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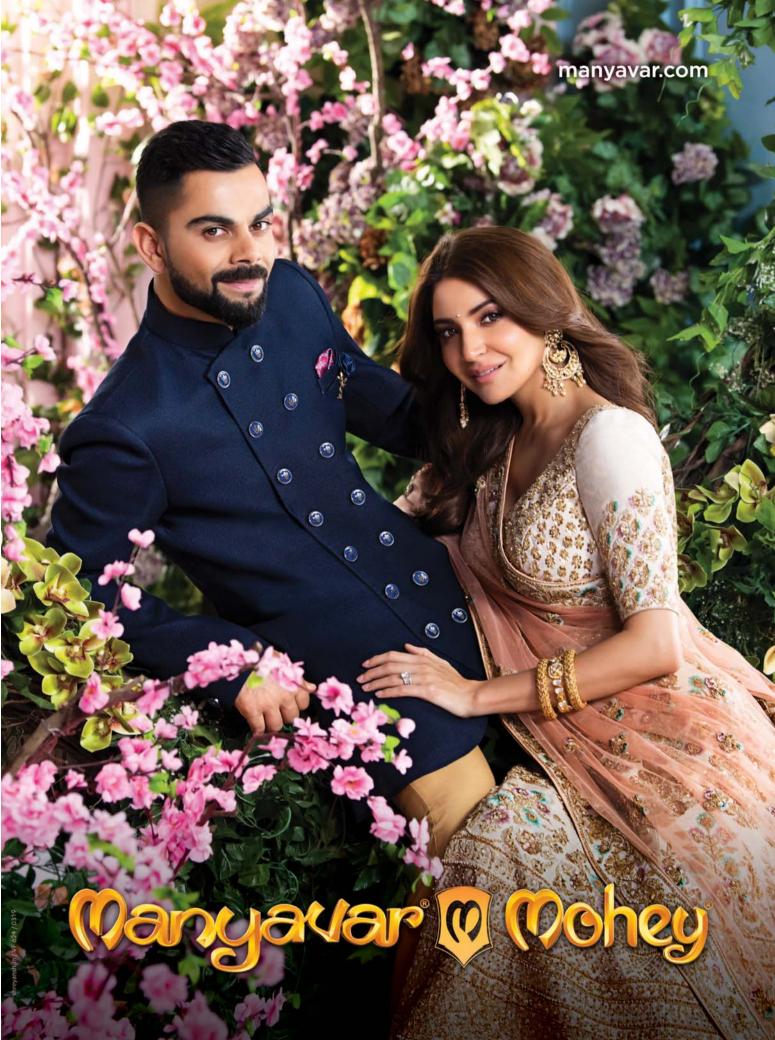
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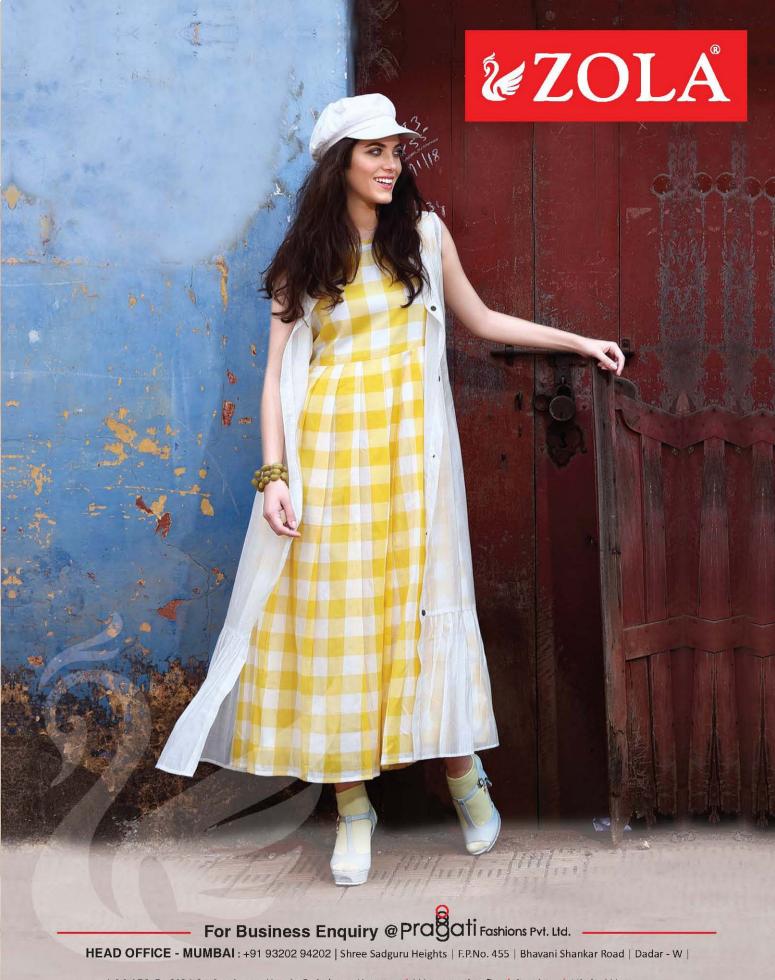




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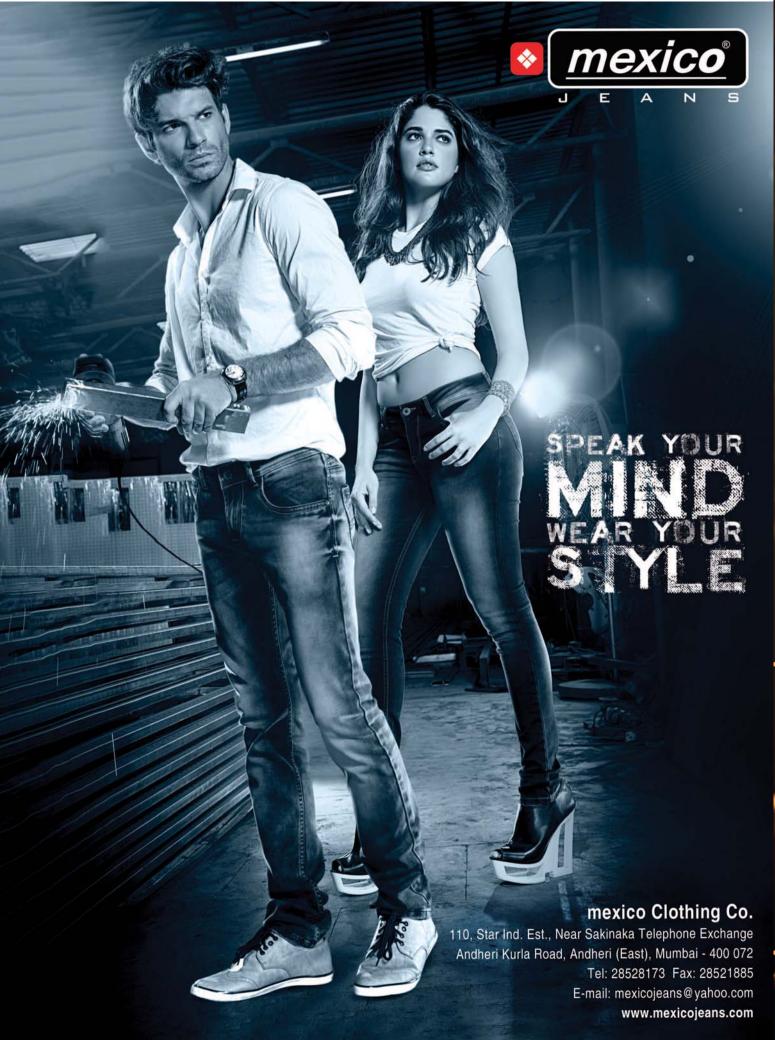


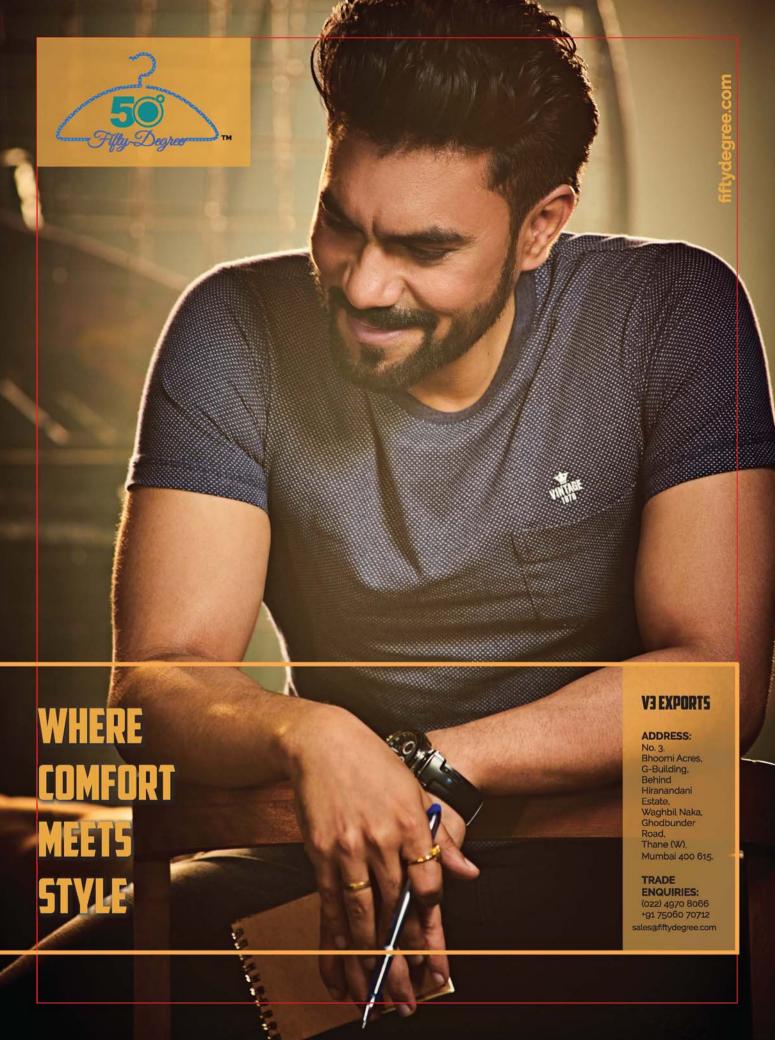
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MAGES BUSINESS OF FASHION

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Dear all.

Welcome to March, a high adrenaline month for all of us at the IMAGES Group for obvious reasons. As I write this, everyone at the office is busy in putting together a bigger and better edition of the India Fashion Forum 2019 (IFF). This issue will be a tribute to the upcoming forum, complete with a curtain raiser to the event

In keeping with our flagship event, we bring you the third annual chapter of 'Meet the Masters'. Like in previous years, this edition attempts to pick the minds of some of the most prominent and visionary stalwarts of the fashion industry. It is our firm belief that CXOs of the fashion retail industry, as the fountainheads of thought, are the ones that will shape India's fashion vision in the coming years. And as the industry is poised for quantum growth, it is absolutely critical to hear them out

The Indian fashion retail market is progressing with giant strides, propelled by increased penetration of organised retail, which in-turn rides the rising disposable incomes, changing demographics, increasing brand consciousness and the e-commerce boom. In this competitive, modern age, retailers are required to have comprehensive insights to keep pace with concurrent market dynamics and address challenges and this is where the invaluable insight of these retail behemoths come handy. We hope that their knowledge laden insights will encourage and aid you to re-evaluate and reshape your fashion retail aspirations and pave the next way forward.

In the meanwhile, I look forward to seeing you all at the India Fashion Forum 2019, Renaissance, Mumbai on the 27th and 28th March 2019. This year, we aim to celebrate and honour the developments and achievements in the field of fashion retail in the last one year and as it does every year, this year too will host a venerable gathering of the who's who of the industry in the country.

Cheers!

Amitabh Taneja

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Meet The Masters: Indian Fashion Retail's Trendsetters

IMAGES Business of Fashion brings you the third edition of 'Meet the Masters', a handpicked list of some of the great minds of the fashion industry, who have, through their perseverance and business acumen over the years, shaped fashion retail in India

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THE EVOLVING NARRATIVE OF **DESIGNER WEAR IN INDIA** THROUGH E-COMMERCE

Cities like Pune, Surat, Indore, Chandigarh amongst others have always been high on the fashion radar but with very little or no physical presence from the designers. The challenge of infrastructure should never withhold the consumers from engaging with enhanced selection of clothes and homegrown designers...

Aparna Batra, Head - Designer Wear & Luxury, Amazon Fashion

arry Winston once said, "People will stare. Make it worth their while." The designer presents his vision on the runway through his craftsmanship. The apparels and accessories designed, articulate his learning, emotions and creativity summed in a collection. A designer, much like an artist wants his creation to reach broader horizons, instead of being limited to the spectators at his fashion show or select metros. For a vast country like India with a lot of population in Tier II and III cities, and the lack of infrastructural support, 'accessibility' however can be a challenge.

The Indian society broadly has a deep understanding of culture and appreciation for art, which make us a potential market for designer wear, given our natural inclination towards aesthetics. Cities like Pune, Surat, Indore, Chandigarh amongst others have always been high on the fashion radar but with very little or no physical presence from the designers. The challenge of infrastructure, in my opinion, should never withhold the consumers from engaging with enhanced selection of clothes and homegrown designers.

Democratising Designer Wear in India Through E-Commerce

The mature Indian consumer does prefer bespoke products whether art, jewellery or apparel and therefore offering them the exciting opportunity to buy their favourite brand online, on their time and at her convenience makes this an exciting space to build. The uber aim of e-commerce with accessibility and affordability can help democratize designer wear by branding young labels, eclectic designers just breaking into their own as



well as the celebrity iconic designer brands all housed together to make sure every customer visiting the store feels suitably inspired but never intimidated.

It's essential to justify designer wear that combines inspiring aesthetics of designers with high quality imagery and accurate size charts in a bid to replicate their offline experience online. With detailed product pages and information on the designers readily available, the experience replicates each designer's individual ethos carefully. The products are shipped in special packaging for the dedicated boutique, delighting the customer even further with a compelling shopping experience.

Designer Boutique: Veterans & Emerging Talent on One Platform

Having understood the subtle nuances of this industry and the gaps therein, the Designer Boutique on Amazon Fashion was set up to democratise designer wear in India. The immense potential and demand for dressing well is prevalent across the country, to capitalise on the wide reach of ecommerce only helps in bridging the gaps.

We launched the Designer Boutique in 2017 at the Amazon India Fashion Week Grand Finale, where in we introduced the concept of 'See Now Buy Now' (the shop-able runway) for the first time in India. Our customers from across the country engaged with designer wear and the runway at the click of a button, eliminating the wait for their favourite outfit to hit the stores. The mundane format of a fashion show became engaging and the response generated was tremendous. With 52 designers on boarded on DBA, we took our first step towards a transformation bringing in the new fashion narrative of 'accessibility, discoverability and selection' for designer wear in India. At present within a year, we have scaled up to offer 180+ designers, offering a selection from established and emerging designers. The awareness and interest in buying wardrobe pieces that stand out has definitely increased over time.

In essence, this is a new narrative that has served as a platform for younger and emerging designers from across the country to display













their selection. For instance, we tied up with Pearl Academy and on boarded selection from students and alumni of the school. This enabled discoverability and inclusivity allowing us to cater to various preferences and pockets. Interestingly, consumers are keen on experimenting with different labels given they have a distinct personality. This is true of non-metros as well. Eventually, the aspiration remains to dress in garments that are handcrafted with care.



Customer Response To Designer Wear Since Launch of DBA

The awareness and interest in buying wardrobe pieces that stand out has definitely increased over time. While accessibility and affordability are crucial, it is essential to create a pleasant shopping experience that justifies the essence of the product sold on the marketplace. The shopping for designer wear has to be a pleasant, engaging and bespoke experience whether online or offline.

To celebrate the first anniversary on DBA, we launched The Treasure Trove. based on our belief that legacy and heritage pieces are not old fashioned or dated, instead must be seen as classic pieces that remain relevant to younger consumers today. This selection of designer pieces allowed us to handpick designs that not only offered a mix of styles but also an affordable range of select pieces that would excite customers' country wide. JJ Valaya, Ritu Kumar, Ashima Leena, Abraham and Thakore, Rajesh Pratap, along with AM PM, Rohit Gandhi Rahul Khanna, Pankaj & Nidhi and the ever youthful

Rina Dhaka put together a collection that has sophisticated nuances but also the effervescence and fun that would appeal to our younger consumers with prices starting at ₹6,000. The boutique has seen immense traction not just in ready to wear labels but also traditional wedding wear. Whilst Treasure Trove is a curated experience with a select number of products on offer; overall the Designer Boutique at Amazon continues to introduce new designers weekly and works closely with a mix of younger labels and well recognized names to continually offer new selection to customers pan country. We have specially focused on creating high quality imagery that will bring out the beauty and versatility of the garment to our customers.

From an online perspective our learnings hint at presenting an engaging buying experience that allows the customers to understand the designer, the product, the sizing and other key inputs before they make a purchase sitting far away in cities like Guwahati, Rajkot, Pune, Chandigarh as well Kochi along with Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Bangalore etc.

This is definitely a space that will grow in the near future, it is exciting for us to be a part of the momentum and witness a paradigm shift in the buying behavior of the Indian consumer. The key element here will remain innovation and technology will have a major role to play in offering a comprehensive shopping experience.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Aparna Batra, Head - Designer Wear & Luxury, Amazon Fashion

With over 2 decades of experience in the fashion and design industry, Aparna Batra has successfully launched the Designer Boutique at Amazon and has conceptualised the grand finales for Amazon India Fashion Week. Aparna is an alumina of Academy of Fine Arts, Florence and a published author.



HOW THE ONLINE SPACE IS SHAPING THE BUSINESS OF FASHION BRANDS IN INDIA

When one thinks of e-commerce, the first category that comes to mind is fashion and when one talks about fashion, it is the online space that is the first place people think to look for apparel most in vogue. IMAGES Business of Fashion takes a look at how e-commerce has shaped the fashion industry in India...

Zainab S Kazi

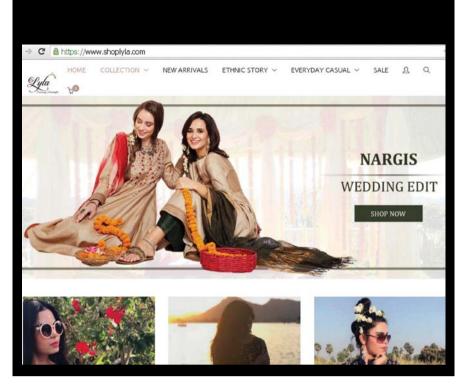
The Market Overview

in vogue.

To set the context of the story, we hear from one of the early entrants in the field to go online with their collection for women's wear. Dr. Lucky Yadav, Founder, Lyla, says, "We started the brand by selling in the online space in 2013: there have been a lot of transformations since then. That time, the online space was just starting to open up and we got an opportunity to scale quickly. However, in the last two years the space has become really crowded and discount driven. It definitely helps to reach more customers especially for brands that are not selling offline. Online has completely changed the way one would do business. Now anyone can sell online, people start business from their homes since no real infrastructure or investment is required."

similarities, it is only natural that they are famously paired together and hence when one thinks of e-commerce, the first category that comes to mind is fashion and when one talks about fashion, it is the online space that is the first place people think to look for apparel most

Reiterating the same is **Vijay Pal Singh Johal, Director, Truffle Collection**. "After selling a million pairs in UK, we tapped the growing market of India through e-commerce.
E-commerce has helped us reach a lot of Indian households and is vastly shaping up our business," he says.



Launched in 2018, Raisin is making a mark in the women's ethnic wear category and according to its **cofounder, Vikash Pacheriwal**,

e-commerce has hugely impacted the brand's sales, marketing and positioning as it has been able to reach a vast audience across all corners of the country and overseas. "We are available on all online e-commerce giants and have our own exclusive portal as well. Collaborations with digital influencers and celebrities have garnered a huge reach across our market audience," says Pacheriwal.

Not restricted to just start-ups, the online space is helping well-established brands reach every nook and corner of the country and offer their products to aspiring customers. According to

Atul Garg, Chief Marketing Officer, Baggit, thanks to e-commerce, there has been tremendous increase in terms of reach and sales in non metros (Tier II/III cities and beyond). He cites the feedback from these places on products and pricing that have helped them gain confidence in launching their online specific value brand 'gg'.

Revealing the influence of e-commerce on the brand's business, Garg says, "E-commerce has been an important revenue contributor by double digit Y-o-Y growth thus contributing to the top line numbers."

Garg also adds in the challenges that brands like his face when it comes to setting up their presence in the online space, "The challenging side is that technology requires huge investments across the value chain, on regular basis. Currently, we are revamping the frontend and backend of e-commerce and also investing in omni-channel strategies to provide seamless shopping experience to our customers."

Parul Sharma, E-Commerce
Manager, Numero Uno says, "We can
see that e-commerce is creating the
biggest revolution in the retail industry,
and this trend would continue in the
years to come. Apparels are no longer
considered durable items and instead,
people are now chasing trends and
hunting for deals. The business of
fashion for 2019 will grow at a steady
pace since customers are finding it
easier to find fast fashion with exciting
deals every now and then."

To accentuate her point on the growing thrust of fashion and retail in the e-commerce space she talks about how the apparel and lifestyle industry together have contributed to about 30 percent of the online retail sales in 2018 in India. "The figures showcase the potential influence of fashion as a category and going by the way we see so many start-ups entering this field, the space is only getting better," she adds.



