craft their strategies for supermarkets rather than just extending the practices of traditional trade into supermarkets will find positive surprises, I see this happening across category after category – amongst retailers, and amongst brand leaders. India Food Forum is a place to exchange these and many ideas together.

BIJOU KURIEN, MEMBER-STRATEGIC ADVISORY BOARD, L CAPITAL ASIA



India Food Forum is the premier destination for anybody connected to Food and Beverage Industry where you can exchange views and hear about the latest trends in industry from the stalwarts and thought leaders.

The Food and Beverage industry has several positive drivers of demand – rapid urbanisation of India, a much younger population, more working households, growth in personal income, and more food service offerings. This has led to a proliferation of food and beverage offerings – from fast food to casual dining, Indian cuisine to exotic international cuisines and fusion offerings in between, from

brew pubs to lounge bars and many more such innovations.

The food service industry encompasses not only the brands that we see on the streets but also those that supply to them – farmers, aggregators, mandis, and logistics suppliers. There are also those that constitute the enabling and supporting framework – warehouses, software and hardware providers, technology services, digital marketing, loyalty service agencies, affiliate marketers and online reviewers who bring these brands closer to you in the malls and high-streets, metros, airports and numerous other locations.

C GOPALAKRISHNAN, FOUNDER, N SUPERMARKETS



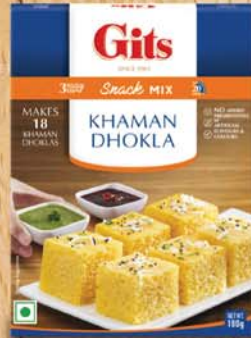
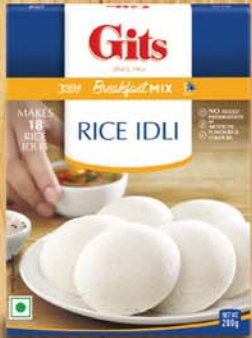
Entrepreneurs are researching the right format for organized food retailing in this country. There are a few industrialists operating national chains, digital companies, and some international corporations are keen to move in as well.

To meet this challenge and competition, it is important to exploit the prospects for providing

quality management with a commitment to consumer delight and shed the fear of disruption. It is important for the retailers to debate on policies and recommend some modifications for better future of F&B. India Food Forum is the perfect platform for engaging in such discussions and charting the industry's way for future success. **PG**

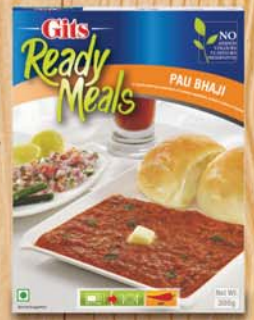
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The challenges and opportunities of **‘Phygital Era’**

In a session at the India Food Forum titled “Food and Grocery Retailing in the Phygital Era – Transformations in the Food Economy and Implications for Policy Making,” moderator Sadashiv Nayak, CEO, Food Business, Future Group, was joined by other titans of the industry who drew on their decades of experience to offer critical insights along with pertinent answers on the contours of India’s evolving food retail market, emerging trends, growth strategies, challenges and opportunities for innovation in a growing Indian economy coupled with the rapidly evolving consumer demands in the decade ahead.

By Aliya Jamal



Technology has brought about phenomenal changes in our ways of living and it has disrupted several industries and markets, including food retail. Even though technology application is in its nascent stage in the food industry, it is nevertheless tremendously impacting the business in the sector. Technology has transformed the way people shop and buy. In this technology-driven era where everything is customized according to individual choices, it has become a challenge for brick-and-mortar retailers to compete with online retailers. The explosion of social media and its widespread reach among the younger generations has hit the food retail sector front and centre. There is now unlimited access to information irrespective of your location at the touch of a screen or a simple

click. Today’s social media and technology-driven era has become the biggest challenge for the retailers. The availability of user customization to the people at large has increased the level of demand for customization and its acceptance among people. “Each and everything is tapped and observed by millions of people online. A single mistake could lead to bad publicity among the consumers and target audience. It becomes the deciding factor of the future of the business and judgments are drawn based on that,” remarked Sadashiv Nayak.

This generation is hooked to the Internet and nearly all of them (92.6%) are connected to the Internet through mobile devices. There are approximately four billion people accessing the net daily. Technology has become part of the life and these are the aspects – accessibility to the Internet, mobile technology, and an expanded range of digital

activities – that are increasingly interfering with the trends and lifestyles of people in the times we live in. Every day, about 85% of people are constantly connected through the Internet and spend an average of six-and-a-half hours online.

Leveraging social media and technology for propagating health

Sri Sri Tattva, the FMCG arm that supports the social initiatives under The Art Of Living founded by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, is into health care and personal care products with a range of Aayush product line. The company is highlighting the importance of fitness among the millennials with the help of its brand ambassadors: Badminton legends Pullela Gopichand and P.V. Sindhu. Elaborating on the importance of health and fitness, **Arvind Varchaswi, MD of the Bangalore-based Sri Sri Tattva**, said: “It is extremely important for an individual to be healthy – mentally and physically. We aim to make use of technology to propagate our mission of increasing health awareness among people. We want to educate people about the importance of being healthy. It is a pressing issue at the moment and making use of social media to educate the consumers is a great approach to connect with them.”

Through the use of social media and technology, the brand has been reaching out to its customer base with its brand message while delivering its products to consumers efficiently through traditional and modern trade, e-commerce and strategic apps. “Today, we have to deal with educated customers and as a brand you need to be responsible for your products. Sri Sri Tattva stands for giving authentic and the best of products to the consumers. We have been building on the range of our product offerings by leaning on customer feedback over the years. Our products are also an outcome of the research we do but they are definitely based on the needs of customers,” added Varchaswi, mentioning that the aim of having sports superstars as brand ambassadors is that the brand message of boosting its consumers’ health and wellness percolates down deep into their psyche.

Direct communication in the age of smartphones and social media

Many organizations, especially in the FMCG space, may not be fast in leveraging the power of social media, but they have a potent tool to mine this terrain by exploiting the advantage of smartphone penetration. They not only amplify the speed with which you can reach your audience but also prove more viable because the brand’s reach to people is instantaneous and it is also direct communication. And with the advent of social media, it has become easier for consumers to give feedback and for organizations to act on it.

Saurabh Kumar, Founder, Grofers, explained the term “Motorcycle Generation” and the importance

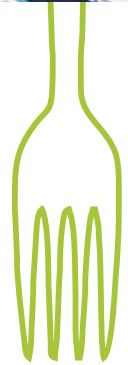


of e-commerce in urban settings, especially for the economically weaker sections. “The next 100 million people coming into the market will be predominantly online in India. This segment is now empowered and every household has smartphones; it has increased access and offers an opportunity to explore options of purchasing grocery. This is the most aspirational segment in India and is coming online in the next couple of years. We believe that with e-commerce, a lot of the problems related to catering to the population of India will be solved. Through e-commerce, retailers can reach out to the aspirational customers who may not have access to value merchandise and assortments.”

A lot of the families with the drawbacks of accessibility are involved in online stock purchasing than the regular families. These aspirational families are attracted to the value of the product and do not hesitate spending money on such products. “Retailers should look out for this segment to expand their business as this behavior is going to multiply the profits and this segment is going to increase the consumption and has much bigger opportunities,” observed Saurabh Kumar. Customers are loyal to the value that they get and if they get value then they will continue with the same. “The key here is to understand your customers and their needs and priorities and to provide value at a fairer price,” Saurabh further added.

Capitalizing on the consumption power of rural India through technology

India is a very complex and dynamic market. Any brand that wants to survive has to have a very strong knowledge of rural India before venturing into the market. The backbone of many businesses is made of this traditional approach. Be it e-commerce or modern trade, any big brand’s business rationale must take into account the consumption potential of rural areas. As a brand and manufacturer, it is important to address this need as well as understand and educate the rural population about the products and their underlying features. Rural India is dynamic when it



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“

We aim to make use of technology to propagate our motive of increasing health awareness among people. We want to educate people the importance of being healthy.

— **Arvind Varchaswi**
MD, Sri Sri Tattva



“

It has become important for the retailers and manufacturers to strike the right path to reach out to the prospective shopper rather than focusing on the value proposition.

— **Ian Wright**
Chairperson, Food and Drink Federation UK



“

Each and everything is tapped and observed by millions of people online. A single mistake could lead to bad publicity among the consumers and target audience.

— **Sadashiv Nayak**
CEO, Food Business, Future Group



“

Through e-commerce retailers can reach out to the aspirational customers who lack access to value and assortments.

— **Saurabh Kumar**
Founder, Grofers



“

There is a market in the white spaces and rural areas if you have the right omnichannel approach for your business.

— **Sudhir Sitapati**
Executive Director, Food and Refreshments, Hindustan Unilever

comes to experimenting with innovation and this fact alone offers a lot of opportunities. Almost everyone has a smartphone today and it has helped in the expansion of e-commerce in the country.

It is therefore crucial for entrepreneurs to understand the markets and territories when venturing into a business. These spaces are categorized as Grey and White space. Grey spaces are the areas that are yet to be explored but hold some potential for the business. However, white spaces hold a greater amount of risk and are virtually a no-profit zone and unexplored. It provides a lot of understanding and background check when starting a business in these areas. **Sudhir Sitapati, Executive Director, Food and Refreshments, Hindustan Unilever** offered some insights on how to grow a business in grey areas. “There are categories and there are consumers that fit into both grey and white space zones. White spaces have to be penetrated for some time so that they can be converted. There is a market in the white spaces and rural areas if you have the right omnichannel approach for your business. It is easier to enter these spaces because resources are limited and opportunities are unlimited. Value-based products will avail profits even in the grey areas. Even if the products are a bit expensive, there is still enough space to occupy in far off places that are categorized as grey spaces. Competition is a necessary fact and we need to face it.”

