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AUGUST 2019

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CEO SPECIAL

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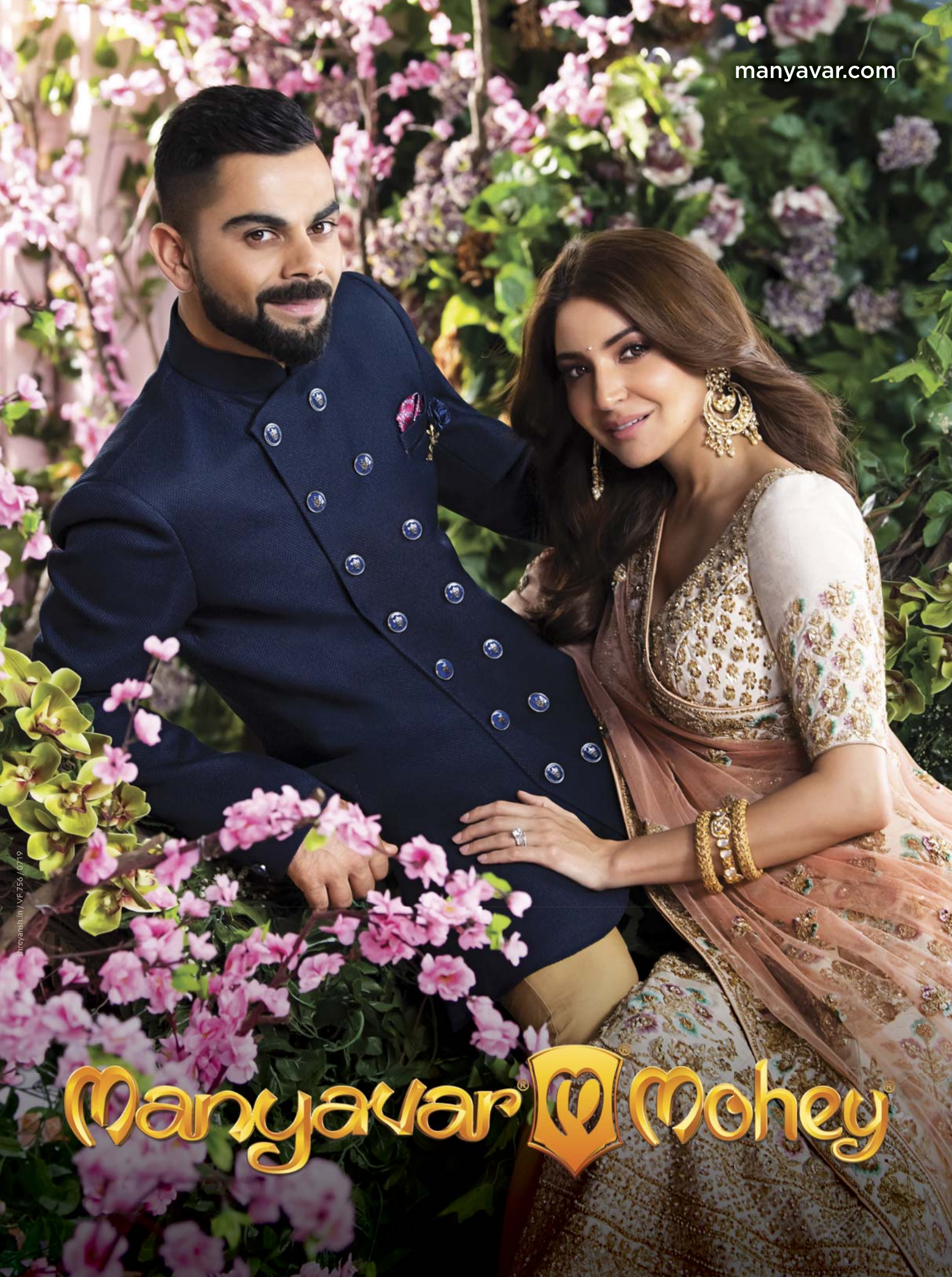


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The Indian Retail Industry is vast and continually reinventing itself amid changing market conditions. In this evolving scenario, to survive and establish oneself as a brand, a strong and innovative CEO at the helm is more important than ever.

To set a company up for a prosperous future, a brand requires a leader who ensures timely innovation, has good knowledge of the industry and its trends, has a sharp business and marketing mind and a vision to take the business ahead, even in tough times.

This CXO level person acts as an anchor for the company and takes the business to the next level year by year.

In our annual edition of IMAGES Retail, we bring you a comprehensive list of Retail leaders who are successfully leading the change and making their brands' presence felt in the sector. In an exclusive one-on-one interaction, these stalwarts talk about the company's growth, vision as well as the future implementation of this vision, which will determine the position of the brand by 2030.

Aside from this, the issue brings readers a rich analysis of the trending Phygital format as well as the impact of the 'Cash on Delivery' concept in the e-commerce segment and what it means for business and consumer acquisition.

The edition also delves into the issue of Loss Prevention, a major pain point for almost every retailer out there – big or small. The feature talks to brand leaders about the major concerns in the area, while discussing the steps which retailers are taking both nationally and globally to cut losses.

Shifting focus, IMAGES Group is busy working towards creating another success story – the 16th Edition of our flagship event, IMAGES Retail Award 2019, to be held on August 26, 2019, at Grand Hyatt, Mumbai.

In the end, we hope that you find this annual August edition as informative and insightful as ever and we look forward to seeing you all at IRA 2019 in large numbers.



Amitabh Taneja

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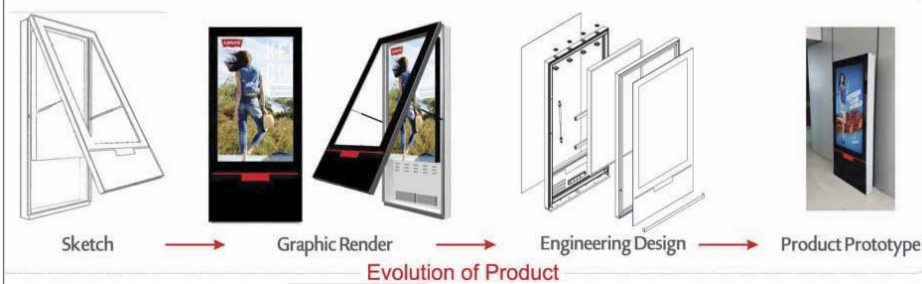
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In its annual edition, IMAGES Retail brings you a comprehensive list of CEOs and retail heads, who are leading the change with the way they manage their brands, integrate technology in their workspace and let consumers be the voice of their brand



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FDI RELAXATION, BOOST TO SINGLE-BRAND RETAIL GIVES RETAILERS POST BUDGET CHEER

The Union Budget 2019 proposal to relax local sourcing conditions in the retail sector makes a positive impact for the retailers as brands continue to take giant steps towards business expansion. Here's a look at some of the prominent headlines last month...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

representation of this design philosophy," he said in a statement. Dikshit said Indian ethnic wear is a large segment in Indian fashion market and the company has identified it as an important growth opportunity.

Shantanu Mehra and Nikhil Mehra said the strategic joint venture of this Shantanu Mehra and Nikhil Mehra said the strategic joint venture of this sort is perhaps only the first-of-its-kind where fashion meets business and one that will redefine the Indian fashion landscape.

"With this unique collaboration, India will now be the new playground for accessible designer wear in its truest form." ABFRL is a part of US\$ 48.3 billion (about ₹3.35 lakh crores) Aditya Birla Group. With revenue of ₹8,118 crore spanning retail space of 7.5 million square feet, ABFRL has a strong network of 2,714 brand stores across 750 cities in the country.

ITC EYEING STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS IN FMCG BUSINESS

Diversified conglomerate ITC Ltd is engaging with and investing in start-ups while looking at strategic opportunities for acquisitions to accelerate growth in the FMCG business.

"Around 25 percent of ITC's segment revenue is from newer FMCG businesses. To accelerate growth in the FMCG



businesses, the endeavour is not only to fortify the existing categories towards delivering industry leading performance but also to foray into newer categories and sub-segments," said Sanjiv Puri Chairman-cum-Managing Director, ITC addressing

ADITYA BIRLA FASHION ACQUIRES 51 PC STAKE IN FINESSE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN

Aditya Birla Fashion & Retail Ltd (ABFRL) announced a partnership with India's leading designers Shantanu & Nikhil with the acquisition of 51 percent stake in Finesse International Design, a company primarily engaged in the business of bespoke occasion and ceremonial contemporary apparel for men and women.

The ABFRL acquisition committee of the board of directors approved the acquisition by way of signing the share

subscription and purchase agreement. "Indian consumers are increasingly seeking contemporary India inspired designer wear in their wardrobes which combines the best of modern fashion with Indian traditions," said Ashish Dikshit, Managing Director, ABFRL.

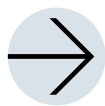
"Brand Shantanu & Nikhil is the finest



shareholders at the company's Annual General Meeting.

The company would lay stress on its health and wellness products in the FMCG space in a bid to scale up the business in the sector to ₹1 lakh crore in the long term from the existing ₹12,000 crore turnovers. The company target is to emerge as a leader in every segment. We will invest in areas where we are leaders, and in areas where we will acquire leadership position in a period of time," he added further.

AMAZON TO LAUNCH SPECIALISED FULFILMENT CENTRES IN PATNA, GUWAHATI



Amazon India is adding two new specialised warehouses in Patna and Guwahati, by expanding the capacity of its existing specialised fulfilment centres (FCs) in cities like Delhi and Mumbai, a move that will enable the e-commerce major further speed up its delivery capabilities.



According to a PTI report: Unlike traditional warehouses, the fulfillment centres are equipped with highly automated pick, pack and shipping processes to facilitate safe and timely processing of orders. The network of specialised FCs enables the American e-commerce giant to handle delivery of large appliances and furniture.

Amazon will launch specialised FCs in two new cities, Patna and Guwahati, and add more storage capacity to its existing specialised FCs in New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Ludhiana and Ahmedabad, among other cities.

He added that this expansion will ensure faster deliveries to close to 14,000 pin codes, a 2X increase from 2018, and customers from over 60 cities can now receive next day deliveries in these categories (large appliances and furniture).

Amazon.in, which is locked in an

intense battle for market leadership against Walmart-owned Flipkart, has over 3,500 products in its large appliances' category consisting of TVs, ACs, refrigerators and washing machines, along with over 1.2 lakh products under the furniture range.

UBER EATS EYES SMALL TOWNS IN INDIA TO BOOST FOOD ORDERS

As the online food delivery market in India goes hyper-competitive, Uber Eats, which is yet to create a significant mark on the Indian palette, is now eyeing young professionals in metros and joint families in smaller towns to increase its footprint.



CatwalkPhotos / Shutterstock.com

Amid reports that Swiggy is buying its India business and then stalled talks, Uber Eats that came to India in May 2017 is finally witnessing fast adoption of its services among Millennials and joint families.

"We're actually seeing a trend of multiple combinations of orders at once in India, which is not limited to just Friday nights or festivals but on a regular basis," Raj Beri, Head, Uber Eats-Asia Pacific, told IANS.

Earlier this year, reports said the elderly population was behind the success of Uber Eats' business in Japan. Beri said the platform's growth in India is beyond age demographics and more towards collective adoption of digital food delivery services.

While Beri refused to reveal the company's market and revenue share in India, he stressed that the company's share in the APAC region is significantly growing. Uber Eats' business grew by 50 percent (month-on-month) in its first year of operations in India. According to Jason Droege, Global Head of Uber Eats, India was their fastest growing market in the world.

Uber Eats is currently available in 38 cities. Launched much later than its competitors like Swiggy, Zomato and Foodpanda, Uber Eats is facing some problems in properly establishing itself as a food delivery platform among foodies in the country. The company is introducing several India-first features on its app like the veg-only recommendations and cash payments.

TATA STARBUCKS TO EXPAND PRESENCE TO 2 NEW CITIES BY YEAR-END

Tata Starbucks plans to expand its footprint to two new cities by the year end, taking the total count to 10, a top company official said. As per a PTI report, The company, a 50:50 joint venture between Tata Global Beverages and Starbucks Coffee USA, believes that the Indian market has tremendous opportunity for growth as coffee consumption level is lower than the West.



AngieYeoh / Shutterstock.com

"By the end of this year, we will be in 10 cities and we are very optimistic of our long-term growth in India," John Culver, Group President of International & Channels Development and Global Coffee & Tea, Starbucks was quoted by PTI as saying.

"We are taking a long-term view of the opportunity that exists here, and I believe there is a tremendous opportunity for us to continue to accelerate our growth here," Culver said in an interview to Tata group's in-house magazine 'Tata Review'.

Tata Starbucks operates in eight cities in India, according to the latest annual report of Tata Global Beverage Ltd (TGBL). Culver also said the company is still in its early phase of growth and is creating a unique 'Starbucks experience'.



PARTNERSHIPS, MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS MAKE HEADLINES IN THE INTERNATIONAL RETAIL MARKET

The retail industry across the globe had much to cheer about this summer with sales, deals, merger and expansion stories. Here's a look at how they are spelling growth across all formats...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

H&M AND KLARNA GROW PARTNERSHIP TO US

 H&M and Klarna announced that they have expanded their current partnership agreement to also include the US market, in the development of an unrivalled payments and shopping experience across touchpoints.

Together, H&M and Klarna are aiming at further integrating H&M's digital and physical stores to give customers a seamless, personalised and engaging shopping experience no matter where, when and how they shop.

The partnership extends across H&M channels, online as well as in-store, and will provide frictionless and flexible payments, including Klarna's leading 'Shop now, Pay Later' full product offering, as well as a streamlined post-purchase experience for deliveries and returns. This will be managed through the next generation of the H&M app and H&M's loyalty program, with the overall objective



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to create an outstanding end-to-end shopping experience for fashion fans that is even more inspiring and relevant. The new feature is currently available for H&M members only, as H&M aims to create the world's best customer loyalty program.

Daniel Claesson, Head of Business Development at H&M Group, says: "Shopping at H&M should be convenient, relevant and inspiring and we are happy to soon offer fashion fans in selected markets a whole new way of paying their fashion finds. Klarna has helped us develop an H&M-unique payment solution that offers our fans a truly modern shopping experience no matter where and how they choose to shop."

Michael Rouse, Chief Commercial Officer at Klarna, says: "The foundation of the Klarna and H&M partnership is a commitment to continuously develop smarter, simpler and engaging shopping experiences. The future of retail is a high touch experience across channels which will delight customers, drive value and build loyalty. Customers will not settle for average and neither will we. We at Klarna are excited by how this partnership with H&M continues to develop and to now together launch in the largest and most exciting retail markets in the world."

LVMH PAIRS WITH STELLA MCCARTNEY

 French luxury goods group LVMH, has announced a tie-up with sustainable luxury fashion brand, Stella McCartney. The partnership with LVMH – which houses luxury retailers such as Louis Vuitton, Dior, Givenchy, Fendi, Tag Heuer and Kenzo – was undertaken to help boost Stella McCartney's worldwide development in terms of business and strategy, while maintaining the tag of a 'sustainable brand'.

McCartney will continue to hold majority ownership and will serve as advisor to Bernard Arnault, LVMH Chief Executive and Chairman and to the executive committee members.

This decision came into play just months after McCartney, known for her animal-friendly ethics ended a long-term partnership with the conglomerate's archival, Kering. As discussed by the industry



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rivals, LVMH had always bragged about its environmental credentials especially when its young shoppers in particular had shown a keen fondness for 'greener' fashion and an interest in issues such as brands' use of animal fur. McCartney has long been known as a trailblazer in this area, relying on imitation leather for her handbags or participating in initiatives to promote the second-hand luxury market.

"A decisive factor was that she was the first to put sustainability and ethical issues on the front stage, very early on," said Arnault in a statement to media about the deal.

"Ever since my decision was announced to take full ownership of the Stella McCartney brand in March 2018, there have been many approaches from various parties expressing their wish to partner and invest in the Stella McCartney House," added McCartney.

LULULEMON OPENS FIRST EXPERIENTIAL STORE IN CHICAGO



Lululemon's first-ever experiential store opened July 11, 2019 in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighbourhood. The 20,000-square-foot store is filled with a massive retail space, two fitness studios, a meditation space, areas for visitors to sit and work, and restaurant Fuel – a restaurant-cum-coffee-shop. The ground floor of the store boasts of women's tops, bottoms and bras, as well as its recently launched personal care line. The floor also celebrates Chicago, with a section featuring a rotating cast of local retailers.

Reflecting Lululemon's ongoing effort to attract male shoppers, the store features a large men's apparel area on the second floor



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with hats, running shirts and black-pepper sandalwood deodorant. The second floor also features a restaurant, Fuel.

For consumers, the brand will also be organising special events, movie screenings, concerts, special yoga classes, personal development workshops, flexible open concept workstations and lounges to inspire connection. The new store, considered a test, is aimed at being the physical manifestation of Lululemon's 'Sweatlife' philosophy, bringing 'Sweat, Grow and Connect' to guests and celebrating the local Lincoln Park community. Lululemon has predicted that by 2023, about 10 percent of its fleet will be 'experiential' like the Chicago store.

GUCCI INTRODUCES AR FEATURE ON ITS APP



Gucci has recently introduced AR feature to its app which lets consumers try on its Ace Sneakers virtually. This technology enables Gucci to provide an engaging experience and an ingenious opportunity for its customers to interact with upcoming shoe collection.

Through this innovation, consumers can choose any sneakers of their choice



Papin Lab / Shutterstock.com

on the screen using the Gucci iOS app – all they need to do is point their mobile camera at their feet and virtually 'try-on' the selected pair.

The ace sneaker, with its ever-changing decorations, has become a canvas for Gucci through which it can demonstrate its delight in creative decoration and embellishment. It is also the ideal vehicle through which customers can express their own personalities.

SPLASH OPENS NEW STORE AT AL WAHDA MALL



Middle East's leading fashion retailer, Splash Fashions opened a new store at Al Wahda Mall Abu Dhabi offering shoppers in the capital the best of cutting-edge street style fashion in a retail space of approximately 14,000 sq ft. Considered a trend-setter in the region, Splash offers an extensive, award-winning collection of popular clothing for women, men and teens and collaborates regularly with well-known designers and personalities to bring the best of fashion to the region.