"Online has completely changed the way one would do business. Now anyone can sell online, people start business from their homes since no real infrastructure or investment is required"

–Dr. Lucky Yadav, Founder, Lyla

The CEO and Co-Founder of Campus

Sutra—which is gaining popularity with its athleisure range of apparels—Dhiraj Agarwal says, "We have seen that whenever a new channel starts, customers gravitate towards it. This happened when brands like Levi's entered the country a couple of decades ago; this was also obvious when MBOs

>





"Online enables discovery, provides a sense of convenience to our customers with speedy logistics and gives an endless window to showcase the depth of our products"

-Tanvi & Shivani, Co-Founders, FabAlley like Shoppers' Stop opened in the 90s. E-commerce provided the opportunity for new-age DNVBs (Digital Native Vertical Brands) such as Campus Sutra with opportunities to establish themselves and scale rapidly in step with the Indian consumers expanding aspirations thanks to (consumers') greater exposure, awareness and increasing prosperity and overall growth of the economy."

Agarwal credits the e-commerce channel for providing them with a platform to meet consumer expectations for 'anytime-anywhere' availability and actually deliver on the promise of fast fashion.

Revealing the advantages that come bundled up with online presence, Tanvi Malik, Co-Founder, FabAlley and Indya states, "Both our brands are present online and offline, and we have seen a lot of emerging synergies between the two channels. Online enables discovery, provides a sense of convenience to our customers with speedy logistics and gives an endless window to showcase the depth of our products. Since women are becoming more tech-savvy, independent and shorter on time due to working hours. our online channels enable them to conveniently shop on our websites."



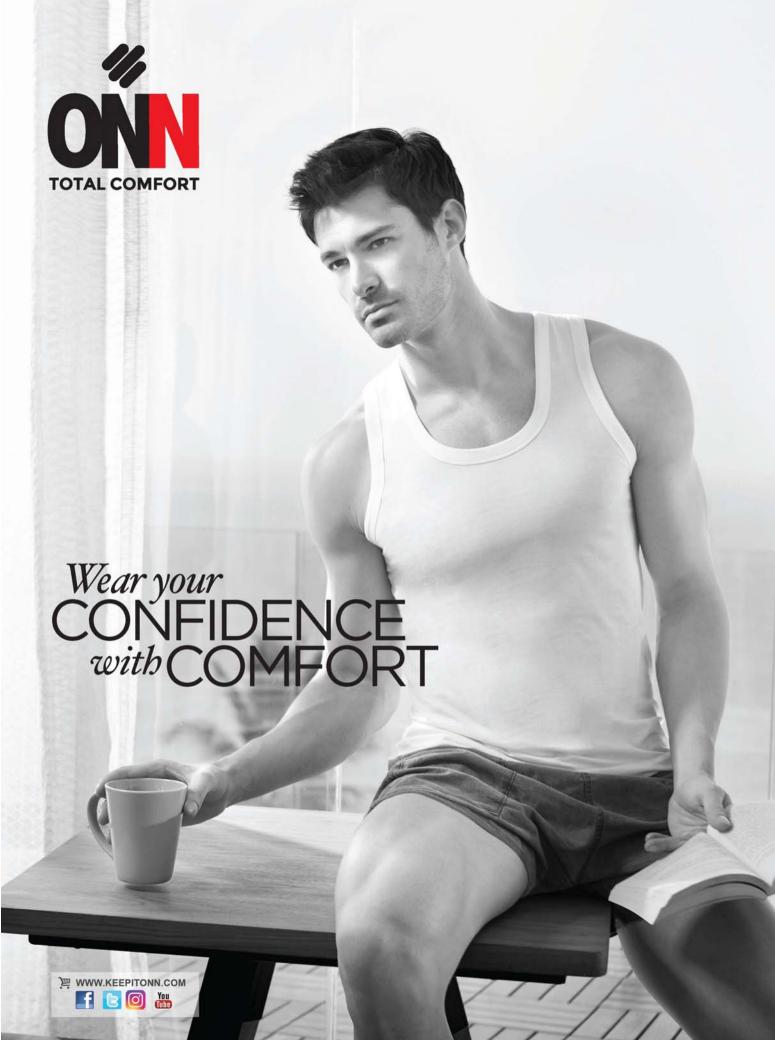
"E-commerce has hugely impacted the brand's sales, marketing and positioning as it has been able to reach a vast audience across all corners of the country and overseas"

-Vikash Pacheriwal, Founder, Raisin

In the year that just went by, Malik and her team launched Indya's website, which caters to 25+ countries. According to her, the brand is seeing a huge demand by NRI customers in the US, UK, Canada, Dubai and other countries.

Where e-commerce exposure is considered a win-win for any brand, Tabby Bhatia, Director, Voganow. com believes that too much of a good thing can act as a spoilt sport. He says, "E-commerce is currently shaping up very differently than it was a year back. Since the taking over of the fashion collaboration of Jabong and Myntra by Walmart, and Amazon pushing its limits against all three including Flipkart, we reckon that currently, it is in to many spots with no sustainable shape in terms of label selling. The marketplace right now is not a great place due to numerous fluctuations. Therefore, it is a safer option to stick to a much more 'precise' platform than a giant e-commerce platform that offers everything to anything."

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"E-commerce is creating the biggest revolution in the retail industry.
Apparels are no longer considered durable items and instead, people are now chasing trends and hunting for deals"

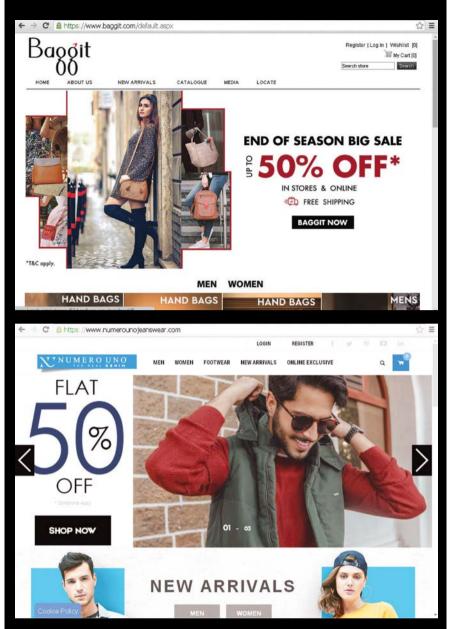
-Parul Sharma, E-commerce Manager, Numero Uno

Payment Preferences

Demonetisation may have made people get accustomed to online and card payments, but cash is still the King! Majority of the brands in the online space talk about how Cash on Delivery (COD) still rules the game. Mobile wallets too have gained a lot of popularity and if we have to rate the modes of payments, it would be COD followed by mobile wallets, cards and then online bank transfer.

According to Yadav, more than the convenience it is the trust factor that makes people opt for COD. She reveals, "COD sales have always been the preferred choice for customers and apply to 70 percent of our sales. The customer still hesitates to pay upfront especially on brand websites and newer portals. However after demonetisation mobile wallets have become the next big thing since everyone uses it as single mode of payment for all expenses."

Garg shares, "As per various industry statistics, COD is the largely preferred



mode of payment (specially in Tier II and III cities) and contributes to the real growth of online business, followed by cards and mobile wallets. There has been a substantial increase in the number of customers preferring mobile wallets as the mode of payment."

Agarwal highlights the option of pay by card on delivery as helping ease payment woes as well – both for customers and the retailers. Elaborating on the same, he shares, "The drive towards digital undertaken by the government has certainly worked in favour of the fashion industry. The ability of consumers to make payment via their cards after

the goods arrive has been a real gamechanger. Indian consumers are coming around to swiping their cards rather than always wanting to pay cash." He further talks about how the cash-backs and other incentives from mobile wallets have provided additional incentives to customers thus eventually let them get accustomed to various modes of payments other than cash!

On the mobile wallet payments gaining popularity, Malik reveals the trend being witnessed at FabAlley and Indya. "Wallets, especially PayTM, have seen an exponential rise on our websites. Now, with Google, Amazon,



Phonepe and other large players entering the wallets' space, it's much easier for a consumer to confidently transact online. Cashbacks and rebates provided by these wallets also help in converting the customer to prepaid payment modes. 2019 will see amazon and google scale up their wallets business rapidly, due to the sheer scale and captive consumer base the two already possess," she states. Keeping the COD preference in mind, Sharma is planning to introduce this option in their mode of payment soon, "As we have recently started online sales, we haven't introduced the COD option on the website yet, but to make it more convenient for the consumers we will introduce it soon as it is the most preferred payment option with about 45 percent of buyers opting for it in India. For us most of the transactions are done using a mix of net banking and debit and credit card payments." She further adds on the future of digital payments in India, saying, "Digital payments adoption will be higher than cash on delivery mainly because of the cashback offers. Analysts, on average, estimated that digital payments comprised 55 to 60 percent of all e-commerce transactions during the festive sales. However, payments by cash on delivery account for about 60 percent of all e-commerce purchases on regular days." Government Policies that Influence the E-Commerce Growth



"E-commerce has provided opportunity for new-age DNVBs such as Campus Sutra to establish themselves and scale rapidly in step with the Indian consumers expanding aspirations"

-Dhiraj Agarwal, CEO & Co-Founder, Campus Sutra

Game Plan

While talking about the various government policies that are affecting the growth of the e-commerce space, Agarwal says, "The GST norms that were introduced are positive for the industry as a whole (in terms of a consistent tax rate across the country), though the GST refund mechanism is not yet in place and is taking time. Also, the updation of TCS, which was introduced for importers in October last year, seems to be taking time. The e-commerce policy that has being

enforced from February 1, 2019 has placed restrictions on the growth of e-commerce players by capping 'exclusive' sales on their platform, sales from owned subsidiaries etc. This will obviously affect the growth of e-commerce in the immediate term, but growth should stabilise once players adapt to the new rules and regulations."

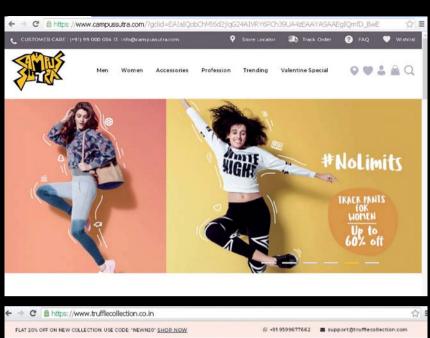
Sharma observes that with the new policies in place, while the local vendors are getting protected, this will be a blow for customers as well since they were able to enjoy discounts which will no longer be there.

Garg adds that with the new framework of policies in place, the government, market places and brands will have to walk together not only to understand the implications but also to provide seamless experience to customers though from the business side, he adds, "Few areas where Government has announced regulations and will affect the ecosystem are bulk purchases from a single entity, providing direct discounts on products, product exclusivity on platforms etc."

The Road Ahead

Malik point out that 2019 will see online fashion retail becoming more focused on experiences, rather than value and discounting. With the

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With the recent policy changes instituted by DIPP, growth on the back of heavy discounting will be curtailed largely and online brands and marketplaces will shift their focus to providing superior experiences to customers

recent policy changes instituted by DIPP, growth on the back of heavy discounting will be curtailed largely and online brands and marketplaces will shift their focus to providing superior experiences to customers. "Driving engagement with content marketing and influencer led marketing are on the cards for us, as we feel that differentiated and authentic fashion imagery featuring real women and relatable experiences are more impactful than leading with products and fashion trends," she says.

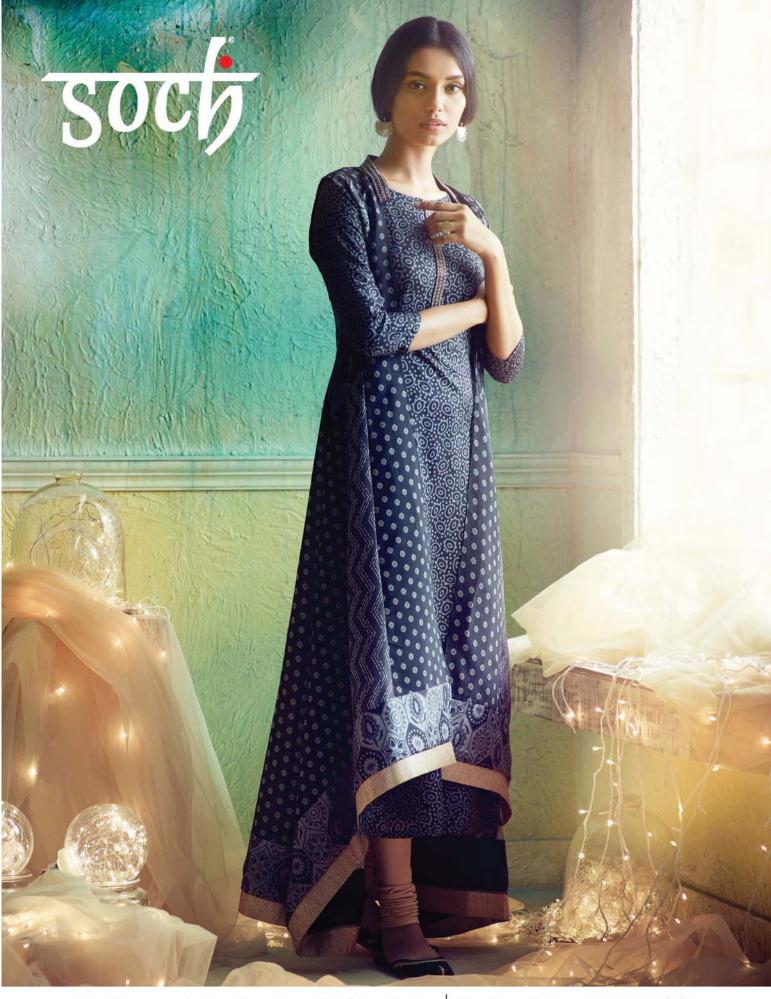


"After selling a million pairs in UK, we tapped the growing market of India through e-commerce.
E-commerce has helped us reach a lot of Indian households and is vastly shaping up our business"

-Vijay Pal Singh Johal, Director, Truffle collection

On the trends and dynamism of the online space, she concludes stating, "The other trend to watch out for in 2019 will be hyper-personalisation. Online shopping provides rich data on customer shopping patterns and behavior, which makes it easier for retailers to target more relevantly. Online retail is beginning to struggle with the problem of the plenty with the entry of multiple Indian and international brands in the space and solving for it requires a better understanding of unique customer tastes and preferences. AI-based software that de-codes these patterns will be incorporated into online fashion retail so that the right products and brands meet the right customers."





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RAYMOND LAUNCHES FIRST CEREMONIAL STORE IN MUMBAI

Raymond Ceremonial speaks of innovation right from its architecture to its design, visual merchandising to the hospitality offered, to the ethnic wear range which is different from what is usually seen in this category...

Gurbir Singh Gulati

Raymond launched its flagship store
Raymond Ceremonial at Kemps Corner,
Mumbai. The store speaks about
innovation right from its architecture to its
design, visual merchandising to the hospitality
offered, to the ethnic wear range which is
different from what is usually seen in this
category.

In a tell-all chat, Bidyut Bhanjdeo, Brand Director, Raymond Ethnix & Next Look told IMAGES Business of Fashion all about the store, the progress and future prospects of the brand. Excerpts from the interview...

Tell us about the retail mapping of the brand Ethnix?

Raymond had two Ethnix stores and now has launched Raymond Ceremonial in Kemps Corner, Mumbai. The newly-launched store will help to create a flagship identity for our ethnic wear products.

Kemps Corner is a premium location and goes very well with the DNA of the brand and the clientele which we get here. The store spans across 2,300 sq.ft. This is our first Raymond Ceremonial store and going forward, we will start opening more in metropolitan cities. Apart from this, two more Ethnix stores are in the fit-out stages and are expected to be launched by mid-March. The target is to take the total store count to 6 by this fiscal year end and then gauging the response, launch another 30 to 40 stores.



-Bidyut Bhanjdeo, Brand Director, Raymond Ethnix & Next Look



What products do you offer and how are you different from your competitors?

One has to understand that 85 percent of the ethnic wear market is still unorganised. However, the game is slowly changing from unorganised to organised. Being a corporate player, Raymond asks vendors to develop fabric six months in advance. Once we develop a particular jacquard or a silk fabric, we take the complete ownership of the fabric and we do not let the vendor sell it to anyone else. This is an agreement we have with our vendors.

There are a lot of fabrics which we have developed which look very different from what is usually available in the market. We are also very different in the kind of embellishments used on our garments.

Aside from this, we use very toned down colour palettes including mint, cream and peach, which are again very different from what is usually available in the market. We also play a lot with prints in our range unlike other brands who avoid prints in ethnic wear. We do a lot of digital prints for younger clients who want to look edgy in a ceremony. These all are a defined set of innovations which differentiate us with any other player in the market today.

What are your product expansion plans?

Ethnic wear is considered a very seasonal product linked to marriages and other special occasions. A very interesting product expansion we did recently was creating something called 'Smart Ethnics', casual wear with an ethnic touch. The collection comprises short kurtas with uneven cuts, bandis which are very soft, stoles sourced from handloom clusters, trousers and harem pants, a bit of indigo denim kurtas, etc. These have started doing very well for the brand. This approach will bring in a lot of youngsters into our store and this will make our business very nonseasonal.

Tell us about the architecture of the store and the elements which stand out as its USP?

When we started off, we decided to keep the brand very classy and sophisticated, which is what ethnic wear is all about. We never wanted to keep elements in the store which are predictable. The Raymond Ceremonial store is a minimalistic in nature, with a touch of class and modernity. Eighty percent of the material used in the store can be recycled – a design innovation we are proud of.

What are the technology innovations that are being introduced at the store?

Ethnic wear as a business is very different from other apparel categories. The kind of purchases which happen are planned in nature and the customer is ready to wait for 15 to 20 days if he does not find his size in the store. For instance, if one does not find his size of sherwani in the store, he can place an order for the same. We have created an online software system, where the moment a request is placed in a store, the head office gets an alert and within a period of 8 to 10 days, the sherwani is manufactured and sent to the store, fulfilling the request of a particular client. This tech innovation helps cut lead time in delivering a product.

What kind of impact do you think Visual Merchandising will play in the new store?

We have created high-points inside the store which have a cluster of bust forms and mannequins with a modern outlook, so as to move away from the traditional dressed up mannequin look and instead go in for a cluster of colour blocks which look more elegant.

Share details on the innovation in terms of customer experience at your store?

This store has a mezzanine floor which has been converted into a lounge. This was created since ethnic wear purchases take around 2 to 3 hours, entire families are involved and they need a place to sit and check out our collections.

Also, while the groom is trying on his outfits, his family needs to be engaged. We engage them by playing Indian music which is very ethos-based, use the best perfumes in the store, and offer extraordinary hospitality to our customers. Overall this creates a very warm feeling for the whole family. The groom is delighted with these offerings which sets him in a positive mood.

The sales staff is trained to show the groom accessories – safas (turbans), necklaces and dupattas – to the groom once he selects his garments and increase sales by 20 percent. In the end, the idea is to provide excellent customer service and improve sales along with it.









Retail formats across India are reflecting myriad visual merchandising strategies to breathe in new life into their store as well as products. IMAGES Business of Fashion dissects Wills Lifestyle's 'Organic Window Concept' strategy for Summer/Spring 2019...

Akash Ashesh, Country Head - Visual Merchandiser, ITC-LRBD



In today's digital age, the photo-worthiness of a retail establishment could be more beneficial to the bottom line than one might think. While a distinct brand DNA is important for every band in the fashion arena today, it's the need of the hour that it should be visible throughout the store. As the trend catches up in India, retail formats across the country are reflecting myriad visual merchandising strategies to breathe in new life into their store as well as products.

A forerunner in the field of effective Visual Merchandising (VM) is Wills Lifestyle, whose VM strategies, over the years, have singularly helped the brand to take its retail game to the next level. In this special coverage of IMAGES Business of Fashion, we dissect the brand's Organic Window Concept strategy for Summer/Spring 2019.

>> THEORY

The current impetus on 'a healthier way of life' has probably, in common minds, gotten restricted to organic eating, supplements, cleansers and purifiers. While all of the above do impact and help give back to the environment, organic clothing, if universally resorted to, will have far reaching consequences; seriously saving our planet from the fatal debris we create and allowing it to 'breathe'. As the advocacy for sustainable fashion and organic clothing gains momentum, it has increasingly been apparent that 'Going Green' isn't just planting more trees; it is also about letting them live to see us through. As a part of this responsible endeavour, ITC Limited has become the first major mainstream fashion apparel brand to go allorganic, in line with its other divisions focusing on the same ideology. This cohesive approach shows its seriousness towards contributing to environment and society helping people associated with these trades across the entire product lifecycle.



"As we try to incorporate not just our brand's fashion sensibility but it's adherence to social responsibility in the minds of our customers, we do hope our visual messaging echoes deeply with everyone and we walk together on this path of greater good for generations to come"

–Akash Ashesh,Country Head – Visual Merchandiser,
ITC-LRBD



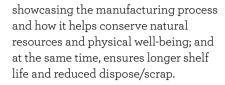
>> INFLUENCERS

While in the previous seasons it focused on Indian-made and Indian crafts as its key USP, this season, Wills Lifestyle unveils itself with a whole new identity - 'Natural on our Minds'. Aligning to this identity, the brand exercises all fundamental processes consideration the environment and it's preservation. The collection presented this season is completely natural in terms of cotton fabrics, trims, treatment and execution.

"As the VM brains behind the idea, we have tried to represent the key idea of 'Natural on our Minds' in this season via merging two simultaneous plots together in the same window – the corelation between humans, the earth's well-being, the need to preserve nature and how to go about it vis-à-vis apparel fashion; as the key feature of the window display," says Akash Ashesh, Country Head - Visual Merchandiser, ITC-LRBD.

>> IDEA

To visually represent this great new step in its domain, the WLS thought of not just making cottons a talking element across its windows but also focused on why sustainable fashion is crucial and significant today. As an apparel brand, WLS strives to build consciousness towards sustainable organic fashion, by explicitly



"As we try to incorporate not just our brand's fashion sensibility but it's adherence to social responsibility in the minds of our customers, we do hope our visual messaging echoes deeply with everyone and we walk together on this path of greater good for generations to come. WLS truly becoming your indefinite lifestyle partner in the times of today," adds Akash Ashesh.