Entering newer geographies and with newer brands are categorized as white spaces. White spaces are really difficult to win because the habit is not built and customers are not ready for such brands. Grey spaces are categorized as ones that have 5-10% of space that fall under the established market geographies but are under penetrated. There are several towns that have plenty of categories in grey space areas. Ice-cream, as a category, has great penetration in the top seven countries but when it comes to the next 100 cities it becomes a grey space with 5-10% penetration. There are categories and there are consumers that fit in both grey and white space zones. White spaces have to be penetrated for some time so that they can be converted. It is easier to enter these spaces because the resources are limited but opportunities are unlimited.

Ian Wright, Chairperson, Food and Drink Federation UK, highlighted the grocery and food business opportunities in the UK: “There is a lot of competition in the UK and for the manufacturers it is even worse with the margins of profit in low single digit and the customer value proposition is more or less similar. It has become more important for the retailers and manufacturers to strike the right path to reach out to the prospective shopper rather than focusing on the proposition.” **PG**



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Insights from Progressive Supermarket Chains

Regional grocers face several challenges as they seek to defend market share from national chains and digital companies — rising labor costs, the rise of e-commerce, and changing consumer desires are just a few of those challenges. Their biggest strength is their local connect. A session at India Food Forum sought to bring the insights from some of the most forward looking regional chains – how progressive grocers are capturing additional value by focusing on their relationships and adding more convenience and choice.

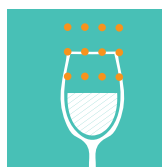
By **A. Nivaz**

Supermarket is a difficult business. Here margins are thin and the cost of running a business is high. “Finding the right location is becoming more and more expensive. Yet there are certain regional players who are doing well. They have found some uniqueness in the entire proposition, which is relevant in the market. It would be good to hear their stories and uniqueness and the secret of surviving and thriving in the market,” said **Dhananjay Sen Gupta, CEO (small formats) Future Group.**

Talking of Ratnadeep Supermarkets, Hyderabad, **Manish Bhartiya, Director, Ratnadeep Supermarkets,** said: “Ratnadeep is a startup brand

established in 1987. We started with a single store and now we have 47 stores. We are further expanding in Hyderabad and outside Hyderabad. As a local chain, I can only say that local brands know what local consumers need. Therein lies our strength. If we go to other cities we face challenges in understanding the requirements, and it’s a learning every day.”

C Gopalakrishnan, Founder, N Supermarkets, which operates stores in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, spoke about his chain’s journey: “My grandfather was the one who started the business by supplying cream to the English gentlemen. In 1939, my dad was deputed to Bangalore to pack butter in a military diary. Then he started with ice cream



parlours and bit by bit built up the business. The customer were loyal to us and in 1973, we started our first self service supermarket. In 1994, we took to the franchise concept because a lot of people wanted quality product. The best part of the business is that 30% of the products sold in the supermarket are our personal brand. I established 30 franchises before I sold the company. Quality is the only thing and it will continue to reign supreme in the business.”

Speaking about the experience of running his store chain, **Anil Kankaria, Managing Partner, Navjeevan Super Shop, Jalgaon**, said: “By birth I am a grocer. My grandfather had a business. Since the past 70 years, we are doing this business. In India, there were no supermarkets at that time. We started self service. Customers are the teachers for us while we keep our focus intact on delivering quality because it is only this factor that takes you ahead of the competition. We have to compete with about 200 pulse mills in Jalgaon but it is on account of the quality we deliver that people come and buy.”

According to **Rajesh Francis, Proprietor, MagSon Fresh and Frozen, Ahmedabad**, “We sensed that no one was selling non-veg in Gujarat and we figured a huge market out there for fresh and frozen products. There are a lot of good corporates operating out of Gujarat and so we got the idea of starting our business in fresh and frozen products. We started with a 250 sq. ft. shop, nine years ago, and today we operate 20 stores.”

Vajirali Momin, Group Director, Hearty Mart, Ahmedabad, started store retail in 2004. “Initially, it was very tough for us and we were hardly able to



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— **Dhananjay Sen Gupta**, CEO (small formats) Future Group



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— **C Gopalakrishnan**, Founder, N Supermarkets



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— **Anil Kankaria**, Managing Partner, Navjeevan Super Shop



In retail, if the focus is not clear, then it becomes difficult to get profits. Your basics have to be right. Desires become deserving only through consistent, directed, self motivated and intelligent effort.

— **Sunil Sanklecha**, Managing Partner, Nuts 'n' Spices





“

There are so many small towns in every state where there are no national players in the supermarket format. For regional players, it presents an opportunity to grow strong in super market chains.

— **Silas Paul**, CEO, Miraj Retail



“

Villages, too, have the potential. But nobody cares to look at rural where people have the buying power. If you give them good products at a good price, they will buy from you instead of buying in cities.

— **Vajirali Momin**, Group Director, Hearty Mart



“

We sensed that no one was selling non-veg in Gujarat and we figured a huge market out there for fresh and frozen products.

— **Rajesh Francis**, Proprietor, MagSon Fresh and Frozen



“

In eastern UP, Jalans is not only a big retailer but also known for its department stores. The latter is an easier business for us because 90% of the product range remains the same and the break-even is quicker.

— **Niren Shah**, Advisor, Jalans Supermarkets



“

The reason local chains are thriving is because they all listen to their customers. Regional players always have their ears to the ground. They pick on things based on consumer needs and desires, make it into a stronger value proposition and move on.

— **Dharmender Matai**, CEO, J Mart (Delhi NCR)



survive for three years. In order to survive, we gave away franchise license of our brand to run Hearty Mart stores in rural areas. We also started supplying to hotels. Our grocery supply operations took off and we were supplying to 200 hotels, then we were in 203 cities and villages, too. But nobody cares to look at rural where people have the buying power. If you give them good products at a good price, they will buy from you instead of buying in cities. Today, we run 14 super markets in Gujarat and we have started one in Mumbai. We have our own private labels for oil, spices, dry fruits, etc and we continue to make our store brands bigger.”

Speaking about his retail model, **Silas Paul, CEO, Miraj Retail**, Rajasthan, said: “Our model is very simple and we operate in 12,000 to 14,000 sq.ft. low frill stores. There are so many small towns in every state where there are no national players in the supermarket format. For regional players, it presents an opportunity to grow strong in super market chains. We are strong in manufacturing as well and we also do our own brands. Since October, we have opened 12 supermarkets. In the next six months, we want to open 100 supermarkets. There is so much scope out there. We now plan to move into Gujarat, MP and Chhattisgarh. We want to open 1,000 supermarkets in the next three to four years.”

Niren Shah, Advisor, Jalans Supermarkets, Varanasi, spoke about the retail and department stores business in eastern UP. “In eastern UP, Jalans is not only a big retailer but also known for its department stores.





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The latter is an easier business for us because 90% of the product range remains the same and the break-even is quicker, unlike in the garments business where fashion formats, models and range keep changing.”

Sunil Sanklecha, Managing Partner, Nuts 'n' Spices, Chennai, informed that the brand was founded in 1999. “It came from a kirana store background. My father had a store, which is now 70 years old and still running. Ours is a specialty store chain. From the beginning itself, the focus was very clear. We did not want to be a supermarket. Today, we have 33 stores. We have presence in Chennai, Pondicherry, and Coimbatore. In retail, if the focus is not clear, then it becomes difficult to get profits. Your basics have to be right. I have the simple formula. Desires become deserving only through consistent, directed, self motivated and intelligent effort. My focus has been on our private labels. In certain categories, the product is our own label. Today, I can say very proudly that our contribution of the entire sales in the private label is about more than 55 per cent. We believe that being good in the topline does not alone define success. The bottom line has to be intact and, very importantly, we are a zero debt company.”

Dharmender Matai, CEO, J Mart (Delhi NCR), observed that different concepts and trends are emerging in the food retail business. “But the most important thing is to keep things simple and not compromise on quality. Today, technology has grown, media has grown, families have become nuclear and people want to shop quickly. They want better ambience and quality. Retailers need to stand up for quality and listen to the customers. The reason local chains are thriving is because they all listen to their customers. Regional players always have their ears to the ground. They pick on things based on consumer needs and desires, make it into a stronger value proposition and move on. That’s the difference between local players and national players.” He added, “the first thing for a retailer is to understand the nature of the market you are in. You need to be grounded. We need to do the detailing – category, sub-category, range, besides also looking into the food habits, pack sizes and other aspects. These are things you don’t know until you go to the market. Today FMCG companies recognize the value of regional players and are actively engaging with them.” **PG**



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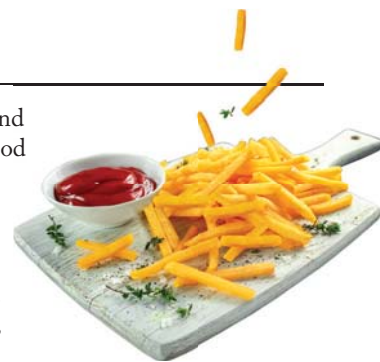
Glorious launches @ *India Food Forum*

Launching a new product at a trade show is the best way to maximize exposure and connect directly with the consumers. Over the years, India Food Forum has emerged as the preferred launch vehicle for many food products. That's because the platform offers the opportunity for a live, captive audience, and an ideal way to showcase the product in the hands of a targeted consumer demographic. This year at India Food Forum, seven products were launched and three brands made presentations under the theme "Seven Minutes of Glory".