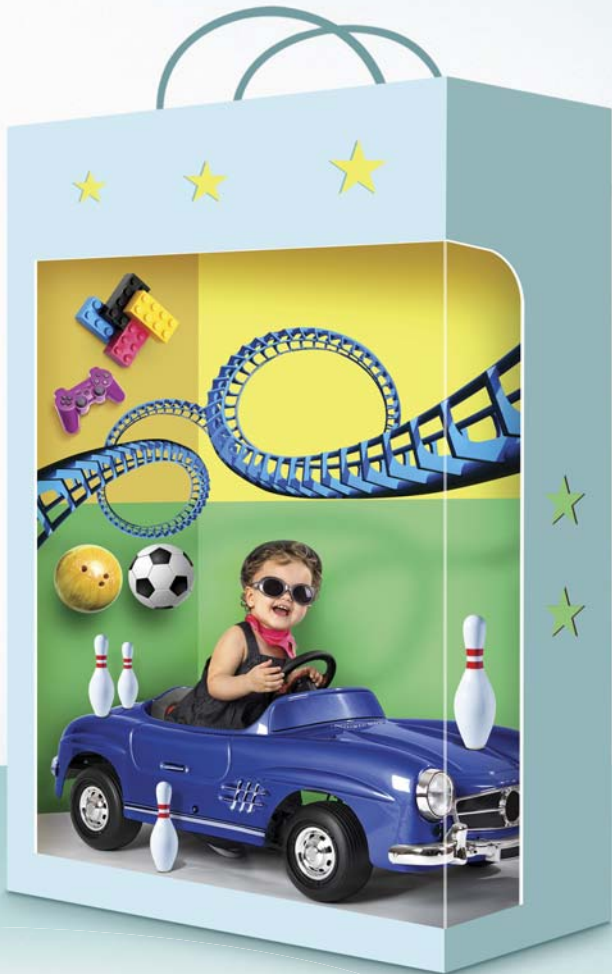
Navaneeth Sudhakaran, General Manager, Al Wahda Mall said, "We are delighted to welcome Splash to our portfolio of retailers. The wide range of goods offered by the brand perfectly aligns to the mall's diverse offering to shoppers. We are confident that Splash will add more buzz to an already vibrant retail environment within Al Wahda Mall."

The award-winning Al Wahda Mall has over 400 tenants offering a superb retail mix of fashion, jewellery, electronics, food court, home improvement, family entertainment, beauty, gym, sports lounge, kiosks and over 50 mouth-watering world class F&B outlets.



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CASH ON DELIVERY: E-Commerce's Pain Point

IMAGES Retail spoke with some prominent e-commerce players in India on the concept of Cash on Delivery, and what it means for them in terms of business and customer acquisition...

By Zainab S Kazi

Shruti Barrot's cash on delivery order, a white shirt, has arrived and the delivery executive is waiting at the door. However, Shruti had happened upon a cheaper, smarter piece, which fit her during her mall visit a day earlier and now she didn't need this anymore. To avoid the embarrassment of facing the delivery executive, she decided – since she had nothing to lose – to just let him keep ringing the doorbell till he got tired of waiting and walked away. Opening the door would have also meant the long, tedious process of cancelling the order and putting in a return request and the bet option here was just letting the executive cancel the delivery.

As easy as it sounded for Shruti, the fact is that this entire process cost the company a few hundred rupees. This is wrong on so many levels but the trend of Cash on Delivery (COD), introduced in the industry by e-commerce major Flipkart, has made online shoppers irresponsible. Unfortunately, to stay in the game, the majority of online retailers have no choice but to pamper their customers with this payment option.

COD – the concept that began off being a boon and then quickly turned into a bane for a lot of online retailers – is here to stay. However, if given a choice, most online players would want to do away with it (some of them have been brave enough to do it already), but none of the bigger players, including Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, have abolished the practice from their sites yet.

However, most big players are trying to their bit to do away with COD as much as possible, trying to dissuade people from opting for the COD mode. E-commerce biggies like Amazon, Flipkart, BigBasket, Groffers etc. have started offering the 'Card on Delivery' option. Delivery agents are incentivised to persuade people opting to pay in cash to pay using their card at the time of accepting the delivery. A vast majority of these players have also initiated the wallet system culture where the customer is rewarded with hefty cashbacks on loading his wallet for a particular amount. The shopping amount then is deducted from the shopper's wallet thus eventually taking them away from opting for the COD mode of payment.



Flipkart has recently introduced the Flipkart Pay Later scheme wherein one can checkout instantly without having to pay immediately. The bills can be settled by the 10th of every month.

To tackle the issue of change to be tendered to the customer in case of COD mode, Amazon has decided that the change amount will be credited to the customer's Amazon Pay Wallet, nudging consumers into using other methods of payment.

IMAGES Retail spoke with some prominent e-commerce players in India on the concept of COD, and what it means for them in terms of business and customer acquisition.

According to **Dipanjnan Purkayastha, Chief Executive Officer – HyperXchange**, COD is a necessary evil of the e-commerce industry. "The concept was launched by Flipkart in its early growth days to build trust among consumers and it resulted in quick and massive adoption of online shopping in India. To that end, COD is a phenomenon that is quite unique to the Indian e-commerce space – we do not see the prevalence of this in other leading global economies. However, while COD brought instant growth to the industry, it also brought in a host of



challenges. As such, most online retailers today are working to reduce their COD exposure, while also understanding that completely moving away from COD isn't an option because it could completely erode their user base."

Citing the evolution of payment modes in India in relation to penetration of e-commerce, **Alok Chawla, Co-Founder – Gizmobaba.com** shares, "In the early days of e-commerce, the buyers were primarily from Tier 1 cities, and hence more aware of online payments and many owned credit/debit cards. Online payment was the only payment option for e-commerce transactions. Flipkart changed the rules of the game by introducing COD on a massive scale in 2010. As e-commerce penetrates into small towns and villages due

to access to high-speed 4G internet (thanks to Jio) we have an entirely new set of people transacting online, who have no access to credit and debit cards, and even if they do, they would be extremely scared to use it online due to fraud concerns."

Vincent Dominic Braganza, Chief Operating Officer, Melorra adds, "We have traditionally been a 'cash and carry' country. Indian consumers are still making about 60 percent to 65 percent of their e-commerce payments through the COD option." Considering the brand is into selling jewellery, it is surprising that despite the ticket size running into a thousands, 82 percent of their customers still opt for COD. However, Braganza says that the use of the 'Card on Delivery' is picking up now.



According to **Siddhant Wangdi, Founder, Meatigo.com** a lot has changed in the payments space especially in e-commerce. "What was thought to be a completely cash and trial driven market has changed. The emergence of simple, easy to use payment options has changed the dynamics to a large extent. We are seeing a lot of options and companies coming in this space and competing with each other in terms of commission structures, payment periods and cashback offers."

His website offers 3 payment options – COD, online payment and wallet payment, and Wangdi observes that a lot of first time users prefer the COD mode.

"I think it's all about having a good first time experience. The next time they order, these people then use more hassle free payment methods like online transactions. This also minimises issues like keeping exact amount ready for the delivery agent or the need to stay at home to receive delivery."

The COD Customer

The very basis of COD as an option came into being to instil trust in the customer thus enabling them to receive and check out the product and then pay. However, industry leaders say that trust is not the only issue. A majority of consumers



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– **DIPANJAN PURKAYASTHA**
CEO – HYPERXCHANGE, COD



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CO-FOUNDER – GIZMOBABA.COM



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- **SIDDHANT WANGDI**
FOUNDER, MEATIGO.COM



"As per our historical data, we have observed that orders with cart values worth ₹5000 and above are generally CODs."

- **CHIRAG TEKCHANDANEY**
BUSINESS HEAD, B LABEL



"The others are trust score, access to online payment methods, awareness, availability of cash at hand, surety about the purchase etc."

- **YASH KOTAK**
CO-FOUNDER & DIRECTOR,
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT,
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have been shopping online since the advent of online shopping in India and still prefer the COD option.

Chirag Tekchandaney, Business Head, B Label shares an interesting insight, "As per our historical data, we have observed that orders with cart values worth ₹5000 and above are generally CODs. However, carts with smaller values are paid for online. On an average out of every five orders, three are paid online and the remaining two are COD. Two of our biggest orders with an AOV worth 20,000 + have been COD."

Tekchandaney further observes that since June 2019, the team at B Label has been witnessing a steady rise in payments by net banking. People have also started opting for online wallets and other modes of payment to pay in advance for their purchase.

Purkayastha suggests that the value of merchandise drives choice of payment mode. "People prefer paying COD or with EMI for high-value items. The associated risk of COD is also precisely the reason online sellers do not prefer giving that option for high-value items. This results in a scenario where mainstream online shopping typically happens in the budget segment, where there are COD options available. The price points of what consumers consider to be budget changes with the product, so there are no universal price points. For example, a budget cosmetics item could be priced very differently from a budget smartphone, but they would both trigger the customer to opt for COD. Empirically speaking, customers typically prefer COD for items over ₹2000," he says.

Yash Kotak, Co-Founder & Director, Business Development, Boheco Life reiterates on value of the merchandise being one of the factors to drive the mode of payment. He adds, "The others are trust score, access to online payment methods, awareness, availability of cash at hand, surety about the purchase etc."

A critical factor that leads to the customer deciding on the payment mode also rests with

the category in questions. As **Kapil Mahtani, Founder And Chief Executive Officer, Tresmode** says, "Initially, the majority of our orders were made on COD payments, but you have to also take into consideration at the time we started the website in 2010, e-commerce was at its infancy stage in India. People love to have the ability to see, feel and touch things that they are going to buy. Also with buying footwear online, consumers are skeptical with the size and fit. But over time the number is slowly decreasing."

Majority of the e-commerce players inspite of considering COD option as a bane for their business are still reluctant to do away with it. 80 percent of them do not want to discontinue the COD mode of payment option.

According to **Riya Kalra, Co-Founder - Candyskin**, online platforms are majorly driven by discounts/offers/cashbacks and online wallets. "Millennials and individuals under 40 who shop online are more attracted towards online payments due to the cashbacks they are being provided with. A lot of times, people who choose online payments are working individuals and do not have a lot of cash on them as they are on a fixed salary and get their salaries straight in their accounts. Also in the world of digitalisation, most individuals use plastic money like credit and debit cards rather than hard cash. Coming to individuals that opt for COD, these people are either very traditional in their spending habits or are unsure of their order or they do not trust the website they are buying from."

Incentivising the Customer to Move Away from COD

The 'more the merrier' is one mantra that has made a considerable impact on online payment options in India. With online retailers expanding their payment options to include wallet payments, offering EMI options, card on delivery UPI payment mode etc. there has been a considerable decline in COD mode of payment.

Harsh Shah, CEO, FYND points out that the recent introduction of UPI based payment



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modes had helped increase the digital payment penetration to a large extent. "It simplified the operations for a common man and hence we have seen a huge shift to this payment mode. What this helps us in achieving is not just moving people using credit cards and net banking to UPI payment but also majorly moving COD customers to move towards this payment instrument. In past, within our company itself and also in the industry at large, we have seen that there is a direct correlation between COD and order fulfillment ratio i.e. more the number of COD orders, lesser would be the chances of successful order fulfillment and nobody in the industry needs just orders but also fulfill them."

Purkayastha says that in the space they operate in – that of refurbished electronics – the COD transactions have reduced from 90 percent to 70 percent over the past 18 months.

FabAlley has been one of the fortunate few who have witnessed a decline in the number of people opting for COD mode of payment. **FabAlley Co-Founders Tanvi Malik and Shivani Poddar** say that there has been a decrease in the COD option since the time they began.

"In 2012, COD used to contribute to more than 70 percent of our payments. Now, it is at a 50-50 level when we talk about the domestic market. This is due to the acceptance PayTM primarily and a lot of other wallets coming in. UPI has also been playing a key role and a lot of other initiatives by the Government and banks post demonetisation have helped in getting more consumers fiscally included through cards and UPI," explains Malik.

The Common Challenges

Aptly stating what COD means for the online retailers, Wangdi says that COD acts as a free lunch for customers and all the risks and costs are borne by the sellers.



"People love to have the ability to see, feel and touch things that they are going to buy."

- KAPIL MAHTANI
FOUNDER AND CEO,
TRESMODE



"Millennials and individuals under 40 who shop online are more attracted towards online payments due to the cashbacks they are being provided with."

- RIYA KALRA
CO-FOUNDER, CANDYSKIN



"It simplified the operations for a common man and hence we have seen a huge shift to this payment mode."


- HARSH SHAH
CEO, FYND

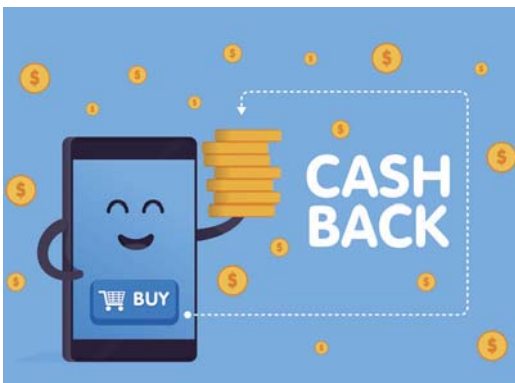
"Unlike payments online where the amounts are deposited seamlessly to the bank with all the necessary information of the order, with more hubs opening, managing sash via COD options becomes slightly more challenging in terms of accounting and reconciliation," he states.

Kalra adds to this saying, "The challenge could be that of a fraudulent order where the address is incorrect, or the customer straight up denies that they placed any order online. Refunding money to a COD customer is also always a challenge. Delivering to a COD customer would mean the customer would have to be present to receive the parcel. The delivery companies only attempt twice to deliver due to which we end up paying a very large delivery charge for the same customer."

According to Purkayastha, the number of orders cancelled at delivery point go up exponentially if COD is the opted mode of payment. "In our industry, 40 percent of all COD orders are returned without payment, and 15 percent of them are tampered in some way or another. Online sellers file insurance claims for these defective or fraudulent returns, which often takes weeks and months for approval/payment. This, in turn, affects the working capital situation of sellers, while also depleting their inventory. Even in cases where COD transactions are genuine and go through at the time of delivery, collecting and reconciling these transactions could take sellers upto 3 weeks, a large turnaround time for an industry built for speed."

Chawla says another common issue faced by e-commerce company is that buyers order the same product on multiple sites. The one who reaches the customers' doorstep first gets his item delivered, all the others that follow are refused and returned. A simple solution could be the development of a 'Buyer Risk Rating'. This would mean rating a buyer on the number of COD orders he has refused, which should be accessible to all online sellers. This would help them greatly to define up to what risk level customers they are willing to serve. A large e-commerce logistics company could possibly have this service in the future based on their delivery database.

Aside from this, actively working to enhance customers experience for using other payment options is a must. "This means creating a better UX while paying through UPI or cards, loyalty bonuses and discounts for prepaid, as well as keeping certain SKUs locked out for COD. This is an industry-wide issue, and not just limited to our hyperexchange.com portal - we are working closely with our partners like Amazon, Flipkart, Quikr, Udaan and others to de-risk our COD exposure," Purkayastha concludes. 



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WHAT IS LIFEWEAR?

LifeWear is UNIQLO's commitment to creating perfect clothing that meets the needs of everyone's daily lifestyles. It is simple, high-quality, everyday clothing with a practical sense of beauty – ingenious in detail, thought through with life's needs in mind and always evolving.

UNIQLO to Enter India in October 2019 with 3 Stores in Delhi

The first UNIQLO store at Ambience Mall, Vasant Kunj, measures close to 35,000 sq. ft. in total sales area on three levels and will feature prominent store-front branding through UNIQLO's unique red colour...

By Charu Lamba

Japanese global apparel retailer, UNIQLO, has announced a strategic rollout plan for its foray into India this fall. Given the size and fast growth of the Indian market, the brand, for the first time, will be launching three separate stores. The first of three UNIQLO stores will open in October 2019 in New Delhi.

"We are committed to the Indian market and are very excited to be launching our first three stores in Delhi, a region that embraces diversity and culture, from art and design to craftsmanship and fashion," said **Tadashi Yanai, UNIQLO Founder and Chairman, President & CEO, Fast Retailing.**

"The opening of our first store, UNIQLO Ambience Mall Vasant Kunj, followed by a second and third store a little later, represents a significant step in our company's global strategy. We look forward to offering our high-quality, affordable LifeWear apparel to the people of India," he added.

The first UNIQLO store at Ambience Mall, Vasant Kunj, measures close to 35,000 sq. ft. in total sales area on three levels and will feature prominent store-front branding through UNIQLO's unique red colour. The full range of LifeWear will be available for men, women, kids and babies, including the popular line of UTs (UNIQLO T-shirts).

The second and third UNIQLO stores will be located at DLF Place Saket, a newly renovated shopping destination set to reopen in Fall, and DLF CyberHub, respectively. Each of the two sites





will be sized to offer the full range of LifeWear for men, women, kids and babies.

FDI in Single Brand Retail

The company's announcement to start operations in India comes after the country allowed 100 percent FDI in single brand retail, although foreign retailers still need to source 30 percent of their products from local suppliers, preferably medium and small enterprises.

In 2006, the government had allowed 51 percent FDI in single brand retail. In January 2018, 100 percent FDI was permitted for foreign players in single brand retail trade to set up own shops in India without government approval.

Established in Japan in 1984, UNIQLO now has over 2,000 stores worldwide, as well as UNIQLO.com. Today, more than half of the stores are located outside of Japan, and the brand currently operates in 22 markets - Japan, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, U.K. and the U.S. In the autumn, the brand is launching for the first time in Italy and Vietnam along with India." 

TECHNOLOGY-LED INNOVATIVE COLLECTIONS

UNIQLO has worked to perfect the functionality and design of all the products, using technology to make stylish clothing for all. This includes the HEATTECH, AIRism and Ultra Light Down product lines that are always among their most popular.

ULTRA LIGHT DOWN - It is a light-weight, portable item that overturns the conventional concept of a down jacket. It brings warmth and comfort, while fitting in a bag or briefcase. It can be worn year-round, either as an inner layer or as outerwear. Available in vest and jacket designs, Ultra Light Down transitions easily from indoors to outdoors, and both can be layered comfortably. Less cumbersome than traditional down products, it is a contemporary take on traditional quilting techniques, utilizing an ultra-fine nylon shell. Featuring designs for men and women, this product travels extremely well.