>> EXECUTION

The window concept involves an innovative and creative amalgamation of natural materials to bring alive this introspective equation in human minds. A human face built in 3D with multiple layers of MDF (wood) sheets representing how current production capabilities and display trends are merged with natural materials to make a window look 'alive'. Mother Earth has been depicted in a human's mind using a 3D rocky terrain proto with a live natural plant growing from within it. The plant, a Ficus Retusa, has been potted, kept alive in its natural conditions.

The rocky terrain consists of stones made out of rolled waste paper, paper masking tape and newspapers all of which is biodegradable. The structure has been mounted on a combination of the same corrugated sheets and MDF boards, again biodegradable. The spotlights added to this infrastructure ensure proper light and temperature requirements for the plant to thrive indoor. The overall depiction has been done in the designated organic colour palette of greens, browns, warm whites and blues for an enhanced visually natural impact.



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SKECHERS INDIA TO BECOME SKECHERS FOOTWEAR

The network of Skechers retail locations in India currently includes 223 retail stores - 61 of which will be Skechers owned and operated while the remaining are third-party owned



global leader in the footwear industry, Skechers U.S.A.,
Inc., has announced that the company has purchased the minority share of its joint venture in India, transitioning the business to a new wholly-owned subsidiary of Skechers U.S.A., Inc.

Already one of the fastest growing and largest international markets for Skechers, the company believes that combining the experienced team and Skechers' proven sales and marketing capabilities will allow it to grow the brand and its presence in a faster, more efficient manner, ultimately meeting its fullest potential.

"Skechers is still a relatively young brand in this country, having been in India for less than a decade, yet in the last five years, we have seen significant growth through our joint venture," began Michael Greenberg, President, Skechers.

"The substantial existing retail network of over 200 stores, a strong wholesale business and a recently launched e-commerce site is a solid foundation that we can build upon. These accomplishments, as well as opportunities we see to increase the brand's exposure and drive sales, give us great optimism and confidence for the growth of Skechers in India," Greenberg added.

"Skechers in India has achieved great success over the past few years," said Rahul Vira, CEO, Skechers South Asia Pyt. Ltd.

"As we look into the future, we are delighted to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Skechers. This development will enable us to amplify our growth plans, accelerate expansion of our operations and build a stronger network to further gain market share in India," Vira added.

"Few markets match the potential for growth of India, which is why we entered the market initially, and why we recently decided to purchase the minority stake in our joint venture," said David Weinberg, Chief Operating Officer, Skechers.

"The effort of our team has resulted in significant growth as illustrated in our year-over-year numbers—2018 saw double digit increases in wholesale and retail sales and an 80 percent increase in pairs sold, reaching 2.7 million. We believe the strength of our diverse product and our marketing insight will help expand our product offering in India. As a subsidiary, we will be able to leverage our capital, product, logistics and business model to better maximize our brand exposure to the 1.3 billion consumers in this country," Weinberg added.

The network of Skechers retail locations in India currently includes 223 retail stores – 61 of which will be



Skechers owned and operated while the remaining are third-party owned. An additional 80 to 100 stores are planned for 2019—of which approximately 20 will be company-owned, company-operated. Consumers can also find the brand's lifestyle and performance footwear and apparel for men, women and kids online at www.skechers.in as well as in major retailers throughout India. The Skechers India subsidiary will continue operating under its existing structure and from its existing headquarters location in Mumbai.



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THE BODY SHOP TO OPEN 20 NEW STORES IN 2019

The brand's pillars are naturality, animal cruelty free and activism and the stores celebrate this through their ambience and every customer touch point.

Charu Lamba

The desire to look attractive and feel good is at an all time high among consumers from all walks of life.

Consumers are continuously looking out for products that make them look good. Innovation, ingredients and integrity are the new buzzwords in beauty. Natural and organic has never been more popular. The movement towards healthier, wellness-oriented lifestyles around the world – complemented by a growing consumer awareness of sustainability, naturality, and ethical sourcing, has influenced personal attitudes towards beauty.

There has been a huge upsurge of consciousness in beauty purchase – Beauty with Responsibility. Today consumers want to buy beauty products which are chemical free, natural, organic, vegetarian and not tested on animals. 'Ethical and Clean Beauty' is indeed on the rise.

Keeping up with the rising demand, many new brands have entered the beauty retail space in India but brands like The Body Shop which have been there in the industry from past 12 years, has carved a niche for itself.

Vishal Chaturvedi, General Manager - Retail (India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh), The Body Shop explains how the brand has become a established household name. He says, "The brand is a one stop shop for new and trending beauty products and ingredients. We have ranges across skincare, bath and body, haircare, make-up, men's grooming range and gifting. Perfected by centuries of wisdom, the brand brings to its cusotmers the finest natural ingredients, refined textures and delicate fragrances, from purifying and firming clays, sensorial and luxury oils, refining natural scrubs and decadent creams."

"We are always on the verge of experiments to bring new beauty formats and testing efficacy to bring the very best to our consumers," he adds. All the products



"Our greatest innovation is our beauty experts and advisors. They are the true ambassadors of the brand. The advisors undergo rigorous training and each one of them is well equipped to give a 360° experience of the brand"

–Vishal Chaturvedi, General Manager- Retail - India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh

of the brand are made exclusively in the UK and supplied across the world. India is one the fastest growing markets and among the top markets for The Body Shop.

"We have been in India since 2006 and have 175 stores across the country. We have presence in 60+ Indian cities and over 600 towns and cities through own e-commerce channel. The brand is known for its ethical positioning with strength of natural ingredients, community trade programs, animal cruelty free and 100 percent vegetarian products. The Body Shop has a fast growing consumer base. We are expanding into new markets and are a leading global beauty retailer in the country," asserts Chaturvedi.

Store Innovations

The Body Shop keeps the customers at the centre of their business and their location strategy is driven by the endeavour to reach as many customers across a wide spectrum of segments. "We choose locations that allow us access to all kinds of beauty consumers and where we can offer our unique The Body Shop experience," reveals Chaturvedi. The brand's pillars are naturality, animal cruelty free and activism and the stores celebrate this through their ambience and every customer touch point.

"Through the stores, the brand offers a heightened personalized experience by unique display of products and experiential zones which uplift the sensorial experience of the customers. We have a marquee Community Wall that specifically talks s about our ongoing ethical campaigns and initiatives," states Chaturvedi.

"Our greatest innovation is our beauty experts and advisors. They are the true ambassadors of the brand. The advisors undergo rigorous training and each one of them is well equipped to give a 360° experience of the brand," he adds.

Future Plans

The beauty brand has endeared itself not only to consumers in big cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata but is also hugely popular in Tier II cities like Guwahati, Siliguri, Jammu, Aurangabad, Patna, Nasik, Mysore, Calicut and many more towns and cities.

"We shall be opening 20 more stores this year in 2019, establishing our footprint in new cities to make ourselves even more accessible to new customers," he reveals.

"Apart from physical presence, we have a very strong online presence.
E-commerce is our fastest channel of reaching 600+ cities and towns adding almost 30,000 customers to The Body Shop family every year. Our e-commerce business contributes to 10 percent of our business. We are expecting to grow by 12 percent," he concludes.



FORM IV			
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>LIMEROAD < SCALE UP ITS OFFLINE PRESENCE

LimeRoad plans to open 20 new stores in the next 3-6 months with the vision to take high-street fashion to every town in India

nline fashion platform,
LimeRoad has opened its
second retail store in Panipat,
Haryana. The state-of-the-art store in
Panipat will primarily retail western,
fusion and ethnic womenswear
and menswear. LimeRoad plans to
open 20 new stores in the next 3 to 6
months with the vision to take highstreet fashion to every town in India.
Customers will now be able to shop
from LimeRoad not only through its
mobile app and website, but also from
its brick-and-mortar stores.

"LimeRoad stores are being designed as brand touch-points. After the success of our Surat store turning profitable in less than 5 months, we opened our second new age store in Panipat with the ambition to go into every market and inject fast fashion into it. Users can see, touch, feel and live the LimeRoad experience first-hand," said Tanuj Gangwani, Owner of the Offline Project, internally nick-

named LimeRoad Touch. "We are delighted to be working with Ambrish and his team at Studio Lotus. They have an outstanding sense of customer experience and design in the offline world, having led marquee offline rollouts like Royal Enfield and Good Earth store," said Suchi Mukherjee, Founder and CEO. LimeRoad.

"LimeRoad offers its users an endless variety of trendy garments and accessories while allowing for a digital social experience of shopping via interactive styling scrapbooks. Inspired by the brand ethos, our approach was to create a retail experience that celebrates this idea of interaction and abundance. These social experiences manifest themselves differently within the customer journey - such as the POS table or the trial room area that transform into interactive spaces to host relevant workshops on styling and thereby extend the brand's online strategy into an immersive and tactile offline experience," said the team of

Studio Lotus, Asha Sairam, Ankur Choksi and Ambrish Arora.

LimeRoad has opened the second store with a clear focus on design. The store uses modular fixtures that can accommodate change of collections and display of merchandises rapidly and effectively. The fixtures are made of wood and metal and the colour scheme has been kept muted and neutral. The scheme sets a perfect stage for all the colourful merchandise available at LimeRoad.

The store has stylists on the floor to help consumers select products. Spread across 900 sq.ft. area, the store is in a central upmarket area in Model Town, Panipat. The store will have a wide array of products ranging from casual tops, jeans, leggings, dresses, shrugs, and accessories etc. The state-of-theart store has been designed by Lotus Design, will be owned by franchisee partners and operated by LimeRoad.





>CARATLANE< 10 YEARS OF TRANSFORMING JEWELLERY IN INDIA

As a part of the celebrations. CaratLane has added limited edition jewellery to three of its bestselling collections -Butterfly, Aaranya and Gold Lace

hen Mithun Sacheti founded CaratLane 10 years ago, e-commerce was at its infancy in India and no one could have imagined that Indian consumers would be ready to buy jewellery online. CaratLane was founded with a mission to democratise jewellery - to make beautiful jewellery accessible and affordable with designs that are modern and wearable. A refreshing and courageous objective at the time, especially since the avenues for an online business weren't as wide open then as they are today.

CaratLane hasn't looked back since then. It has grown from being one of India's first online jewellery brands to being one of India's largest new age jewellery brands now with 50

> On the special occasion of CaratLane's 10th birthday. Mithun said, "The world has indeed changed in the past ten years. And while e-commerce has now become widely accepted in India, it has taken steady and sustained focus to democratise jewellery-buying online. From a website for easy shopping to allowing

women to explore jewellery through apps to discovering interactive mirrors and providing a no-barrier access to precious jewellery in stores, CaratLane has transformed jewellery-buying in India."

"Our strong online footprint is now complemented by our growing store presence. With 50 stores across the country, we are now perhaps the world's first truly omni-channel jewellery brand. It wouldn't have been possible without our extremely valuable and loval customers and an extremely dedicated team who would stop at nothing," he added. As a part of the celebrations. CaratLane has added limited edition jewellery to three of its bestselling collections - Butterfly, Aaranva and Gold Lace. It has also launched its biggest sale ever with flat 20 percent off on all diamond jewellery but that's not all, there are many more exciting offers for CaratLane customers.

CaratLane, has also launched an upbeat film to create buzz around its 10th birthday celebrations. The campaign rolled out nationally with a combination of TV, digital and CaratLane's social media channels. The film is targeted towards creating FOMO (fear-of-missing-out) on its celebrations, among its audience.

Talking about the campaign Atul Sinha, Senior Vice President - Marketing. CaratLane said, "We've come a long way since our inception and we wanted to celebrate this milestone with the people who made it all possible - our customers. The '10th birthday' campaign film beautifully captures our excitement as well as the cheerful emotion that we're trying to build around the occasion through our biggest sale ever."







"We are continuously evolving our stores with new technologies. To fully enable our customers to enjoy these new introductions, it is important for our sales personnel to understand, communicate and comfortably operate all new innovations. Before implementing any new technology or introducing product innovation, our entire store team goes through an extensive knowledge session, which enables them to understand the product/ technology being introduced"

-Vasanth Kumar, Executive Director, Lifestyle ifestyle, a part of Dubai-based retail and hospitality conglomerate, The Landmark Group, is a true Omnichannel player with a country-wide presence across 77 stores in 44 cities and delivering to over 18,000 pincodes through their online store.

In an interview with IMAGES Business of Fashion, **Vasanth Kumar, Executive Director, Lifestyle** reveals, "Our pan-India presence allows us to reach out to our customers better. This enables us to build on our initiatives in providing a unique and memorable retail experience."

"Apart from this, visual merchandising is a key differentiator in retail and especially in the fashion retail segment. When implemented keeping in mind the brand ethos, it creates awareness as well as brand loyalty. Visual merchandising has evolved as a strategic tool that Lifestyle uses to drive a seamless experience for customers," he adds. To add to the overall shopping experience of the consumers, the brand, which has a strong private label offering, has been introducing a lot of technological innovations.

Innovation

Incorporating technology, that is both interactive and engaging, has changed the dynamics of retail. Today, technology in day-to-day operations is not just about enhancing business functions, it is about providing an incomparable shopping experience as well. "With technological advancements, the shopping experience has evolved and Lifestyle, as a progressive retailer, has embraced many of these technological advancements to further enhance the shopping experience we offer our customers," says Kumar.

The fashion retailer, which is known for offering men's, women's and kids' apparel, footwear, handbags, fashion accessories, beauty products and much more, all under the same roof, has added features such as 'Self-Checkout Kiosk', 'Mobile POS', Fitting Room Assistance', etc., to augment its in-store experience.

Explaining the innovations that the brand has introduced for billing, Kumar states, "The Self-Checkout kiosk is a facility that allows customers to bill their merchandise and complete the payment transaction in a few simple steps on their own. The Mobile POS which we have introduced for billing some of our products such as watches, fragrances or cosmetics."

Innovation, today, is the tool that allows brands to ensure a frictionless iourney from discovery to purchase for the customer. And Lifestyle is no far behind. "We have introduced 'Click & Collect' - an Omnichannel initiative that allows customers to order online and collect merchandise from a Lifestyle store of their choice. Our in-store Endless-Aisle initiative helps a customer to find her missing size on our online channel." he further elaborates. Several of initiatives that the brand has taken are technological solutions to real customer problems which they discovered through their interaction w-ith customers as well as staff. Using this feedback, they have created simple yet impactful solutions leveraging technology. These have

an extensive knowledge session, which enables them to understand the product/technology being introduced," says Kumar.

Lifestyle regularly tracks consumer satisfaction through NPS (Net Promoter Score) in store, by the virtue of offering, staff interactions, store ambience and consistently deliver an overall delightful shopping experience thereby winning customer trust and loyalty.

"We have launched 'Lifestyle Edge', an exclusive program for our premium customers in Chennai and Pune and soon we will be expanding this to other cities," says Kumar.



"Retail is moving towards a seamless world and going Omnichannel is the way forward – emphasis will be given to these two aspects," Kumar states.

"Apart from this, a frictionless journey from discovery to purchase, rapid expansion across the country and enriching digital experiences are some of the changes that consumers can expect from Lifestyle going ahead," he adds. The brand, which is experiencing flat same store growth for the current year, is planning to launch one store in every 45 days for the next two years along with a steady growth in their online retail footprint. To aid the expansion plans, it is looking forward to spending ₹10-₹12 crore of capital per store and the funds will be arranged through internal accruals.

"We plan to change the growth rate of the brand by enhancing our goto-market strategy – we are working to bring in relevant and trending fashion faster to our stores. Also, by ensuring a seamless and a frictionless shopping experience we are confident of sustaining the growth for the brand," concludes Kumar.

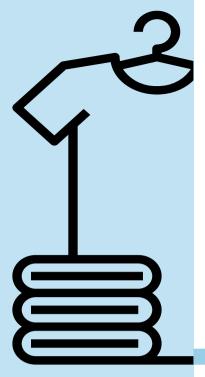


"The other innovations that we have introduced include our Fitting Room Assistance program that has emerged from our insights into our customer shopping behavior, allows for size retrieval with the help of technology. For our e-commerce business, which at present contributes sub 2 percent of the overall revenue, we have introduced visual search and enabled voice-based search on our apps which has helped creating a more personalised and convenient shopping experience."

led to positive impact on their overall customer experience and helped increase engagement with the brand.

"We are continuously evolving our stores with new technologies. To fully enable our customers to enjoy these new introductions, it is important for our sales personnel to understand, communicate and comfortably operate all new innovations. Before implementing any new technology or introducing product innovation, our entire store team goes through

X



Iff 2019: INNOVATE THE **FUTURE OF FASHION**

Slated to be held in Mumbai on 27th and 28th March 2019, at Renaissance Hotel, Powai, the fora aims to celebrate and honour developments and achievements in the field of fashion retail in the last one year. The theme of this year's IFF 2019 is 'Innovate the Future of Fashion'...



nnovation in fashion retail, shifting buying behaviours, fastmoving fashion trends, and ever-growing global competition ▲ - these are some of the topics that will be discussed when the entire fashion fraternity, from manufacturers to retailers, meets at the 19th edition of the country's largest fashion retail intelligence event, India Fashion Forum 2019.

Slated to be held in Mumbai on 27th and 28th March 2019, at Renaissance Hotel. Powai, the fora aims to celebrate and honour developments and achievements in the field of fashion retail in the last one year. A global identity of the Indian fashion industry and a mega intelligence event on the supply side of fashion retail economics, IFF offers an in-valuable platform for networking, influencing business ideas and exploring growth opportunities for fashion retailers in India. As it does every year, this year too IFF will host a venerable gathering of the who's who of the industry in the country. Prominent retail leaders are scheduled to attend the event and share notable insights on the current trends through various interactive sessions.



- First-mover advantage: Reducing lead time means always having a first mover advantage over rival brands.
- Fashion Today, Not Tomorrow: Many retailers try to forecast what customers might buy months ahead. It is more profitable to sync with customers and offer them what they want to buy NOW.
- Width Over Depth: More width in your merchandise means more choices and higher chances of getting it right with the consumer.











IMAGES Business of Fashion





Intelligence
Design
Retail
Technolom

- Customer Research: Realtime customer research allows sharp product design strategies that accurately meet customer expectations.
- End-To-End Tech: Technology needs to be deep and across-theboard through the supply chain, not just used to create superficial 'Wows' at the front-end.
- Brand Experience: Some fast fashion giants spend less than 0.5 percent of sales on advertising against the industry average is 3.5 percent.

The two-day mega fashion event will witness unparalleled opportunities for learning from International and Indian industry experts, academicians, experienced professionals and analyst through a world class mix of keynote addresses, panel discussions, CEO's round tables, presentations, knowledge series sessions and master classes.

Four themed exhibition platforms showcase the most market-ahead fashion ingredients, design innovation, technology, retail strategies and solutions to a mega congregation of

leaders from the business of fashion in India and elsewhere:

- TrendView
- L Cube
- Customer Experience Forum
- India Brand Show

A big attraction this year at the IFF 2019 will be presentations by upcoming malls to a jury consisting of IPCs and retailers and the IMAGES Shopping Centre Awards. And then there is the grand finale – the coveted IMAGS Fashion Awards 2019 (IFA 2019), celebrating excellence in the business of fashion. Like every year, these trophies will be presented to India's most forward-looking, innovative and exciting fashion brands, retailers and professionals for achievements in the year 2018-19.

The nominees go through a rigorous procedure before being considered for the award. IFA nomination categories and entry details are announced through the IFF websites, magazine ads, a personalised electronic campaign and tele-calling to prospective nominees in all proposed categories. Nomination forms are checked by the IFA audit team for eligibility, completeness and data correctness. Nominees may be asked to rectify mistakes, if found any, and also provide supporting documents wherever required.



IMAGES FASHION AWARDS

- The IMAGES Fashion Awards are India's highest honour for recognizing excellence in the business of fashion. Now in their 19th year, the IFAs recognize most admired fashion brands, retailers and concepts.
- The IFAs are presented at the grand finale ceremony of the two day India Fashion Forum, the largest gathering of the brightest minds, products and concepts in fashion.
- This annual gathering of the fashion industry is the place where fashion leaders congregate to drive the future of Fashion in India.
- Every year at the IFF, new ideas, concepts, and equations are created; and old relationships are renewed.





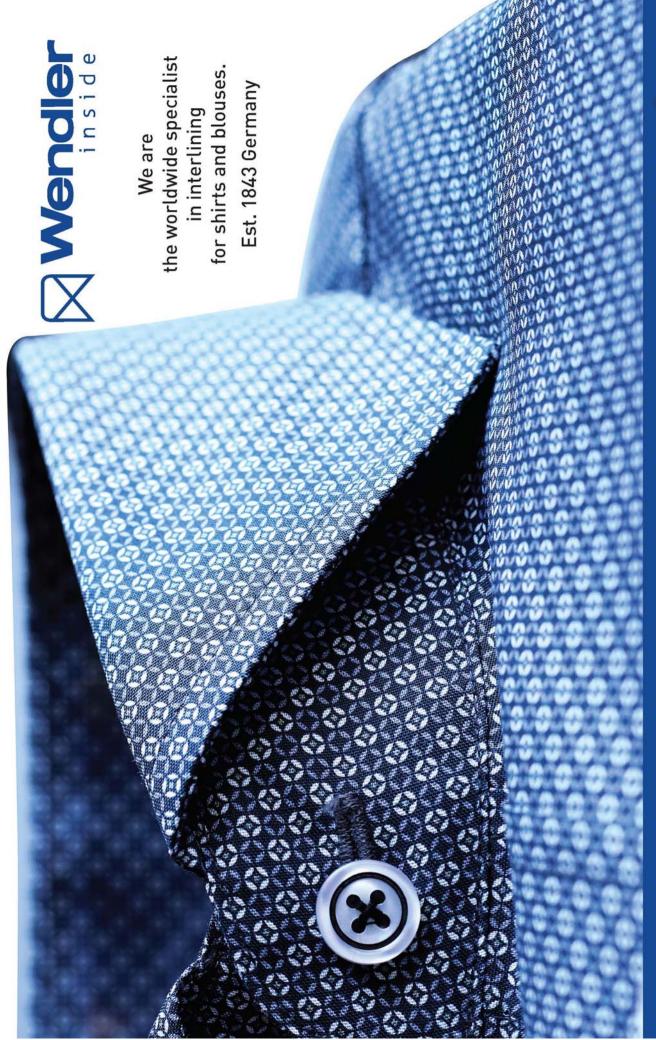
The IFA team of analysts then make a presentation to the IFA jury – with analysis of performance metrics such as growth in top line sales and retail presence, sales per square foot, same store sales growth. A special note is prepared on Effective Technology Adoption, Product Development, Customer Service, Buying & Merchandising, Category Management, Supplier Relations, Employee Relations, Marketing & Promotions, Brand Distribution, Brand Retailing, Any one

Brand Distribution, Brand Retailing, Any one key achievement during above mentioned period.