→ MCCAIN

McCain Foods Pvt. Ltd. is a renowned brand. It's the producer of French fries and different ranges of potato variants. McCain's products are used by leading fast food chains, hotels, restaurants, catering companies, and in-home consumption.

McCain brings an entirely new and innovative product- McCain Sure Crisp - fries that stay crisp five times longer than regular fries. While regular fries stay crisp for 5-8 minutes on an average, Sure Crisp maintains its crispiness for over 25 minutes. This is why they are better suited for delivery than regular fries. With a longer hold time, Sure Crisp fries are also a perfect side dish for burgers, sandwiches and a super snack for long conversations, casual dining and events. Moreover, the crispiness is superb for buffets, in-room dining, and banqueting.



→ BIZOM

Retail distribution is on the brink of undergoing a massive overhaul in the coming years. This process is being accelerated with evolving cloud & mobile technologies. As retailers get digitally empowered and consolidated distribution systems are put in place, consumerism will move from push-based to demand based.

➔ ZOFF- ZONE OF FRESH FOOD

ZOFF (Zone Of Fresh Food) is a food company which believes in the innovation of delivering food products in its fresh form, which is possible by creating a zone of fresh foods. The brand's ultimate focus is on delivering pure and unadulterated products. It believes in constantly enhancing the quality of its products. In order to provide an extremely pleasant experience to its customers, the brand maintains hygiene in its products as its ultimate priority!

The brand has a wide range of Indian and exotic spices. Raw materials are procured from various parts of the country in order to give an authentic touch to all the spices. It is the only player in the spices industries that grinds spices at a very low temperature using cool grinding technology in Air Classifying Mill (ACM), which is a fully mechanized automated production plant and helps to maintain the purity, oil, aroma, and pungency of the products. For delivering in the purest form possible after grinding and thus retailing all the properties of spices until it is consumed, it has introduced "Zip Lock Packaging" with four layers in spices for the very first time in India. The technology keeps the spices fresh and resists the external temperature. The packets are air-tight and can be resealed to retain the aroma, maintain the freshness and sterility of the spices.



➔ SERAPHEENA

Serapheena Foods Pvt. Ltd., the newest entrant in the food start-up arena, has launched a range of innovative and good-for-you gluten-free cake mixes. The products are made with love using ancient supergrains like jowar (sorghum) blended with natural sweet potato flour and raw cane sugar with no preservatives or colors.

Serapheena gluten-free cake mixes bring back the joys of baking and are aimed at individuals and families who enjoy baked goods but still care about health and clean ingredients. Serapheena will be available across top 12 cities, in all channels via distribution partners Tree of Life Pvt. Ltd.

➔ HAPPILO

Happilo is a gourmet healthy snacking brand focusing on the health & nutrition category with a product range that includes nuts, dried fruits, berries, trail mix and organic seeds.

Happilo was launched in the year 2016. Within a span of less than three years, it has become a household name in the health & nutrition category.

Happilo products stand for delivering quality food products that are 100% healthy with zero percent guilt and without any compromise on taste. Most importantly, no oil is used in any of the roasting process. Happilo has a fully automated state-of-the-art facility at Bengaluru with a capacity for producing 40,000 + units per day.

At India Food Forum 2019, Happilo was Nutrition partner and it also launched an exclusive range of organic gourmet seeds and innovation in new international flavors like peri-peri, barbeque & jalapeño to reach newer markets and demographics. The seeds are cholesterol free, organic and gluten free.



➔ BLUE STAR

Increased demand for maintaining freshness is ramping up logistical and refrigeration challenges for retailers and manufacturers. E-Commerce growth is further propelling the demand for cold storage and refrigeration. Smaller supermarkets & grocers demand innovative refrigerated merchandising solutions. Refrigeration companies are gearing up to offer flexible refrigeration solutions with ease of merchandising that meets the evolving demands of retailers, keeping in view the need to conserve energy and protect the environment.

➔ **NUMBER MALL**

A new era of development has begun in general trade supply chain and FMCG brands need to design their operating model for consistent execution with cost control. It is important to provide proper insights on the necessary conditions of business, which is never complete without the feedback from the retail outlets and the market.

The community has hit the tipping point where technology is pervasive for best experience between brand, distributors and retailers directly to create a convenience for all the stake holders. Digitalisation adds wings to the sales team and letting them cover 5x no. of stores in a day. Retailers can experience 24/7 on demand restocking experience. The slow scale rise of sales or degrowth is not enough. FMCG brands have to figure out the way to make it grow with the power of technology.



➔ **ON THE RUN**

It is hard to find a nutritious mid-meal eating option that is 100% natural, just like one out of your kitchen, but can be consumed on the go. On The Run has created a range of great tasting products in the mid meal segment that are 100% natural and nutritious. With a clear vision of being an insurgent brand in the world of incumbents, On The Run is targeting a health-conscious consumer who prefers nutritious products that are clean label, values the kitchen-crafted ingredients and do not want to compromise convenience. Our target is to build a consumer base who will consume one OTR product every day.

On The Run products are made in a state-of-the-art ISO 22000 & BRC certified facility. It is available in Retail (GT & MT) with a presence in six cities across 450 stores. The brand's product line includes energy bars, granola cereal, legume-grain puffs, mini-bites. On The Run aspires to be India's most trusted brand for health food.



➔ **LUNN**

GBR, which operates brand Lunn, is an emerging manufacturer, producer and exporter of organic food products from India. To achieve this, GBR is constantly focusing on improving food processing procedures and simultaneously upgrading these procedures to match international standards. The brand believes that once the culture is inculcated in any individual/system the results can be seen in its surroundings. With this approach, it has developed valuable products like specialty salts, organic seasonings/spices/herbs, saffron, hibiscus flower rimming sugar, edible hibiscus flower with syrup etc. The success of its products has inspired the brand to develop more products in the future, which can satisfy customers across the globe. The company is an ISO 22000:2005 certified company besides being also certified Canada Organic, Indian Organic, FTO as well.

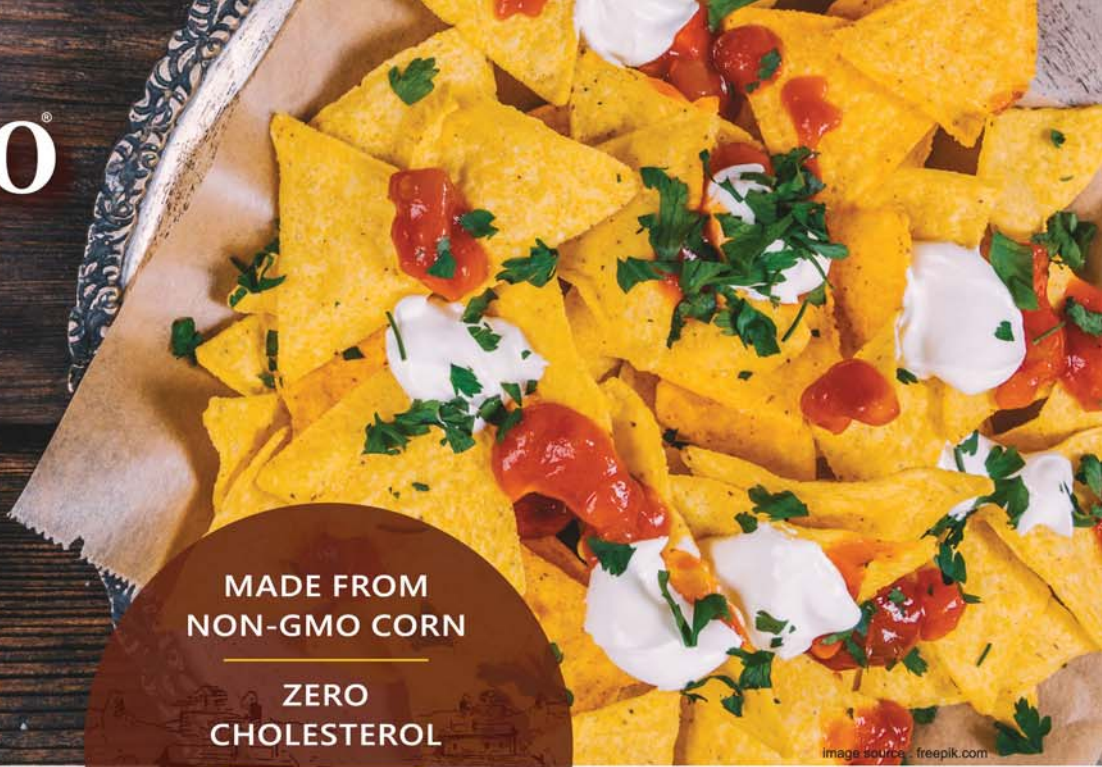


➔ **DUKES**

Dukes has launched the new avatar of its flagship brand Waffly in the wafers segment. The new product comes in a completely new packaging with natural fruit extracts, which provide it a luxuriously delicious taste. In addition to the widely popular fruit, chocolate & cheese flavors, a new flavor – butter – has been added to the existing range. **PG**

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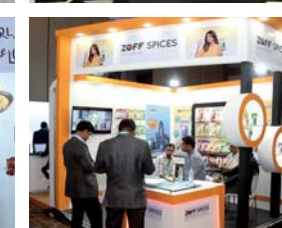
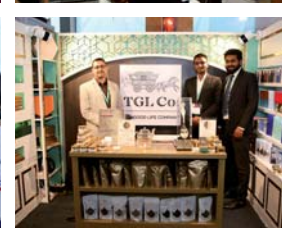
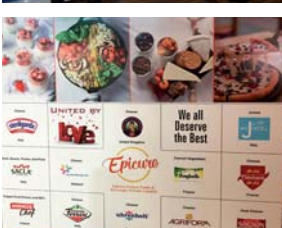


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The Coca-Cola Golden Spoon Awards powered by Kissan is the crowning highlight of the Forum every year. Launched in the year 2008 to acknowledge the rising importance of modern food & grocery retail, and its crucial role in the evolution of effective marketing and distribution of food and grocery brands in the country. The Award, given away for Excellence in Different Categories of Food Retail, is recognised as India's most prestigious honour for food and food service retailers.