HEATTECH - It is innerwear that offers a smooth, fine feel to the skin and provides incredible comfort. Developed through a partnership with Toray Industries, one of the world's top fibres and textiles manufacturers, the material comprises four distinct yarns that optimize comfort by absorbing the body's moisture and converting it to heat that is trapped within the air pockets of the fibres. It delivers warmth in a single layer, reducing bulk.

AIRism - It is functional innerwear that embodies UNIQLO's LifeWear concept. Jointly developed with Toray and Asahi Kasei, two of the world's-leading fibre and textile manufacturers, AIRism keeps people incredibly cool and comfortable in any kind of weather. Employing a specially engineered fibre to breathe and wick away trapped sweat, the innerwear accommodates the specific needs of men, women, children and babies to ensure comfort for all. AIRism is light, thin and smooth; designed to feel like silk on the skin. Wearing it as an additional layer under usual clothing helps the body adapt and cope with heat and perspiration.

UV CUT - These thoughtfully designed pieces block and reflect up to 90 percent of all UV radiation, reliably protecting consumer's skin and keeping them comfortable in hot summers while looking stylish.

Depending on the weave and knit used, UV Cut products have been enhanced to either safely absorb dangerous UV rays or reflect them back to deliver a very high level of skin protection. Despite the thin nature of the fabric, UVA rays are stopped from damaging the skin's sensitive dermis layer while UVB rays are blocked from the epidermis level where sunburn strikes.

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Express Avenue Celebrates 9 Years of Successful Retail

As Express Avenue celebrates its ninth anniversary, IMAGES Retail takes a walk down memory lane, highlighting the key achievements and offerings of the mall...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

Express Avenue, the brainchild of its Managing Director Kavita Singhania, is often described as the platform which introduced a whole new dimension of style and glamour to the lifestyle of people living in Chennai. When the entire country's retail growth was concentrated in the North and West, she envisaged and worked towards building Express Avenue in Chennai. In 2010, Chennai as a city did not have a single organised mall. It was her vision that redefined the mallscape in the city by gifting it its first internationally designed world-class shopping centre. Nine years on, Express Avenue boasts of a gamut of leading international and national brands of repute in its premises, with the promise of opening many more in the future.

The Journey

The journey of the mall has been quite interesting. Express Avenue was launched in 2010, amidst serious doubt about the potential of running such a huge mall in a very conservative market. The launch turned out to be a roaring success and laid



to rest the arguments of many skeptics. As Kavita Singhania rightly said, "Chennai was ready for transformation" and the successful launch of the mall proved her correct.

The creation and success of Express Avenue has also paved the way for other malls, leading to the creation of a retail market that is second to none in Chennai.

Factors Leading to Success

Express Avenue has a perfect mix of the key elements that determine the success of any shopping centre in the country today – a great location, a catchment area second to none, a category and brand mix to be envious of and an entertainment quotient – including dining options – that's par excellence. And, it never failed to disappoint its customers on these parameters. The mall gained popularity, as more and more consumers felt connected to the services and facilities.

Express Avenue followed a superior zoning strategy to ensure that stores are organised in an 'easy discovery' manner for visitors. The ground floor, being the face of the mall, is occupied by some of



the best international brands and the mall management upgraded the same by bringing in more bridge-to-luxury brands in all these years.

Apart from keeping F&B, FEC, fashion brands in mind, Express Avenue also looked into customer convenience and hospitality, as they were the first mall to introduce an emergency medical centre inside its premises, with a dedicated pharmacy and ambulance services. Also, to enable ease of commuting within the mall by the elderly and the physically challenged, battery-operated carts were introduced inside the mall.

“Due to the simplicity of design, a good brand mix, centralised location the mall has achieved quite a few awards and recognition. Consumption story in the mall has been quite strong right from inception making most of the stores at Express Avenue clocking the highest sales in whole of South India,” says **Munish Khanna, Chief Revenue Officer, Express Avenue.**

Key Attractions

As Khanna explains, “The mall has been truly blessed with the central location and good catchment. The simplicity of the mall design and the convenience of location makes it the most preferred shopping destination in Chennai. The location and design of the mall has competitive advantage over other competitors.”

The key attractions of the mall are:

→ **Shopping:** The shopping section consists of stationery, toys, games,

gifts, electronics, home and lifestyle. There is a prominent fashion section which includes top brands in footwear, handbags, jewellery, watches, lingerie, luggage, leather products, watches, optics, sunglasses, health & beauty, fitness, cosmetics, perfumes, sportswear and goods.

→ **Food:** The dining segment includes vegetarian and non-vegetarian fine dining cafes, chocolates, ice cream and fast-food outlets.

→ **Entertainment:** There is a dedicated entertainment section with a kids play zone, 5 D cinema and game shops.

“Some of our major entertainment partners are Escape, Funcity, 5D Cinemas, Scary House, Dialogue in the Dark etc. The mall has gone from strength to strength by bringing the first Snow City in the heart of city, cricket, football, Jungle Safari catering to a relatively adult audience,” states Khanna.

Food Courts

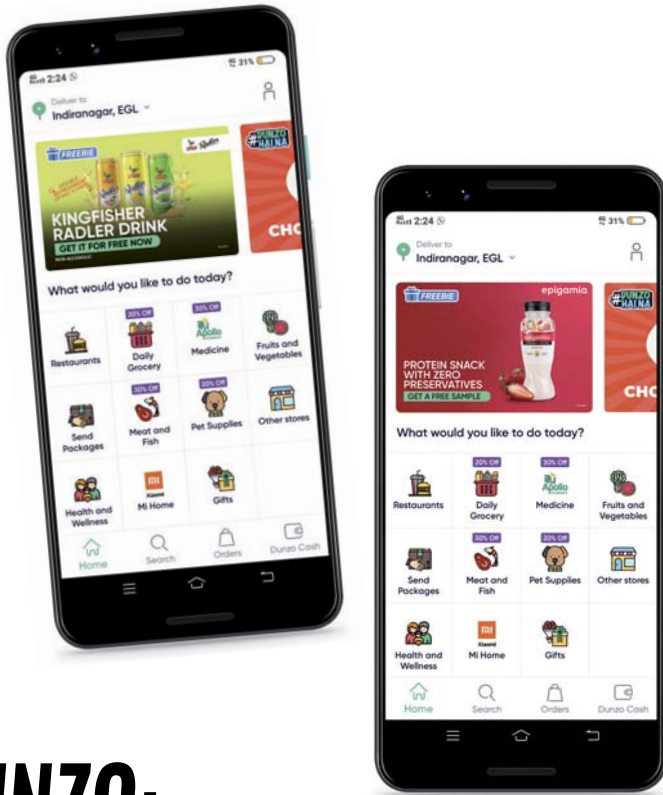
The third floor of the mall is dedicated to F&B i.e. the food court. “Express Avenue has been watching the shift in the consumption pattern very closely more skewed towards Food & Entertainment and hence we have chosen to strengthen our FEC offerings. Food being an important part of this equation, Express Avenue has a huge food court, which is a visual delight. It has been recently upgraded to redefine the consumer

experience. Lot of popular brands have been introduced to bring in strong footfalls replacing the weaker brands,” says Khanna.

Celebrate wellness & Health at Express Avenue

Express Avenue Chennai's took initiative to host a 'First of its kind, wellness fest curated by 'The Divine Sparks & the Lucky Charm & Co' on August 2-3, 2019. The objective of this two-day wellness fest was to spread Wellness in reciprocation to the warmth received by Express Avenue for the last 9 years. The fest also unveiled a plethora of healing modalities for the body, mind emotions & energies experiential sessions on well-being, including methods of relaxation for inner peace. The event was inaugurated by renowned Wellness Consultant Ishani Vellodi Reddy, a Certified Health Coach, Former Investment Banker & founder of Ishani Vellodi Wellness. It consisted of various activities such as Chakra Healing, Sound Therapy, Shalvik Mantra Rahasya, Candle Therapy, Pranic Healing, Cosmic Healing & Talaakyam to name a few. The wellness fest also had interesting master classes for both adults and children.

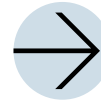
“Today, having a holistic and positive lifestyle has become an imperative. The objective of this fest is to spread wellness & wellbeing in reciprocation to the warmth received by Express Avenue for the last 9 years. This fest will also unveil a plethora of healing modalities for the body, mind emotions & energies,” concludes Khanna. **IR**



DUNZO: A MEASURABLE WAY TO REACH CONSUMERS & DRIVE BRAND RECALL

Dunzo, the popular hyperlocal Bengaluru based delivery service works with over 40 brands to drive recall, engagement, and on-demand delivery through their product sampling service...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

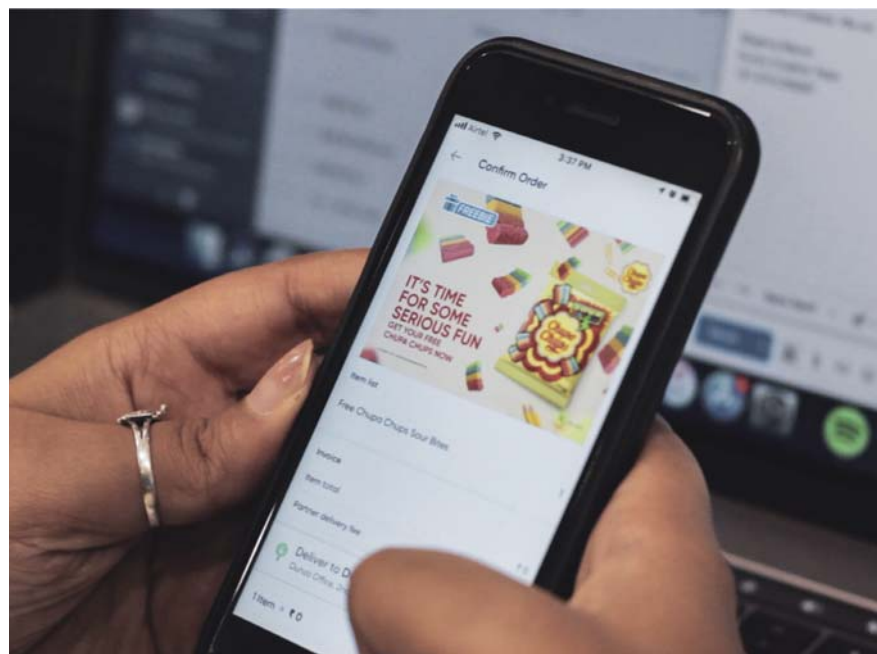


If there's anything consumers love more than a bargain, it's anything free. Imagine walking into a supermarket or a department store and being offered a free sample of cheese or perfume? Would you refuse or dive into the experience? In case you'd choose the former, you'd definitely be the exception.

The primary psychology behind product sampling is "Reciprocity" - the strong sense of obligation to return the favor for something someone has done for you. FMCGs have long harnessed this human tendency by offering the products for free across offline touchpoints.

Off late, however, the practice has taken a digital turn. In the era of digital marketing, brands are gravitating to e-commerce and hyperlocal delivery companies to reach a more targeted, intent-based audience to drive adoption and demand for their products.

Dunzo, the popular hyperlocal Bengaluru based delivery service works with over 40 brands to drive recall, engagement, and on-demand delivery through their product sampling service. They are able to build a more measurable and targeted way to reach consumers and promote their offering. Some of these brands include Kingfisher Radler, Perfetti, ASAP granola bar, Epigamia, and MARS Chocolates.



In case you're still in two minds about product sampling, here are the top 7 reasons why your brand needs to integrate digital product sampling into the marketing function:

1. Tactile Experience: Breaking into the market for a new brand can be tricky these days. Though sampling is not a new concept, it has the advantage of giving consumers real experience with a product. FMCG brands have enabled the product sampling tradition for decades - whether it's with a sachet of shampoo or a pack of biscuits. While the traditional approaches in sampling, like in-store and distributor-led sampling, are still seen at large, the problem they face is finding the relevant TG for the product.

2. Push vs. Pull: Until most recently, brands have cast a wide net when it comes to sampling, often focused on certain geographies. However, with smaller brands and niche product companies coming into play, budgets are tighter, and reputations are at stake. Though the traditional sampling methods still hold water in some, if not all cases, Dunzo is now able to provide a smarter, faster and efficient method to do the same. How do they do it? It is a case of Push vs Pull strategy - while most traditional methods of sampling use the 'push strategy' to make the product available for a wider set of audience, it doesn't necessarily reach the relevant TG and results in leakage. While a 'pull strategy' presents the relevant TG with access to the product, resulting in them engaging more with the brand on a need-based scenario. With data and insights, Dunzo is capable of targeting the right users for the right brand. This makes the sampling more focused and the result you yield from this exercise will help you gather valuable insights about your target audience.

3. Data-Driven: For an upcoming Snacks brand, Dunzo was able to map the samplers with their purchase behavior to

understand where they typically shopped - be it kiranas, chains or gourmet stores. This helped the brand fine-tune their market strategies, and whether they should focus on Modern Trade or General Trade. These days the amount of data up for grabs is only limited by your imagination; did you know that people who order Pizza and Biryani prefer Cola over any other aerated drinks?

4. Distribution & Reach: It's not just about the right TG - your brand must also have good reach while setting forth for a sampling exercise. With Dunzo, considering how sampling is driven completely on the app, it is independent



of dependencies like logistics and other factors that sometimes affect such activities, the brand is able to reach a wide set of audiences across different cities in the county. To throw some light on the matter, let's talk about a sampling exercise they had done for a premium chocolate brand. While their distribution was wide, most of the demand was fulfilled by stores like Godrej Nature's Basket and Foodhall as compared to any other store in the city. This helped narrow down on distribution and achieve stronger calls to action in these locations.

5. On-Demand: On-demand services have flourished so much over the last decade. There are a countless number of apps that have tapped into this category. However, Dunzo can provide on-demand delivery of samples that provides instant gratification and yields better results. Think about it, some of the FMCG products like chocolate, ice cream, and other comfort foods work for the user based on mood, and it's a fleeting window of opportunity - if your TG has access to your product at that very instant, it results in a conversation that goes beyond conventional advertising techniques. The world is getting smaller every day when you put companies like Amazon in perspective; what started with a 7-10 days delivery window, has come down to 2 days to 2 hours with the arrival of Prime. While this window continues to shrink, Dunzo is already making deliveries within 45 minutes.

6. Litmus Test: With users ranging from one end of the spectrum to the other, Dunzo presents itself as a fine platform to conduct a litmus test on new products entering the market. There's always something new coming up every day, and it may be a new source of renewable energy or a new beverage in a new bottle. One such sampling was done for Kingfisher Radler, a non-alcoholic malt-based beverage that was sampled across all cities. It turned out to be the most popular product on the platform.

7. Direct to Home: Needless to say, convenience is a priceless feeling, and the idea of having your brand get delivered to the doorstep of your target audience, and to draw insights from it, will help brands leverage huge benefits from the exercise. It is still an alluring pitch for many, and an enticing opportunity for others; so perhaps it's true when they say that the doorstep is indeed the best platform ever built.

At the end of the day, most FMCG brands will keep sampling as a method to arrive at a sensible picture of their TG. Sampling with Dunzo provides brands a more cost-effective and efficient form of marketing, while it would cost them a whole lot more had they gone with an FoS marketing agency without any guarantee on reaching the right TG.

To get in touch & find out more, reach out to dunzo4brands@dunzo.in



IMAGES Retail™

Future of Businesses

[ISSUE SPOTLIGHT]

INDIA'S SHOPPING CENTRES SPECIAL



Shopping malls, a central part of urban life in India, are fast adapting to changing consumer needs to achieve scalable success. To deliver new experiences and increase footfalls and sales, malls are evolving into community hubs, frequented by visitors who want to shop, eat and be entertained.

The September issue of IMAGES Retail brings its readers unparalleled retail experiences that malls in India provide. This Mall Special edition will include:

1. Research on Retail Real Estate & Space Supply in India
2. Malls as Consumer Engagement Centres
3. Consumer Experience in Malls, with an emphasis on experiential retail, technology and store innovation



[SECOND LEAD]

ONLINE TO OFFLINE

With so much happening in the online space, it comes as no surprise that winds of change are blowing through the retail industry. But instead of being pushed towards the e-commerce, these winds are propelling retailers towards physical stores. The September edition of the magazine will carry an in-depth study on why online retailers are switching platforms and how they have fared so far. The feature will analyse whether the future of retail is physical, online or Omnichannel.

Do not miss participating in this special issue of IMAGES RETAIL

To participate please talk to our business development advisors:

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CEO VISION 2030: Innovation & Sustainability



In its annual edition, IMAGES Retail brings you a comprehensive list of CEOs and retail heads who are leading the change with the way they manage their brands, integrate technology in their workspace and let consumers be the voice of their brand...

By Sandeep Kumar and Charu Lamba

The Indian Retail Industry is considered as one of the fastest developing sectors of the country as it continues to take giant steps towards becoming organised. The sector is rated as one of the pillars of the Indian economy and accounts for about 10 percent of the GDP. India is one of the top-five retail markets globally currently, worth approximately US \$600 billion in economic value. However, the success of the retail market is completely dependent on retail brands, then be it large players or the smaller ones, older or new brands, start-ups, shopping malls, -and-mortar stores, warehouses, e-tailers, franchise models, etc. It is very important that these brands to be successful so that they can contribute to the success of retail fraternity. The success of these brands and companies depend on one individual, who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the company. He determines the vision of the brand and leads the company on the path to growth

CEO Vision 2030

Every company wants to be successful. Today, in the era of digitalisation, phy-gital retail, Omnichannel commerce and e-commerce, becoming a success is a tough ask. The path leading to the top of the retail chain doesn't just include running the business and generating revenues but requires a working knowledge of technologically by CEOs alongside with them being updated with all the latest trends in the industry. While the big picture doesn't often change, the details of the story must adapt to constantly changing business conditions. Therefore, it is the duty of the CEO to keep the vision of the company fresh.