The IFA Jury comprises renowned and respected personalities from fields such as design, trends forecasting, research & consulting, academics and media, who follow strict international benchmarks in deciding the top honors.

IFA 2019 is scheduled to be attended by many of India's most prominent organisational, business and category heads from the country's leading fashion and retail companies.







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FABINDIA TO ENHANCE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WITH FABFAMILY — A UNIQUE LOYALTY PROGRAM

A five-tier program, this presents a membership based program with unique experiences for the company's expanding customer base...

IMAGES Business of Fashion

pparel and furnishings retailer, Fabindia has rolled out its first-ever loyalty program, Fabfamily. A five-tier program, this presents a membership based program with unique experiences for the company's expanding customer base.

Launched simultaneously across online and brick-and-mortar stores, the loyalty program allows aggregation and redemption of points across all Fabindia stores. Besides giving customers the opportunity to earn and accumulate points against their shopping spends, feedback and referrals, the Fabfamily loyalty program extends to offer curated experiences, such as a vacation in an inspired environment, a

fabulous meal at a handpicked restaurant, an adventurous trail in the outdoors, or a discovery trip into a unique artisanal cluster. Talking about this initiative,

Viney Singh, Managing Director, Fabindia stated, "Fabfamily is unlike any loyalty program in the retail space. Our customers can not only make their future purchases attractive by redeeming points, but can also choose from a host of special, curated experiences which we will bring in conjunction with our select partners." He further added, "We want to make our relationship with our customers more delightful. We are confident that the Fabfamily program will strengthen our connect and engagement with our customers across the country and provide real value."

Fabfamily features five tiers: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Noir. Benefits of this customer focused program include shopping from home exclusive previews, shopping by appointment, an extended exchange period, and a dedicated relationship manager.

Fabindia has also launched a new website www.fabfamily. fabindia.com for customers to enrol and engage with the program. Depending on the tier customers are enrolled in, they can earn between 1 to 7 percent reward points for every ₹100 spent, making it one of the most generous programs in the country.



MARKS& SPENCER

LONDON

MARKS & SPENCER

TO OPEN 6 MORE STORES IN THE **NEXT 60 DAYS**

The brand now has 71 stores across 30 cities like New Delhi, Amritsar, Mumbai, Pune. Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi, Bhopal, Kanpur, Hyderabad and Chandigarh among others







ritish multinational retailer Marks & Spencer (M&S) is on an aggressive pace and is opening six more stores in the next two months alone, a top company official has said.

According to a PTI report, Marks & Spencer has opened its first store here way back in 2001 and in April 2008 signed a joint venture agreement with Reliance Retail to form Marks & Spencer Reliance India.

It now has 71 stores across 30 cities like New Delhi, Amritsar, Mumbai, Pune, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi, Bhopal, Kanpur, Hyderabad and Chandigarh among others.

"India has become increasingly an important market for us. We are now the largest market for M&S outside of our home market. We are 71 stores today and we continue to invest in this market. We opened nine stores in the last six months and it is our intention to open six more in the next 60 days," James Munson, Managing Director, Marks & Spencer Reliance India told in an interview.

Internationally, Marks & Spencer hawks its products in 57 markets across 400 stores and an online presence in 33 markets.

Munson further said they would look to maintain that expansion pace in the next year as well and told, "There are no other markets which are expanding the way we are expanding here." Of the 71 stores here, 10 are standalone beauty and lingerie stores, including two it opened in the last nine months and said half of the stores it plans to open in the next 60 days would also be for the

"The company clocked a revenue of ₹908 crore last year and has been growing at a CAGR of 24 percent over the last five years," Munson said. It had clocked a 9 percent growth in the same store sales last year. "A fifth of the turnover comes from outside the major metros," he said.

It sources 30 percent of its products from locally and India is a sourcing base for the wider British market as well. M&S has partnered with other e-commerce players like Amazon and Flipkart over the last few years and he said its a strong area of growth and this year they are expecting 75 percent growth in online sales.

However, the contribution from online to its revenues is still quite small here, unlike in Britain where it's targeting 30 percent online sales.

M&S has developed a rethink campaign specifically for this market, a first globally where a campaign has been designed for the local market. In Britain, food is a popular segment for the company but Munson said there are no plans at present to introduce food here.















NEWLY-LAUNCHED METRO CENTRAL AMALGAMATES FASHION AND CULTURE WITH SUBTLE DISPLAYS OF CINEMA

Central, India's most popular fashion destination by Future Group, has launched its second store in Kolkata at one of the most iconic heritage buildings in the city...IMAGES Business of Fashion

he location of Metro Central, once home to Metro cinema, has been a favourite among filmgoers during the Golden Ages of the 40's to 70's. While renovating the building, special care was taken to ensure that the heritage of the building is retained. The Art Deco facade with waterfall-style columns and grand staircase is one such example. With state-of-the art décor depicting the heritage and culture of Kolkata, minimalistic fixtures and an aspiration of fashion boutique feel, the High Definition Metro Central vows to provide a never-before shopping experience to its customers right from the time they enter the store to the billing and cash counters. Vishnu Prasad, CEO, Central said, "We are really excited to launch our 2nd store in the City of Joy. Kolkata has always been special for us at Future Group. The launch of Metro





Central is a proud moment for us. We have always believed in staying ahead of the curve and understanding the need of our ever evolving customer. Metro Central defines the best of both the worlds in terms of fashion, choice, culture and sensitivity. Keeping the heritage identity of the building at the core, the store has amalgamated fashion and culture with subtle displays of cinema, popular culture and fashion."

Offering world class designs, with over 500 high-end brands and 10,000 styles displayed in high definition and latest trends, this one-stop destination for shoppers will ensure the best shopping experience for fashionistas of the city. The new Metro Central is spread across 50,000 sq.ft., and four floors. Manish Agarwal, CEO of East Zone, Future





Retail said, "The re-launch of Metro cinema as Metro Central is indeed a proud moment for us. The new Central in Kolkata will offer the best of global and Indian fashion to the fashion lovers in Kolkata, amidst rich history and heritage. We are very excited to serve the fashionable customers of Kolkata in the most stylish way and giving them a new venue for the best shopping experience in Kolkata."

Ananya Chatterjee, Regional Head of East Zone, Central said "We look forward to bringing the best of fashion to our customers in Kolkata with Metro Central. With Rajarhat Central being a big hit with fashion lovers in the city, we are ready to serve them with our second store as well."

Central stores are currently located in large cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Ahmedabad and Gurgaon, as well as smaller cities like Baroda, Indore. Trivandrum, Vizag and Mysuru. The central offers discerning shoppers options of choosing from over 1,000 best brands across categories including apparels, cosmetics, fragrances, eyewear, watches, accessories, sportswear, toys and much more for the entire family. Central stores are largeformat stores measuring anywhere between 50,000 sq.ft., to 3,30,000 sq.ft., and offering over 500 domestic and international brands across several categories. These stores, often located in standalone locations and also have food-courts, restaurants, multiplexes, supermarkets and electronics superstores built within. At present there are 44 Central stores present in 25 cities operating over 3 million sq.ft., of retail space across India.

Unique services that will enhance customer experience at Central:

Assisted shopping, central services

- Fashion stylists—They will help customers with expert advice on latest fashion trends
- Shopping by appointment— Customers will be able to book an appointment with fashion stylists at stores who will help them revamp their wardrobe
- Fashion attendants Store staff to double up as fashion attendants for shoppers
- Reserved shopping—Customers can now choose a product and reserve it for free, for up to 48 hours if they are not sure about it instantly
- WhatsApp shopping- Customers can now send their requirements through a WhatsApp message, get options and have the chosen product delivered to their doorstep
- Lux billing- A sit down billing is a unique feature, to ensure comfort to the customers
- Complimentary Wi-fi-Following the international store trends, this High definition Central offers complimentary wi-fi service to its shoppers

Ambience and store facilities

- Mother's room- Convenience hub for mothers that will give them a private space for nursing and changing diapers along with added amenities like milk bottle heaters and food heaters
- You are special- Various exclusive benefits will be provided to Central Privilege customers, senior citizens and expecting mothers









MEET THE MASTERS



2019 / MARCH ISSUE // COVER STORY

INDIAN FASHION RETAIL'S TRENDSETTERS

IMAGES Business of Fashion brings you the third edition of 'Meet the Masters', a handpicked list of some of the great minds of the fashion industry, who have, through their perseverance and business acumen over the years, shaped fashion retail in India ...

IMAGES Business of Fashion

he Indian Fashion Retail Market is poised for great growth. According to Technopak Research, the Indian Retail Market was estimated to be worth ₹53.06.400 crore (US \$792 billion) in 2018 and is expected to reach ₹1,50,68,300 crore (US \$2,249 billion) by 2028, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 11 percent. It is envisaged that the current fashion retail market worth ₹3,61,160 crore (US \$54 billion) will grow at a promising CAGR of 8.1 percent for next ten years to reach ₹7,88,532 crore (US \$118 billion) by 2028.

The Indian fashion retail market, which is the second largest contributor in the retail industry after food and grocery, has been witness to major disruptions in the past one decade. The entry of international brands, a large and young consuming population in the country, deeper penetration of the Internet, mass media and the social media, changes in this population's preferences from non-branded to branded apparel, and a fast growing economy leading to increased disposable income has converted India into a highly lucrative market.

The distinct trends in the macroeconomic scenario. the favorable demographic dividend, retail specific policies, and consumer buying behaviour, have triggered a transformation in the fashion retail market which is also reflected in the changes undergone by the Indian retail industry according to Technopak.

These take the form of modernisation and corporatisation of retail businesses, the evolution of alternative retail landscapes, the customisation of product portfolios to address the specific needs of various consumer segments, the increasing success of private labels, and the growing focus on business efficiency. And who better to understand these changes than stalwarts of the Indian Fashion Retail Industry?

IMAGES Business of Fashion brings you the third edition of 'Meet the Masters'. We give you a handpicked list of some of the great minds of the fashion industry. This selected group of visionaries have, through their perseverance and business acumen over the years, shaped fashion retail in India. This leader's club comprises entrepreneurs, brand & business heads, and fashion visionaries. These trailblazers not only have the vigour to dream big but also the perseverance to see that dream through to reality.

What makes these stalwarts masters? It is their deep understanding of fashion and their sensitivity to its subtle nuances; their willingness to try new trends; their acute sense of appreciation of fashion; and their in-depth understanding of the materials and design that make fashion.

Read on for the views and visions of some of the most creative, innovative and enterprising geniuses in the Indian Fashion Retail scenario, as well as their outlook on taking their market forward.









AKSHAY **NARVEKAR**

Akshay Narvekar has always had an interest in the fashion and apparel industry. After spending 5 years at BCBG Max Azria, a luxury apparel retailer based in Los Angeles, he moved back to India to work with a consumerfocused private equity firm, specifically working on the operations of portfolio companies. His career came full circle a few years later when he launched Bombay Shirt Company with an aim to offer high quality and accessible custom-made shirts.

FOUNDER, BOMBAY SHIRT COMPANY

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

I knew from a young age that I wanted to work in the fashion and apparel industry. My first stint with fashion was with a California based clothing brand, where I worked in their operation's team for 5 years. The personal quest to wear a well-fitted shirt and have it customised to my taste drove me to start Bombay Shirt Company (BSC). What's most exciting about being in the industry is that there is a constant need for innovation, which keeps me thinking of new ways to keep the context of BSC relevant, while focusing on consistency.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion for me is a way to represent who I am, without having to say it out loud.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Innovation for me is about offering a basic product, doing it really well and in ways that are consistent. At Bombay Shirt Company, we are on a mission to offer a shirt that is impeccably tailored, using only the best quality ingredients, at prices that are accessible. We have recently launched the BSTee, a basic t-shirt but one that stands out in the crowd because of the way it's designed.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Technology has definitely been one big factor in changing the face of fashion in India. From the very beginning, we have integrated old school tailoring techniques with state-of-the art technology to tailor our shirts. With the advent of newer

technology, we now use CAD systems to cut patterns, that lend more precision and reduce the amount it takes to make a shirt.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Customers today are more informed. They know exactly what they want. Ten years ago, customers probably had to be told what they needed, but that isn't the case anymore.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

Ten years ago, fashion was solely about the product. Today it's more than that – it's the experience that comes along that makes the product special and coveted.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

Absolutely, the product comes first. But for us at BSC, we make sure that with a good product, comes good service. We go to great lengths to keep our customers happy and offer an experience that will make them come back to us.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

I think India offers a great mix of things when it comes to fashion – be it our ability to manufacture or design, or our fast-growing technology, we are definitely getting there on the world map. One of the key challenges for us though, is to change the mind sets of people and get them to believe that a good-quality product can emerge out of our manufacturing units.





India offers a great mix of things when it comes to fashion – be it our ability to manufacture or design, or our fastgrowing technology, we are definitely getting there on the world map.



Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

We can certainly be all this and more, because we have the right kind of talent available in abundance here.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

Quality tailors/masters—they are indispensable to the industry, no matter how digitised it gets. We'll always need that element of human touch when it comes to clothing.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

The availability of smart technology – if used optimally, can help accelerate growth exponentially.

And, which factors may/will act as roadblocks?

A lack of enough funding or investors can be a major roadblock, no matter how good your product is.







AMEET PANCHAL

A successful intrapreneur. Ameet Panchal is a firm believer of design thinking and has a successful record of achieving exceptional results in competitive environments that demand continuous innovations. Ameet has over three decades of innovative and result oriented leader in the fashion industry. He is a firm believer of design thinking and has a successful record of achieving exceptional results in competitive environments that demand continuous innovations.

DIRECTOR, ETHNICITY

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

I have been part of the fashion industry for almost three decades. I can't imagine doing anything else. Everything about fashion and retail is exciting, the people we work with, the fast changing trends, the customers and the challenges. I have a zest for creative influences in day-to-day life. We are in the business of making our customers look and feel great about themselves.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion is a reflection of one's personality. It is one of the biggest factors that affect and that can be affected by the society. According to me fashion is storytelling. It's about what he/she aspires to be, fashion has a lot to do with your ideas, attitude and way of living.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Design thinking is at the core of all our decisions. I am of opinion that structures are collapsible in nature, and flexibility and simplicity will lead us for the next few years. If a brand is not innovative it will fail to deliver value to its customers. Be it fashion industry, luxury or any other sector. We have to match the standard techniques opted and try and achieve a new caliber of business. It is the technology and innovation which makes the fashion sector so remarkable and appealing!

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Retail is becoming smart and is quickly becoming the Internet-of-Things. Fashion

Tech helps retailers streamline processes and modernise operations. Technology helps in understanding useful insights right from buying patterns, spending habits, even colour and style preferences and allows businesses to scale with shorter risks. The combination of this data and our gut feeling works for us. Smart Tech Visual Merchandising enables the shoppers to get interested in the products and creates engagement and add ease to shopping experience. The art to the science is a winning combination.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

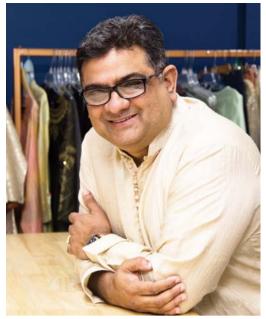
Choices. The Indian consumer is constantly evolving. With exponential choices available at the tip of their fingers and awareness generated through various platforms makes the customer today more knowledgeable than ever. Today a customer knows exactly what he/she wants to buy unlike the days when they picked anything that retailer would offer.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

The only constant in fashion is change and this applies to everything in the industry, from design-and-marketing to production-and-sales. With the rise of internet and smartphone users, customers are now able to see global fashion trends and want to consume products that reflect these trends.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

I completely agree that a great product places an enormous impact to the fashion players. A great product at the right time and valued at the right price should be one's bible to sustain and grow in retail fashion industry.



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Indian consumer is constantly evolving. With exponential choices available and awareness generated through various platforms makes the customer today more knowledgeable than ever.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

India has so much to offer - every region has its own handloom techniques that are used to weave so many fabrics, embroideries, etc. Nurtures in the rich land of India, craftsmen and artisans inspire the designers across the world. To name a few, Leheria from Rajasthan; Baluchari Silk from Bengal; Tangaliya from Dedadra, a small village in Ahmedabad; and Kanchipuram sarees from Tamil Nadu. Most of the textiles have a deep connect with the architecture of the place of their region. I believe we score 7 on 10 on the word map for fashion. India needs to be more experimental and bold enough to accept changing trends, welcoming to different cultures around the world and have fun simultaneously.

Should India focus on being a value-based manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

India has always been a value-based manufacturing hub and it is going to remain as it is for a couple of years more. Though the inspiration is taken from the core design centric houses. A blend of both strategies of being value based and design centric should be the focus.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

Along with a sharp business sense, and understanding of fashion and lifestyle, strong visual and sensory marketing will generate a lot of job opportunities in near future. As mentioned a lot of empowerment will be given to the weavers community as India is going back to its roots.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

Strong supply chain management, flexibility to changes, and quick adaptations to tech are some of the few skill sets the industry will focus upon. Along with risk taking and bringing newness in visual communications shall generate a lot of opportunities in the near future.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

Fashion consumers are becoming more environmentally conscious. Though there is an increase in demand for sustainable and eco-friendly goods, companies who work on ethically sourced and sustainable products have a long way to go. As far as government is concerned 'Make in India' is a classic illustration of the path we are headed to.

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BIPAN **JAIN**

Having spent over 35 vears with Jain Amar. Bipan Jain has been with the organisation since its inception. Bipin's futuristic vision and strong business acumen has lead the organisation to reach new heights. He has travelled to more than 50 countries in order to expand the horizon of the brand, Madame. He continuously identifies opportunities for innovation by adapting products and services to the way the marketplace is changing. At present, he is leading the entire team of Jain Amar.

MD, MADAME

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

This is a sector that fascinates me the most. People will never stop wearing clothes and thus, this category is never going to die. Women's apparel market, especially the western wear segment, has potential to show unprecedented growth, which is fairly visible as well.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

As our tagline says, "Be Everyone U R...", it syncs into the lifestyle of the individual thereby making her feel confident of what she wear or carries.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Each new product is innovation when it hits the bulls-eye of the fashion quotient of today's youth. Technology is imparting a new dimension to innovation with special fabrics and blends created for specifics. Sustainable fashion is fast becoming a new USP, which most of the brands are working towards and wish to capitalise upon

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

On manufacturing, a lot of automation has been brought into utilisation, thereby reducing the number of hands that touch the garment. This is creating more accurate and quality product. In sales, inclusion of VM equipment like Magic Mirrors has given customer a newer outlook towards pre-empting a look on herself before the actual sales. Similarly, Omnichannel is fast becoming the way to operate in near future.

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In the current scenario; value-based manufacturing is the key to success. However, in the long run, design-centric hubs shall lead to sustainability.

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How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

With the onslaught of digital media, the customer is more learned and has access to latest trends and forecasts, thereby becoming more demanding from the brands. It is a buyer's market today through and through, where the buyer cannot be lured into buying obsolete trends.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

Each season, one can experience newer categories hitting the stores that weren't existent the year prior. And every season there are newer winners when one talks about innovative product.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

For me and for most of the people in this business, product and quality is everything.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

India is still a follower of fashion trends and not a trendsetter till today. A lot of American and European labels still see the country full of potential because of the population and not for appetite for latest fashion. Deep discounting has further lured the customer to go



for price than quality. In a nutshell, appetites have increased for products but not for quality.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

In the current scenario; value-based manufacturing is the key to success. However, in the long run, design-centric hubs shall lead to sustainability.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

According to me, trend forecasters and design heads will rule the roost.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can

accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

It will be quality and fast-fashion at decent prices.

And, which factors may/will act as roadblocks?

Considering the present scenario, deep discounting that brands offer to grab eyeballs is a major obstacle to growth.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

Brands and manufacturers will have to gear up to meet 'sustainability' standards. In the digital age, with information more transparent across verticals, we look forward to seeing regulations from the authorities towards environment friendliness.







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GANESH SUBRAMANIAN

Ganesh Subramanian is the founder and CEO of Stylumia, a technology venture solving real-world problems in fashion and lifestyle businesses. An experienced retail professional, Ganesh has had long stints with global and Indian fashion and general merchandise retailers. He was earlier the COO of Myntra. He has been in leadership roles with reputed fashion brands and retailers such as Tommy Hilfiger, VF Corporation, Reliance Trends, Arvind Brands, Indus League Clothing and Coats Vivella. He loves solving real-world problems using technology.