The Coca-Cola Golden Spoon Awards powered by Kissan, at India Food Forum 2019 saw trophies being presented to brands, personalities and concepts; for exceptional initiative, outstanding/focussed performance, setting efficiency benchmarks, innovation, and broader impact to industry.

India's most innovative, successful and revered brands and professionals across food retailing were presented with the awards this year. The awardees were selected by an eminent jury that comprised **Amitabh Taneja**, Chief Convener India Food Forum; **Ajay Macaden**, Executive Director, Nielsen India; **Ankur Shiv Bhandari**, Founder & CEO Asbicon Group; **B. S. Nagesh**, Founder, TRRAIN; **Harminder Sahni**, Founder & Md Wazir Advisors; **Professor Ravi Dhar**, Yale School of Management; **Lara Balsara Vajifdar**, Executive Director, Madison World; **Ajay Kaul**, Senior Director, Everstone Group; **Debashish Mukherjee**, AT Kearney Partner & Co-Head; **Amit Lohani**, Convenor FIFI; **Anand Ramanathan**, Partner, Strategy & Operations Consulting, Deloitte India; **Sreedhar Prasad**, Partner Kalaari Capital; **Samir Kuckreja**, Founder & CEO, Tasanaya Hospitality Pvt. Ltd; **Nitin Puri**, Senior President & Country Head, Food & Agri Strategic Advisory & Research, Yes Bank; **Pankaj Karna**, Managing Director, Maple Capital Advisors; **Dr. Prabodh Halde**, President – (AFSTI) Head – Regulatory, Marico Ltd.



IMAGES MOST ADMIRED FOOD & GROCERY RETAILER OF THE YEAR: **LARGE FORMAT**



Awardee: RELIANCE SMART

Received by: **Lalatendu Panda**, CMO, Reliance Retail,
Parul Khanna, Vice President, Head of Merchandising- Reliance SMART
Presented by: **Kabir Gossain**, General Manager, Retail & Omnichannel,
Modern Trade-HUL

Nominees: SPAR | Big Bazaar

IMAGES MOST ADMIRED FOOD & GROCERY RETAILER OF THE YEAR: **NATIONAL SUPERMARKET/ CONVENIENCE STORE**



Awardee: 24SEVEN (Convenience Store)

Received by: **C K Sharma**, Regional Sales Manager, 24SEVEN

Presented by: **Oliver Mirza**,
Dr. Oetker Fun Foods and **Kiran Gali**,
Founder and CEO, Number Mall



Awardee: EASYDAY CLUB (National Supermarket)

Received by: **Hemant Mecwan**, Chief Head,
Easyday Club (National Supermarket)

Presented by: **Oliver Mirza**, Dr. Oetker Fun Foods and **Kiran Gali**,
Founder and CEO, Number Mall

Nominees: Miraj Retails | More | Reliance Fresh | Spencer's

Awards

IMAGES MOST ADMIRED FOOD & GROCERY RETAILER OF THE YEAR: REGIONAL SUPERMARKET



RATNADEEP
HAPPY SHOPPING SINCE 1987

Awardee: RATNADEEP

Received by: Manish Bhartiya, Director, Ratnadeep

Presented by: Dr. Prabodh Halde, Head Regulatory Affairs, Marico Limited,
Dr. Udayraj Prabhu, Marico and Nilesh Lele-AFST

Nominees: Heritage Fresh | Needs | Star Market

IMAGES MOST ADMIRED FOOD & GROCERY RETAILER OF THE YEAR: SPECIALTY STORE

MagSen
Fresh and Frozen
Convenient Food Shop

Awardee: MAGSON FRESH AND FROZEN

Received by: Rajesh Francis, Director, MagSon Fresh and Frozen Foods

Presented by: Damian Irzyk, Consul General, Consulate General of The
Republic of Poland In Mumbai and Naveen Gupta, CMO, Bikaji

Nominees: Food Hall | Fipola | Nuts n Spices | The Nut Lounge



IMAGES MOST ADMIRED FOOD & GROCERY INNOVATION OF THE YEAR



 **FALHARI**
a fruitful habit

Awardee: FALHARI

Received by: Gulshan Sharma, Founder, Falhari

Presented by: Arvind Kumar, CEO, Dukes

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Runner Up: BRITANNIA TREATANAUT ACTIVATION

Received by: Rahul Khandelwal, Modern Trade Head, Britannia

Presented by: Arvind Kumar, CEO, Dukes



Nominees: Britannia Bluewell & Blueforce | Food Hall | Golden Harvest Recipe Ready | Nutty Gritties | Spencer's | Popi Corn



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IMAGES MOST ADMIRED BRAND RETAIL PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR



Awardee: BIG BAZAAR & BRU COFFEE

Received by: **Kabir Gossain**, General Manager, Retail & Omnichannel, Modern Trade-HUL and **Dhiraj Kumar**, Sr. Manager, Future Group

Presented by: **Sudeep Goenka**, Director, Goldiee Group and **Mohammed Rafathullah**, CBO, Timla Foods



1st Runner Up: FUTURE GROUP & MCVITIE'S

Received by: **Prem Singh**, Category Manager, Future Group and **Abhishek Verma**, Sales Head, Future Group

Presented by: **Sudeep Goenka**, Director, Goldiee Group and **Mohammed Rafathullah**, Chief Business Officer, Timla Foods



2nd Runner Up: RELIANCE & BRITANNIA

Received by: **Rahul Khandelwal**, Head Modern Trade, Britannia

Presented by: **Sudeep Goenka**, Director, Goldiee Group and **Mohammed Rafathullah**, CBO, Timla Foods



Nominees: Amazon.com & Brylcreem | Apollo & Lifebuoy | Health & Glow and Ponds | MK Retail & HUL | More & Cornitos
Reliance & Lovely Bake Studio | Reliance & Pepsodent | Star Bazaar & Desi Atta Company

Retelling retail with self-checkout



- ⦿ **Mobile App**
- ⦿ **Handheld POS**
- ⦿ **Self Checkout Kiosk**



IMAGES MOST ADMIRED **TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE YEAR**



Perpule

Awardee: PERPULE

Received by: Jignesh Barfiwala, VP- Head of Business, Perpule

Presented by: Rahul Singh, President, National Restaurant Association of India

Nominees: SPAR | Big Bazaar-Future Pay | Spencer's

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Awardee: POPICORN

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Presented by: Manish Bhartiya, Director, Ratnadeep and Jean Mark, Yabon & Luxury Gourmet



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1st Runner Up: POSHN

Received by: **Rahul H. Kakkad**, Founder, Poshn

Presented by: **Harshita Gandhi**, Director, Tree of Life and **Ian Wright**, UK, Food and Drinks Federation



2nd Runner Up: THE GOOD LIFE COMPANY

Received by: **Bhuvan Dani**, Co-founder and Director, The Good Life Company and **Shariq Ashraf**, Co-founder, The Good Life Company

Presented by: **Harshita Gandhi**, Director, Tree of Life and **Ian Wright**, UK, Food and Drinks Federation



Nominees: Eighty2o Foods | FIRMROOTS-Timios | Inner Being wellness | Muyum Milk Foods | NumberMall | On The Run | Vahdam Teas

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Awardee: FINE FOODS

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Presented by: **Amit Lohani**, Convenor, FIFI and **Mark Wallace**, U.S Embassy



Awardee: SHRI MAHALKASHMI STORE, VADODARA

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IMAGES MOST ADMIRED CATEGORY PERFORMER OF THE YEAR



Awardee: SUSHANT JANGALE,
Manager, Liquor & Tobacco, Aditya Birla Retail Ltd.

Presented by: Vikas D Nahar, Happilo International and
Akash Agarwal, Director, Zoff Foods



Awardee: HAMEED KHAN,
Category Head, Meat, Fish & Livestock and Dairy, Foodhall

Presented by: Vikas D Nahar, Happilo International and
Akash Agarwal, Director, Zoff Foods



Awardee: RAJESH NAIDU,
Division Head, Fresh & Grocery - Staples, Fruit & Vegetables, Dairy, SPAR

Presented by: Vikas D Nahar, Happilo International and
Akash Agarwal, Director, Zoff Foods



Awardee: VARUN SINGHAL,
Category Manager, Beverage & Confectionery and
International Foods, Foodhall

Presented by: Akash Agarwal, Director, Zoff Foods



Awardee: HEMANT MECWAN,
Chief Head - Home, Personal Care & Beauty, Future Retail

Presented by: Vikas D Nahar, Happilo International and
Akash Agarwal, Director, Zoff Foods



Other Performers: Abhijeet Patole, Category Manager, Staples and Processed
Food & Savouries, Foodhall | Bhautesh Dave, Category Manager, Fresh Food,
Foodhall | Jyoti Agarwal, Manager, Staples, Aditya Birla Retail Limited



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BUDGET REACTIONS



→ The Budget will help to push the government's vision of propelling India into becoming a US\$10 trillion economy, which can be realized in the next eight years. The vision of a healthy India with focus on organic farming, coupled with initiatives for farmers and traders will spell growth for the retail and cash and carry sector. Better infrastructure will aid efficient supply chain management whilst continued efforts towards digitisation of five lakh villages will make e-commerce a household way of consumption in rural areas. The additional direct income for farmers, incentives to develop fisheries and benefits for animal husbandry will help reduce the stress on the sector, and uplift the grocery retail segment. The increased sourcing from SMEs will promote indigenous businesses whilst the GST reduction from 18% to 6% for traders with a turnover under Rs. 50 lakh will make it more sustainable for them to expand their business in the country.