Fine-tuning and updating the vision is a never-ending process of unraveling a paradox. It entails a number of elements. The CEO is in a good position to communicate how the company is living up to expectations with timely anecdotes and facts about success. Consistent direction from the top is critical to driving outstanding performance. The best CEOs enable communication about the vision to flow consistently both to and from them.

In its annual edition, IMAGES Retail brings you a comprehensive list of CEOs and retail heads, who are leading the change with the way they manage their brands, integrate technology in their workspace and let consumers be the voice of their brand to understand the future of the industry. In an exclusive one on one interaction, these stalwarts talk about the company's growth, vision and future plans which would determine the position of the brand by 2030.

THE ROLE OF CEO IN MODERN RETAIL INCLUDES:

- Communicating, on behalf of the company, with shareholders, government entities, and the public
- Leading the development of the company's short- and long-term strategies
- Creating and implementing the company or organisation's vision and mission
- Evaluating the work of other executives leaders within the company, including directors, vice presidents, and presidents
- Maintaining awareness of the competitive market landscape, expansion opportunities, industry developments, etc.
- Ensuring that the company maintains high social responsibility wherever it does business
- Assessing risks to the company and ensuring they are monitored and minimized
- Setting strategic goals and making sure they are measurable and describable



ARVIND KUMAR

GEO, DUKES INDIA

Arvind Kumar hails from a simple background and had a very transforming journey before he became the CEO of Dukes India. He joined Dukes as a Management Trainee in early 2010 from where he rose to become CEO. Today, he is leading the organization, taking it to greater heights. From handling operations, logistics, manufacturing, accounts, IT, sales, marketing, branding and management, Kumar has handled all disciplines of Dukes and has driven the business growth rate successfully in each segment.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The food industry will continue to present a great opportunity and innovation. In baking space, I see the per capita consumption of biscuits to increase by 50 percent and bottom of the pyramid playing a major role in driving the consumption story. In the consumer front, I see a lot of value-added products taking up the share from basic biscuits with better distribution and availability through e-tail to the last mile. At Dukes, we have also envisaged e-commerce platforms competing with retail and e-tail with better logistics, connectivity and cost improving with Third-Party Logistics (3PL).

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The top innovations are: AR, last mile delivery by e-tail v/s e-tail pickup points in vicinity and physical presence of e-tail brands/chains.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O space is becoming very interesting with e-tail giants looking to buy retail players/partner with them. Subsequently, retailers are creating a space for consumers to buy online and get the products from offline stores/delivery points. We see this a very important strategic step where synergy and presence in online and offline are critical factors to capture the moment of truth – to get consumers buying, with the ease and convenience of both worlds thrown in.

→ **What technological/innovative in-store and online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

We are in the process of creating innovative consumer experiences at the right touchpoints driven by technology and delivery platforms, which we will reveal at the appropriate time

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards? Tell us in detail.**

At Dukes, we believe in sustainability and also actively work for it. Our R&D department has proposed many ways and means in manufacturing and packaging as well as in every decision. We conduct regular training for our team in sustainably.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership?**

Currently, we are exploring healthy snacking category which is poised to grow fast. We are also focused on expanding our presence in existing categories like cream wafers, biscuits, chocolates and confectionery segments. The company is in a growth trajectory and is growing in high double digits. With the change of culture with the employee being the center of it, Dukes is here to deliver delight to consumers.



AKHIL SRIVASTAVA

MANAGING DIRECTOR, PARFAIT INDIA

Akhil Srivastava has been working with the retail industry for over a decade and has experience of undertaking and leading roles involving retail consulting, new store planning, visual merchandising, brand promotion, SCM and Logistics etc. He has worked with brands like Walmart, Landmark and Times of India, before joining as the Managing Director of PARFAIT India.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The plus size fashion industry is growing at a rapid pace and it is estimated to grow by more than 35 percent in the coming years. The increase in GDP, population, increase in the purchasing power and higher standard of living especially plays a vital role in giving a boost to this sector. The industry is expected to enter the category segment from sub-category sector and the underserved sector will see tremendous growth in the coming years.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The top three innovations as per me are: E-retail, Customer engagement activities and Personalization & customisation

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/ Phy-gital strategy?**

Yes, we do have the Omnichannel strategy. We entered India last year and commenced our operations through offline and online retail partners majorly to test the waters and observe the consumer behaviour and gauge their reaction. We are already present in the

Northern and Western region of India through shop-in-shops and pan India through online platforms. Gradually, we will get into franchisee model and utilise the complete potential that the business model has to offer. Alongside we also plan to open Parfait's standalone stores starting with Delhi NCR region and moving to other metro cities.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership?**

We will continue to spread awareness amongst the female members of the society and educate them about the importance of wearing the right lingerie. Alongside, we will be penetrating in Tier I & II cities to create a loyal customer base for the brand. We should have a positive bottom line in the next five years. I truly believe and hope that my past experience in the retail industry has helped the brand grow and flourish in the Indian market. I have been able to guide the team in the right direction and have been able to provide counselling wherever needed. I have do understand the complex consumer behaviour which comes in handy while setting up a new brand.



DINESH ARORA

MANAGING DIRECTOR, EASTMAN COLOUR RESTAURANTS

Dinesh Arora's ambition for food took time to enter his soul. He grew up in New Delhi and studied Commerce at the Delhi University and loves travelling and has built quite a refined palate of his own. His passion towards eclectic cuisines stemmed right from his first bite of 'Paella' in Spain, 'Tom Yum' in Thailand, 'Crème Brulee' in France, 'Dimsums' in Hongkong and from his numerous visits to fine dining restaurants in London and Dubai. He entered the restaurant business owing to his love of food. Interestingly Arora loves Bollywood as much as his food, hence he named the brand 'Eastman Colour restaurants'.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The food industry is enjoying one of its best eras currently. With a spike in the number of diners to evolving palates and culinary rich audience, the industry has a lot of scope for growth. With increasing spending capacity, there is scope for many more restaurants in our country. The next ten years for restaurants in India will be more concept diners, chef-driven restaurants, comforting casual places and cuisines from all over the world.

→ **What are the Top 3 food innovations in your opinion?**

Chef-driven menus paired with alcohol has been an interesting innovation in the industry. Another innovation has been bringing back the traditional styles of cooking using organic and seasonal produce. Another innovation can be of fusion style of cooking that is a perfected marriage of two different cuisines into one.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

The most effective and useful strategy, O2O is the best way for the food industry. From using online applications, aggregator websites and social media channels like Facebook and Instagram to capture epicureans and creating a brand presence to converting them offline by bringing them to the tables, the synergy between online to offline is vital for sales and growth of a restaurant.

→ **What technological/innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

Some of the technological innovations which we have implemented are online reviewing, location filters and geo tagging. From sending informative mailers and SMS's to birthday and anniversary discounts and wishes, we indulge in everything that enhances customer experiences. From offline customer feedbacks to engaging events at cafes, special discounts, themed nights, we

continue to give multiple reasons for our patrons to come back enjoy.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/Phy-gital strategy?**

From an Omnichannel strategy that comprises of multi-channels of marketing to a phy-gital strategy that is a combination of the physical and digital, use of both is a plus point for all restaurants. Our marketing mix is headed by both these strategies thereby integrating the online mediums for presence and in-house presence. From running online campaigns, contests, videos, reviews etc. to collating offline activities, we as a brand are a mix of both.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

We are in an expansion mode right now. From opening Swad in Gurugram to opening Unplugged Courtyard franchises, we are bringing in new concepts and menus every quarter.



ANCHIT NAYAR

CEO-RETAIL, NYKAA

After seven years in investment banking at Morgan Stanley in New York, Anchit Nayar joined Nykaa in 2018 to look after the physical retail business. Due to his vision, Nykaa has successfully expanded its footprint to 45 stores, with a goal to hit 150+ stores within the next 3-4 years.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The beauty and cosmetics market should double in size as consumer awareness is growing at a rapid rate and brand proliferation is increasing with the help of interactive communication platforms such as digital marketing. However, the physical retail component will surely remain important in this sector due to the touch and feel the nature of the category.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion? Does your brand have an Omnichannel/Phy-gital strategy? If yes elaborate**

Nykaa's unique journey began online and moved offline. Offline is critical to this category due to the personalisation element and the importance of experiential retail. The two work best in tandem to create a better shopping experience.

→ **What technological/innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

Staff product training, knowledge through learnings and development apps, endless aisle ordering through handheld devices, queue busting, etc. are soon to be implemented. Beacon tech, 360-degree CRM, as well as app notifications, are already in process. AI and VR technology is also being examined for skincare and cosmetics. We have a couple of things in the pipeline as well.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

We are focused on growing our footprint further pan India and becoming the biggest offline beauty retailer to complement our leadership position in the online space. We will continue to grow by educating the Indian consumer about beauty and bringing Nykaa into every neighbourhood.



HETAL KOTAK

CEO, LEE COOPER

Hetal Kotak is a textile engineer with over 22 years of hands-on exposure to the varied nuances of Lifestyle Retail in India. Being hailed as a transformational leader, he has given quintessential importance to constant innovation and also towards constructing an approach for consumer delight at the forefront of all business endeavours. He joined Future Group as the CEO for two of the key strategic brands; Lee Cooper & ALL in February 2016. Prior to this, Kotak has worked as the Brand Director and Chief Operating Officer for Color Plus and Park Avenue at Raymond Ltd as well.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The casual wear category has been growing at 15 percent annually for the last five years and is expected to be worth ₹54,600 crore by 2023. I see 'Fluidity' as being the strongest watermark of success, in the near future for our industry. Fluid fashion can be occasion fluid, age fluid, etc. and in my opinion, it will continue to emerge as an even stronger consumer trend in the days to come. Our aim is to leverage the well-balanced portfolio of our lines and thereby emerge as an effective enabler of expressions, for our consumers. I see this sector growing at roughly 15 percent every year with 'Denim' witnessing one of the fastest-growing rates in the apparel segment.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

For me, shopping with Augmented Reality, Visual Search and Drone Delivery are some retail innovations that have made a major difference.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O is a medium of accessibility for today's consumer. Our brand motto is being 'consumer first' and if we feel O2O is a natural extension of making the shopping experience for the consumer more seamless, we will keep looking at it with the importance that it deserves. We hope and strive to give our consumers a far-fetched experience to make them happy.

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards? Tell us in detail.**

Every season Lee Cooper aims to get

better and outdo itself. In the bid to be a responsible, environment friendly brand with a legacy of over 110 years, we have adopted 'e-flow washing technology, G2 Cube Technology, Laser technology and Indigo Dyeing. the following innovations':

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

Lee Cooper is one of the biggest players in the casualwear space in India. From a brand that continues to have a very strong presence across SIS, we have forayed into opening several Exclusive Business outlets, in the last 1 year. A successful run of these stores has resulted in our decision to open 20 new stores in the next year. The CAGR for 2016 to 2019 was around 25 percent per annum, and we are looking at growing by approximately 40 percent from 2019 to 2021.



INDRANATH SENGUPTA

CO-FOUNDER, KOMPANERO

Indranath Sengupta, started Kompanero in 2014, and has scaled it into a homegrown international brand with 27 stores across the length and breadth of India with a strong presence in the international markets. An engineer by degree, hailing from a business family, Sengupta held a deep interest in entrepreneurship right from a tender age. He has always been highly passionate about business and brand building. It is from this city Kolkata, that he has successfully set-up Kompanero across various countries. Currently, the brand is available in more than 400 stores in Australia and spreading its presence in USA, Canada and various parts of Europe.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The demand for bags and luggage is highly correlated with the growth of travel and tourism in the country. Bags and luggage form a vital part of travelling, and hence, boost in travel will aid the growth in sales of bags and luggage. Bags dominate overall luggage industry, supported by the strong performance from backpacks and handbags, where value sales of bags doubled and will increase progressively in the future. The market in India is still in the nascent stage. With the per capita income and spending power increasing, the usage of premium leather bags and accessories is going to increase exponentially.

→ **What are the top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

- Ultimate customization of goods at the point of purchase is something that is getting big, and with 3D printing advancing fast it's only going to get bigger
- Omnichannel retail

- No Checkout shopping innovated by Amazon Go is another innovation that can shape the future of retail

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/Phy-gital strategy? If yes, elaborate.**

By far offline stands tall in contributing majorly to the brand's revenue, but at the same time we are keeping our pace up with today's world by focusing on our e-commerce channels as well. To achieve the vision of the brand, it is important that both the channels go hand in hand. We are proud to say that we are achieving various milestones by opening more brick and mortar stores, and we plan to have an online shopping experience within the stores by next year. Due to limited space in the stores, it becomes difficult to exhibit the entire range of our products to the customers. In this case, our online platform would help our customers to have an enhanced shopping experience by giving access to a wider range of products and help them make decisions for purchase.



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JAVIER SOTOMAYOR

MANAGING DIRECTOR, CINEPOLIS INDIA

Javier Sotomayor has been with Cinépolis for 16 years during which he has held various leadership roles globally across marketing, business development and supply chain. He started his career at the Mexico headquarters started with spearheading the company's first international expansion to Central America in 2002. Since then, he has worked across various locations including Mexico, Central America, the Middle East, Indonesia and India. He has been an initial team member of Cinépolis India, since the brand entered the Indian market.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

2018 was a record year for the industry with Global Box Office revenues of \$41+ billion. The Indian market also did exceptionally well to clock revenues of approximately \$2 billion. Going forward, there is tremendous potential in the India market due to two reasons:

Low penetration of multiplex screens in the market: The overall screen density in India is very low – 8 screens per million people. Compare this to USA which has 125 screens per million people and the difference is clear. Even out of this low count of screens in India, only about 30 percent are multiplex screens. The rest are single screens. As consumers become more aspirational, they continue to demand better experience which multiplexes provide and so the numbers are bound to go up.

High appetite for content: India produces the highest number of films in the world – 2000

were produced in 2018, compared to around 800 in the US. Also, contrary to popular perception, the introduction of OTT platforms in the country has augmented this demand.

→ **What technological/ innovative experiences have you introduced?**

Globally, we were the first to introduce the recliner concept in the exhibition industry through the sub-brand Cinépolis VIP. In terms of projection and sound we have the best the industry has to offer – i.e. the Series 60L Laser Projector and Dolby Sound Certification for our cinemas. We have always offered the best technology formats in our theatres, starting with the first 4DX screen in the country. Thereafter, we have introduced many more concepts such as IMAX, Onyx 4K and Cinépolis Junior. Apart from this, Cinépolis is also the only exhibitor in the country to offer RealD 3D, a leading global cinema 3D technology.

Recognising the fact that food is an

important element in the movie going experience, we launched our biggest F&B campaign, as we collaborated with the acclaimed chef Saransh Goila to develop and launch an all new menu with over 100 dishes across India.

→ **What is the future-plans for your brand?**

Globally, Cinépolis is present in 17 countries including USA, Europe, Latin America, South Asia and most recently, the Middle East and Indonesia. In Middle East, Cinépolis has plans to expand in UAE, Oman, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. In line with its plans to expand Cinépolis' global network, Cinépolis has entered into a strategic partnership with Lippo Group, Indonesia's leading consumer services group, and its subsidiary PT Cinemaxx Global Pasifik ("Cinemaxx"). Talking specifically about India, we are extremely proud of our journey and achievement in our decade long operations here.



MANISH AGARWAL

CEO EAST, FUTURE RETAIL

A Chartered Accountant by profession, Manish Agarwal has been working with Future Group since 1997. Under his leadership, the brand has grown and established itself as a household name in the eastern region.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

- The top three retail innovations for me are
- Virtual fitting rooms
 - Payment modes
 - Data Science-led personalisation

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The organised retail has immense potential and in the next ten years it will grow at a rapid pace. The effective collaboration of real estate developers and retailers will help build quality real estate and retail businesses. Alongside this, better shopping malls equipped with digital technologies will be making their presence felt in the coming years. Tier II & III cities and towns are high potential retail sites and are sure to become landmark areas for the Indian Retail Industry.

→ **Is O2O synergy important for your business?**

We have an excellent Online to Offline presence. We are active in engaging with customers online to get them to come and shop in our physical stores. This is important part of our customer engagement strategy.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/Phygital strategy? If yes elaborate**

Retail 3.0 strategy of Future Group is all about 'High Touch + High Tech' which is blended form of e-commerce with layering technology having it delivered in the physical space for the consumers. We also have a small format business 'Easyday Club', which runs on a membership model where members can place orders online, pay digitally and get products delivered at their doorstep.



POLICE

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JP SHUKLA

CO-FOUNDER & CEO, 1-INDIA FAMILY MART

Jay Prakash Shukla or JP, as he is popularly called, is a force to reckon with in the retail industry in India. In a distinguished career spanning over 17 years into retail with companies like Vishal Retail, Big Bazar, Salasar Retail Adani Retail and Indiabulls Retail, JP Shukla held key leadership roles, including Whole Time Director and CEO for Vishal Retail as last assignment before starting own venture. Under his leadership, these businesses have set the retail industry performance benchmarks. In over two decades, JP has straddled the entire gamut of modern retail; his expertise ranges from merchandising, value retail, buying and sourcing, strategy and vendor selection. He founded 1-India Family Mart with the objective to be the 'bell-bearer company' in the value retail space.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

In coming ten years, the retail industry is expected to grow with an immense pace, on grounds on technology, innovation and digitalisation. We will be seeing a much more advance level of convenient and seamless experience across all platforms. As far as 1-India Family Mart is considered, we aim to reach to an overall turnover of Rs 5000 crore, covering almost all the major states and catering the demands and needs of 75 percent of the overall population.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/ Phy-gital strategy?**

Currently, we are in the process of piloting an Omnichannel approach and once we get the desired results, we will probably launch a full bloom setup in an advanced manner.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

In my opinion, the top three innovations in the retail industry so far have been IoT, Big Data and CRM analytics.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

To be successful in the time of cutting-edge competition, we need to understand the importance of an O2O setup. We have to be open for all kinds of business expansion model and this O2O synergy is currently our top priority.

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards?**

The business has to be sustainable in order to envisage growth. If the front-end expansion is not backed up

by technology and new innovations at the back end, we will probably not be able to sustain the business model or growth.

→ **What technological/ innovative in-store and online experiences have you introduced?**

We have an AI-based monitoring system at our stores where we try to ascertain the customer demographics through these cameras and build insights.