FOUNDER, STYLUMIA

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

I left computer science engineering to study Fashion Technology in my early days as one of our well-wishers said fashion is a basic necessity and it did make sense. With that as the beginning of fashion entry, what excites me most here is constant change and challenges with the dynamism of the industry. There is never a day you can say things are under control. The constant discovery of newness and challenges associated with the unknowns.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion, as far I am concerned, is not superficial one that makes us look good. When we asked people in my earlier career what is fashion for them? Everyone starts with "It makes me looks good". Once you start probing what happens when they look good? They say, "It makes me confident", "It makes me feel good". When we further probed what happens when you feel good. They say, "I live a great life". Fashion hence is helping humanity live a great life.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Purpose of innovation is to make life simpler and better for our audience. It is a pursuit of exponential improvement. One of the key challenges in fashion is knowing what consumers like and also predicting what will work in the time to come. Most of fashion brands profit is not lost in what works but in what does not. At Stylumia we enable brands and retailers know real – time using a proprietary demand sense engine of what consumers like globally in fashion. This is against the current practice of subjective insights through experts. We believe in a good

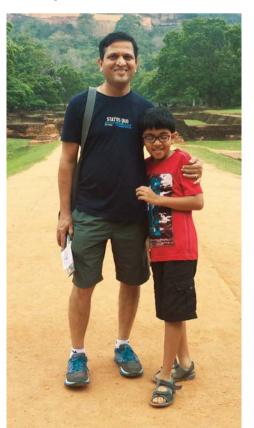
combination of Human + Machine for delivering disruptive innovation.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Not just in India, technology adoption always starts from the front end, facing the consumers. Be it CRM's, digital mirrors, personalisation, etc. What we all miss is 'product' is a key part of the equation in retail. Retail essentially is delivering right product to right customer at the right time. Right product and right time is an area technology adoption has been low. This is an area Stylumia is working on to get the product and time right.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Customer of today knows more than the brand. We cannot anymore take customer for granted and preach and make them follow. Brands and retailers are now chasing customers to stay on track. This is thanks to information explosion and the world of internet.





Customer of today knows more than the brand. We cannot take customer for granted anymore and preach and make them follow. Brands and retailers are now chasing customers to stay on track.



How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

Looking back 10 years, that is 2009, I can relate to brands able to get the attention of customers using insideout product innovation through their research and travel globally and communicating them with campaigns. Now with the explosion of innovation, traditional ways of innovation is commoditised as almost everyone is aware of the information. What can differentiate brands and retailers apart from building emotional connect is 'speed'. This is one area wherein despite knowing, less of doing is happening amongst bigger brands in India and also globally.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

Product is very important. You can have best of stores, best of people and best of marketing, if your product is not good and relevant, customers will walk away, and they finally buy a product for the story that it tells.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

India is one of the top 6 countries in terms of fashion markets in the world.

Indian consumers are as discerning as any consumer in the world today. As the market is maturing tolerances for error will keep coming down that is when usage of technology to stay informed and take informed decisions will matter. Those leaders who realise this ahead of time will stay ahead.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

I always believe we should play to our strengths. India's strengths are manufacturing and technology. We have great design talents, we have never created Indian designers to be looked at the world map. I would bring the combination of Design + Manufacturing + Technology as a compelling lever which very few countries in the world can bring together.

And, which factors may/will act as roadblocks?

It is an open world. Laws and regulation will help us in the short term to get our act in order. Irrespective, I would encourage all the business owners to be ready for a global challenge irrespective of the guardrails. In my view, biggest roadblock is our 'mindset'. If we are open like 'android' no 'ios' can win us.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

Today's consumers are very conscious of 'doing good' for the planet. Going by keeping "consumers" at the center, those brands will get attention who are authentically doing something towards making a better planet.

With fashion being one of the top 3 high carbon footprint industry and 50 percent of what the industry makes the consumers do not want, there is a huge possibility of making the fashion industry sustainable is to make the right products. We at Stylumia enable this cause of improving the probability of getting the right products to consumers.





JAY PRAKASH SHUKLA

Jay Prakash Shukla is a force to reckon with in the retail industry in India. In over two decades, he has straddled the entire gamut of modern retail. his expertise ranging from merchandising, value retail, buying & sourcing, strategy and vendor selection. In his current role as the CEO. he provides strategic direction and leadership to the company. Under his leadership, 1-India Family Mart has achieved a top line growth of ₹500 crore and has crossed the 50-store mark in a span of five years.

CO-FOUNDER & CEO, 1-INDIA FAMILY MART

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion may seem like a simple concept, but behind the word is a world full of creativity, breakthroughs and endless possibilities. The Indian fashion industry has emerged as one of the most dynamic and fast-paced industries. The retail sector in particular, is experiencing exponential growth, with retail development taking place not just in major cities and metros, but also in Tier II and III cities. At present, India leads in terms of per capita retail store availability making it a favourable market for retailers.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Being an idea-driven firm with customer centricity at the core of our operations, the use of POS driven database systems and intelligently placed CRM has made it possible for the company to maintain low inventory levels across different categories. It has also enabled us to be the market pioneers in the introduction of innovative fresh fashion and general merchandise at the most affordable prices.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Customers have expected basics like quality service and fair pricing, but modern customers have much higher expectations, such as proactive services, personalised interactions and innovations. Our company is driven largely by customer centricity. Focusing on our customers' needs has been imperative and this is what drives our digital operations as well. Going forward, we see digital communications taking more of a lead when it comes to customer experience. Our team engages regularly with customers on the digital medium to build the brand image.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

Indian fashion industry has expanded to such an extent over time that it has now come at par with the international fashion industry and has become one of the most popular revenue generating industries of India. The blend of contemporary, vintage and Indo-western has become tremendously popular in last couple of years.

The market for branded clothes is emerging in India. An ever-increasing number of people are getting inclined towards branded garments as they provide quality affirmation.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

Fashion brands have been redefining Indian fashion and putting the Indian subcontinent on the global fashion map. Indian apparel industry which is the second largest contributor in the retail industry after food and grocery is seeing some major shifts. Entry of international brands, changes in preferences from non-branded to branded have changed the course of value fashion. India is on its way to reach the top line but that would take some time, as our century long tradition

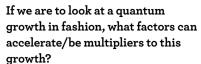
and culture is very deeply rooted among the designers. However, it is exceptional to carry forward the legacy, but to find a balance between innovation and tradition can be challenging.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

Technology is disrupting the retail industry rapidly. Retailers have already started taking measures to prepare for the changing times where technology and data sit at the heart of every operation. Along with the technological advancements, shifting customer expectations have made the need for upskilling and reskilling more important.



Consumers have become progressively more concerned about the environmental and social impact of their spending decisions. This has manifested in an increased demand for environmentally-friendly products and a trend towards eco-labelling.



The retail industry has morphed into a new and modernised version of its former self in the recent past. Digitisation, introduction of different schemes and upgradation of technology has seen the evolution of this space from unorganised trade to organised retail. This has been made further possible by demonetisation and the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST), as these have helped organised retail gain a fair share of the market from unorganised trade.

Improved business models, changing demographics and increasing per capita income have played a crucial role in propelling the retail industry forward.

Which factors will act as roadblocks?

Despite the lucrativeness of the apparel industry, it is facing certain challenges. Entry of international brands, changes in preferences from non-branded to branded have changed the course of value fashion. Consumers have become more adaptable to changing fashion trends, leading to a challenge for retailers to stay upbeat with changing demands of the customer.

Despite growing at a promising rate, value fashion is facing its own challenges.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

Sustainability and the demand for green products is a reflection of evolving consumer awareness and preferences. Consumers have become progressively more concerned about the environmental and social impact of their spending decisions. This concern has manifested in an increased demand for environmentally-friendly products and a trend towards eco-labelling.



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NARINDER SINGH **DHINGRA**

Narinder Singh Dhingra possesses an in-depth experience of more than two decades in the apparel segment with a comprehensive understanding of the Indian retail landscape. He incepted Numero Uno in 1987 with his astute vision of growth and expansion which has now transformed into a dvnamic unisex casual wear brand. Numero Uno started by manufacturing jeans for men and slowly moved into jeans for women, eventually designing and manufacturing complete wardrobes for men and women.

CMD, NUMERO UNO

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here? The fashion industry, for me, is an opportunity to play with product and bring trends to life. The ability to conceptualise an idea to getting the final product designed is the driving force for me.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion, to me, is a culmination of comfort and trend defined through what you wear and how you wear it. Everybody (most of the people) like to be fashionable and show their personality through clothes. Lot of trends get highlighted during fashion week and since the world is connected through web, it penetrates every corner of the world simultaneously. In India a lot of home grown designers and brands have found a foothold who keep on infusing trends in the country regularly. Apart from this there is no dearth of international brands who highlight style as well. If you look around you'll notice that people have become more aware of what works for their body type and embrace fashion accordingly. At the end of the day a good design sells, and consumers are getting conscious of their preferences more.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Innovation is brought at many levels of business starting from designing of product to marketing it, selling it at stores and finally at the after sales level. At each step one needs to bring about innovation to keep up with the times. At design stage in Numero Uno innovation means unrestricted use of fabric, design techniques and fitting of a garment. We have started to mix and match fabrics to create unique products, for example we have used knitwear and denim fabric to create a stunning

jacket which was not a popular choice in the past but now is. Even the way our brand communicates to the customers has gone through changes, in the past traditional marketing like print advertising was heavy but now digital medium to connect with consumers is at the fore front.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Technology plays an important role from start to finish of a business and no part of business is now untouched by it. Due to technology we see that our process have become more efficient with higher productivity when used correctly. Designers are the brain for product design, but technology is the backbone for the same. No longer does the industry depend on individual thoughts and liking to know the trends since the forecasting is now done with the help of tools and analysis. Moving on to our dealers meet, we have started to use a technology which has made it easier and faster to place order and generate detailed analysis. With the help of this technology we have gotten accurate production quantities

depending on each of our business partners past and future performance analysis. When we look at our production end, our technology partner Jeanologia works closely with us in the dry and wet processes in laundry. They also help us in finding solutions to reduce our carbon footprint and help in making eco-friendly fabrics. Apart from this we have technology helping us at our logistic end to help improve our sell-through as well.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Customers today are quite evolved. They are looking for great products at great prices. Today's customer is spoilt for choice as there are plethora of products/brands to choose from, especially with the advent of the Internet, spoiling the customer for

choice. They have retail at their fingertips.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

Fashion business means change, the key product remains the same but how you present it to the consumer needs to change. A pair of denim is classic but adding a twist to that pair becomes imperative since consumers are always on the lookout for something exciting or new. Fashion over the last 10 years has become less restrictive, consumers open to fast fashion. While mixing of fabrics was difficult in the past to create a new look, it is possible now, both because of technology and consumer acceptance. It's all about pushing the boundaries to

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Technology plays an important role from start to finish of a business and no part of business is now untouched by it. Due to technology we see that our process have become more efficient with higher productivity when used correctly.





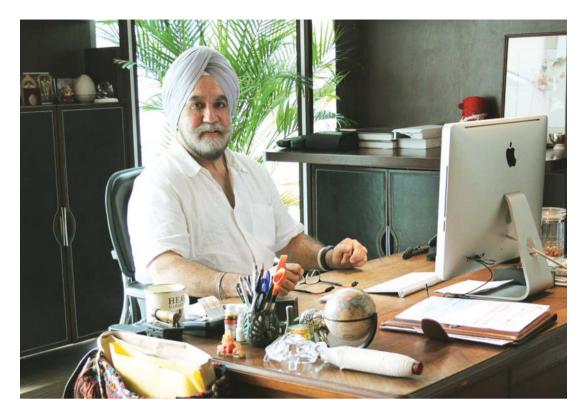
create an interesting product which also needs to be liked by people.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

Absolutely, product is the star always, everything revolves around it. If you have a great product it will be relevant in any season/year.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

I'd like to say, India scores quite well when it comes to fashion industry. India's design talent is growing as per international standards and people from outside are always looking at



our country for either fabric, design or inspiration. However, India doesn't have advantage of product as we lose to other competing countries when it comes to production. This is mainly because we do not have the support from labour laws. Efficiency is low of our labour force as compared to the competing countries like China, Vietnam or Bangladesh which is an inheriting disadvantage.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

India should focus on being a hub for all of the three. With the talent pool we have, we can easily be design centric, with the capacity that we have as a nation we can easily become a value base manufacturing hub playing on volumes and without technology we cannot grow so that's a must too.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

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With the talent pool India has, we can easily be design centric, with the capacity that we have as a nation we can easily become a value base manufacturing hub.

In India, we are geographically blessed with different pools of talent in varied parts of the country. In certain regions we have the efficiency to mass produce at great prices and in other regions you would find great design talent.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

Availability of capital to execute a business plan backed by a great product and a friendly labour law can help in accelerating the growth in fashion.

Which factors will act as roadblocks?

If one doesn't have support from the government to build infrastructure/ transportation facility around a newly developed unit then it becomes absolutely difficult to run the set up and we have seen such instances a few times already. Apart from this other roadblocks can be unfriendly banking support to run the business. Labour laws also need to be re-looked at to have a balanced approach rather than heavy support only to one party which is not fair.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

Sustainable fashion is need of the hour and the only reason why brands do is to contribute to the environment. We all have a responsibility towards the earth so that there is a better future for the coming generation. Government has already established and shown its support towards sustainable processes on paper, however the implementation of those are still in question which needs to be looked at.



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originally french

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NATHASHA AK **KUMAR**

With more than five years of experience in the B2B garment industry dealing with Tier II and III city consumer demands. Nathasha A R Kumar has been able to implement her learnings from the grass root level to lay the foundation of her ventures. She understands the potential of a private label like Vajor in the industry. She believes that fashion is no longer a commodity and wishes to change the current scenario of marketing products. And Vajor is achieving that by selling an overall experience to its consumers.

FOUNDER & CEO, VAJOR

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here? I would call myself a fashion and lifestyle entrepreneur. What I have built here with Vajor and my other B2B ventures has so much more to do with creating a lifestyle and delivering holistic experiences to the consumers. Fashion is a medium to communicate with and cultivate a tribe of people and that is what I feel the most passionate about building with the brands.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion for me is anything that falls in the category of comfort yet has the power to create an impact, to narrate a story, to speak about who we are visually. When it comes to how fashion impacts people, it's as evident as it gets with the current social media driven day and age. It's no more a commodity, instead fashion has been influencing people, spreading awareness, driving causes, breaking stereotypes, empowering ideas.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

In the current scenario, innovation and solutions have more or less become synonymous for us. As a brand that has values like comfort, body positivity, functionality and sustainability at its root, we are constantly working towards finding new ways to deliver the same to our end consumer. Few innovations we are working on at present are launching a new vertical that is an everyday wardrobe solution for those who seek versatile, breathable clothing. We are also looking at revamping our entire packaging to make it more eco conscious by reducing plastic

and making it reusable. Innovations at the digital front include coming up with more 'next-gen' savvy communication and experiences.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Over the years the fashion business has seen a peak for many. The age of internet has been such a catalyst that has lead not only Vajor but many other brands to reach where they are and to be able to expand and reach to newer heights. Vajor has been able to adapt and incorporate technology within its sphere to a great extent. Even though Vajor launched as an e-commerce brand, today its blurring the lines between online and offline. Vajor store are the perfect take at a next-gen omni channel experience.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

I believe the major difference today's consumers and those of the past is awareness. The consumer now is more conscious and aware of what they are buying and have access to a huge chunk of the global market. They want to spend money on things that holds value, is sustainable, would last for a longer time, is not harming the environment in any form and of course, worth every penny they spend. Brands today need to sell ideas and ideologies rather than selling a one-off product.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

Products have evolved along with the consumer psyche and buying behaviour which has resulted in merchandise that is not merely trend driven but driven by concepts of storytelling, art & culture, sustainability, consumer first approach, etc.



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Customers, today, want to spend money on things that hold value, is sustainable, would last for a longer time, is not harming the environment in any form and of course, worth every penny they spend.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

Having a great product is an essential ingredient, yes. It forms the grounding of any brand. However, what makes any product great is not just the general making of it but, what it is able to speak to the consumer. If it is able to establish a connect which only happens when a product comes along with a holistic experience and is a balanced mix of form and functionality.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

India is being recognised and known for its heritage and culture. We are known for our gorgeous textiles, handicrafts, the skills of our artisans and the diversity of inspiration. The key lies in recognising the potential of everything that lies at our core and banking on

the fact that today is the perfect time for us, owing to the consumers already being on the hunt for all things rich and authentic.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

It is important to acknowledge that we as a country are catering to a fair chunk of both global and domestic consumers. India is already a manufacturing hub and has reached a considerable growth when it comes to being a design hub. What we need to focus our energies towards is to become more focused on fashion technology.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

The differentiating factor between today's consumer and that of the past is awareness and demand for more conscious, eco sensitive products. Being simply trend driven or design driven will not cut it. The definition of a successful product/brand itself encompasses being sustainable today. And companies that have recognised the same are to gain the attention of the larger section of their targeted audience. They are to gain a recall value and in turn repeat sales as well. A company with a sustainable product and a sustainable working model has a higher probability to sustain itself altogether.







A second generation entrepreneur, Raghul Sikka has over a decade of experience in the hosiery industry. Raghul has led the expansion of Dixcy and its product portfolio to target newer markets. He has ideated several innovations within the product portfolio as well as numerous marketing activities, making the innerwear brand a name to reckon with in terms of innovation and marketing.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIXCY

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

As the son of a first-generation entrepreneur, my formative years revolved around Dixcy Textiles or Prem Hosiery as it was known then. My passion and pull for the industry grew steadily over the years. I eventually followed my calling. I have been privileged to witness as well as be a part of the growth of this company from a small hosiery manufacturer in Tirupur, Tamil Nadu to one of the leading players in the innerwear market catering to people across class, region and generations.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

In the millennial age, fast-fashion has become a buzzword and the defining feature in our industry. Global brands like Zara and H&M have driven and set benchmarks in this segment. Zara launches 24 new lines every year in this segment.

People are becoming more fashion conscious here. They possess and are driven by a refined sense of aesthetics. The industry has been characterised by high growth as we have kept the prices reasonable when compared with other industries. During the period 1995 to 2004, the consumer price of clothing has grown at a reasonable rate of 156 percent against a growth rate of 272 percent for all other goods in our country.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

According to me, innovation is the game changer. I take immense pride in saying that as a company, Dixcy has been at the forefront of innovation in the innerwear category. We were the first company in India to introduce innovative lines like

gym vests, hooded sweatshirts and Spandex elastics. Around a decade back, we thought of athleisure, ahead of other competitors in India.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Technology is all about the digital age. From the consumer viewpoint, online spending alone does not capture the growing digital influence. Technology has helped overcome the barriers of distance and time. Companies and customers can communicate and listen to each other without any lavers or hierarchies in between. The digital space is also driven and increasingly defined by the mobile device. Phone has become increasingly indispensable to Indians. More purchases are made online through the mobile phone than through any other device. About 80 percent of urban e-commerce takes place on phone. It is imperative for companies to be more mobile friendly.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

The fashion product of today is characterised by simplistic and minimalistic design. Companies are evolving their product mix to find opportunities at every price point. Planning themes in fashion will be driven by people's aspirations. In fact, innovation across various parameters will be a part of the product stories that companies will showcase.



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Technology has helped overcome the barriers of distance and time. Companies and customers can communicate and listen to each other without any layers or hierarchies in between.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

I couldn't agree more. A product is the most important aspect in fashion. Fashion is all about aesthetics and tangibility. Without this, it would lose its relevance. It is the single biggest driver for purchase.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

In the apparel export market, India ranks fifth worldwide with a four percent share. The domestic consumption is nearly two-anda-half times of our exports. In a nutshell, we are one of the largest manufacturers of fibre. I feel that the fibre policy of our country needs to be relooked for global competitive advantage.

Should India focus on being a value-based manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

India should focus on becoming a design-centric hub as well as a fashion tech/IT hub. Both are sustainable for long term growth. As a design hub, India has the potential to be a centre for high quality fashion. Fashion tech/IT hub can be integrated and entrenched in the system to achieve better synergies.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

All major brands are headed towards fast-fashion. The ability to think and act fast, in a proactive rather than a reactive manner, with the customer in mind will be a crucial skill. This is extremely important as brands are cutting timelines for product design and launch.

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We face an uneven field versus Vietnam, Bangladesh and Cambodia with regards to fibre tariffs that are imposed. To make it favourable, we need to negotiate better with high performing countries.



If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

I feel that the factor that will act as an accelerator is the ability of a company to act in a lean and efficient manner delivering fast-fashion by reducing the apparel calendar for the "See Now, Buy Now" generation. For example, companies that are vertically integrated like Zara own their store infrastructure. Hence, the product's journey to the store is faster. Also, since prices of garments have not increased significantly over the past decade, the sale of apparel will increase with the corresponding rise in the purchasing power of the people.

And, which factors may/will act as roadblocks?

I strongly feel that India's fibre policy needs to be to our advantage. We face an uneven playing field versus Vietnam, Bangladesh and Cambodia with regards to the tariffs that are imposed. To make it more favourable, we need to negotiate better with high performing countries.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

It set me thinking as to what we as

an industry could do to set right this process. Any solution cannot work in isolation. The textile industry consumes fertilizers and fossil fuels across the production value chain. There is a need to follow the best practices followed by countries like Germany with regards to the production, discharge and recycling norms. Also, since India has a great affinity for cotton, we need enhanced safety standards for cotton production, considering its economic and social impact. We, at Dixcy, have consistently endeavoured to put Tirupur on the global map for following the best practices in sustainable production and waste discharge. As of today, nearly 80 percent of our power consumed is through renewable and sustainable sources.

We also need to direct our CSR investment into R&D projects with leading universities to adopt and innovate sustainable technological initiatives. With greater public and industry initiatives, the government will come up with legislations to offer a level playing field as well as incentivise sustainable production.







RAHUL **AGARWAL**

A young and energetic businessman, Rahul Agarwal heads Donear NXG, the apparel division of Donear Industries that deals in formal. semi-and casual wear. Rahul's interests lie in the best global practices relating to manufacturing and resource/people management. He has worked extensively in different capacities, be it handling the family office in real estate portfolio or understanding the textile business from grassroots, he has shown his eagerness to learn and master the various aspects of running a business.

DIRECTOR, DONEAR GROUP

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

My father, Rajendra Agarwal, has been in the textiles and fabrics industry ever since I was a child, so I had the wonderful opportunity of learning everything about the fashion industry at close quarters. The same led me to go ahead and study Textile Engineering. Being surrounded by this environment further encouraged me to set foot in the same space so as to continue enhancing our family's legacy and my personal passion for our brand and industry.