Tanit Chearavanont
Managing Director,
LOTS Wholesale Solutions



Simon George
President, Cargill India

→ There is quite a strong rural economy and agri push in the Interim Budget. We are particularly optimistic about the Central Govt. sponsored PM Kisan Yojna, the Direct Benefit Transfers to small holder farmers. Though a lot more can be done but nevertheless a good move that will help farmers align better with the market. Many more initiatives including market reforms like implementing the model APMC Act, Essential Commodity Act, etc., are required to achieve the objective of doubling farmers' income by 2022. The interest subvention scheme of 5% to farmers engaged in animal husbandry and fisheries is also a positive development, and will help farmers through lower interest rates. Additionally, the MNREGA outlay increase to Rs. 60,000 crore will result in higher rural employment and infrastructure growth.

The Budget gives more money in the hands of the farmers and consumers through tax reforms, which will provide further impetus to the economy's growth. It is good to see the Indian government look at promoting the use of renewable power and becoming a world leader in transport revolution. Cargill as a global company also focuses on sustainable practices that can support the environment.

➔ **Amit Vatsyayan, Partner - Government and Public Sector, Advisory Services, EY India,**

says: There are many positives in the Budget for farmer income support, fisheries, and agro & food processing value chain. The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PMKSN) Scheme seeks to provide income support to 12 crore small and marginal farmers in the country. Under the PMKSN scheme, INR 6,000 per hectare in a year will be distributed to farmers in three installments, directly to their bank account. A scheme like PMKSN is a welcome move as it provides support to small and marginal farmers who are largely involved in subsistence farming and struggle to invest in agriculture inputs or technology. As this amount is transferred in three installments, it will help the farmer to invest in production inputs in peak production seasons.

The specific requirements of the fisheries sector are at variance from the way conventional agriculture is structured. For instance, the different touch points in the entire supply chain around fish and fish products, especially for the export component, is entirely different from agriculture and needs specific intervention. Additionally, infrastructure needs like cold chain requirements for fisheries and agriculture commodities are different and cannot be shared nor can the processing industries be likewise. Concerning the exports and forex realizations from it, a simple trend analysis assuming the usual business scenario shows that in the next five years, the export, both concerning quantity and value is expected to increase 2-2.5 times. A dedicated department for the fishery is a welcome move as it would enhance the growth of the sector.

Contract farming and linking farmers with the food processing sector is an important step to ensure better prices to them through the market



mechanism. The Budget also emphasizes the importance and need of doubling the farmer's income. In addition, the changes in minimum support price (fixing the MSP of all 22 crops at minimum 50% more than the cost) and establishing forward linkages for improved market access will not only increase farmer's share in the consumer economy but will also instill long term sustainability in the agricultural sector. Further, the focus on organic production, high-value agriculture, and agriculture export infrastructure subsidy including testing facilities and strengthening bilateral exports ties in emerging markets will boost the food processing units to scale up their uptake and provide remunerative prices to farmers. These would further build on our food security, value-added products and improve market competitiveness in agriculture export markets. Also, the increase in interest subvention and incentives for timely repayment of loans will not only increase the working capital of farmers but will also help in bringing credit discipline. It would also have a positive multiplier effect on the economy."



Rohit Sahni
Director, WK Life

➔ As a technology brand and retail stores owner, we are disappointed with the Budget. There is hardly anything for us. However, it is not that we were expecting much and especially with the Lok Sabha elections looming, the government was bound to make it people-centric. It is great to see that our farmers and jawans get some relief, but we had hoped for something more for the technology sector. The only mention of our industry came when the interim FM said that digitisation is really helping our country. Yet, our products are still at the higher slabs of GST. The earlier e-commerce policies did help us a bit, but something more in the Budget would have made us, the retail store owners, happier. The easy access to loans is a good takeaway though and it is good to know that the government is willing to help MSMEs. Still, we are taking heart from the fact that the middle-class population is getting tax exemptions. With this, the purchase of electronics products will surely increase, which will help our sales. Regardless of what it is, we would like to think that the Budget is indirectly helping us by improving the lifestyle of the overall country.

Budget

→ “It is heartening to see the Government’s continued focus on its flagship programs, Digital India and Make in India, as key drivers to the nation’s economic growth, with a greater focus on digitisation in the rural economy. In line with this agenda, the announcements to set up a national centre for Artificial Intelligence and development of an AI portal through identification of nine priority areas in the segment will be critical to promoting the adoption of these emerging technologies in the country and to position India as a front runner in this space across the globe. The extension of the GeM platform with a focus on supporting domestic trade and services, retail trading and welfare of traders augur well for the development of these sectors. The continued impetus to boost MSMEs and empower traders will contribute towards the growth of small businesses and foster innovation and employment. On the whole, we believe the Government’s thrust on technology along with the emphasis on internal trade in this year’s budget are the defining steps, the results of which will be crucial in realising the vision of the \$10-trillion economy in the long run.”



Vartul Jain
VP-Finance, GreyOrange



Mansoor Ali
Chief Sales & Marketing
Officer, Hamdard India

→ The Budget is pro-growth and fiscally prudent. Schemes such as Prime Minister Kisaan Samman Nidhi, the exemption of income tax that will create more stimulus for consumption, other sops for farmers, middle class and the introduction of pension schemes for the informal sector will all help in achieving the overarching consumption story of the country. This will ultimately increase consumers’ disposable income with more money in their hands. Initiatives like MGNREGA, PMGSY, focus on electrification of villages will also play a role in the development of infrastructure and raise the standard of living in rural India. All in all, the measures and policies introduced in the Budget will ensure more income for marginal and small farmers and more money to middle class to boost FMCG consumption.



→ A progressive Budget! It takes into account the issues being faced by small enterprises and in addressing these, the Budget will definitely have a positive impact on the startups and help to generate more jobs for the youth. The GST limit of 5% for daily use items is a relief for consumers at large and shall help in increasing revenues and sales for the retail businesses.



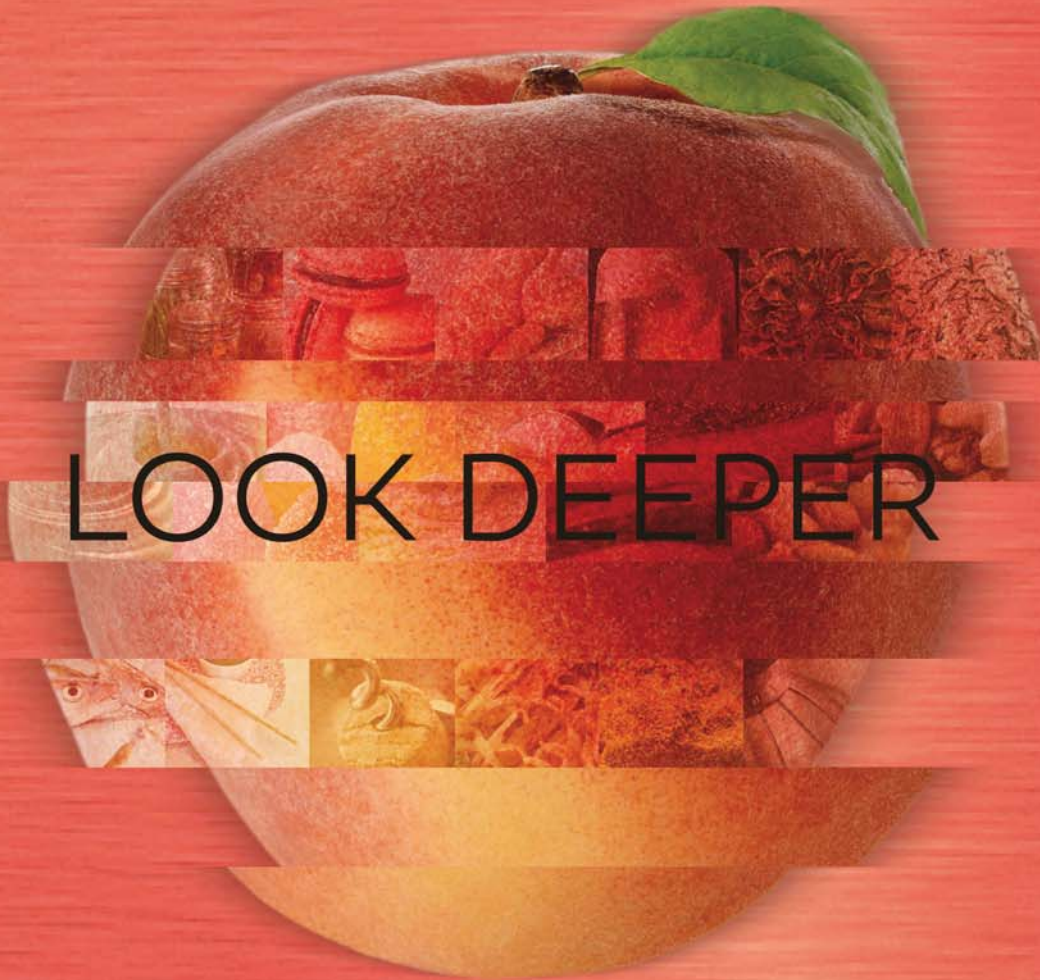
Anant Goel
Co-founder, Milkbasket



→ **Paresh Parekh, Partner, Leader Consumer & Retail Tax, EY**, says: Three key changes proposed in the Budget – higher personal disposable income due to higher tax rebate for up to Rs. 5 lakh; higher rural disposable income because of farmers package, interest subventions, etc; real estate and housing sector proposals like no notional tax on second home, capital gains tax exemption for two homes and no notional tax for unsold real estate inventories up to two years – all these three buckets of changes are potential game changers for the entire economy and the consumer sector in particular.