→ **How has the company grown under your leadership?**

I have been heading this business for the past 7 years now. We are about to reach the store count of 100 stores. The journey so far has been very successful as we have moved on with a planned approach, supported by a dedicated team.



MAYANK LAKHANI

MANAGING DIRECTOR, LAKHANI INFINITY FOOTCARE PRIVATE LIMITED

After completing his Masters degree from Boston University, Mayank Lakhani started Lakhani Infinity Footcare Private Limited with a team of only 20 people in Sahibabad with a core focus to stay relevant to the youth with their products. Under his leadership, the company achieved an annual turnover of Rs 10 crore in its inaugural year itself. Later, in the year 2016, the brand reached crossed the mark of Rs 50 crore and in 2019 the brand has already achieved a total turnover of Rs 105 crore. The target for 2020 is to achieve a turnover of Rs 200 crore and grow to a team of 60 people.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

Business visionaries in India are reforming the footwear business in the country, which is currently dominated by men's footwear, which contributes close to 58 percent of the total Indian footwear retail market and is expected grow at a CAGR of 10 percent by 2020. According to a recent Indian footwear industry report, footwear production is over 22 billion pairs annually, accounting for approximately 9.6 percent of the total global footwear output per year.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

Three top retail innovations as per me are: 3D printing, AR and Data collection

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

Online-to-Offline is the way to progress for most players who need to

draw in their client base in India for the long haul. We are also working on our O2O strategy as it is important for a brand in the current age and time to be present at a spot where your customers will need you to be.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

The company aims to introduce many innovative products with the underlining principle of comfort and modernity. This will, in turn, facilitate better customer care through innovation in line with our philosophy of dynamic development. I always work with the belief that if quality footwear at reasonable prices can be made available to customers, then we can be at par with any foreign footwear brand.

Major plans for the brand consist of:

1. Introducing a kids' segment, a first for Lakhani
2. Boosting online sales through radio campaigns
3. TVCs on major national channels by October, 2020

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KARAN TANNA

FOUNDER, YELLOW TIE HOSPITALITY

An automobile engineer from Sardar Patel University, Karan Tanna has an experience of working with General Motors and McKinsey & Company in the past. He opened a restaurant Chain named 'Kutchi King' as his first project. In 2015, he started Yellow Tie Hospitality and aims to expand the brand to a few hundred stores pan India.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The F&B industry in India is one of the most booming industry in the last few decades. New-age business like food tech, deliveries, home dining is growing big time and has given conventional businesses a run for its money. At the same time, experiential restaurants are growing to another level of orbit. Food malls are growing. It's a crazy time and customer is in the best seat right now. The coming 10 years are going to challenge conventional business practices and will bring the best out of restaurateurs. The industry will evolve and mature. Eating out is increasing day by day and in the next 10 years, the industry will grow at least 3 folds.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

In food retail, I would say that drive-through is a big innovation. The use of technology

has enabled a lot of innovations. Booking your meal and taking it away from a counter at a QSR joint is a very cool innovation. Companies like Eat and Pret have developed great Logistics to freshly prepare the food in-store to be sold on their cold/hot retail shelves.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/ Phy-gital strategy? If yes elaborate**

We serve food in our stores as well as on delivery aggregators. We also serve food through our own platforms but however, due to the dominance of delivery aggregators, it is usually through them.

→ **What technological/ innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

We have shifted to Digital Menus in most of our stores. We are also doing a pilot of

virtual reality product showcase. This is very exciting and takes the ordering experience to another level. We have also started to leverage targeted social media marketing to only our users, categorised with their behaviour. This has started to give us a good return on the marketing dollar.

AI-enabled audit technology is very handy to track what's happening at our stores. Technology and innovation have become a way of life for customer experience and restaurant operations.

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards? Tell us in detail.**

In one of our brands, we use only biodegradable disposables. This prevents a lot of pollution and wastage. We advocate sustainability discipline to avoid food wastage and control environmental pollution.



PANKAJ VERMANI

FOUNDER AND CEO, CLOVIA

Pankaj Vermani's first job was that of a regular software engineer in Global Logic, where he worked for around 1.5 years. He set up his first company with a bunch of friends which was acquired by Tribal Fusion Inc, a California based company, which was then the fourth largest Ad Network in the world. He started the India office of Tribal Fusion with a few co-founders. Post that, he ventured into Vriti, an eLearning company. Prior to starting Clovia in 2012 and exiting Vriti, he set-up and headed an incubator for a Swiss fund in India for a short period.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

Lingerie for the longest time was a staple product with hardly any innovation. The last few years have seen unprecedented growth in awareness – both from sizing/hygiene as well as fashion perspective. While the overall apparel category is growing at 8-9 percent CAGR, lingerie is pegged to grow anywhere between 15-22 percent annually. The currently \$4 billion market (and 8 billion by 2020) is still so nascent that the top 10 brands put together are not even addressing 8 percent of the overall market. Innerwear shopping online is estimated to be growing at 50-65 percent annually. The lingerie market has just started to scratch the surface and is all set to bloom in the coming years.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The gradual shift or acceptance of digital is one of the biggest innovations. Another aspect that is picking up fast in the retail industry is product creation based on feedback or customized products.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership?**

Clovia is now the fastest growing brand in a 4 billion market where the top 10 players hold less than 8 percent of the market. While Clovia continues to grow in the online space, we're fast setting footprint in the offline retail as well, to ensure a pan India brand presence in all genres of our customer base. The idea is to continue the growth, accelerate both our online and offline channels with equal push. In the next 5 years, Clovia intends to be the largest lingerie brand in India. While we are steadily on that path, we're also encountering a host of organic/inorganic opportunities to grow internationally, which we are exploring, and the next 4-5 years will also see Clovia's presence in at least 4 more geographies. And in this journey - both online and offline will work towards providing wholesome customer experience and thereby remain equally important for the brand. We are now selling 600,000 pieces a month i.e approximately 1 piece every 5 seconds.

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KAZEM SAMANDARI

FOUNDER, L'OPERA

Kazem Samandari is a trained engineer from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology with a Ph.D. degree in Industrial Economy. He started his professional career as an assistant, teaching at the university followed by a very rich trajectory which took him to 64 countries, from design and planning of nuclear power plants to social and economic development, digital printing, high-tech medical devices to finally the Food & Beverage sector in India.

→ **What are the top 3 foodservice innovations in your opinion?**

According to me, the top 3 innovations in the food segment include replacing quantity with quality; gradual move away from meat; growing importance of healthy nutrition.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

In ten years, I see the food industry becoming more and more important both in terms of 'feeding' people and playing a growing social role as a means of connecting individuals and families who engage in a collective experience.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O or clicks-to-bricks as some like to call it is certainly going to play an increasing and important role in the F&B space worldwide. The synergies are undeniable as are the challenges in our particular segment, but there are still a lot of challenges.

→ **What technological/innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

We started working with the implementation of a very robust and integrated ERP system, which is now working quite well both at the back end in the production centre of L'Opéra and in its outlets. We have also created an excellent data base of over 40,000 customers who have engaged in a documented interaction with our brand. We are currently in the process of evaluating and implementing new technologies at the store level and additional proposals for online use to enhance the customer experience with L'Opéra.

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards?**

Absolutely. Responsible and sustainable growth is one of the 8 core values of L'Opéra which also includes such elements as commitment to excellence and quality,

collaboration and mutual respect, gender equality, honesty and transparency, meritocracy and equal opportunity, courtesy and ownership and accountability. At L'Opéra, we wanted to create a brand and activity which would last for generations. This fundamental "sustainability" required a profound and honest relationship with all stakeholders, namely the staff, the customers and the shareholders but also with the society and with the environment.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

Now that we have established our brand and secured a solid reputation as the foremost authentic French pâtisserie, bakery and Salon de Thé (Tea House) in Delhi NCR, we have embarked upon an ambitious but realistic expansion plan which will take us to some 23 outlets in Delhi NCR, Mumbai and Chennai by 2019. We expect to operate some 50 outlets pan-India within the next 5 years.



RAHUL VIRA

CEO, SKECHERS SOUTH ASIA PRIVATE LIMITED

Rahul Vira is the CEO of Skechers South Asia since April 2015. He has 18 years of experience working with high-paced organisations across Lifestyle, Luxury and Online industry in India and the Middle East. Vira started his career with India's leading retail chain working across various functions of buying and merchandising, marketing and operations. He has also worked in the Middle East with an American chain. During the first round of Internet action globally, Vira joined India's leading media house in their Internet division setting up e-commerce. This was one of the leading few online shopping activities in India. He further moved to work with leading jewellery brand of India in the leadership role.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The coming ten years for the Leather and Shoe industry are going to be very innovative and exciting. They are going to be very impactful for the retail industry. Footwear industry will be one of the leaders in the retail industry with a variety of innovative range.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/Phy-gital strategy?**

As far as our Omnichannel/Phy-gital strategy is concerned, Skechers is currently working towards implementing in-store devices to further enhance shopping experience.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership?**

India is one of the fastest-growing markets globally for sportswear. We are just beginning the journey here and are very young in this market. In the next few years, we will expand 360 degrees and enter Tier-III and Tier-IV towns. We are also testing apparel and will launch athleisure wear this year. As far as e-commerce is considered, we are taking it slow at this moment. However, we will be innovating and upgrading our own website to improve customer experience and feel.



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MITHUN APPAIAH

GEO- INNOVATIVE FOODS LIMITED, SUMERU

With around 16 years of experience in the FMCG space, Mithun Appaiah's expertise lies across the spectrum of sales, marketing, R&D, key account management, customer marketing, business development, P&L management and start-up accelerator. He started his career with Nestle India. He has also worked with Britannia as National Channel Development Manager and Customer Marketing Head for channels and Modern trade business. Currently, he is leading Innovative Foods Limited (IFL) makers of the brand Sumeru as the Chief Executive Officer.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The frozen food sector is increasing its visibility gradually since frozen is the way forward in the next few years. The demand for frozen food is increasing year-on-year because of convenience and more shelf life as they can be stored, consequently leading to zero food wastage. The processed and frozen food market has been witnessing steady growth both in India and the world over, particularly in the developing Asian countries. India's frozen food market which stood at US \$310 million in 2017 is projected to grow at a CAGR of over 16 percent to reach US \$754 million by 2023. Today, frozen food is more accessible to the Indian consumer because of the increase in the number of large format retail stores in the country. Smaller retail stores too now have better refrigeration facilities.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations**

in your opinion?

The top three retail innovations are: Enhanced customer experience during payments, Augmented Reality and Direct-to-Home service.

→ **What technological / innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

We use real time systems with temperature tracking enabled network that help us monitor and take decisions immediately. Our vehicles are GPS enabled and have temperature monitoring set up which allows us to ensure that there is no deviation on this front. We are looking ahead and see frozen as the new future. We want to keep delivering an exciting range of frozen product. In fact, we are the first retail company to launch a Michelin Chef range as a frozen product and also, we have added Momos (Veg & Non -Veg) as a part of our new addition.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

We have renovated ourselves as a young, agile and disruptive brand. Food is the most exciting category today. We want to reposition ourselves as a complete foods company. We will focus on new trends, large categories which need disruption as well as look at categories which solve issues for the consumer.

Sumeru for the first time in the last decade has seen a growth of 25-30 percent with reduced spends and with one of the largest numbers of new innovations. Our domestic retail business has nearly doubled its reach. Exports have grown at 40 percent with the introduction of our new range and with our entry into the Middle East. We have got into categories which are exciting and break the myth around frozen. Many first-time innovations in product, process and concepts have also been executed.



RAJNISH SETHIA

DIRECTOR, SUCCESS

Rajnish Sethia started working in the textile industry from the age of 16 and gained experience and then went on eventually to establish his own brand under the name 'Success'. He started from scratch by manufacturing trousers and went on to build a team with the vision of having a brand with the entire menswear range. Sethia believes in hard work and focusing on the goals that have made him reach a successful point of his professional journey.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The menswear apparel sector is unique and variant. Everyday there is a new addition to the trend and style and there are some trends which are always in fashion. I believe, this sector will reach newer horizons with the advent of latest technologies in the coming years.

→ **What are the top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The top three retail innovations are, Physical stores for digitally native brands, Adding Omnichannel experiences across all platforms and Product customisation.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

Although e-commerce with digital outlook is here to stay, physical retail stores will thrive too. The key is to intertwine online business with the offline world. So, offline to online (O2O) synergy, the next frontier for retail is here to stay and is also very important.

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards? Tell us in detail.**

We as a brand are doing our bit for sustainability. Earlier 50 percent of our entire shirt production used to go through various chemical processes to get its final look but now we have reduced it to almost 15 percent thereby reducing water and chemical use which is environment friendly. We are now buying high-end fabrics for shirts which do not require chemical processes. In case of denim also we are moving towards basic washes which require lesser water and chemical wastage. Thus, we are trying our bit to make environment-friendly garments.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

We are planning to grow our brand pan India. We want to enter Tier II & III cities focusing on the entire menswear range. The journey from 1996 to 2019 has been good, with ups and downs and a lot of learning curves.

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NARINDER SINGH DHINGRA

CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, NUMERO UNO CLOTHING LTD

Narinder Singh Dhingra has been as the Chairman and Managing Director of Numero Uno Clothing Ltd. since December 14, 2006. He possesses an in-depth experience of over two decades in the apparel segment with a comprehensive understanding of the Indian retail landscape. He inceptioned the Numero Uno brand in the year 1987 with his astute vision of growth and expansion, which has now transformed into a dynamic unisex casual wear brand. Dhingra has been awarded with the Gem of India Award, as well as the Hind Ratna Award. Prior to focusing on Numero Uno Clothing Ltd., Dhingra was associated with Lee Cooper and was instrumental in introducing and establishing the brand in India.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The top three retail innovations are: Personalised targeted (location-based) marketing, Click & Shop model and Digital Payments

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O synergy is the best way to ensure a brand is able to fulfill the order and doesn't lose out on business due to unavailability of the product in a particular store, be it online or offline. As long as the brand has the product available in its universe, it should be in a state to deliver it to the customer.

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards? Tell us in detail.**

For Numero Uno sustainability is not just

about making a contained range and labeling it as conscious/sustainable. It is about inciting a real change at every stage of the product lifecycle possible, from manufacturing to washing & finishing, to delivery, to recycling and disposal.

Numero Uno has taken real and significant steps towards setting up an ethical and sustainable ecosystem from the beginning, adopting eco-friendly processes and technology with emphasis on low water consumption, restricted use of hazardous chemicals and good working conditions for its workforce. There has been a conscious, gradual and consistent shift towards sustainable methods, adoption of effective technology like extensive use of laser machines instead of hand-scraping for benefit of workers' health. The use of 'E-Soft, Ozone/G2, Cold-Eco Dyeing' has helped in reducing water and hazardous chemical consumption.

In 2017, NU collaborated with Jeanologia of Spain and created a sustainable collection of denim called 'One Glass Water Denims' wherein only one glass of water is consumed during the washing/finishing process.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership?**

We are in process of establishing a user-friendly website, which will be a convenient platform to purchase our clothes, shoes and accessories. An exclusive range for the website is also part of the plan. We have come a long way from a website which was just for information about the brand to know where our products are being sold and generating interest among online shoppers. We will expand our offerings to cater to our audience at a price that would be exciting for them to make a purchase.



RICHA KALRA

FOUNDER, CANDYSKIN

Richa Kalra has been working since the tender age of 16, during her undergrad times from European University Barcelona in Business Administration. Post that, she completed her post-graduation from Istituto Marangoni London in Fashion Brand Management. She interned with a jewellery brand called Maria Francesca Pepe in London right after her education. On returning to India, she started working in the Sales & Marketing Department in her father's company. After gaining experience, she started working on Candyskin along with her sister.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

There's a lot of scope in the lingerie market, as most of it is unorganised (especially in India). I hope that in the next 10 years the market will get converted to the organised sector.

→ **What are the top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The top retail innovations as per me are:

- Omnichannel experiences
- Product Customisation
- Innovative POS, CRM System and Digital VM

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/ Phy-gital strategy?**

Yes, we do different types of marketing activities to increase customer engagement, for example, print ads, pamphlets, discount coupon distribution at events / corporate / restaurants, Quiz, SMS Campaign, Fit Sessions, follow-ups for customer feedback and after-sales services.

→ **What technological/ innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

We have a tab called 'Find Your Size' on our website, wherein the customer is asked 4-5 questions to find out their correct bra size in case they are not sure about it, as sometimes the customer also does not know their correct size. We also have a chat service to help the customer shop online as and when they require. Alternatively, they can reach out to us on Whatsapp by clicking just one button.

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards?**

We have moved to biodegradable plastic from regular plastic and are trying to convert to biodegradable and recycled packaging.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

We are constantly expanding to different markets/states in India. We are also constantly working on expanding our product range.



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PUSHKARAJ SHENAI

CEO, LAKMÉ LEVER

Pushkaraj Shenai is the CEO, Lakmé Lever, the beauty services business of Unilever which operates over 435 salons in over 65 cities in India. He has over 20 years of experience in strategy, operations, marketing and sales across consumer goods, retail and real estate. Prior to Lakmé Lever, Shenai was COO, Piramal Realty where he built the team responsible for land acquisition, project management, marketing and sales for a portfolio of 18 million sq. ft. He has also led the team at Globus which won the Best Fashion Marketing award at IMAGES 2008. Shenai has worked across sales and marketing in Unilever working across regional and global brands in skin care and cleansing.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The outlook seems exceptionally bright due to the constant innovation and new launches which are catering to consumers' growing requirements and will fuel growth in the industry. Consumers now are more inclined towards experimenting with their looks and utilise each service available at their disposal. We continue to expect a strong growth in the salon services industry led by increased consumer demand and premiumisation.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail/brand innovations in your opinion?**

For me, the top retail innovations are Augmented Retail, customisation and store as a content/entertainment hub.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

The Lakmé Salon app – allows flexibility to the consumers to seek interesting beauty content, browse the portfolio, book appointments, review and redeem Runway Rewards points. It is very encouraging to see an early response.