The most exciting thing about this industry is that it is dynamic yet rooted in its own way.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion is usually subjective, depending upon an individual's requirement when it comes to apparel and clothing. For me, it is about that perfect combination of comfort and style.

There are two aspects of fashion's impact on consumers-

Psychological Aspect—Any particular trend, or something that is 'in', inspires or encourages people to think about buying similar apparel. Subconsciously, they begin looking for similar patterns and styles, thus resulting in something becoming a 'hit trend'. In the same way, if a particular pattern is not appealing, it will not be accepted by the people and eventually, that particular style will fade away. And then they are the classics, which are perennial and never out of trend.

Economic Aspect– Basis the psychological aspect, it has a direct impact on the purchase patterns of consumers, which lead to increased demand of particular

styles. This further leads to other market players introducing same or similar trends.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

We have always been ahead of times and competition in innovation. This is an important feature of our process and we constantly work towards this.

Innovation happens through people and processes. Our workforce is extremely dedicated to producing the best quality products and innovates to align fashion trends with utilitarian benefits. On the processes front, we are always quick to jump onto the bandwagon for better efficiency. Having amalgamated technology into most of what we do, we find a way for trends to reach consumers faster.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Technology has evolved considerably in the past few years. Every process is interlinked to make the best possible use of time and competencies. New software are a seamless plug and play.

Technology has dovetailed into our existing processes and ensuring lead time reductions and an error free production regime. At our company, we're constantly scouting for better ways of doing things. From partnering with industry tech giants for our manufacturing efficiency to developing a strong in-house tech team so we are kept abreast of the latest in the market and more often than not, develop our own.



How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Ten years ago, there weren't many players in the market. In fact, in certain areas, there used to be monopolistic brands as the reach was limited, from both ends.

Today, everything is available at our fingertips. We can sit at home and purchase anything across the country – there are more choices and increased exposure which further lead to cumulative consumer insights which help in better decisions for all the market players.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and

theme planning changed?

The quality and quantity of consumer insights have enhanced due to wider reach, thanks to the Internet. This has helped fashion brands to develop products which are in accordance with the consumers' expectations. While developing new products or pushing the current ones in markets across India, brands can now make better informed decisions, which help in increasing their market value and puts them in sync with their consumers.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

I strongly believe that at the grassroot level – a product is of prime importance.

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A product has many layers associated with it – it needs to be the right colour/design/trend to befit the occasion, it needs to be available and at the right price point. All those factors are interlocked to prompt a purchase. The experience is truly felt once the product is tried on and the reflection of your persona is seen/felt.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

Around 13 percent of the country's export earnings is from the textile and apparel industry thus the position is well established. We are the second largest producer of textile and apparel in the world. There are few challenges which is being worked upon as an industry to enable us to become the leaders globally. Few challenges for the nation overall are illicit markets, excise duty on man-made fibers and the impact on environment. Having said that, our company has very stringent policies regarding sustainability and counterfeit products.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

A prudent mix of all three is essential for this sector to move forward. A manufacturing hub that quickly churns out product, an expertise of design hub that resonates trends from leading fashion-capitals and evolving with technology needs to be a mandate.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

I think one just needs to have the following skill sets for stepping into fashion industry the right way –



Creativity – Be it colour, design or pattern, one must have an eye for relevant details whilst having the ability to play with them

In sync with overall trends - One must be in sync with all the trends existing in the fashion ecosystem to be able to appreciate it and develop newer trends using insights gathered for the present styles

Future Planning – The individual must be able to gauge the current way of fashion and make decisions for future product development

Experiential Ability – The ability to create an experience out of fashion.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

India is a wellspring of opportunities. To accelerate growth we have to look towards infrastructure development, skilled workforce and innovation and technology.

Only with a healthy mix of all three can we leapfrog into a global arena.

And, which factors may/will act as roadblocks?

The current labour laws aren't conducive for growth. Also, the high import cost of machinery which enables us to upgrade technology are some roadblocks.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

It is, without any doubt, a necessity to have environmental-friendly products to come into play. Sustainable fashion is a need of the hour, given the current scenario of depleted resources and waste pollution. Yes, I do expect certain government regulations to come up soon to foster sustainable and environment friendly processes/products. Although I do hope that we don't reach a dire stage where it becomes inevitable, but yes, it should be a conscious choice across the fashion industry.



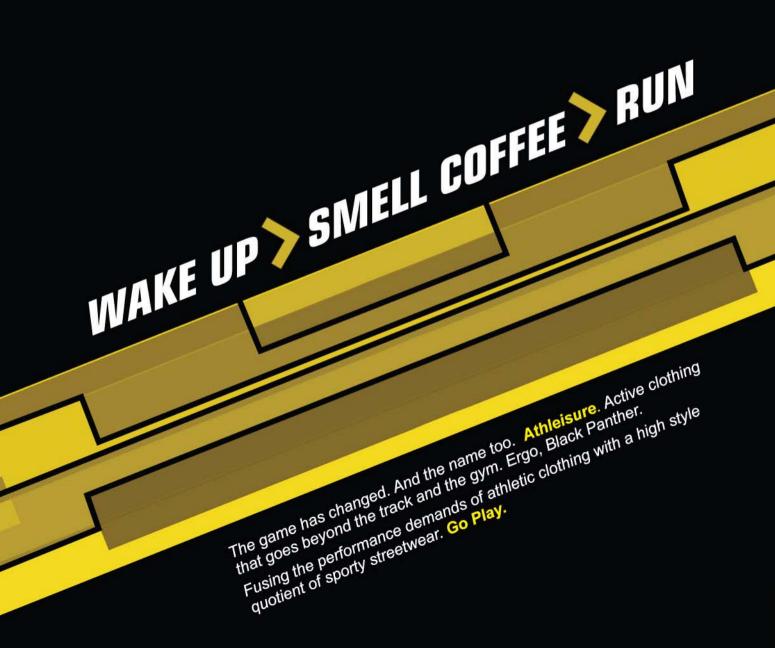


TOTAL SPORTSWEAR SOLUTIONS





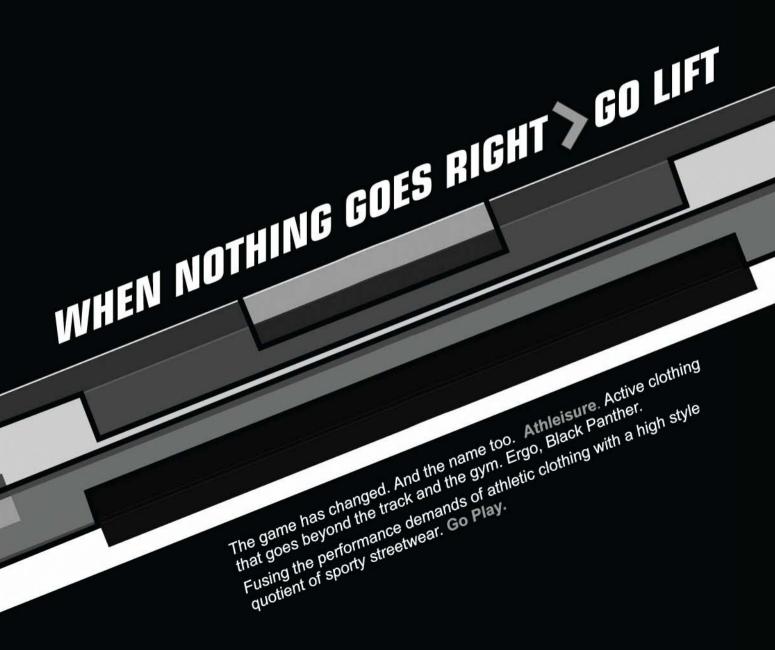
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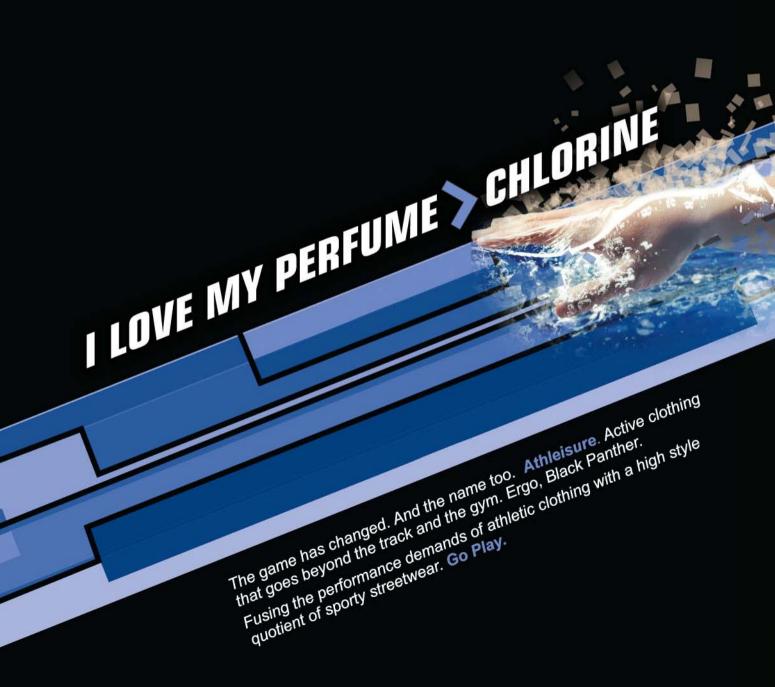


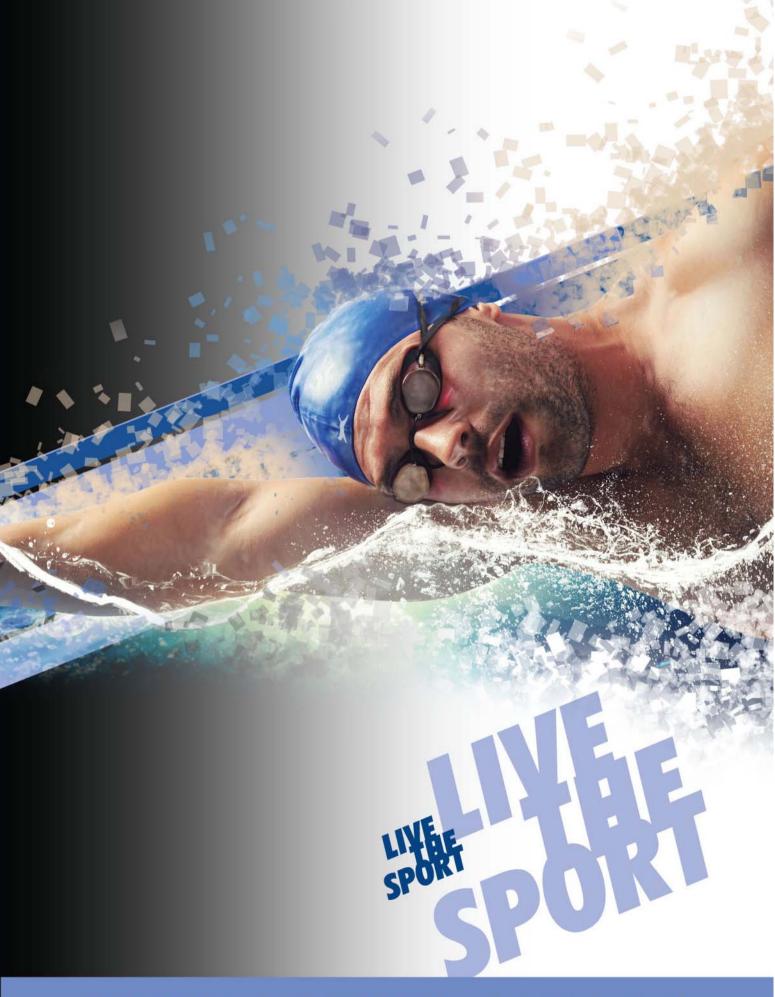


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TOTAL SPORTSWEAR SOLUTIONS









Rahul Vira comes with over 20 years of experience in retail. Known for his successful strategic and tactical leadership across lifestyle and luxury retail, Rahul has, in a short span of four years, carved a niche for Skechers in the competitive footwear market of India. Under his guidance, Skechers, a relative new-comer in the Indian market. has scaled to a turnover of over ₹440 crore with more than 2,000 retail doors. He is at the helm of diversifying the brand's business, increasing brand awareness among the Indian audience and exploring newer avenues for business expansion.

CEO, SKECHERS

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

The Indian fashion industry is fast growing and in the last decade, has moved from an embryonic stage to staggering heights today. It's quite widespread and with the rise in digitization, there has been growing consciousness towards fashion which make consumers more open to experimenting with fashion.

I personally love the fashion industry. For me the most exciting part is that I am doing something that I love.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion is no more limited to dressing up. It has, over the years become an extended version of one's personality, an expression of oneself. The industry as a whole, over the last decade, has seen a revolutionary change and is making its mark on the world stage. The growing inclination of Indian consumers towards fast-fashion is allowing brands and retailers to sell their products all-year-round whilst creating employment opportunities. Fashion has become affordable, clothes available at reasonable prices.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Innovation, after a certain stage in a business becomes very vital especially when there is cutthroat competition. It is what sets your brand apart from others. Being innovative, I believe, not only gears up the sales ratio but also provides your customers a wide range of products to choose from.



Skechers is now focusing on offering innovative designs and technologies in products in order to build on the brand image and gain a larger share of the consumer's mind. Our latest innovation is 'Luminators', from the Skechers kids category, which uses fibre optics to light up the uppers of the shoe. Skechers also recently launched a special collection in collaboration with Japanese manga and anime series, One Piece. These shoes are designed after the main characters of the show.

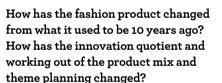
How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Customer expectations are rising faster than ever. They have evolved over time, but never as rapidly as they have in the past couple of years. We can thank technology for most of these new customer expectations. With growing consumption of digital content, consumers today are increasingly updated with latest fashion trends. The amount of information that's available online makes nearly everyone expect more. Customers earlier were brand loyal but with the rise of aggressive competition and access to information, they now have a wide array of choices for every product in different brands around the same price range. Also, higher disposable income has led to more purchasing power because of which demand for fashion and luxury brands are growing in the market.



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Innovation, after a certain stage in a business, becomes very vital especially when there is cut throat competition. It is what sets your brand apart from others.



Fashion trends change so fast that sometimes it's hard to keep up. The fashion industry has evolved a lot over the years, but the good part is that fashion repeats itself. Consumers expectations are increasing rapidly from the fashion industry and consumers are more welcoming of different styles, patterns and trends which is fun to play around with. Fashion, for some is undying, while some believe in trends and being up-to-dated with what's in store. Keeping the consumer trends and needs, Skechers recently reiterated the 90s chunky sneakers with the launch of 'Skechers D'Lites' which is a great amalgamation of 90s dad chunky sneakers with a new age design.



Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

Definitely. I believe a good product speaks for itself. Consumers in India now are aware that the quality of the product exceeds anything else. They are, in fact, willing to spend more in order to receive a better quality product than settling for something average. Good quality products invariably build stronger brands.

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Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the

While India scores very high on traditional art and weaves which also become inspiration for large fashion houses globally, we are still not the leaders in driving the fashion industry. We need to promote and build platforms of international standards to enable fashion to get highlighted and not just

based manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc.?

A combination of all is super and I think India has the capability of doing all of this.

have maximum demand/generate maximum employment for Indian manpower in the future?

I think, when you see it from a macro level, skill sets across all levels of this industry right from creating, to manufacturing, to retailing will be in high demand. In fact, industries which are involved indirectly will also see an increase in demand.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

I think affordable fashion is one area where I see India experiencing quantum growth. India is still growing, and our purchasing power is increasing yearon-year. Easy access to global fashion trends will be one of the major reasons for this quantum growth.

And, which factors may/will act as roadblocks?

Well I don't see any major hurdles as the government is listening to the industry, laws are being modified for the new India, FDI regulations are getting clearer though not as fast. Overall I am very positive about India and things will change for the better.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

This is the new mantra across all

industries not just fashion. As people of this planet, we have to look at sustainable and eco-friendly products and processes. This would help the planet at a larger level. Across the globe, governments are working towards it along with the industries to create policies, incentivising and occasionally bringing in tough measures as and when required.







the ORIGINAL

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RAVI **MODI**

When Ravi Modi founded Manyavar, he re-invented a category - the men's ethnic wear. Ravi Modi defines an enterprise as 'life' and not just commerce. Covering more than one million sq. ft., Manyavar showcases the highest quality benchmarks and a retail presence spanning over 400 stores in India, USA and UAE is a testimony of its signature leadership. The conjunction of ethics, excellence and a seemingly impossible growth has made Modi the subject of numerous case studies.

CMD, MANYAVAR

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

Men's ethnic wear was never considered 'fashion' in the apparel. Back in the late 1990s, people did not consider ethnic wear to be a daily wear option, it was only limited to specific occasions, hence the perspective need change amongst the consumers. To fill this void, we started our journey to make ethnic wear more acceptable and more fashionable with Manyavar. It was an exciting journey as we created a completely new space and created some classic trends in men's ethnic wear.

The most exciting part is that we are the catalysts of the ethnic category and have become synonymous with wedding wear and festive wear. Due to the industry's ever-evolving nature, trends change every day opening space for evolving designs and palettes according to consumer demand and trends. This keeps us pro-active and extremely perceptive to trends.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Rising consumerism and higher disposable incomes have led to increased demand for fashion consumables. With fashion, the scope of differentiated products and services is extremely high. The fashion industry has also seen a major change in terms of distribution channels and promotion channels. Fashion is no longer referred to in the broad sense of the term as a lot of niches and differentiated offerings have popped up which serve Indians according to their preferences.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

We implemented ERP way back in 2002, long before it was introduced to most of the industry players. Everything happens in real time which leaves no gap in any transactions.

Auto-replenishment of stock ensures we have the right products in the right place at the right time. There is no manual intervention, and everything is managed in real-time. Our algorithms tell us what to procure and produce with absolutely no manual intervention! We also have an advanced in-house technology where on only has to enter basic details and the products get delivered from the nearest store to your POS. This ensures quick turnaround and satisfied customers.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

There's a host of major consumer trends emerging in recent times. Today's

consumers have radically different priorities, along with a transformative effect on the fashion industry as well. The paradigms are shifting in terms of the way people consume fashion and engage with changing trends.

There used to be a time when seasonality based buying behaviour was a thing. Now people have very specific needs. There's a changed buying behaviour for different segments — different needs for different occasions.



Fashion is no longer referred to in the broad sense of the term as a lot of niches and differentiated offerings have popped up which serve Indians according to their preferences.

Consumers have now started to reimagine ethnic wear in a whole different manner. Earlier, ethnic wear was limited to specific occasions, now consumers have changed their buying pattern by incorporating ethnic wear in their dayto-day space also.

The consumer is much more conscious about his/her fashion quotient today compared to say 10 years back. Because of the sheer amount of fashion they consume through social media, they are more informed, evolved and involved in fashion. Constant updating and huge volumes of fashion discourses online have ensured that they are always on top of their fashion game. Major trends are now completely driven via social media where consumers are readily absorbing them and going back for validation.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

A product is an input in the fashion sector and that is what drives the whole industry.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

Ethnic fashion is ideally more accepted in women's space rather than men's. There has been a huge growth in ethnic fashion space amongst women as there's a lot of options available to choose from, and now it has forayed into fashion in a much deeper level. Getting men to be more conscious about ethnic fashion is a huge multiplier to this growth. As an ethnic catalyst, we are continuously working on making ethnic fashion more acceptable in men's space. Overall, more consciousness will certainly lead to quantum growth.







RISHABH OSWAL

A third generation of the Oswal family, Rishabh Oswal acts as the Director of Cotton County Retail Ltd., and Oswal Woollen Mills Ltd., the parent company of the group and one of the top producers of woolen and acrylic yarns in the country. Innovation and customer satisfaction is the top priority for Rishabh, which has helped Monte Carlo extend its reputation in the apparel industry. He likes to work out a lot which has fueled his dream of launching his own athleisure brand. Rock It.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MONTE CARLO & FOUNDER, ROCK IT

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

Fashion has always been a source of passion for me, as dynamics varies vastly across the change of season. The evolution that Indian fashion industry is witnessing urges me to contribute towards this growth, where there is a huge scope to create an everlasting change.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion as an industry has gone through a sea of change, yet the essence of it remains singular. Fashion is often considered to be a vibrant representation of the current thought-process and ideas. It is an art form that can never die due to its ever-changing nature, which reflects on living a lifestyle.

India is known for its diverse fashion sense, which has evolved over time. The rich tradition and conventions from ethnic to the modern sensibilities of western both find space in this diaspora. You can see a change in the value-expressive attitudes transforming the mentality and central beliefs among the citizens, transforming how one leads his/her life.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Innovation for us is the essence of change, where we bridge the gap between the consumers and the industry, with best ideas possible. We have always strived to come up with creations that would add a shade of innovation to our patron's lives. It is essential to marry the idea of innovation with age old traditions, in order to create a bracing impact. Starting from the knit to the shade, we try to emulate the pulse of the current times.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Technology and information superhighway are the game changers in the business today, providing us with newer avenues to create a long-lasting impact. While understanding and reaching out to our customers has always remained our focus, with technology it, has been possible for us to adapt to the evolving times while maintain a healthy discourse with our clientele.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Fashion reflects on the sensibilities of the wearer. Hence, the evolution in fashion came owing to the evolution of tastes. Present day consumer is further well-versed with the industry, updating themselves on a daily basis. Hence, understanding of fashion, product and quality has changed extremely which has a lead to increase in the number of expectations from the brand.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

As with the taste, the products have evolved at a rapid pace, reflecting upon the current and upcoming scenario. The positioning of product has evolved from being an accompanying factor to an asset that accentuates the wearer. Innovation has added the presence of newfound value that now every consumer seeks out of the product, as how one markets and sells it.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

Product has always been the hero as a great product creates a pleasurable experience for the consumer, allowing the space for further engagement. While marketing has grown to great lengths in creating value, a stellar product is what creates value for the brand in the eyes of the consumer.