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Snacking Gets Sweeter

Bakery retail and cafe chain Angels in my Kitchen is a popular name across Delhi NCR and runs 12 stores along with a delivery service for a number of affluent neighbourhoods. Well-known for its healthy home-baked bread and an assortment of tea-time eats, the individualistic bakery line emphasizes on the value of tradition and insists on making products the way they were made centuries ago. In a conversation with Progressive Grocer, Directors, Bijoy Kr. Majhi and Bhupesh Jain discuss their brand's vision and key attributes.

Give us a brief overview of the history of your store chain and its growth and evolution over the years.

We started operations in 2003 in a small store in New Friends Colony (NCR), an up-market and affluent residential locality in South Delhi, and operated as a single outlet for three years in addition to working in institutional sales and the wedding market. In 2006, we opened our first large store and thereafter, grew at an approximate rate of a store a year, and are currently operating 12 stores. When we started operations, we entered the institutional supplies market, and became one of two vendors for Cafe Coffee Day, India's premier coffee retail chain, in Delhi NCR. We also tied up with Jiggs Kalra and Marut Sikka as the sole vendor for western desserts in the premium wedding catering segment. However, we exited from both these avenues between 2006 to 2008, and concentrated our focus on building our brand and setting up our own retail chain from there onwards. Over the years of building our brand, we have earned various accolades and awards from different bodies

and groups. We were the emerging bakery in the HT Crystals Awards in 2006, and were designated the best bakery (non five-star) in the TOI food guide and the HT Guide between 2005 to 2008.

Tell us about your store's product basket. What is the range of products at your store?

We have a wide range of products across the entire line of bakery and confectionery. From healthy breads, breakfast items, assorted tea-time eats to chocolates, cakes and pastries, our products range across the entire gamut of traditional bakery products.

Which product categories draw in the highest traffic?

Our confectionery segment is more popular across our customer segments, and accounts for more than half of our overall revenue. Our breads are very popular as they are based on healthy ingredients and appeal to our customers. Chocolate is popular and sells more in products like brownies, cakes, pastries and among dry products like cakes and muffins.



What is the price range of products available at your stores? Which price band/range is the most popular with customers?

Prices at our outlets range between a minimum of Rs. 40 and upto a maximum of Rs. 2000. Average bills range between 300-600 across different outlets.

What is the customer profile at your store? In terms of customer segments and demographics, which is your most prolific customer group?

Our customers will be from SEC A1 right up to C and even D in some cases. It's more about an educated customer who knows what they want, and are willing to pay for it. We would want to think of ourselves as a VFM brand, because we give very good quality at a reasonable price bracket.

What is the location strategy for your stores?

As a rule, we prefer not to locate our stores in malls, and concentrate on high-street markets and upper middle class to affluent neighborhood markets. We believe in being the small friendly bakery to many neighborhoods. Our sales strategy is also based on the same principle, wherein we don't look for top-notch locations, but rather gradually integrate ourselves into the neighborhood. Customers thereafter get to know about us through word-of-mouth, and generally start seeking us out.

What is the marketing positioning and customer proposition of your outlets?

As a bakery, we are strict on quality and don't use any pre-mixes or artificial flavours. Except for a blueberry compote, all our products use fresh ingredients and



age-old methods of cooking/baking. We pride ourselves on using grand-mom recipes, and insist on making products the way they were made centuries ago.

How would you describe your strengths and achievements?

Our major strengths lie in our background and impeccable product knowledge, which ensures we have a regular stream of innovative and front end products hitting our shelves at regular and short intervals. Apart from that, our team of employees are our bulwark, for with them, we can handle any large quantum of business, while ensuring that consistency and innovation is not compromised at any point. Our biggest achievement is the creation of our own brand, while having no business experience of any kind without any major financing assistance.

What is your marketing strategy and what steps have you taken to promote your stores?

Our marketing strategy till date has been predominantly "word-of-mouth" publicity. While we do use standees and other promotional material, its more about informing our customers of new and innovative products launched at the bakery. We actively use sampling as a prime sales enhancer. We find that creating new customers is best achieved by ensuring your current customers are satisfied and willing to tell others about their satisfaction. We have a concept of rewarding a reviewer, so that people are encouraged to tell others about their likes and dislikes at the stores. We also ensure that we have a hotline for feedback, which is always carried by an owner, so that any information or feedback is directly delivered to a decision maker who can take the right steps



Our major strengths lie in our background and impeccable product knowledge, which ensures we have a regular stream of innovative and front end products hitting our shelves at regular and short intervals.

— **Bijoy Kumar Majhi**
Director, Angels
in my Kitchen

SUPPLY CHAIN STRATEGY

We operate under a hub and spoke system, wherein we have one central commissary which supplies all finished and semi-finished products to all 12 outlets. We have taken it a step further by designating four stores as further hubs, based upon their size and overall sales. They act as stores for 2-4 outlets within their vicinity. For example, our Defence Colony store, by virtue of its location and sales, acts as a store for NFC, GK and Noida. We store some finished and semi-finished products here for further and rapid supply to the smaller store. Our supply system is not a once-a-day system and focuses on smaller and more frequent deliveries. That helps us in ensuring fresher products and reducing wastage across stores.



“
Our supply system is not a once-a-day system and focuses on smaller and more frequent deliveries. That helps us in ensuring fresher products and reducing wastage across stores.

— **Bhupesh Kumar Jain**
 Director, Angels
 in my Kitchen

immediately. While we have never done any major cross-promotional activities, we are open to the idea of tying up with brands which will have a symbiotic effect and lead to advantages for both of us. One of the reasons of not having any major tie-ups is because we have a very clear “only sell what we manufacture” policy. The only items we sell through out-sourcing are canned beverages and water. We have tried some cross-promotional activities with health juice manufacturers, but since a large part of our business comes from take-aways and delivery services, the quantum of sales of beverages for dine-in customers is not very high.

How do you ensure that your suppliers and distributors stick to quality standards and the best practice norms?

We have a great relationship with all our vendors and suppliers. We also have a regular testing and tasting system that ensures that the ingredients remain the same. Since our stakeholders know that we are very hands-on with our product, any such change is always clear and transparent. As we sell our products under our own brand, we ensure the best quality.

What are your benchmark criteria for identifying new manufacturers and suppliers?

Our prime criteria for tying up with any manufacturer/supplier is the product. If we feel that a particular product or ingredient is of value and will enhance our end offerings to the customer, we will actively try and tie up for regular supplies with them. Other terms and conditions are always there like payment systems, relevant processes, delivery timelines, etc.

Describe your customer service initiatives and any loyalty programs you offer.

We are an extremely customer focused organization, since we believe that our success is solely derived from the legions of satisfied and loyal consumers of our products. We believe that the customer is a reasonable and educated being, and by keeping our ears to the ground and by fulfilling their spoken and unspoken needs, we will be able to maintain growth in both numbers and sales. As a rule, we have had a feedback number posted on every SKU and customer information media (menu etc.), which is carried by an owner. We believe it is the one true hotline between us and the actual customer and ensures direct feedback and two-way communication. We have just launched our customer loyalty program known as Halo, which offers “brownie points” to our regular customers.



→ **FACT BOX**

- Retailer/ Brand Name: Angels in my Kitchen
- Launch Year: 2003
- Parent Company: Epicurean Foods Pvt. Ltd.
- Company Headquarters: New Delhi
- Key People: Bijoy Kr. Majhi and Bhupesh Kr. Jain
- Retail format of stores: Retail Bakery and Cafe
- Number of stores in operation and total retail area: 12 stores in Delhi NCR; 7,000 sq. ft.
- Average size of stores: 500 sq. ft.
- Operating structure of stores: All rented and self-operated
- SKU count in stores: 175 approx.
- Average daily footfall: 100
- Growth in same store sales: 15%
- Catchment of stores: 7 km radius
- Total number of employees: 100+

How prominent is the use of technology and digital engagement in your business model?

We have a live e-commerce enabled website, which is the only such web site by an artisan bakery in Delhi-NCR. It is payment-enabled, and offers delivery to designated areas across Delhi-NCR. We do not try and offer deadline based delivery systems, as the very nature and perishability of our products would make that difficult to sustain. We are in the process of making our own app, which will be launched in Delhi-NCR shortly.

What is your roadmap for the future and how do you see the chain growing?