→ **What technological/innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

At Lakmé Salon we believe in giving the best and for this, we have introduced:

- Lakmé Salon App: The app comes ready with the catalogue of services and treatments that we offer, making it easy for the customers to book directly from their mobile devices. This app is the perfect way to stay connected, manage bookings, and provide all the latest news and special deals
- Diagnostic Tools: Introduced skin analysers

and face mapping techniques and tools which enable experts to understand the consumers' needs better and in return suggest them the treatment suitable for them

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

We have a strong and talented leadership team inspired by our vision to 'Beautify the Future'. This team works relentlessly towards fulfilling and preserving our six core values - People First, Customer Obsession, Beauty Rules, Owner's Mindset, Keep it Simple and One Step Higher. With this passion, we have been able to create value for the company as well as our stakeholders. Over these last few years, we have made significant progress in our Net Promoter Score, service innovations and expansion agenda. We have been able to build a growing and profitable enterprise and I feel honoured that my role in the company enables me to contribute further to this vision and values.



RAGINI MEHRA

FOUNDER, BEAUTY SOURCE

Ragini Mehra's portfolio includes projects across the residential, hospitality and corporate sectors. Currently, she is the managing partner at Silhouette, the foremost luxury salon in India, and is founder of Silhouette Retail.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

As far as Beauty Source is concerned, we are planning to expand operations in 2019, with a focus on reaching out to more and more consumers across the country. We are partnering with several online and offline retailers to sell the products, as well as numerous spas and salons to use them in the treatments that have proven so popular over the last 18 months.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The three top retail innovations as per me are, 'Merging of online, offline and mobile customer experiences, pop-up shops and social shopping.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O synergy is an important aspect to approach for brand value. At Silhouette Salon, one can step in anytime to experience the product/service, and if they like the product, they can easily get it with a click a button without going anywhere.

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are**

actively working towards? Tell us in detail.

Yes, we believe in sustainability. Like Sans[ceuticals] products use potent vitamin actives to repair, nourish and protect. These ingredients have been proven in rigorous scientific trials to change the appearance of skin and hair and assist in recovery from sun damage, pollution, and irritation. After exhaustive research and consultation with environmental scientists, Sans[ceuticals] chose PET for its packaging. This modern, safe and non-leaching form of plastic is the most stable packaging material available today. All Sans[ceuticals] bottles are solid in colour, ensuring the highly active ingredients are protected from UV light.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

We are planning to expand operations in 2019, with a focus on reaching out to more and more consumers across the country. Beauty Source is partnering with several online and offline retailers to sell the products, as well as numerous spas and salons to use them in the treatments. We are also expanding the product range, with some very exciting new launches and brands to introduce.

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Katihar Milan Katra, Mangal Bazar (Opp. Shyama Talkies) Howrah & Kolkata Avani Riverside / City Centre
(Salt Lake) / Gariahat (Triangular Park) / Mani Square / Quest / Shyambazar / Sodepur (Station Road) /
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RAHUL AGARWAL

CEO & FOUNDER, ORGANIC HARVEST

Rahul Agarwal started his career as a Chartered Accountant but his search for innovation and doing something disruptive made him an entrepreneur. With determination to develop a good quality product with reasonable pricing for conscious consumers, he along with his team conducted a research about the beauty market in India and abroad. The limited availability of pure and organic personal care products in the country finally led to the conception of 'Organic Harvest'. Presently, he aims to make 'Organic Harvest' a 'go-to-brand' in the personal care segment in India in the coming two years.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

In the coming 10 years, the organic personal care sector will grow exponentially, attributing to factors like expanding urban population base, rising health concerns, growing consumer spending on lifestyle and personal care, etc. Changing consumer perception towards the choice of products coupled with the growing utilisation of environmentally sustainable products has fueled and will continue to cause the much visible growth in the organic personal care industry.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

AR, AI and Omnichannel are the innovations that have made a huge impact on the retail industry.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O – is on the rise in India. Marketers,

these days, are leveraging both online and offline channels to create new customer touchpoints. At Organic Harvest, our presence at online e-commerce platforms and on social media platforms blends well with offline interactive communication strategy.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/ Phygital strategy?**

At Organic Harvest, we have opted for a similar Omnichannel strategy in order to be able to influence our consumers through various platforms. Social media is one of the key legs of our marketing strategy. Instagram and Facebook work great for a brand like us, we have increased our followers by 5x over last year and so has the engagement improved. We are also regularly curating engaging video content for YouTube and offering industry insights and company news through LinkedIn and Twitter. We have Organic Harvest products available in more than 20,000 brand outlets across Tier I & II cities. We have appointed

more than 500 Beauty Advisors in stores with the maximum consumer footfall to provide the consumers with open channels of conversing with the brand.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

Organic Harvest has been growing aggressively. When we started, we had 30 outlets and today we have presence in 6,000 outlets in the country. With more than 30 percent growth in terms of revenue and presence from 3500 to 6000 outlets (2017-2018), we are expanding at a thrilling pace. We are expanding globally as well. We have debuted in the UAE market. Organic Harvest is already present in US, KSA, and Nepal with its extensive range of organic personal care products. Moving on, the company plans to take a 360-degree route to take the brand to another level and reach out to every individual that consumes personal-care products and make organic a lifestyle.



RAJESH JAIN

MANAGING DIRECTOR & CEO, LACOSTE INDIA

Rajesh Jain's signature quote sums up his approach to business leadership succinctly and emphatically – 'Top Line, Bottom Line, Growth, Customer Delight and Human Resource Development, everything else is merely incidental'. Jain's clearly stated mission – growth as opposed to category leadership – has shaped Lacoste India into a lifestyle brand, with a remarkable growth of 100 percent in the last three years, despite a global economic slowdown. A Masters in Commerce from the University of Delhi and a CA from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Jain obtained his CS degree from the Institute of Company Secretaries of India.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

Like other growing economies, India is experiencing major transformations in the retail sector. The market is maturing as most retailers are now focusing on profitable growth. In coming years, the advancement in mobile technologies, AI, VR and easy availability of the internet will give impetus to fast and smart retail. Things to watch out in future retail are Ultra-Fast Delivery, Digital Dressing Rooms and Curated Experiences and Robot Customer Service

→ **What are top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The top three innovations for me are: Premium malls, Increased channel of distribution and Omnichannelisation.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

Online to Offline (O2O) business can effectively provide a seamless experience to the customer whether the customer buys online or offline. It helps the customers to make purchases in the offline stores without any hurdle.

→ **What technological/innovative in-store and online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

We have started a CRM platform which has proved to be very fruitful. Then, we use ERP and PoS systems which provide an effective solution to our supply chain needs and end-customer experience. We are also working towards innovation like how to map inventories to try and give our customers the best Omnichannel experience.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

As far as expansion is concerned, we follow the "Selective Distribution Network" Policy across the globe. Each and every new point of sale is chosen very carefully, keeping the premium-ness of the brand in mind, hence we look for the premium environment, adjacencies, catchment, etc. Delhi and Mumbai being the most important markets in India, the brand has much deeper penetration in these markets and intends to expand further.

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RAHUL KHANNA

DIRECTOR, AZURE HOSPITALITY

Known for his hard work, dedication and vision, Rahul Khanna believes in enjoying the idea of creating experiential brands that are lively and have people at the heart of the essence. A graduate in hospitality management from Ecole Hoteliere De Lausanne in Switzerland, Khanna started Mamagato with his friend Kabir in 2010. Today Azure Hospitality has a number of brands like Dhaba, Roll Mall, Speedy Chow, and boutique brands under Sly Storys with Sly Granny and Foxtrot.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

The next decade is vital for the growth of the food sector of our country. Our country is on the verge of a major expansion. With the increasing population and the rise in average diners eating out daily, the growth and scope of the sector is massive. From increasing disposal income to changing habits of Millennials and working professionals, the concept of comfortable and casual cafes and bars are up for exploration with a growing future for all-day diners.

→ **What are the Top 3 food innovations in your opinion?**

Baking is one of the most important innovations in the food industry. Another innovation is 'mock or vegetarian meats' which is done by specialised companies like Impossible Meats. Third is the usage of probiotics in form of drinks and food.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O strategy not only helps in bringing more business to the brand but also helps in creating an effective brand strategy. The synergy of both online and offline is important considering the digital era we are living in. Whereas, online helps in locating restaurants and their offerings with the help of social media, offline helps in converting customers and bringing them to the restaurant to experience the food and services offered.

→ **What technological/innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

Azure Hospitality offers a loyalty program for its customers with discounts and offers from time to time. From in-store database and feedback forms, our brand uses online channels to inform our guests about the

upcoming events and offers via e-mails and SMS marketing. We also host online campaigns on social media to enhance their experience.

→ **Is innovation and invention something you and your brand are actively working towards?**

Innovation is an important aspect of our brand's sustainability model. Our restaurants involve itself with many new offerings every year. With a menu with over 150 signature offerings, we make sure our customers never get bored with our food. From hosting musical nights to revamping the interiors and making changes in the menu, we believe in staying true to our brand by adding new innovations as per the comfort of our patrons. With more sustainable food menus to plush interiors, we are actively working towards building a better brand every day.



ROHIT NARANG

CO-FOUNDER, TOSSIN GOURMET PIZZAS

Rohit Narang's journey led by the passion for food began many years before he started 'Tossin Gourmet Pizzas'. He moved to Australia in order to pursue his passion professionally, studying for a hotel management degree. He opened a food truck after working with the best names in the Australian food industry. He returned to India and after doing a dedicated work for a year and half, he launched Tossin Gourmet Pizzas with Honey Mehta in 2013. Under his leadership, Tossin has won awards like "Half Pizza Marathon" and "Best Pizza in Gurgaon" and gained appreciation across food critics and restaurant industry gurus.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

Pizza is one of the world's most consumed food items. Now given the fact that the Indian pizza market is still in its growing phases, 10 years from now it should be at least 3 times of what it is today

→ **What are the Top 3 food retail innovations in your opinion?**

The top 3 food retail innovations for me are AQS-system, Vertical farming and 3D Printing technology

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/Phy-gital strategy?**

We work with multiple partners for our phy-gital piece. The goal is to drive customers to our restaurants and enjoy the dining experience together with our food. We do multiple campaigns for this through our website and through multiple other online mediums that fetch us a great deal of customers.

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards?**

India is a big country and to have adequate coverage we would need a significant amount of time for which we ought to be sustainable in our approach. This reflects in every aspect of business that we do mostly around the supply chain.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

We have exciting times ahead of us as we would be growing significantly in the times to come. I came up with multiple strategies around formats of our outlet to successfully combat the expensive real estate which helped us win some marquee locations that are doing exceedingly well. We have won awards like 'Half Pizza Marathon' and 'Best Pizza in Gurugram'. Recently, our digital campaigns have also won two advertising awards. We are always moving forward and wishing to do better every day.

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Few of Our Esteemed Customers





SANDEEP AGARWAL

MANAGING DIRECTOR, RATNADEEP

When Sandeep Agarwal joined Ratnadeep, it was still a modest grocery business looking to grow and scale up. With fire in his belly and a resolute determination to carry the retail journey forward, Agarwal set his sights on taking the still fledgling enterprise to the higher orbits of growth and expansion. For him, core values are most important for the mission and vision to be executed.



MANISH BHARTIYA

DIRECTOR, RATNADEEP

Manish Bhartiya took over his role in Ratnadeep, when his father Brijkishore Bhartiya retired due to health reasons. Bhartiya is a determined and dedicated individual with a vision for the brand. He believes in strong implementation and following up with chain of command. Bhartiya rates the brand's 25th store opening celebration as one of the great achievements of his career and aims to take the brand to further heights.

→ *Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?*

This industry is set to grow multi folds in the coming years. We see a lot of modern shoppers moving to this convenient format that we are in. People don't want to waste time going to malls, spending time in parking, etc, but also don't want to completely move to digital shopping as groceries have an aspect of touch and feel.

→ *What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?*

The top three retail innovations according to us are:

- Hyperlocal platforms
- Fresh foods / cafés in store
- Experience-based shopping intertwined with physical and digital strategies

→ *Does your brand have an Omnichannel/ Phy-gital strategy? If yes elaborate*

Currently, we are tied with hyperlocal platforms like Dunzo, Swiggy stores, etc. and these are proving to be great partnerships as it is increasing our visibility with the digital shopper as well as increasing our sales. We are also tied up with an end-to-end home delivery provider in Bengaluru. Once we are confident enough, we plan to roll it out in all stores.

→ *Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards? Tell us in detail.*

We care about the environment and therefore we are working towards reducing the consumption of plastic. We are moving towards buying loose fruits & vegetable (F&V) compared to our previous packed F&V. We are also encouraging our consumer to use cloth bags. We try to source our fruits and veggies directly from farm and make sure the farmers don't lose out a lot. We also hire our staff (unskilled and skilled) from government programs and initiatives to drive regional growth.

→ *What are the future plans for your brand?*

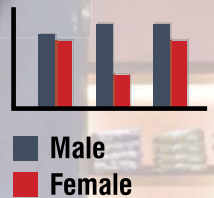
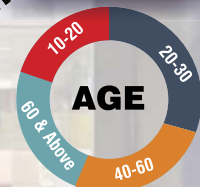
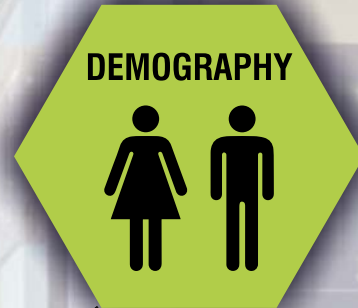
We want Ratnadeep to grow into a national brand with presence in every major city, while keeping the brand's DNA intact – which is mainly value and variety. We value the customers' time, money and choice. We aim to make grocery shopping a hassle-free experience.

Ratnadeep stores are known for their high assortment. The retailer follows a 'glocal' merchandising model, which is a combination of global and local merchandise in foods/ non-foods, grocery/ staples/ fruits regular/ imported and specialty fruits/ vegetables/ household items/ personal care, among others. The merchandising strategy is uniquely planned, keeping in mind the availability of products as per the location of stores and their catchment segmentation. The assortment of all SKUs put together is over 20,000+

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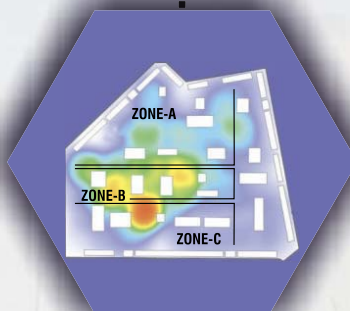
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SAMIR MISRA

COO, V MART RETAIL LTD

Samir Misra has an experience of working in the retail sector for more than 16 years across QSR, Skin Care and Apparel segment. Having grown from the ranks has always helped him to be closer to market conditions be it floor operations, product, people and customer needs. At V Mart, Misra is spearheading the development and execution of long-term strategies with the goal of increasing shareholder value.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

India's retail market is expected to reach US\$ 1.6 trillion by 2026. Online retail sales are forecasted to grow at a rate of 31 percent year-on-year to reach US\$ 32.70 billion in 2018. The fashion sector is expected to be buoyed by women's top wear category owing to generic inclination for western wear.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The retail innovations which I would choose are digitalisation of payment gateway and holographic representation of goods. Also forward looking retailers are creating branded proprietary checkout experience.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/ Phy-gital strategy? If yes elaborate**

We are currently working on our

Omnichannel strategy and simultaneously building capabilities towards it. It is expected to be ready for launch in the next few months.

→ **What technological/ innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

As an organisation, we are progressively adopting new technological innovations to support both back and front end. We have MIS processes digitally enabled. Additionally, we are looking at AI / ML to support us in planning product which is closer to the consumers' requirements.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership?**

As an organisation, we have aggressive growth targets for the years to come. We have embarked on this journey of exponential

growth and as a part of that, we are looking forward to doubling our store count in the coming years, saturating existing markets and entering new geographies. We are looking at riding the wave of the growing consumption story and aspirations of India's ballooning middle class. This is aided by building a strong organisation structure, hiring highly competent people in leadership roles, defining and implementing processes that would provide sustainable growth. But more importantly, driving the culture of consumer centricity through authentic leadership has been my guiding principle in the last 1.5 years that I have been with V-Mart.

Our efforts would be to help the middle-class youth in Tier 2,3&4 market gain access to the latest fashion in line with their growing aspirations. We believe that the middle-class youth in India use fashion as a vehicle to express their individuality and we are here to help them with that.



SACHI MAKER

VP- MARKETING, TRAWORLD

Sachi Maker has an experience of working in the hospitality industry for more than 9 years. She moved to the luggage/fashion space with a new vision and has brought dynamic changes for the brand with her inept marketing strategies. She has a forte in making unique campaigns that are out of the box and different from the rest.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

As we can see that the travel industry is booming and due to significant pick-up in sectors such as aviation, rail and road transport has led people to travel a lot. This has resulted in making people purchase lots of luggage bags. Today, everyone is fashion conscious and they want to have a stylish, luxurious and convenient travel bags. So, the demand is huge, and the industry will grow at a rapid pace in coming ten years.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The top three retail innovations which have made an impact are: Pop-up stores, 3D printables and Omnichannel

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards? Tell us in detail.**

Currently, we are working on the eco-friendly materials and our next collection will be made totally out of it. We are a young team and are very concerned about sustainability and that is one thing we will definitely take forward.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership?**

Traworld is a three-year-old brand and so far, we have been doing well. We further plan to focus heavily on the marketing segment and make the brand a heavy content-driven company. We also intend to focus on customer experiences and make Traworld a one stop destination for everyone who is planning a travel.

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SAURABH GADGIL

CMD, PNG JEWELLERS

Saurabh Gadgil is a sixth-generation successor of the Gadgil family, who founded the PNG Jewellers company. After taking up the management of the family business in 1998, he went on to overhaul the entire infrastructure of the brand by streamlining the processes, embracing the latest advancements in technology and introducing quality and assurance checks. Under his leadership, PNG Jewellers has transformed into a leading national player in the organised jewellery sector, with its presence expanding from Maharashtra to other states pan India and finally reaching international markets including Dubai and USA.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

Indians hold gold in extremely high regard. The implementation of the mandatory hallmarking of jewellery, better resale values and improved transparency in transactions due to GST has had a positive impact on the branded jewellery market in the country. It will continue to grow steadily over the coming years, driven by a continued increase in the price of gold, higher number of store openings, and a massive extension of the promotional schemes period. This will be matched by an increase in the demand for branded jewellery in Tier I, II & III cities.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The innovations that I believe in are Product customisation, omnichannel and incorporation of ethical practices into brand's functioning.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

Online to offline synergy is a vital component of the modern retailer's approach to commerce and is something that we attach a great deal of importance to. The wisdom of selling expensive, high-end goods online has been debated every now and then. An online portal should incorporate and highlight the best a brand has to offer, pairing the virtual and physical experiences through strategies such as push notifications, reactive and proactive newsletters, a multi-platform shopping interface, and cross-platform functionalities.