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Product has always been the hero as a great product creates a pleasurable experience for the consumer, allowing the space for further engagement.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

Similar to every other avenue, Indian fashion has left its mark on the global scenario. Be it our batik prints or our much loved designers such as Bibhu Mohapatra, the global players and consumers are appreciating our contribution to the whole diaspora of fashion. Digitisation of fashion is emerging yet there is a great deal more work to be done, in terms of competing with other digital brands. Also, products that are sustainable and yet maintain ecological balance are on the lesser side. This has to be promoted on larger scale, keeping diverse tastes in mind.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

To think of the fashion industry

emulates a host of characteristics, where focusing on any singular one would create a vast gap in the growth of the industry. Hence, while India has help proficiency in manufacturing, it needs to embolden it's grasp over marrying the cause of fashion with technology, while improvising on it's already brilliant base of design proficiency.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

India has always held proficiency over manufacturing, with the sheer



manpower that it hosts. While manufacturing will continue to demand/generate maximum amount of employment, design and incorporation of technology will also see a profound leap in engagement of professionals, accelerating the industry.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

The focus on fusion, keeps on growing as wearers opt for attires that keep up with time and yet reflect upon the sensibilities that they have imbibed. Value-based clothing is also in a rise, where the product should covey value to the wearer's thought process and image. India is on a rise, as the rate of dispensable income rises amongst its citizen, and brands are one of the preferred options amongst all. Yet, unique apparels found in independent labels are gaining traction.





ROHAN BATRA

Among the youngest MDs in the Indian sports and fashion space, Rohan Batra joined the Fila business in 2008. Rohan dived headfirst into the product upon joining the India business, working with the sourcing team at footwear factories. he developed an indepth understanding of footwear technologies, manufacturing and supply chain. Rohan also heads Proline Fitness, the largest fitness equipment player in India which operates across both home and commercial segments.

MD, CRAVATEX BRANDS (FILA)

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here? My family has been in fashion since 1983. It was a very natural progression that led me to my current role after a short sojourn into investment banking. The most

led me to my current role after a short sojourn into investment banking. The most exciting thing for me is the mix of creativity; process and commercial instinct that you need to run a fashion business.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

I think that fashion is extremely important to any culture, not just in India. Whether as a form of self-expression or as a functional tool, the choices people make when it comes to style allow them to fit in and stand out, often simultaneously.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

For us at, Cravatex Brands, innovation is a process. We have set up our own design lab within the company and filled it with some extremely creative people. We work on three major processes in our teams – Iteration, Innovation and Invention. Iterating your bestselling products allows you to improve them every season and grow your core businesses. Innovating by introducing new materials, technologies or manufacturing methods adds freshness, improves quality and can lead to keeping your products relevant to the market needs. While, Invention takes time and is hard to do but it is the most important. Companies that invest in research and testing of materials, technologies and new ideas will always ensure that they keep one eye looking ahead to build a future pipeline of amazing products.

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What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Technology strategy is important for any retail company today. Just as you need a brand strategy a coherent approach to the technology backbone of a company is a must. We have areas such as product lifecycle management where we use tools to track the development of multiple projects simultaneously, often allowing vendors direct access to cut down development and manufacturing time.

The biggest change in the last decade has been the sheer amount of raw data available to a fashion business these days. We have a clear plan for harnessing this data and utilising it for improvements across our businesses in assortment planning, PLM, markdown management and inventory control. This can all be unified and used across all sales channels to ensure a higher return on capital.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Consumers today are fundamentally not different; they still seek great quality products from brands they identify with. What has changed is the way in which brands and customers interact. Ten years ago the channels of distribution were limited but now a customer can purchase brands through many

different retail formats, both online and offline. The nature of the dialogue between brands and consumers is much deeper now with conversations happening in real time over social channels. We are living in the golden age of communication and connection between brands and consumers.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

I think there was a phase during the last decade where fast fashion with easily available and cheap products were the mainstay of any wardrobe but with need for sustainability in fashion rising, I think we will enter a decade where people want great quality and durable products that last. With regards to planning an assortment the greatest tool for this in the last decade has been the availability of data in real time which allows us to react much quicker

Consumers today are fundamentally not different: they still seek great quality products from brands they identify with. What has changed is the way in which brands and customers interact.

to changes in the product architecture. Often no matter how much analysis we do a good old-fashioned gut feeling is sometimes required.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

I believe that great product and strong brands are the basis of fashion. The most important thing however is telling a story of a brand through its products that captures the imagination of the user. Fundamentally the product must be well constructed, have utility and is honest but for truly great product it must tell a story. At Fila, we have products like the BB01 polo which has remained largely the same since its introduction in the 1970s, but it tells the story of one of the greatest tennis players that ever lived, Bjorn Borg. His story is captured in the details such as the pinstripes, pop button placket and of course the athletic fit.

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A great product and strong brands are the basis of fashion. Fundamentally the product must be well constructed, have utility and is honest but for a truly great product, it must tell a story.

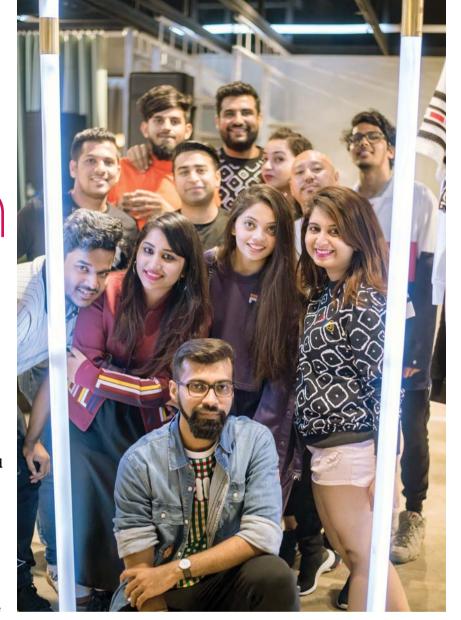
Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

I think in a global context the next decade will see India become a larger part of the fashion conversation.

The sheer number of talented young designers and companies that are in their infancy now is incredible. Our largest challenge however is that before we conquer the world, we must conquer own backyard. That means growing distribution, increasing scale and building very strong brands in India first.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

I think India will need a great pool of talent across all disciplines but especially data driven technology professionals. Faster fashion cycles and a more complex supply chain that enables endless aisle and omnichannel strategies would need professionals who have a strong grip on not only product



but a very strong understanding technology and the role it plays in merchandising and forecasting.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

The biggest growth can come through infrastructure and mobility in cities followed by the growth in distribution. Once the price war online settles down, we can have a very strong penetration across India with a very sustainable model. Investment into integrated large-scale manufacturing would also help grow the industry significantly.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

At Cravatex Brands, we have an entire sustainability department independently working across all business functions to ensure our environmental footprint is reduced and we move to a more sustainable product portfolio.

Sustainability and consciousness throughout the supply chain would be very important going forwards. The Government is already taking measures with regards to waste disposal, environmental treatment of by products and use of plastics. I think simple, clear and stable policy changes would be beneficial for the ecosystem as a while.







SAMEER **PATEL**

A self-made and selfmotivated professional. Sameer Patel is a proud owner of a globally established brand. Deal Ieans. He believes in getting acquainted to the fashion trends followed in every corner of the world and then crafts them with fresh concepts in his seasonal collection. What makes him stand apart from the rest is his conceptual thinking, international competence and ability to see the big picture.

FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN, DEAL JEANS

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

The fashion industry is a competitive place to create and leave your footprints in. We are proud to boast about our accomplishments and achievements. Today with trends changing in the blink of eye, understanding what this industry demands and fulfilling at the right time to the right people is what excites us to be a player in fashion industry.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion is a spirit, an extension of oneself. It is an unspoken communication that speaks volumes about personalities and their thoughts. It encapsulates who we are on an everyday level and how we project that through our clothing. There is no rule to fashion, it simply is playing around with and breaking the rules of conventional dressing.

With exposure to entertainment like music, movies and internet, fashion has a deeper influence on the lives of people and witnesses timely changes in taste as per trends focused across the nation. Fashion definitely has a healthy impact at large as it creates a wordless communication that we all understand!

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Innovation takes place at the intersection of fashion and technology, representing a powerful way to connect consumers to brands while providing distinct shopping and wearing experiences. Design is continuously gaining importance in the development of the fashion products, coping up with this element is where innovation plays a crucial role.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Fashion industry has transitioned to becoming digital-centric. The shift from brick-and-mortar retail shopping to a world of e-commerce has forced traditional retailers to rethink business strategies and adapt to rapid changes in technology and consumer preferences. At Deal, the use of real-time data technology towards inventory management followed by social media marketing for brand promotion and internet technology which facilitates to sell online in a better manner and helps to establish the brand much faster, there is no geographical boundary anymore. Use of technology for superior in customer experience and sophisticated CRM is a great opportunity for the brand.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

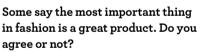
The customers 10 years ago, had minimal exposure to fashion as compared to the present scenario. Also, the accessibility of internet lacked which today plays a crucial role in bringing fashion trends across the globe with ease. Today, fashion influencers have risen to prominence. the number of apps in our social media rotation has quadrupled, the way that consumers make purchasing decisions has dramatically altered: they stand in stores, using their smartphones to compare prices and product reviews. All these aspects have created an impact on the fashion orbit.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and

working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

The fashion product has significantly evolved over the years. India has witnessed a huge transformation in the consumer lifestyle which has been influenced by the geo-demographic, socio-cultural factors, psychographics, preferences, norms and behaviour. Rising disposable income continues to drive increase spending. Rise in brand awareness and educated consumers accessing internet to follow global trends has brought fashion forward products to Indian market. The growing fashion consciousness through western culture among Indian consumer has led to the grow manifold in past decade.

Today's fashion market is highly competitive and the constant need to 'refresh' product range means that there is an inevitable move by many brands to extend the number of 'seasons', that is, the frequency with which the entire merchandise within a store is changed. With the frequent replenishment of merchandise with fresh collection, brands are encouraging consumers to visit their stores more frequently with the idea of 'Here Today, Gone Tomorrow'.



Yes, product is the lifeblood of any company. Without them, the firm withers on the vine and either dies or is absorbed by another firm. Good product also needs to be backed with an efficient marketing campaign which creates a demand for the product.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

India has an immense creative side when it comes to fashion. Over the centuries, Indian fashion industry has contributed greatly to the global fashion world





The shift from brickand-mortar to e-commerce has forced traditional retailers to rethink business strategies and adapt to rapid changes in technology and consumer preferences. with both in terms of both adding to its economy as well as giving its ensembles that have been worn by generations. International fashion designers have utilised Indian prints and textiles over the years, as well as emulate some of the traditional silhouettes in an exciting and modern way.

Lack of familiarity with Indian brands has led to westerners being hesitant to purchase Indian products. Indian designers are renowned for their flair and attention to detail. Those that produce traditional garments are singled out for their ornate craftsmanship. Essentially, international markets work on principles of commercial viability and wearability. This makes the traditional Indian look hard to push on shop floors. International fashion is speeding up when it comes to production processes and lead times are shrinking. However, for Indian brands, the possibilities on either side of the equation are large: A domestic market with more than one billion potential clients, as well as an international market keen to see them combine traditional flare with Western commercial viability.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

We strongly believe India should focus on being a value based manufacturing hub. Reason being it's long standing history and developing textile and garment sector. India is the second largest textile manufacturer. Also recent government initiative "Make in India" has renewed focus on invigorating the country's economy. Now given the right support and growing consumer base can help develop the retail and fashion industry, gaining international investments.



Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

Fashion industry is an extremely competitive and dynamic market. Trends and styles change with the blink of an eye. Data Science can be used here on historical data to predict the trends which will be in demand and hence potentially save a lot of time and money. We are moving into even more of a data-driven world. But numbers alone are useless there's a human who can interpret them. With emerging technologies like machine learning and data science the outlook for data analysts is promising in India.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

Growth in apparel industry in India is increasing manifold with the change in lifestyle, earnings and urbanisation of the customers. The Indian consumers are adopting fashionable items quickly and conveniently with the rise in competition. The emergence of branded apparel outlets, shopping malls are also increasing rapidly all over India. The change in lifestyle of the Indian

consumer, increasing working class, higher disposable income, dual career families, and many other social and economic changes offer a wide array of opportunities, and contribute in accelerating the pace of growth of all.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

Style is supreme in the world of fashion. Ethical companies must recognize this and focus on innovation to make sustainability on trend. These aspects will be inspiring, commercially viable, and bang on-trend. There is the potential to lead a revolution in the way the fashion industry is run for the brands who support sustainable and eco-friendly processes. Doing this, we also need to go one step further for sustainable fashion to enter the mainstream and that is to drop the idea altogether of being worthy and instead concentrate on innovation because eco conscious shoppers might be driven by more ethical considerations when making purchases.



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SATYEN P MOMAYA

A seasoned professional, Satyen P Momaya holds over 20 years of experience working across retail. telecom and consumer durables. Satven has a successful track record in building a strong profitable business and achieving market growth objectives. At Celio*, he spearheads the retail business right from operations and management to marketing activities and revenue generation and is also responsible for the growth and development of Celio* in India.

CEO, CELIO*

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

It is an exciting, exhilarating experience, for me. Apparel retail is amongst the few large opportunity industries which is moving late, but fast, to organised and branded retail in our country. The constant development and innovation on product, understanding the consumer mind and anticipating fashion trends and being ahead of the curve really excites me.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion to me has to have the creativity/aesthetics which are appealing and differentiated, it also has to be simple, comfortable, as a brand it is an opportunity to create and present garments with love, passion and definitely making it accessible for people at large to adapt into it. Apart from being one of the largest and one of the fast growing industry providing huge employment opportunity fashion also has a bigger influence of allowing people to express themselves and as people disposable income grows looking good and fashion becomes even more important.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Industry research/design and product people work simultaneously on analysing the past season while launching current season merchandise and the work in progress on design for the next season, there is innovation at every stage right from cutting down product lead time, re-engineering manufacturing process to improve on costs and sustainability. At Celio* innovations is one of our core values, our designers and product development team in France is constantly innovating on the product whether it is the fabric, washing or treating the garment, performance

benefits to consumers etc. In India we launch all our global innovation on product the same time to give you an example the soft touch denim is a fabric innovation and so is the stay denim, both these products launched simultaneously in India and France.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Fashion as an industry in India has been a late adapter to technology and given the revenue scale many brands have been able to achieve the allocation of resources has been constrained, but in the last 4 to 5 years the speed of technology is changing and accelerating. We have carved out a digital blue print with the intent to deliver better consumer shopping experience, improve data capture and analytics and CRM. To give you an example of providing sharper curated merchandise assortment, as an organisation we are on a retail footprint expansion drive across channels,



to support this we are combining intuition with AI for our internal data to understand region wise channel wise what consumers love what is not working and constantly curating our merchandise assortment accordingly.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Over the years the customer has really changed. Before, it used to be the channel or the brands who were completely in control and dictating fashion, now the customer is in charge because technology has really given the customer access to so much information. The consumer expectations with customer service on product and price parity is higher than it has ever been.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

Yes I completely agree. We are a menswear specialist; product is our DNA and creating reasonably priced fashion is our strength.





Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

India scored high on the sheer scale of the opportunity for apparel retail and is one of the largest fast growing fashion market, the key challenges we need to address is to leverage the strength on providing technology solutions at a fraction of cost.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

India has the art and the workmanship embedded within our culture hence design is our strength we need to invest higher on technology to leap frog on fashion manufacturing.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

Apparel and footwear retail, both online and offline, is growing and will continue to grow stronger. We will need to work on developing the soft skills which will help address the new increased consumer expectations.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

Building a pool of talent across functions in fashion and investing in competency building.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

Very, very important it has to be on the top of the list for most organised retailers and brands, a 360 percent approach right from sourcing to, use of chemicals and waterless treatments, worker work environment, longevity of garments etc., is something which will act as unique differentiation for brands and will be valued more than ever by the consumers including the millennial.



SHARAD VENKTA

Sharad Venkta has been instrumental in making Toonz one of the largest kids retail player in India today. His experience lies in key strategic decision making and initiatives including retail operations, developing new business models, etc. With over two decades of experience in the retail industry, his last stint was with Future Group where he successfully managed operations of more than 1 million sq. ft. of retail space, administered the sizeable business (₹1.000 Cr+) and led a team of more than 2,000 people.

MD & CEO, TOONZ RETAIL

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here? Kids' fashion is the most creative and innovative of all the fashion segments. With every passing year, we get to see and also design some really creative stuff for them, making it even more exciting.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion is a form of art, a form where you can express yourself any way you want to. It is extremely diversified. Every day comes with new ideas, challenges and innovations. The fashion industry, in particular, is a place where imagination and creativity run wild. Kidswear is one of the fastest growing segment, these days. They are well aware of the latest trends and make their own decisions and treat fashion as a way of self-expression by wearing their attitude.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Innovation comes out of need, and how you plan to fulfill those needs in the most creative ways possible. Here at Toonz, we aspire to provide the best range of everyday necessities for your child. Our products range from beautiful attires by our in-house brands—Wowmom & Superyoung—to bedding sets for newborns and toddlers, from toys to prams and strollers, and everything that your child requires under the sun. Our innovation lies in the fact and in the way we provide all of these products under one roof, making it a one stop shop.

Online is generating more interest even in the interiors of the country. And, better access and supply chain logistics are enabling the fashion retail markets.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

The customer of today is more aware about his/her needs. Be it a 10 year old kid or an adult, everyone around us knows what they want, what inspires them and what their needs are. Also, with the advent of technology and also with the help of increase in the disposable income, the customers today have come a long way.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

India has come a long way. Today, we are exposed with international brands and social media which are influencing the customer mindset and behaviours. Ten years ago, customers were less aware and conscious about the kind of clothes they carried. Consumers are aware of the fashion trends and popular fads, especially with the excessive exposure to social media and online portals.

Because of the awareness so caused, we are always on our toes, looking out to change the current fashion scenario and creating a trend of our own. It is not just about the price or the quality now, the product mix now consists of everything, comfort, expressiveness and ease of procurement have also emerged to be very crucial, each factor having equal importance. The theme plans and the innovation quotient have changed significantly over the years with the increasing sensitivity towards fashion trends.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

Yes! If the product is not great, then the trend won't last, and nor would it have a chance to come back, like many of the '90s trends which are doing the rounds now. Timeless classics like the Levis straight cut jeans are still deemed to be timeless because of how great the product was in every way. So yes, a fashion product needs to be great to actually find a place in the market.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/ generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the

A very important skill set that is in great demand is the understanding of the needs of the customers. It is important for the brands to follow the trend and be aware of what is going around them to be able to give the maximum to their customers.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

The theme plans and the innovation quotient have changed significantly over the years with increasing sensitivity towards fashion trends.







SWETA SARAFF

Second generation into the fashion accessory business, Sweta Saraff feels privileged to be associated with a family that boasts of a rich heritage in the fashion industry. Armed with degrees in business and fashion designing, Sweta ioined the business when it was in need of certain technological up gradation in terms of innovation, administration and expansion. D&G Buttons is a well recognised brand in fashion accessory, it has strong presence in Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru.

CEO, D&G BUTTONS

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

Fashion industry has been a tradition in my family for years. It's a gift of our forefathers and runs in our DNA. I feel closely connected to it through my genes. In India, the fashion industry is a combination of cultural heritage, elegance and colourfulness. The rapid changing nature of this industry gives me a rush. It is all about the power of visualisation and creatively breaking the stereotype.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion is all about awareness. It is distinctive, innovative, descriptive and even constant sometimes. It talks about your acceptance for change and how you want to present yourself in terms of style, status, profession, etc. The fashion industry has been dominant in India for over 1,000 years. Lately there has been a rapid growth in the middle class and an increase in powerful manufacturing sector. India is now the destination to be in for international brands, due to strong economic fundamentals and increasingly tech-savvy millennial population. There is a shift from just a sourcing hub to becoming the most attractive consumer market outside the western world.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Innovation in my industry holds two dynamics: aesthetics and technology. They are so closely knit that we cannot neglect either. The very sensitive angle to this is the price competitiveness in the market. At present we are working on alternate solutions to the conservative product composition and traditional construction



techniques. Modern machineries for construction of moulds, semi-hollow buttons, stainless steel are some of such examples which sustain our goodwill.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Technology today has a great role to play in the fashion industry. Manufacturers are leveraging technology to enhance the creative experience with digital marketing displays and improved checkouts. It helps in increasing their consumer space through e- commerce as well as significantly lowering labour cost. We are presently moving to solutions based on artificial intelligence which aims at personalisation and curation as per the needs of the buyers.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Customers of today are way complex than those 10 years ago. Technology was for a few. Brand loyalty was high. The market was divided into two segment: the classy and the massy. But today the apparel industry is being driven by the increasing tech-savvy consumer. There is huge awareness at all levels. The growing penetration of the internet, social media, and e-commerce is now providing with increasing access of brands and

Technology today has a great role to play in the fashion industry. Manufacturers are leveraging technology to enhance the creative experience with digital marketing displays and improved checkouts.

> orthodox process of 3 to 6 months' time frame does not function any longer. We have to rapid the process to reduce the lead time, sometimes letting go the creative aspect.

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Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not? We at D&G buttons swear by quality

in terms of product and services. The quality of the products used in the fashion industry is self-descriptive. It reflects the personality and priorities A well finished and designed durable accessory adds a lot more value to the product than just aesthetics. The market for branded clothes is emerging in India

at large. A great product will always provide great customer satisfaction. as they provide quality affirmation.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

products to the consumers in Tier II

cities and even below.

There has been a drastic change in the fashion products from what it was 10 years ago. People no longer consider apparel as a durable item; it's a seasonal concern. Quality is no longer their priority; they chase latest trends and look for bargains.