As of now, we are concentrating on growing our business within Delhi-NCR, and increasing customer satisfaction while fine-tuning our business processes and standardization. Once we have everything in place, maybe within FY 18-19, we will be looking at increasing our reach to different metros across India. We have not finalized any specific growth path for that stage as of now. **PG**

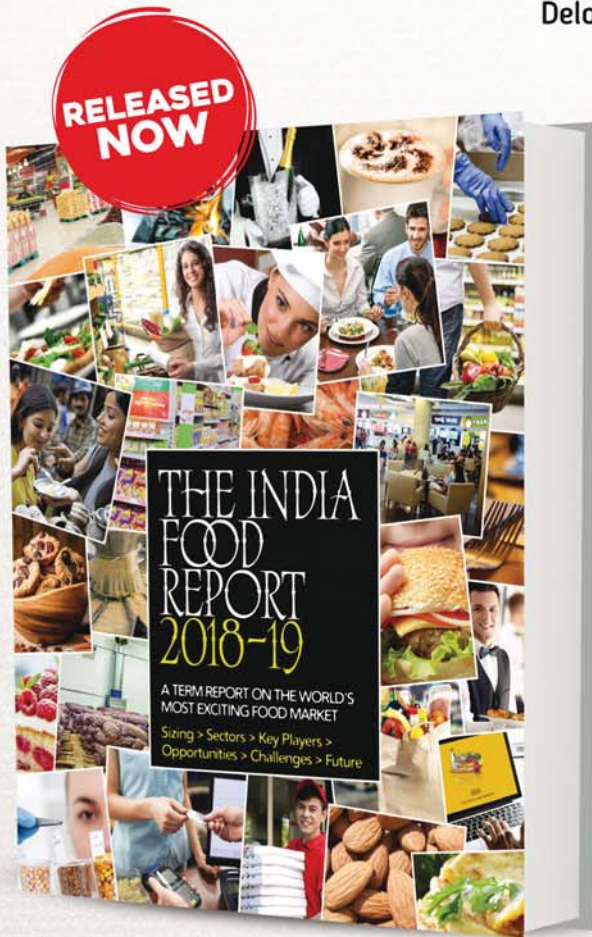
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Sizing > Sectors > Key Players > Opportunities > Challenges > Future

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Organizations and industry experts who have contributed to the making of the Report include **Mintel, Euromonitor, Technopak, GS1, Deloitte, Wazir, Maple Capital Advisors, CBRE, FIFI**, to name a few.



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Eat a healthy *diet to beat the depression blues*

Adding appropriate edibles to your diet along with an adequate amount of sleep is of prime importance for maintaining good mental health. But you must understand which foods encourage mental health and which ones send an alarm to your limbic system (emotion center), causing irritation. Consuming the right kind of diet will definitely make you feel more emotionally strong and less susceptible to the impact of stress and mood anxieties.

Dr. Siddhant Bhargava



A host of lifestyle aspects can lead to depression, but the one factor that's often unnoticed is the kind of food you are feeding your mouth with. Needless to say, that a nourishing diet plays a huge role in driving away sadness. Do you desire to eat sweet, salty, and fatty foods during the times you are feeling blue? Fret not, you are not alone, but if we consume better foods like whole wheat, lean proteins, and fresh fruits and vegetables, we automatically tend to short-circuit the junk food longings and have higher levels of energy and sharper psychological focus.

Adding the right kind of produce, seeds, and nuts to your daily diet will prove to be great mood boosters, thus keeping the unwanted anxiety at bay. Below mentioned are some of the foods that you can consider eating every day to feel good. These will surely provide the essential nutrients that your body needs to fight off brain inflammation, which leads to depression.



Include dark green leafy

vegetables: They are nutrient-dense inflammation fighter. If you are keen on refining your diet to maintain a healthy brain growth, you must never miss out on consumption of the rich in nutrient green leafy vegetables like kale and spinach. The greens, mushrooms, beans, are considered to be the foods with the most powerful immune-boosting and anticancer properties. Adding them to your diet regimen facilitate in preventing the cancerous alteration of normal cells and is known to keep the body equipped and ready to attack any precancerous or cancerous cells that may later develop. According to various studies that have been conducted, it has been found that cases of grave depression are associated with inflammation of the brain. Leafy greens have a capacity of combating against all kinds of swelling, and are the richest sources of vitamins A, C, E, and K, minerals, and phytochemicals.



Walnuts are great mood

boosters: When consumed in a moderate quantity, most nuts are an exceptional source of proteins and

heart-healthy monounsaturated fats. But walnuts definitely seem to have an upper hand when it comes to reducing the indications of depression owing to the fact that these are one of the richest plant sources of omega-3 fatty acids, and it is a known fact that omega-3 fatty acids upkeep the brain function and mitigate signs of depression. The omega-3s present in walnuts brace overall brain health. Additionally, it is important to note that a complete absence of omega-3 fatty acids in the diet may be one of the reasons causing psychiatric disorders.



Avocado increases brainpower:

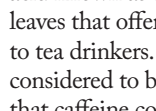
Try incorporating a whole avocado every day in your salad for lunch.

These nutritive edibles are power foods because, again, they contain healthy fat that your brain requires in order to function effortlessly. Three-fourths of the total calories contained in an avocado are from fat, typically monounsaturated fat, in the form of oleic acid, which is responsible for boosting brainpower.



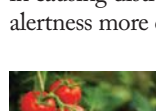
Green tea:

Green tea is an extremely rich source of antioxidants, but its anxiety-fighting properties can be outlined to the presence of an amino acid known as theanine. This is naturally found in tea leaves that offers an anti-depression relaxation advantage to tea drinkers. The existence of theanine in green tea is considered to be mainly accountable for the observation that caffeine consumption in coffee drinkers is more apt in causing distress as opposed to the stress-free mental alertness more common to tea drinkers.



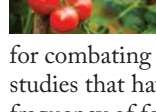
Tomatoes are great depression

fighters: Tomatoes comprise a whole lot of folic acid and alpha-lipoic acid, both of which are extremely beneficial for combating depression. Various researches and studies that have been conducted reveal a higher frequency of folate deficit in patients suffering from anxiety. Folic acid has a capability of preventing an additional amount of homocysteine — which limits the creation of significant neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine from developing in the body. Alpha-lipoic acid aids the body in converting glucose into energy, and therefore soothes mood.



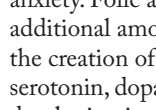
Apples are full of antioxidants

and necessary fibers: It is true that eating an apple a day helps keep the doctor at bay. But when an apple is consumed with the rest of super healthy foods, it



Dark chocolate:

It has been found that eating dark chocolate can really help lift up your mood. This is because dark chocolate aids to release serotonin and unwind the blood vessels of the cardiovascular system. Just remember that dark chocolate is unbelievably calorie-dense, with about 150 calories per ounce, so eat just one small piece at a time.



Turmeric is an anxiety reliever:

If you're feeling miserable and dejected, this bold spice found in many Indian and Asian curries is an outstanding way to lift up your mood, among its other health benefits. Thanks to its profound anti-inflammatory activity, turmeric can be considered as one of the spices of life that comprises the active compounds turmerones and curcuminoids, which have been allied with a wide variety of health advantages.



So, if you have been looking for a new weapon

in the fight against depression, these good-mood foods have shown a lot of promise in offering a great amount of relief. **PG**



helps to keep the psychiatrist away, at least for stretches of time. Just like berries, apples are high in their quantity of antioxidants, which can avert and mend the oxidation impairment and inflammation on the cellular level. Also, being full of essential soluble fiber, the fruit stabilizes swings of blood sugar.

If you are keen on refining your diet to maintain a healthy brain growth, you must never miss out on consumption of the rich in nutrient green leafy vegetables like kale and spinach.



The writer is Co-Founder, Fitness & Nutritional Scientist - Food Darzee, a health and nutrition company that provides a unique customer experience combining nutrition, food and fitness to help you achieve your health and fitness goals.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand, wearing a white dress shirt and a dark grey suit jacket, holding a single, vibrant green leaf. The hand is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, with the thumb and index finger gently gripping the stem of the leaf. The leaf is heart-shaped with prominent veins and is held against the lapel of the suit jacket. The background is a soft-focus view of the person's torso and the texture of the suit fabric.

Sustainable Visions

Helping the environment has become a key part of grocers' CR platforms.

By **Bridget Goldschmidt**

These days, it isn't enough for a company just to do business – it has to conduct itself as a responsible corporate citizen.

A growing number of consumers and prospective employees want to know that a company doesn't just make money, but that it also helps make the community, region and country in which it operates a better place.

Along with traditional philanthropic causes, sustainability has increasingly become a corporate responsibility priority for grocers.

For instance, at SpartanNash, local products serve several purposes.

"A key component of our corporate responsibility (CR) is providing a 'local flavor' in our stores whenever possible, because we understand that locally grown and produced items travel fewer miles to store shelves, which improves quality and reduces the product's environmental footprint,"

explains Meredith Gremel, VP, corporate affairs and communications at the Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer and distributor, and executive director of the SpartanNash Foundation. "At SpartanNash, we are passionate about supporting local farmers and food businesses, and are dedicated to helping them succeed through merchandising opportunities in our stores."

Adds Gremel: "This also strengthens our relationship with the communities we serve, which is a key focus of our corporate responsibility programs." All of this is set in motion, she points out, by the fact that "customers have a growing appetite for locally grown items."

These objectives are in keeping with the grocer's "corporate responsibility 2017 dashboard [that] includes both environmental sustainability and social responsibility initiatives," she points out. "On the environmental side, our key initiatives are waste and energy reduction."

Another way that SpartanNash champions sustainability is through Earth Week donation drives in partnership with Goodwill Industries, which the grocer has held for the past seven years at 80 of its corporate-owned stores in five states.

“Since 2011, SpartanNash associates and store guests have diverted more than 211,000 pounds of materials from landfills, and Goodwill has converted these donations into approximately 45,275 hours of workforce redevelopment training for people in their local communities,” notes Gremel, adding that in 2017, the grocer rewarded anyone who dropped off a donation at a participating Goodwill organization with a coupon for \$10 off a \$25-or-more purchase at one of its stores. “The Earth Week coupon successfully engaged customers in our recycling efforts, as more than 2,100 customers redeemed the coupon,” she says.

What’s more, the company is able to leverage the occasion to encourage even greater shopper and employee participation.

“In addition to our Goodwill donation drives, our Earth Week campaign employs a number of creative ways to involve both store guests and SpartanNash associates in our CR efforts,” observes Gremel.