→ **What technological/ innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

A key innovation that we have introduced in our stores is the interactive 'Try-On' kiosk. This cutting-edge technology employs a

sophisticated face-detection system that allows our customers to try on a vast range of jewellery pieces virtually, from anywhere anytime.

→ **What are the plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership?**

Over the course of the next decade, we plan on establishing PNG Jewellers as a pan-national leader in the jewellery industry, while also bringing the skill and craftsmanship of Indian jewellery to the attention of the world. The introduction of a franchise model is central to these plans. We opened our first franchise outlet in Pune. We plan on introducing at least 20 new stores via this model in Maharashtra. There are also plans for further expansions in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, as well as international markets such as the Middle East, UK and USA.



SUDARSHAN GANGRADE

FOUNDER, LO! FOODS

Sudarshan Gangrade, former Head of Marketing at Ola, is a seasoned serial entrepreneur with experience in successfully running companies and expertise in growth, marketing and analytics. An alumnus of IIT Kharagpur and IIM Bangalore, Gangrade has been part of India's start up e-commerce ecosystem from its early days. He founded Lo! Foods in January 2019 to promote low-carb and keto friendly food items.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

Over the next 10 years, we see 'healthy for you' emerge as a strong category as more people turn towards healthy lifestyle choices. This category is also ripe for disruption as we anticipate big FMCG brands entering this market with their range of low carb snacks. In a real sense, this market will be a few hundred crore categories if not thousand. We believe Mom & Pop stores will play a crucial role in making this category a household name. Already Mom & Pop stores are embracing technology in terms of managing their payments, ledgers and inventories. These are good signs for new businesses like us as overall sector growth will ensure faster scale up for us.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

Before the advent of e-commerce majors in India, modern retail chains like Big Bazaar and Reliance Fresh introduced the concept of private labels in India. To my mind, it is one of the best innovations in the retail business as it took Indian households by storm.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O synergy is more significant in terms of backend and supply chain efficiency. For the end consumers, this would not be as impactful.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

Currently, we are working aggressively to scale up Lo! Foods in the online space. Our range of products is already live on top health platforms like Eat Fit and Fresh Menu. Recently, we also announced a partnership with Hyatt Place Hyderabad to launch a Low Carb and Keto Friendly all-day menu which is powered by Lo! Foods. We plan to scale up our online presence as we have already started selling through leading e-commerce sites like Amazon and Big Basket. The next phase of expansion would include stepping up our offline play where our range of products will be available at premium shelf spaces. In a short journey of 7 months, our customer repeat ratio is 35 percent and our range of products including Lo! Atta is seeing healthy traction from home chefs and professional bakers alike.



SHIVANI PODDAR & TANVI MALIK

CO-FOUNDERS FABALLEY

An Economics graduate from Delhi's Lady Shriram College, Tanvi Malik did MBA in Brand Management from MICA Ahmadabad. She started her dream project, an inclusive, accessible and fashion-forward brand for Indian women – FabAlley, and later Indya where she spearheads design, marketing, product and communication. Her role gives her endless opportunities to create wonderful fashion as both brands are truly democratizing fashion by providing access and affordability to women.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The top three retail innovations for me are: Merging of online, mobile, and offline customer experience, AR and visual search.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O is a crucial retail synergy, and one which every brand should incorporate sooner rather than later. Increasingly, the line between online and offline consumers is blurring and brands that understand how to service their consumers efficiently agnostic to where the consumer is shopping from, are brands that will grow and scale sustainably.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/ Phy-gital strategy? If yes elaborate**

Indya is an Omnichannel brand with a healthy mix of online and offline distribution.

About 50 percent of our business comes from the online segment and our website. In terms of the offline market, we have 19 brand-owned stores that were started in the last 16 months. These EBOs are present in Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore, Pune, Chandigarh, Ludhiana, and many more cities and the plan is to take this up to about 35 stores by the end of this year. We're also very excited about launching our first exclusive store for FabAlley in August this year.

→ **What technological/ innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

We are working on introducing digital screens in pilot stores where our customers can browse through our look-books, new collections and have access to experiential styling features. The idea is to provide the consumer with an endless aisle experience. Parallely, we are also working on enabling

online-to-offline retail, by adding features such as try-and-buy, free garment alterations and other features to our online consumers.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

High Street Essentials Pvt. Ltd. (HSE) has grown from ₹20 lakh monthly sales in 2013 to almost ₹10 crore in monthly sales in FY19. The growth has come from expansion in both the online and offline segments along with constant product expansion. In terms of offline presence, Indya has 19 company-owned stores which were launched in the last 16 months. This number is going to go up to 35 stores by the end of this year. The brand is also present in large format stores like Lifestyle, Central, Globus and Ethnicity. FabAlley is present at more than 100 shop-in-shops with Lifestyle, Central and Globus as well and is launching its first EBO in August '19 at Elante Mall Chandigarh.



SHREYANS SURANA

DIRECTOR, BAAZAR STYLE RETAIL PVT. LTD.

Shreyans Surana, Director, Bazaar Style Retail Private Limited is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and also the Institute of Company Secretaries of India. He oversees the financing strategies, capital structure, administrative and corporate legal functions of the brand. He is responsible for the overall working of the company and is instrumental in making strategic decisions for the company. He has also worked with V.Singhi & Co and PricewaterhouseCoopers in the past.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

Merging of online, mobile, and offline customer experiences, payment experience and controlling in-store transaction data are the top three innovations.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

Transition from traditional retail to organised retail is taking place due to changing consumer expectations, growing middle class, higher disposable income, preference for luxury goods, change in the demographic mix, etc. This is further intensified with the convenience of online shopping, multiplicity of choice under one roof (Shop-in-Shop), and the increase of mall culture, etc. These factors are expected to drive organised retail growth in India over the long run. The overall retail market in India is expected to grow at 12 percent growth rate per annum.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O space is slated to become a multi-trillion-dollar industry soon. By thoughtfully utilising the O2O data and designing campaigns that make customers feel wanted, retailers can witness a complete transformation

in their growth and engagement strategy. In the age of customer-centric marketing, retailers can deliver Omnichannel experiences which create an emotional connection by employing marketing automation.

→ **What technological / innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

We have introduced successful implementation of HRMS, Matrix, ARS Lift and Godrej Racking system across regions. We have strengthened networking with leading external threat protections (Firewalls) along with ARS Lift & Godrej Racking system has been introduced. We are completely working with the Ginesys software and various other software to enhance customers experience.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

Bazaar Style Retail Pvt Ltd has gone through a major expansion in the year 2018, where the company has grown from 27 stores to 63 stores, a whopping 200 percent growth. In other words, the company took a giant step from a turnover of ₹304 cores to ₹541 cores. We are planning to operate around 100 stores across India in the financial year 2019 – 2020.



TABBY BHATIA

DIRECTOR, VOGNAOW

After completing his studies, Tabby Bhatia started his own brand of footwear and accessories. His main focus was to create his brand's presence in the domestic market and then widen this to international totally, which he intends to achieve in the coming five years.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

It is great to see that e-commerce sector is growing 5X of what it is today, considering the internet penetration in the country. With digitalisation taking over, more customers will be able to gain access to retail outlets online. Also, advanced banking services are helping both sectors where EMI facilities are making it easy for customers to purchase desired products. Retail is only going to get bigger in the coming years.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

My top three innovations are: Easy returns and exchange policies, Online connections with offline for stocks and product customisation

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

Online to offline synergy brings consumer into the real world to make purchases in physical stores. It helps in building strong relationships between buyers as one can return or purchase products online at a physical location and vice versa. The brand gets a chance to directly listen to customers' requirement which leads to bridging the gap between the two.

→ **What technological/ innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

Our specialised AI software will help our salespersons in tracking all selling aspects including selling price, color, category etc. to pitch more for the better targeting of sales. The main motive of our brand is to cater to the best service to make the maximum permanent customers for the brand. Keeping this in mind, we have initiated a service to people to get experience, purchase and have that product delivered

at home without any extra effort. Also, the customer can return products they have bought online to stores.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership?**

This year we are concentrating on an offline plan, entering the offline market with a few stores in Jalandhar. By 2019, we plan to open 2-3 flagship stores in India. The brand already has an outlet in UAE, and we desire to strengthen our business in the outer market.

We started this business in 2015 with an investment of ₹1.3 crore and have today turned it into ₹12 crore profit. Moreover, we are able to gather celebrity and cricket player eyes to set our benchmark. We would say it's our entire team's hard work and luck that this year we were chosen by BCCI to design 55 travel kits for entire Indian cricket players for World Cup series 2019.



VIKRANT BATRA

FOUNDER CAFÉ DELHI HEIGHTS & NUEVA

For Vikrant Batra, food has always been an integral part of his life and hence he has always tried to encapsulate it through his work in the form of quality flavours and consistency blended with the look and feel of the dish in its totality. With a vision to change the way people perceived cafes in India, Batra joined his family business and opened first outlet of Café Delhi Heights in 2011. Over the years, under his leadership, Cafe Delhi Heights won numerous awards and also launched a Peruvian and Modern cuisine bar and diner called Nueva.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

I see awareness, innovation and experimentation on the rise as food sector has a very bright future. With evolved palates that are ready to explore and appreciate different styles of cuisines, the food sector is on the verge of entering new avenues and a massive and versatile growth in the upcoming 10 years. With new developments from International chefs entering the Indian market to upcoming locations and improved infrastructure, India will be witnessing development in the industry.

→ **What are the Top 3 food innovations in your opinion?**

Innovation in the food industry combines technological innovations along with social and cultural innovations. From food going online to organic and seasonal food offerings coming back, the industry has seen many food innovations. Food presentation, too, has gone under a series of innovations and has become as important as the taste today.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

A business strategy model - O2O finds consumers online and brings them

offline. The following model is complementary rather than competitive as it uses both mediums to increase the sale of any brand. In today's digital age, O2O model is very important, as it is one of the fastest ways of marketing owing to huge success of businesses.

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards? Tell us in detail.**

The three pillars of any sustainable model in the food and beverage industry comprise of customer experience, quality of the product & consistency. Serving large hearted portions of good quality food, our brands have always stood true to its offerings since day one. Staying true to our concept and thought along with customer satisfaction has been our mantra of success that has helped us achieve what we are today.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

Café Delhi has expansion plans of launching in Chandigarh and few more locations in Delhi and NCR. The brand is ready for aggressive expansion to other cities like Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai and more.



UMANG TEWARI

FOUNDER, BIG FISH VENTURES'

Umang Tewari is the face behind 'The Junkyard Café, GaramDharam and Local', which is one of the favourite destinations for Delhi's Millennial population due to its unique concepts and entertainment themes. Coming from a family that is wholly into real estate, he decided to venture into hospitality purely out of sheer passion and has revolutionised the nightlife of Delhi. His customers and their love and support are what gives him the courage to take risks and experiment with his unique concepts.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

A food loving country, India has never experienced this big a rise in the number of diners before. With businessmen and investors investing in this industry to small and big chefs venturing their own cafes and restaurants, the industry is changing its shape and size tremendously. The sector is evolving and expanding along with international brands entering the Indian market. From restaurateurs and chefs bringing international cuisines to new food innovations to more and more women chefs taking the lead, the sector is in for aggressive expansion in the following ten years.

→ **What are the Top 3 food innovations in your opinion?**

With the coming of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Marketing, the food industry

has largely taken over the internet. From food delivery apps to reservation portals and social media portals, the avenues have widened. Along with this, the chefs and restaurateurs have begun to experiment with different styles of cooking and unique cuisines like Nostalgic Indian, Peruvian and more. From molecular gastronomy to using dehydration techniques and more.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

The synergy of Online to Offline is very important for any industry. With a current advantage of ecommerce over traditional commerce, it is easy to track the consumer behaviour, payment information and customer targeting. O2O not only bridges these gaps but also makes it easy to track the conversions of offline transactions and hence enables brands to target them directly too.

→ **What technological/innovative in-store & online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

From online discounts and table reservation services, our brands also host engaging contests and customer feedback programmes online. Whereas, in terms of innovative offline experiences, we indulge in hosting themed nights, new menu launches, customer engaging events and feedbacks to upgrade our customer experiences.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

The company has grown from one outlet to around 11 outlets which are successful and well-established brands of the capital. We are working on more concepts and shall be announcing them soon. Besides new concepts, we are also working on the expansion of existing ones to Tier II & III cities.



VINAY CHATLANI

CO FOUNDER AND CEO, SOCH

Vinay Chatlani is a retailer by profession, an interior designer by passion and a fitness enthusiast. As CEO of Soch, he defines the road map for all creative design strategy, operations and marketing at one of the most popular ethnic specialist fashion chain. A graduate from the University of Miami with a major in Entrepreneurship and a minor in Marketing, Chatlani kick-started his career in 2002 by setting up a promotions company along with his friends targeting some of the most exclusive restaurants, bars, lounges and night clubs in Miami. In 2003, Chatlani moved to Bangalore from Miami and joined his family business, with a vision to establish Soch as one of the leading ethnic wear brands in the country

→ **Where do you see the sector in the next 10 years?**

We are confident that the ethnic wear market will witness a rising demand in the next decade. This is going to be backed by the rise in disposable income from a growing middle class, the influence of social media and celebrities in buying decision as well as easy accessibility with e-com and Omnichannel routes.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The retail industry is ever evolving with several innovations and technologies being employed in the sector. The top three according to me are Omnichannel retailing which has enabled retailers to bridge the time and space gap with consumers; Opening up markets and consumer segments that were previously under-penetrated. Pop up stores is also a great initiative, if used well they can test the markets by creating a buzz around a limited edition or launch concept.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

Today, the consumer has evolved and expects a shopping experience that encompasses a seamless integration of brick-and-mortar with online platforms. E-commerce is no longer just limited to the web and several brands now realise this and are opting for a hybrid O2O model. Features such as in-store digital kiosks, online order and in-store picks help in creating online and offline synergies leading to the superior consumer experience.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel strategy?**

We are building our Omnichannel capabilities by integrating all our stores and distribution centers to provide our customers with an enhanced shopping experience at EBOs and also online on our e-commerce website.



VASANT KUMAR

MANAGING DIRECTOR, LIFESTYLE INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE LIMITED

As the Managing Director of Lifestyle International in India, Vasant Kumar is spearheading the brand's aggressive growth plans since its launch in the country. With an illustrious marketing career spanning 23 years, Kumar has a rich and diverse experience in marketing, sales and retail management in the apparel, FMCG and consumer durable industries in India. In February 2005, he joined the Landmark Gulf Group as President, Max Retail Division, Lifestyle International – headquartered in Bangalore and moved up to become the Executive Director of the brand.

→ **Where do you see the retail sector in the next 10 years?**

In the next ten years, the retail sector will grow at an immense pace and will offer a highly intuitive, personalised shopping experience to discerning customers.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

In my opinion, O2O synergy is important for brand building as it provides consumers with a seamless and hassle-free shopping experience.

→ **What technological/innovative in-store and online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

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 memorable shopping

experience as well. At our stores, we have The Self-Checkout Kiosk, where customers can complete the payment transaction in a few simple steps on their own, Mobile POS for billing products such as watches, fragrances or cosmetics Fitting Room Assistance' program that allows for size retrieval with the help of technology Click & Collect– an initiative that allows customers to order online and collect merchandise offline from any store, In-store Endless-Aisle Initiative helping the customer to find the missing size our online platform.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/Phy-gital strategy?**

Lifestyle provides seamless, hassle-free shopping and an Omnichannel experience with its online store lifestylestores.com. By 'Click & Collect', customers can order online and collect

merchandise in-store. With a country-wide presence across 78 stores, 44 cities & delivery to over 26000 pin codes, Lifestyle seamlessly brings to life trends across all touch points of every fashion journey - including online, mobile, in-store, and social media.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership? What are your online expansion plans?**

We plan to launch one store every 45 days for the next 2 years along with steady growth in our online retail footprint. The vision for the future is to make Lifestyle's Omnichannel experience a seamless one and ensure that we provide a frictionless fashion shopping experience for customers across our stores and online. We are looking at a steady growth in our online retail footprint from here on.



VISHWAS SHRINGI

CEO & FOUNDER, VOYLLA

Vishwas Shringi, an IIT Madras alumnus and Carnegie Mellon graduate, returned to India to set up Voylla in 2010. Since then, he has been steering the course of the business, building a brand which is now synonymous with innovation, quality and accessibility. Known for his relentless drive, hands-on approach and proven leadership qualities, Shringi has helped Voylla become one of the largest fashion jewellery brands in the country in a very short time.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

There is tremendous potential in the jewellery segment which is set to grow exponentially as women are becoming the decision-makers and are moving towards an evolved sense of style. We expect this sector to do very well in the coming ten years. Government-controlled policies are stemming the surge in Chinese cheap imports and the industry is immensely benefitting from these policies. Fashion jewelry is growing at 20 percent+ CAGR YoY. At this rate, it will be more than a \$10 billion category in the next 10 years. We at Voylla, have been the leaders in creating and owning this category - branding fashion jewellery with an Omnichannel presence. We hope to consolidate our lead and keep growing the category as well.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

For me, the biggest innovation in any retail business is product

innovation, price competitiveness and to perfect every possible platform where the product is available.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

Omnichannel strategy is important for most categories, especially in categories where touch and feel are not very important. However, for loyal customers, O2O is a good transition as they are already familiar with the brand and the quality, so design visualisation can help them with purchase decisions online.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/ Phy-gital strategy?**

Yes, we do! Our customers can place orders online and get products delivered to the stores. We are working on further enhancing customer experience where customers can return, exchange at ease at any channel.