Worldwide there has been a remarkable shift towards the megatrend of hasslefree 'activewear' and 'sportswear'. As a result, we are forced to create collections faster and at lower R&D cost. The

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

Indian fashion industry is at its growing stage and has a great potential to make the mark on the world at large. Its rich cultural background and large population with cost effectiveness accelerates its global opportunity. In the last decade it has taken a blossoming take-off. India fashion industry needs to focus on product innovation and development, invest in brand building and supply chain. Trend spotting and digital marketing can also be profitable.

India is blessed with diversity in all aspect. The large population supports value-based manufacturing, the rich heritage and culture is a pillar to the design centric aspect. and the

adaptation toward development make it

"

an IT hub.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

India is blessed with diversity in all aspect. It can easily provide with an all-in-one solution to the world. The large population supports value-based manufacturing, the rich heritage and culture is a pillar to the design centric aspect, and the adaptation toward development make it an IT hub.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

India is a labour-intensive country. With the increasing manufacturing industry there is a huge demand for skilled labour.

Parallel to the increase in the economic growth there is more and more brands wanting to come to India, leading in construction of new malls every day. This in turn also creates opportunity for sales people at floor level.



If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

The favourable demographics and rising income level are believed to be the key growth drivers in this sector. Branded attires mark a significant contribution to the evolution of Indian fashion industry.

And, which factors may/will act as roadblocks?

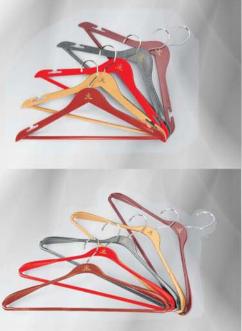
One major roadblock in the industry is lower productivity levels. With increasing globalisation, it is one of the main factors affecting the growth of the garment industry. There is also a vacuum in investment in the infrastructure development and process standardisation.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

Since the world is going global with everyday technological developments, 'good' fashion is the only key to success in the future. With the use of eco-finish process-electricity, water, chemical and waste can be highly reduced. It is an effective way to save energy and resources, which can build environmental sustainability and protection. The government needs to impose regulations for pollution control otherwise it will lose its existence in the world altogether.



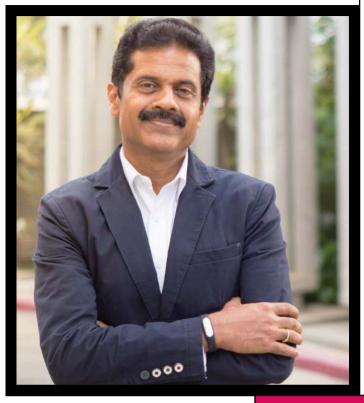






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VASANTH **KUMAR**

With an illustrious career spanning 22 years, Vasanth Kumar has successfully launched, nurtured and established leading value fashion apparel and retail brands like Max Fashion and Peter England. Kumar joined Lifestyle International as President of Max Retail Division, where he laid the foundation for the brand. spearheading it into a formidable player in the value fashion segment in India. Currently, Kumar is spearheading Lifestyles' aggressive growth plans in India.

MD, LIFESTYLE

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here? The dynamism of the industry is what inspires and excites me.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion is the freedom to express one's style. Fashion consumption is an indicator of economic progress hence, its impact on the nation and people is significant.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

Innovation is the tool that allows brands to ensure a frictionless journey from discovery to purchase for the customer. At Lifestyle we have implemented several such innovations to ensure that the retail experience is nothing short of memorable. We have introduced 'Click & Collect' – an Omnichannel initiative that allows customers to order online and collect merchandise from a Lifestyle store of their choice. Our in-store Endless-Aisle initiative helps a customer find missing sizes on our online channel.

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

Incorporating technology, that is both interactive and engaging, has changed the dynamics of retail. Today, technology in your day-to-day operations is not just about enhancing business functions, it is about providing a frictionless shopping experience as well.

The Self-Checkout kiosk - a facility that allows customers to bill their merchandise and complete the payment transaction in a few simple steps on their own. The Mobile POS which we have introduced for billing products some of our products such as watches, fragrances or cosmetics. Our Fitting Room Assistance program that has emerged from our insights into our customer shopping behaviour, allows for size retrieval with the help of technology. For our e-commerce business, we have introduced visual search and enabled voice-based search on our apps which has helped creating a more personalised and convenient shopping experience.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Customers are becoming more discerning and tech savvy than ever and are looking for simple, hassle-free and personalised shopping experiences. They are well versed with trends, both national and international are seeking a retail experience that is unique.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

These days, fashion is adapted to meet global trends. The focus has shifted towards creating curated capsules for various occasions rather than a "one-size-fits-all" collection. The role of creativity has a new significance, as continuous change requires the ability to quickly transform products as per customer requirement.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

Products play an important role in the fashion industry. It is a key differentiator that help brands maintain their leading position in the market.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key





challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

Retail is a growing industry with huge opportunities both online and offline and the large number of new entrants be it brick-and-mortar or e-commerce platforms are a testament to that. Every player in this industry brings their own strengths to the customers. Over the years Lifestyle has carved a niche for itself amongst consumers who are looking for international products and shopping experience. Our strong private label offering and the power of choice that Lifestyle offers through a curated collection continues to distinguish us from the rest in the market.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

With huge improvements in technology and access to data connectivity. customers are now looking for seamless integration between the physical and virtual retail spaces. Hence, in the fashion industry, apart from fashion designers, planners, buyers who will always be required to manage a fashion business, we will see a big influx of e-commerce and omni-channel experts in the fashion industry. Digital and Social Media Management, Performance Marketing, Data Analytics, Web and App Development, Omni-Channel and E-Commerce Management will be some of the skill sets that will be in demand in the coming years. The core of the industry which is to design/buy, move and sell, will remain intact, and hence so will the skill sets that support this aspect of fashion retail. The additional demand of manpower will come from the new channels of engaging and selling through omni-channel.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

Building great customer relations, providing a seamless omni-channel experience and a frictionless journey from discovery to purchase supported by customer focused services.

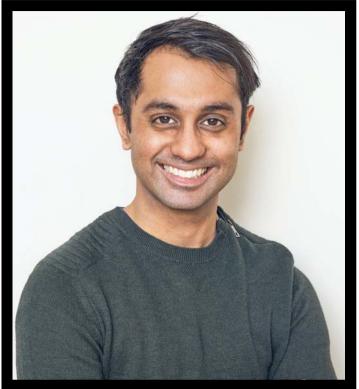
And, which factors may/will act as roadblocks?

Adequate availability of quality retail spaces is a challenge.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

Eco-friendly fashion is soon to become an industry wide movement. Reducing the environmental impact is key and every player should work towards ensuring that systems, processes and products adhere towards sustainability.





VIJAY PAL SINGH JOHAL

A gritty, enthusiastic, self-motivated individual who leads by example, Vijay Pal Singh Johal has an experience of 8+ years in the footwear industry. Under his leadership the brand. Truffle Collection. has scaled new heights of success with a growth rate of whopping 350 percent since 2015. Johal's observant nature allows him to be a stalwart in the product designing aspect of the brand which also happens to be his passion. Meeting new people and understanding new cultures has helped him understand life in a deeper, more meaningful way.

DIRECTOR, TRUFFLE COLLECTION

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

Fashion is something which has always been close to my heart. I have loved and grown up watching people dress up and create a personality of their own. Fashion gives a voice to many of us, it boasts self confidence for many. Also, since our family business has been operating in this segment, so fashion came in at an early age to me.

I enjoy the rapidness in this field and how one has to evolve with the changes. Infact, what excites me more is keeping up with trends and continuously finding new ones. It is an everyday process.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion is a broad institute in itself. For me fashion is freedom of expression, emotion, values to the extent of what you believe in and how you want to be perceived. Fashion now has a huge impact on people in India, with social media playing a huge role in this. They have started taking fashion seriously and I can see people putting in a lot of effort to rock that "effortless" look as well.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

We are constantly working towards innovations for the Indian market. We also have a team of UK based designers which makes us the foremost brand to bring key trends into India. From working on creating detailing on flat sliders to a chunky sneaker, we are constantly researching new trends across the world to bring it to the Indian market.

"

What has been the role of technology in changing the way companies do fashion business in India? How has your company adapted to technology?

I think technology has major role when it comes to growing a business and reaching out to multiple customers. With the ever increasing technology there comes social media and online shopping. We strongly believe that accepting such technological changes has helped the brand to explore new market and customers.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

We live in a millennial age that wakes up to a social media post, reviews and are more active and vocal. So I think today's customer knows exactly what they want and do not need any validation from anyone.

Whereas 10 years ago if one had to purchase anything they would require that kind of validation from someone to make their purchases.

How has the fashion product changed from what it used to be 10 years ago? How has the innovation quotient and working out of the product mix and theme planning changed?

The customers today require fast fashion in which we need to turn around a lot faster than we used to in past. This has naturally led to the product being versatile and in line with the latest trends. As the customer is well informed and well-travelled, quality at no cost can be compromised, as pricing has taken a back seat.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

How do you define a great product? Is it something which is trending or something comfortable and stylish. In The customers today require fast fashion in which, brands need to turn around a lot faster than it used to in past. This has led to the product being versatile and in line with the latest trends.

our case it is an amalgamation of both. So a great product for us will be fast, easy and stylish at the same time.

Where does India score on the world map for fashion? What are the key challenges which should be addressed to make it more competitive in the world market?

India is growing and increasing its demand very rapidly, and we are proud to see this. We would love for our customers to be a lot more creative with what they wear and how they wear it. While this isn't exactly a challenge but it's surely one of our aims.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

With the ever growing working force and peoples drive for creating,

manufacturing, etc., India can definitely be a bit of all.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment Indian manpower in the future?

I've said retail will be the strongest in India in the long run, along with focus on online/social media where it is growing rapidly and people are willing to spend on the same.

If we are to look at a quantum growth in fashion, what factors can accelerate/be multipliers to this growth?

One should always take risks and explore new adventures by finding the right market which is the actual key to accelerate growth.

And, which factors may/will act as roadblocks?

I think consumers need to get out of the "low price" idea as you pay when it's worth it. You get the right value and returns on your investment which is something one should also look into.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

With the changing environment and global warming in the picture, I feel everyone in every sector needs to contribute their bit to make this a better place. We being a part of fashion industry are doing our best to support such causes and it definitely impacts a good change in the environment where fashion is highly consumed.

I think government regulations are already in place, but we need to educate more people on the way eco-friendly fashion is important to us and how it impacts the society on the whole.





VINOD GUPTA

With over three decades of experience in finance, marketing and administration, Vinod Kumar Gupta is the man behind Dollar Industries' exponential growth. His effective leadership and excellent business tactics have driven the entire organisation towards success. Being professionally qualified, he is also the member of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI).

MD, DOLLAR INDUSTRIES

Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you the most here?

The most exciting thing about being part of the industry is that it is driven by imagination and a form of expression instead of clothes being just functional. Innerwear is a basic need of every human being, and it has evolved over the decades. The trend has changed significantly and the taboos behind innerwear is fading.

Being in this industry has its own excitement and challenges but being innovative in this field is the most exciting part. With new kind of fabrics that are being developed, customers are demanding more choices than ever – this requires us to constantly keep a watch on their demands and provide them with fashionable, sustainable and affordable products. It's very exciting to see how far the hosiery industry has evolved over the last few years and there is so much happening and so much to offer.

How would you define fashion? What is its impact on people at large and on India as a nation?

Fashion is self-expression, it is extension of who you are or what you believe in. When it comes to hosiery products, comfort is the main criteria along with being fashionable, so it is important that we strive to have a balance in our products which are not just comfortable but also are trendy.

What does innovation stand for you and how is your company working on giving new innovations in the market?

This year we have experimented with fabric that is stretchable and body hugging to give a snug fit. As far as colours are concerned we are concentrating on bright

and pastel shades for summers. We introduced a new product category 'athleisure' for consumers who love sports and invest time in staying fit.

Two to three decades ago, multiple clothing styles didn't exist, and neither did clothing differentiation. Today, we have morning wear, casual wear, office wear, party wear, night wear and so on for all the categories – men, women and kids. At Dollar, we always look forward to giving our customers a delightful experience.

How is the customer of today different from the one 10 years ago?

Innerwear has evolved from being just functional to being fashionable. People now are more conscious of what they wear inside. Today people are prone to wearing good innerwear when they go to the gym or when they go in for sports activities as staying fit and comfortable along with being stylish plays a very important role in peoples' lives. Innovations in this category will largely depend on the fabrics being used.

The foremost importance is that there is a hygiene factor associated with intimate wear – the taboo behind it is slowly being lifted day by day and hygiene-related communication is being promoted at all levels across our country. People have started feeling comfortable in this 'second skin' as well. Customer psychology has changed a lot from 10 years ago.

Some say the most important thing in fashion is a great product. Do you agree or not?

Yes, the right quotient of fashion is quality products with amazing fit, that makes everyone comfortable and yet is stylish or on trend.

Our company began its journey with the signature brand 'Dollar'. Later we



introduced premium men's innerwear brand Dollar Bigboss, which achieved great popularity. We also introduced women's wear brand Missy, ultrapremium wear for men ForceNXT and Force Go Wear, kids wear brand Champion and a range of winter wear called Dollar Ultra Thermals and Wintercare for all categories – men, women and kids. We recently launched athleisure for sports lovers and apart from these, we have our economy range of products including Dollar RKG, Lehar Bravery, Egyptian, etc.

Should India focus on being a valuebased manufacturing hub, design centric hub, or a fashion tech/IT hub, etc?

India is very rich in terms of culture and heritage. The skill of art among the Indians is like no other. If spoken about design, the western world has deep appreciation for our art and flocks to purchase items that have traditional Indian designs. Whether art or science India is no less than any of the first world countries and slowly emerging as one of the world power houses.

Which skill sets in fashion will have maximum demand/generate maximum employment for Indian manpower in the future?

Cutting and stitching definitely requires a special skill set to produce effective work in the fashion industry, hence it is important to empower more labours with providing them the needed aid and knowledge so that we have sufficient resources and artisans.

How important is 'good' fashion going to be in the future? What do companies that support and foster?

'Good' fashion is a relative term. If spoken about only fashion, it was there before also, it is present now and it will exist in the future as well. Fashion, specially clothing, changes with time. Every season comes up with new and innovative styles which become the current fashion and stays for sometime then again it changes, so it moves on like that.

We, being one of the leading hosiery companies of India, follow eco-friendly ways of manufacturing quality products for our customers, like we have zero waste discharge machines which manages the wastes and controls it. Instead of using turbine we use wind power for generating electricity, we initiate quality check of products at every stage of production, we do a lot of CSR activities every year for the welfare of the society and underprivileged children etc. We would definitely agree that by doing these for our customers we have gained a lot of positive support from our consumers and hope to get it in the future as well.

If asked about ESG (environmental, social and governance), we are very aware, and our consumers are aware too. We are actively working towards sustainable fashion.





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DA MILANO LAUNCHES LIMITED EDITION ZENIA COLLECTION

The unisex collection has selective colour options with interesting depictions that add a touch of luxury and style to the user's personality...

eading leather accessories brand,
Da Milano is always known for
its extravagant, gimmicky and
classy collections. This season is no
different with the brand launching the
Limited Edition 'Zenia Collection' for
its patrons.

Designed by the Italian team, every product is handcrafted by vegetable-tanned and hand-dyed full-grain Italian leather which is suitable for every mood and every season.

Available in selective colours like grey, cognac and basic black, the unisex collection

includes trolley, computer bags, passport cases, laptop sleeves, wallets, duffle bags and briefcases.

The brand proudly endorses its products with a life-time service warranty.

With more than 80 stores in India, UAE and Nepal, Da Milano boasts of two state-of-art manufacturing units which employ efficient craftsmen who are trained to create each piece with intricate details. With its quality and service ethos Da Milano has been catering to a discerning clientele since 1980s.











The summer line comprises t-shirts, designer tops, shirts, denims, trousers, lowers, loungewear, capris, bermudas and footwear, all of which channel the classic international vibe.

Duke Fashions blends bright colours to give life to its artistic creations this summer. The collection is featured in a versatile colour palette of desert rose, pewter and moss with contrasting greys, refreshing the wardrobe with soft, yet bold colours this summer. The collection plays on graphics and volumes.

Kuntal Raj Jain, Director, Duke Fashions, says, "Our target audience is today's youth who is looking for a trendy and stylish range that is in sync with international designs, fashions and quality. Duke is a value for money brand and our mission is to make international designs and styles available at highly reasonable prices. We see it as our duty to provide our customers the inspiration they need to look and feel confident. Our spring summer collection'19 is also based on the same philosophy. Duke aims to provide people with the perfect summer wardrobe that they would love and adore."

Duke has an unbeatable marketing network comprising more than 360 EBOs and over 4,000 MBOs across major cities in India. Moreover, the products are also exclusively placed at big chain stores and on online shopping portals..

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>DUKE< LAUNCHES SPRING SUMMER'19 COLLECTION

The newest collection by the brand has been inspired by the fashion culture of South East Asian Islands...

uke has launched its summer fashion line which blends effortlessly with contemporary style. Influenced by the South East Asian Island's climate that defines what an ideal summer fashion should be like, the new collection takes inspiration from exotic warm beaches, glorious mountains scenery and the colourful culture that show what summer wear should be like – light, loose and, most importantly, comfortable.







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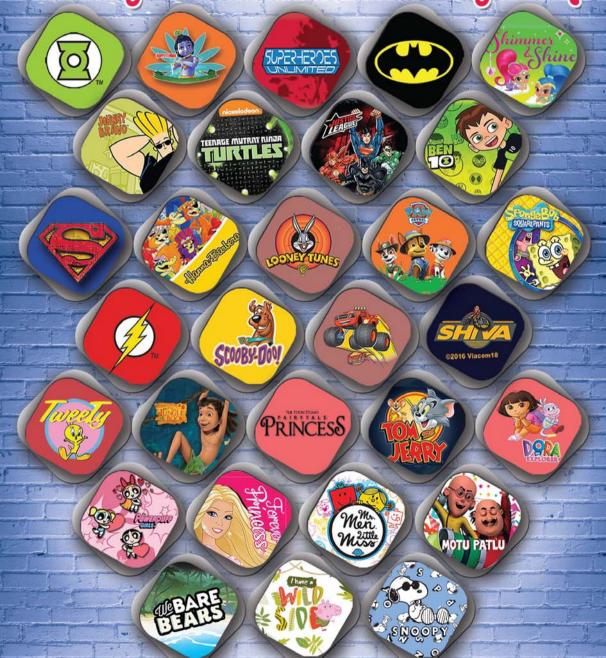
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PUMA REINVENTS THE 80'S WITH THE ALL NEW RS-X KICKS

Nodding to the '80s, the experiential pop-up space showcased the rebooted Puma RS (Running System) range of sneakers while narrating stories of extreme reinvention. Puma introduced its RS-X series in India with an exclusive 'future-meets-retro' event in Mumbai attended by celebrities, sneakerheads, press and industry movers and shakers...





portswear brand Puma India kickstarted the season with an exclusive launch of its new RS-X range at Khar Social in Mumbai. Nodding to the '80s, the experiential pop-up space showcased the rebooted Puma RS (Running System) range of sneakers while narrating stories of extreme reinvention. The exclusive event was attended by celebrities, sneakerheads, press and industry movers and shakers.

The event saw not just the reinvention of Puma's RS shoe but of a unique movement in sneaker culture by partnering with influential, individuals and institutions that push culture forward. Celebrating reinvention and retro futurism, Puma created a space that epitomises 'old meets new'. With musical performances, art displays, gaming consoles and more, Puma India has elevated the RS-X experience.

Khar Social was revamped with RS-X sneaker art, installations, quirky photo booths and surreal projections. Taking the attendees back in time with cool retro experiences, Puma had a claw machine filled with Hot Wheels toy cars and a DDR music video game. Adding further to the experience, Puma played host to artists such as Priyesh Trivedi a.k.a Adash Balak, Nishaant Fogaat, Tejas Niar, Big Fat minimalist-Anniruddh Mehta who created their artistic rendition of the RS-X shoe, which were displayed in capsules and audio-visual units around the venue.

The mezzanine floor of Khar Social was what created the most noise with

a display of the all new RS-X drops. A centre table displayed the immensely popular and much - awaited RS-X Hot Wheels collection on a very cool Hot Wheels track. A trophy wall cabinet proudly showed off the RS-X Trophies and a super slick wall installation dangled the RS-X Toys sneakers. An augmented reality photobooth added an interactive element to the display. A stack of nine televisions brought to life the RS-X OG sneakers. The 'So Collectables' Pac- Man video, based on the original 1980's phenomenon. streamed a game in which Pac-Man was on a mission to snap up all the RS-X kicks in the maze. Guests were treated to live performances by Major C followed by Aniruddh and Tejas.

Back in the '80s, the original RS was Puma's innovative, high quality cushioning technology. Today, the brand has rebooted the RS design to create the RS-X – inspired by sport but made for the street. X marks extreme, exaggerated, remixed. The RS-X tells stories of reinvention to the extreme with its bulky design, material mixes, and bold colour palette. With RS-X, Puma takes its collab game a notch higher by partnering with brands that echo the same language with exciting iterations of the RS-X.

The RS series will have multiple drops throughout the year, with each telling their own stories of reinvention. Stay tuned to @pumaindia on Instagram for more cool updates on the RS-X collabs dropping next. Available at puma.com and Puma stores across India.



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- Complete event coverage
- The success stories of retail trendsetters
- Full coverage of IFA 2019 & ISCA 2019 including in-depth information on nominees and awardees

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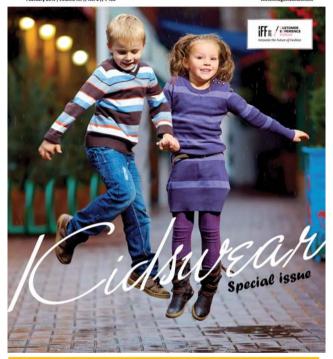
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- Full coverage of IFA 2019 & ISCA 2019 including in-depth information on nominees and awardees
- Detailed information on upcoming malls in India

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