“Leading up to Earth Week, we held a reusable-bag design contest and asked our store guests, associates and communities from across the U.S. to submit digital designs that represent local state pride in Nebraska, North Dakota and Michigan. Three winners were chosen, and their winning designs [were] featured on limited-edition reusable grocery shopping bags sold in SpartanNash corporate-owned stores this [past] fall. The reusable bags contain up to 20 percent recycled material, and feature our CR message and information about the winning artist on the sides.”

Further, she notes: “Many of our stores’ bakeries also participated in an Earth-themed bakery contest, displaying their creative – and delicious – homages to the environment. The items were for sale to our store guests as well.”

SpartanNash was pleased by the response to these contests, according to Gremel: “Both of these efforts engaged our associates and our customers in our sustainability efforts – and brought in an element of friendly competition.”

Licensed to Chill – and More

For its part, Pittsburgh-based Giant Eagle endeavors to attain the highest sustainability standards to demonstrate its commitment to aiding the environment.

“We ... work diligently to ensure operational sustainability in all retail locations throughout the company’s footprint,” says company spokeswoman Jannah Jablonowski. “For example, recent efforts to continue to reduce our refrigerant emission rate have



DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH

SpartanNash teams with Goodwill Industries for Earth Week donation drives that divert materials from landfills.



READ ALL ABOUT IT

In common with Giant Eagle, SpartanNash uses signage such as this door cling decal to inform shoppers of energy efficiency measures implemented in its stores.

resulted in a leak rate that is well below the industry average and recognized with multiple GreenChill achievements.”

The grocer’s sustainability accomplishments don’t end there, however. “Giant Eagle was the third grocery chain to enroll all of their stores in the Grocery Stewardship Certification (GSC) program,” after Hannaford Supermarkets and Weis Markets, notes Peter Cooke, GSC program manager at Plymouth, Mass.-based nonprofit organization Manomet. “In an effort to improve team member engagement in the management of store-level sustainable practices, Giant Eagle began working toward chain-wide Grocery



WASTE MANAGEMENT
 Jerry Campbell serves as the produce lead for SpartanNash's food waste recycling pilot program, which rolled out last year.



second life, fighting hunger and reducing our food disposal costs.”

Additionally, in 2016, 10 SpartanNash grocery stores – five in Michigan and five in Nebraska – rolled out a food waste recycling pilot program “with the goal of diverting as much produce, bakery and dairy waste as possible into the food-recycling dumpster instead of the trash dumpster,” recounts Gremel. “Our partner collected the material, partnering with local cattle farms in Kennard, Neb., and Webberville, Mich., where the watermelons, carrots, cupcakes, bananas and other produce were blended down to a smaller ration size and mixed with grains, corn, wheat and other nutrients to create the final cattle-feed product.”

Along with food waste, Gremel predicts, “Sustainable packaging and sustainable food sources will ... continue to gain traction” as issues that grocers address through corporate responsibility efforts. “Our category managers study the continuously changing market, trends and consumer preferences, so they have the knowledge and expertise about how to best get the right products onto store shelves,” she adds. “We will continue to work with them to advance our corporate responsibility efforts and messages, so our customers are able to find the products they need and can feel good about their purchases.”

Giant Eagle, meanwhile, has in recent years begun “partnering with fresh food rescue programs, like 412 Food Rescue in Pittsburgh, that enable us to donate products that conventional food banks cannot accommodate, to meet an immediate need in the area and reduce overall food waste,” observes Jablonowski.

Getting the Word Out

SpartanNash has found signage to be particularly effective in making customers aware of its eco-friendly efforts, including the in-store signs, photos and information it uses to highlight local products and farmers across its store footprint.

“In September, we celebrated the grand reopening of our Forest Hills Foods store in Grand Rapids, Mich., showcasing [among other things] our commitment to local flavor ... and a focus on environmental sustainability programs,” says Gremel. “Store guests can ... learn about Forest Hills Foods’ energy-efficiency improvements and savings and recycling options from signage throughout the store.” These improvements, which

Stewardship Certification in 2015. Through their work with the GSC, each Giant Eagle supermarket location has designated a sustainability coach and completed our workbook-based program designed to foster continuous improvement and increase accountability.”

As a result of its participation in this program, in which more than 700 grocery stores nationwide are enrolled, Manomet estimates that Giant Eagle annually saves nearly 6,000 tons of waste from going to landfills; more than 45 million gallons of water from being used; and about 260,000 tons of greenhouse gas from being released.

Beyond what she deems “behind-the-scenes’ initiatives” like the above, Jablonowski notes that “we also understand the need to provide a robust assortment of locally and sustainably sourced and organic offerings to our customers. For example, we work with Sustainable Fisheries Partnership and other nongovernmental organizations to ensure our customers can be confident that the seafood they purchase in Giant Eagle or Market District has been sourced from fisheries and organizations that take every measure to lessen their environmental impact.”

In common with SpartanNash, the company features sustainability as a key pillar of its corporate responsibility agenda. “At Giant Eagle, we are committed to making socially and environmentally responsible business decisions that have a positive impact on the communities we serve,” says Jablonowski.

Waste Not, Want Not

In its ongoing mission to promote sustainability, SpartanNash has identified a key issue. “Food waste is a big concern in our country – and being in the grocery industry, we have a real opportunity to reduce food waste, minimize damage and divert products,” notes Gremel. “We have employed a number of innovative programs and partnered with local food banks and pantries in all of the communities we serve. ... Our merchandising teams also donate display products from our food shows to local food banks and pantries. This is product that would have otherwise gone to the landfill, but through these partnerships, we are giving food a

“**Food waste is a big concern in our country – and being in the grocery industry, we have a real opportunity to reduce food waste, minimize damage and divert products.**”

— Meredith Gremel
 SpartanNash

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“As we have noted increased customer interest in sustainability touch points, we strive to engage customers with strategically integrated signage throughout the store.”

— Jannah Jablonowski
Giant Eagle

include the installation of LED interior and exterior lighting, lights that dim to 50 percent when there’s no activity nearby, glass doors on produce cases, and energy-efficient entry and exit doors, should enable the store to reduce its annual energy consumption by 1.4 billion BTUs – equivalent to the greenhouse gas emissions created annually by 38 homes’ electricity use, or 592 barrels of oil consumed.

“As we continue with store remodels, we will increase our corporate responsibility signage,” asserts Gremel. “By sharing our corporate responsibility messages with store guests and associates as they shop the store, we can demonstrate how our efforts are having an immediate and lasting impact on our local communities and on our environment.” The grocer also published an inaugural corporate responsibility report last year, highlighting its commitments and accomplishments in this area.

Giant Eagle is a proponent of similar methods. “As we have noted increased customer interest in sustainability touch points, we strive to engage customers with strategically integrated signage throughout the store,” says Jablonowski. “In our Market District locations, local purveyors and farmers are highlighted with dedicated displays and callouts above their products, and highlighted in the monthly newsletter and in proactive media outreach. Energy Star and LEED-certified buildings have specific callouts, and locations that are fitted with dairy doors have vinyl cling decals on the doors to educate customers on the energy-saving benefits. Additional information about many of our sustainability initiatives are publicly available on our website, and details are in our annual corporate social responsibility report.”

The important thing is for grocers to publicize their sustainability strides – and dry published statistics may not be the best way to do that.

“When it comes to sustainability, the consumer need to feel a connection can be particularly powerful,” notes Andy Harig, senior director for

sustainability, tax and trade at Arlington, Va.-based Food Marketing Institute (FMI), in a blog post published on the organization’s website last April. “Grocers are committed to improving lives outside of their stores by dedicating time and resources to enhancing their communities through sustainability efforts, but many retailers seem sheepish about sharing these efforts, or hide them away in annual sustainability reports that very few consumers access.”

According to Harig, consumers “want to see behind the numbers to what these efforts really mean. Data is always impressive, but how food retailers tell the story of sustainability to consumers matters more than ever. ... Successful businesses depend on the ability to tell a story that compels organizations forward and harnesses the authentic connection between a brand and a customer. Strategic storytelling transcends company narratives and has become a powerful skill that can better frame and impart experiences and knowledge to others.”

He believes that “telling this story can be a powerful tool that transcends marketing and educates consumers about the kind of company you are today and aspire to be tomorrow.”

Why Do it?

For retailers that undertake sustainability programs, the benefits can be substantial.

“Most customers prefer to purchase products or shop at retailers where sustainability is a key part of the corporate strategy and brand,” says Manomet’s Cooke, while FMI’s Harig echoes in his blog post, “Consumers ... want to feel like the store where they shop and where they get their favorite things shares their broader values.”

Highly prized as it is, shopper good will isn’t the only advantage, though. “Additionally, improving operations and efficiency through sustainable operating practices can reduce costs and dramatically shrink environmental footprint,” observes Cooke. “When approached purposefully, these efforts engage employees and help attract and retain talent, thus increasing productivity and reducing recruitment costs. Food retailers who have integrated sustainability into corporate strategy have also reduced material business risk and improved their company reputation.”

Despite the challenges inherent in living up to their sustainability commitments, grocers are firm believers in the worth – in more ways than one – of such endeavors. Referencing SpartanNash’s investment in fleet efficiencies, which increased the company’s miles per gallon and reduced its fuel consumption – “very important when the fleet travels more than 55 million miles per year” – Gremel notes, “Our environmental initiatives to reduce energy and fuel consumption are not only good for the planet – they also [positively] impact our bottom line.” **PG**



LOCAL HERO
SpartanNash deploys signage highlighting its local produce offerings, and the farmers who produce it, as part of its commitment to sustainability.



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