VINEET GAUTAM

GEO, BESTSELLER INDIA

With over 18 years of experience in the retail industry, Vineet Gautam has worked across various sectors including food, fashion & telecom. A graduate in Hotel Management from IHM-Delhi, Gautam is heading the operations, marketing, brand management and business development for all the Bestseller India brands – Jack & Jones, Vero Moda, ONLY and Selected Homme – since 2010. In the current role, he is focusing on driving business, strategy and profitability across brands.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

In the next 10 years, the retail sector will be more organised and refined. With a greater number of retailers adopting the Omnichannel strategy, the retail sector will offer much more convenient and seamless shopping experience to the customer. Increased adoption of retail technology and innovation concepts will help the sector keep up with the constantly changing purchase patterns and help understand the consumer's buying behaviour to the extent of even helping predict consumer shopping trends. While the increasing disposable incomes coupled with the influx of foreign players, as well as local players, is set to make the sector more competitive and cluttered.

→ **What are the Top 3 retail innovations in your opinion?**

The three innovations which have impressed me are; Same Day Delivery, Social Shopping and Smart Mirrors.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

O2O synergy is extremely important in my opinion, as any brand looking to retain consumer loyalty needs to tap into the online and offline potential of servicing the consumer. Consumers are flooded with a plethora of product offerings from various brands. In such times, it is extremely crucial to provide a seamless shopping experience through every touchpoint in the consumer journey in order to maintain brand loyalty.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/Phygital strategy?**

Yes, at Bestseller, we try and ensure that no matter what platform our consumer chooses to shop from – be it online or

offline, he or she has the same brand experience and can enjoy seamless shopping experience.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand? How has the company grown under your leadership?**

I strongly believe in the concept of teamwork and building core competencies within teams. During my journey, I have watched the strength of our team grow from a small team of 42 to a robust team of 3000+ employees today. Through our collective efforts, we went from operating 15 brick-and-mortar stores, to 1500+ sales point pan India. We aim to further diversify and grow our product offerings across all our brands and continue to bring the best of international trends and make them relevant for our Indian consumers. By 2020, we aim towards making Bestseller the largest fashion retailer of the country



YASHOVARDHAN GUPTA

FOUNDER & DIRECTOR, TORERO CORPORATION

After pursuing MBA, Yashovardhan Gupta decided to launch Torero which is modelled on the licensee business model of Luxottica. Torero Corporation Private Limited is a global licensee for Cross and Police leather accessories. The brand houses leather accessories which are created, manufactured and exported to brands like Mont Blanc, Hugo Boss, Giorgio Armani, Cerruti 1881 and Guy Laroche in more than 40 countries.

→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

We have three major distribution channels – retail, e-commerce and business gifting. All three are expanding excessively and we are very optimistic about the future. The retail sector in India is emerging as one of the largest sectors in the economy. The total market size of the Indian Retail I reached is forecast to increase to US \$1,200 billion by 2021 and US \$1,750 billion by 2026. The e-commerce industry has been on an upward growth trajectory and expects to surpass the US to become the second largest e-commerce market in the world by 2034. The e-commerce market is expected to reach US \$200 billion by 2026. The business gifting section is also an area of growth for us especially in the pharma and insurance companies. We would like to replicate our success formula in for business gifting in other areas as well.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/Phygital strategy? If yes elaborate.**

The global distribution format is moving from pure offline sales to a hybrid model of offline and online sales. It is critical to move with the times and adapt in order to be ready for a future customer who would be looking to buy in the Omnichannel world. We have consolidated our sales in the offline retail world globally since our inception and recently launched our e-commerce store front on amazon India in 2018. We plan to launch our e-commerce distribution in Europe in France, Germany, Italy and Spain. We would like our customers to have the same experience when purchasing our products offline as well as online.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

We are looking to expand within our core competency as global licensees for international brands. We want to bring in additional brands and continue expanding our distribution network through it.

Leather Talks Introduces Technologically Enhanced Luxurious Handcrafted Leather Accessories

Leather Talks (LT) journey started inform of an EBO in AC Market, Kolkata in 1973. By 1984, the brand had four EBO's in Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad. LT was the first brand to launch luxurious gent's belts with locally made reversible buckles with original golden and silver polish. The great exuberating craftsmanship, product quality with innovation and great customer service helped it achieve a goodwill in a short span of time. Then the LT journey took a turn to the goodwill products/promotional goods market with the top 150 corporate of India as its clients. In 2010, LT launched the MRH Leather Goods Pvt. Ltd, now the parent company and the brand owner of Leather Talks and Vaunt. MRH made a national presence by launching both the brands in the Indian Stationery market through the MBO (Multi Brand outlet) mode and acquired a channel comprising of India's leading organised stationery sellers within a year's time.

In a one on one exclusive interaction with IMAGES Retail, **Apekshit Jaggi, Managing Director, Leather Talks** talks about the journey, growth, challenges and future plans of the brand.



→ **Where do you see your sector in the next 10 years?**

10 years ago, unbranded manufacturers dominated this sector. But with the entry of International brands the market has opened up. Consumers have more options and have become more particular with the product features and characteristics. Indian domestic manufacturers and brands are more aware of the consumer's options. In the next 10 years. The market will be a game of 'survival of the fittest'. The customer expectations will escalate to the next level and so will their demands. The competition will be higher. Product innovation with 'good' customer service will be the key differentiation.

→ **How important is O2O synergy in your opinion?**

In the modern-day, online to offline synergy enhances the reputation of a brand. It certainly creates an awareness of the services a brand provides saving time and money as well.

→ **Does your brand have an Omnichannel/Phy-gital strategy? If yes, elaborate.**

Yes! One of the most unique features that the brand has recently incorporated is the introduction of online shopping through its website. This is a cross channel strategy which has been introduced to improve user experience. We are working on upgrading our social media approach and e-commerce.

→ **What technological/innovative in-store and online experiences have you introduced to your brand?**

The stores have been digitally equipped with gadgets to reduce customers shopping time. Introduction of iPads and display screens lets users get a view of the online store. The LT Go custom allows users to customise their products according to their choice of leather and colour (Customised leather goods).

→ **Is sustainability something you and your brand are actively working towards? Tell us in detail.**

As a brand, we believe in product innovation with good customer service. We are prepared for circumstantial alterations according to the market's demands adhering to the values that the brand and its employees have inherited over generations. Leather Talks has remained at the forefront of luxury leather goods for over 4 decades now.

→ **What are the future plans for your brand?**

Leather Talks clearly states the intention of expanding its retail over two new metropolitans in India and overseas – Sri Lanka, Bhutan and a few countries in the middle East being the prime targets. A considerable improvement in the demand for corporate gifting has driven attention all over the nation. In fact, the next store to be inaugurated will be at Infiniti mall, Malad (Mumbai). Leather Talks proudly introduced LT smart range of products which are technologically enhanced luxurious handcrafted leather accessories. The utility of which is a necessity for the modern man. We will be introducing more products in the coming years. Innovation has always been a key aspect. **IR**

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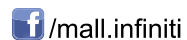


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The Rise & Growth of the Indian Retail Industry

Consumers in India have far evolved and expect their shopping experience to be seamless across every channel be it brick and mortar, e-commerce or on mobile. With these changing consumer demands and expectations retailers are required to work continuously towards gaining a competitive advantage. This can be done by using innovative retail formats and next generation methods to yield growth throughout various channels of distribution.

By Baqar Iftikhar Naqvi, Business Director & Samir Soni, Associate Consultant, Consumer Products and Retail, Wazir Advisors-

Over the years, retailing in India has been one of the most dynamic and fast paced industries, which has travelled through different phases. Origins of retailing in India can be traced back to the emergence of kirana and mom & pop stores, but with Indian economy getting liberalised in early 1990s, many indigenous franchise stores propped up. Many domestic players like Raymond, Bombay Dyeing etc. started to forward integrate from manufacturing to retailing thereby catering to a larger base of customers.

In the backdrop of evolutionary times coupled with day to day disruptions, retail outlets like Shoppers Stop, Planet M, Crosswords, Pantaloons etc. entered the market in the 1990s, followed by a few shopping malls, department stores and supermarkets. Thus, from early 90s to about 2005, shoots of organized retail started emerging in India. 2005 onwards marked a phase of growth and stabilization where large corporates like Reliance, Aditya Birla, Godrej etc. entered and grew their retail business. Retail became the 'buzzword' and the industry to be in. In the decade the industry saw

many ups and downs and a few groups also exited retail who were not being able to grow and compete in the sector. A large number of International brands and retailers also entered India during this phase, many of them like Zara and H&M becoming extremely successful while the others still struggle to find a foothold.

Currently, driven by strong macro-economic factors, India is one of the fastest growing economies globally and the fourth largest retail market in the world. It thus holds a very strong position as far as its market potential is concerned. It provides a strong platform for

consumers, distributors, manufacturers and ancillary sectors like transportation, logistics, cold chains etc. Retailers are continuously trying to fully tap the depth of this potential by making use of latest technologies along with next gen tools like data analytics, social commerce, CRM solutions etc. which form the backbone of modern retailing.

The burgeoning millennial population, growing middle income households and increasing women workforce provide a highly positive outlook for the retail businesses in India. Fuelled by these factors, the Indian retail industry is expected to grow from US\$ 790 billion in FY 2019 to US\$ 1400 billion by FY 2024, as the overall economy crosses the US\$ 5 trillion mark.

As internet penetration increases, more international retailers set up shops in India and established Indian brands and retailers set themselves on a high growth trajectory, the share of organised retail market is expected to increase from 12 percent in FY 2019 to 25 percent in FY 2024. The e-commerce market itself is estimated to grow from US\$ 24 billion in FY 2019 to US\$ 98 billion in FY 2024.

Going forward, given the strong retail and consumer outlook, India is expected to witness redefining trends which will shape the future of the retail market. Consumer experience will be the key focus of the retailers, while technology will play an important part in increasing sales as well as facilitating the enhancement of consumer experience throughout their shopping journey. The next 10-12 years will be the defining years for Indian retail

as the market will mature and organized retail will penetrate deeper into smaller cities and towns. While on one side more international brands and retailers across categories and formats will aggressively enter and grow the Indian business, India will become the key growth market for the ones already present. Technology will replace many 'human roles' in retail and new ways to emotionally connect with consumer will evolve. New markets will develop, and new channels will disrupt and reshape the markets.

This article focuses on the some of the above points and throws light on trends expected to disrupt Indian retail industry in the near future.

Growth of Indian Economy & Consumption

Just days after coming to power, the current government spelt out its key priorities, which were focused on laying the foundation for making India a US\$ 5 trillion economy by FY 2024. As per IMF too, India's GDP will grow at 7.4 percent in FY 2020, with medium term growth projection expected to remain strong at 8 percent due to ongoing structural reforms and a favourable demographic dividend.

These factors are largely scripted on the strength of India's growing domestic consumption. This high rate of growth in consumption is accompanied by a substantial decline in India's poverty rate and increase in formal employment, due to growing proportion of jobs in services and declining share of employment in agriculture. The growing contribution

of services sector towards India's overall GDP, has resulted in creating improved working conditions and better income for Indian households. As a result of this, India's GDP per capita has crossed US\$ 2,000 mark in FY 2019.

The government now intends to focus on the manufacturing sector to create new jobs and has launched many initiatives like "Make in India" for this. This will further help in increasing the GDP per capita, thereby putting more money into the hands of people to improve their lifestyle, thereby supporting consumption and the retail market.

FIGURE 1: SECTOR WISE CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS GDP

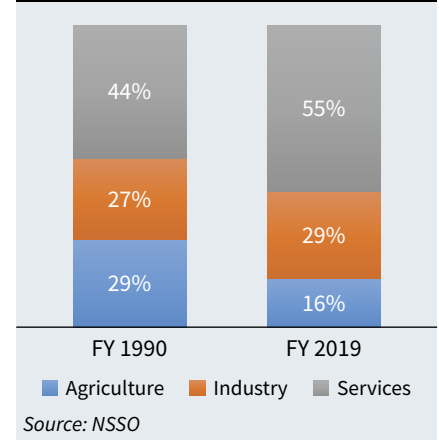
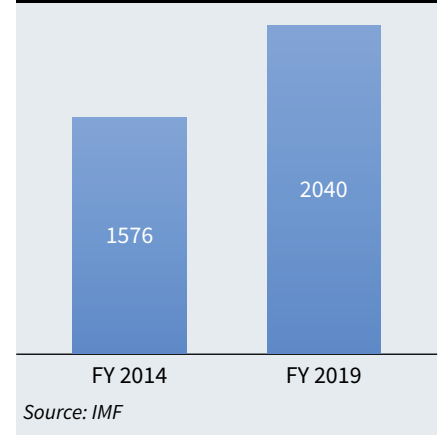


FIGURE 2: INDIA'S GDP PER CAPITA (US\$)



It has been seen in the case of China that when the per capita GDP reaches US\$ 2,000 mark and the basic requirements of shelter, food and clothing are met, people start spending many other categories and the retail market consumption prospects improve and investment momentum



increases significantly. At this level of per capita income, basic needs are met and income available for discretionary spend increases. As India has crossed this US\$ 2,000 mark in FY 2019, it can be expected that Indian retail has reached its inflexion point. With rapidly growing economy and higher GDP per capita, it can be assumed that Indian retail industry has started to change its gears, just like China did in the last 15 years.

Indian retail is thus expected to reach US\$ 1400 billion by FY 2024 from US\$ 790 billion in FY 2019, growing at a CAGR of 12 percent.

FIGURE 4: SHARE OF RETAIL FORMATS IN INDIA

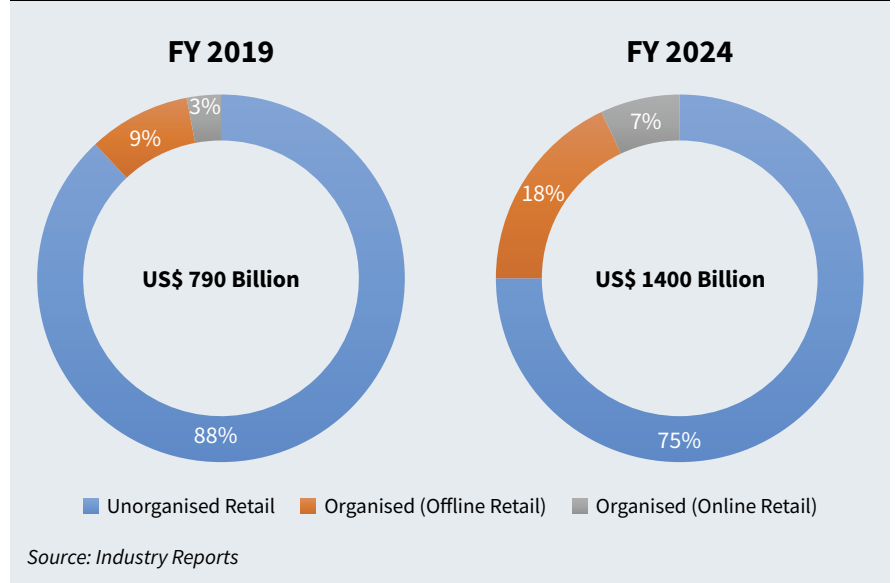


FIGURE 3: INFLEXION POINT FOR INDIAN RETAIL

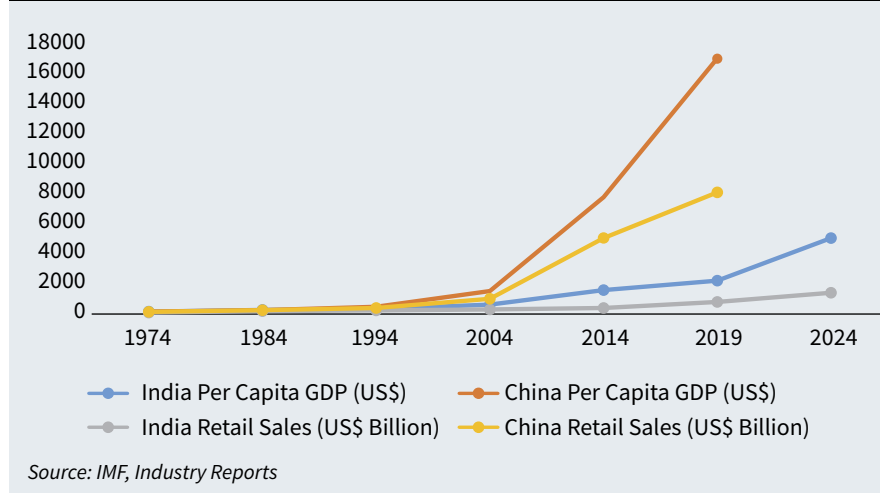
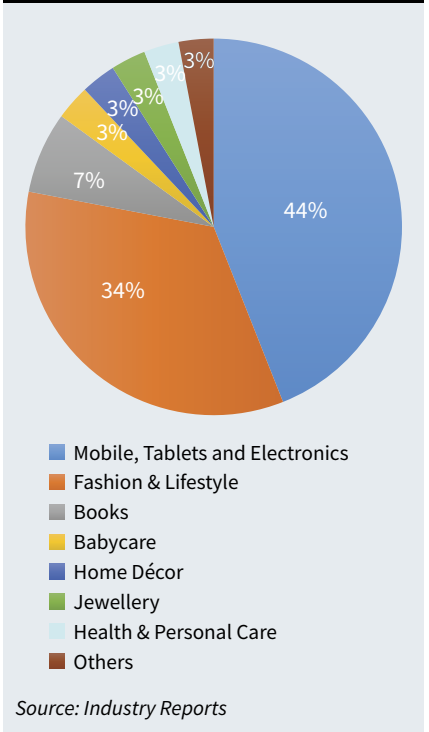


FIGURE 5: CATEGORY WISE SHARE IN ONLINE RETAIL



Growth of Organised Retail

Due to the sharp rise and changing consumption pattern of Indian consumers, share of organised segment is growing rapidly. While traditional formats or unorganised retail formats continue to dominate the retail market, organized retail is growing at a faster pace and eating up into traditional retail. A major driver of this high growth trajectory has been online retail which is projected to grow at a CAGR of 33 percent between FY 2019-24. Growth in online retail is majorly attributed to factors including:

- Increasing internet penetration
- Growth in number of smartphone users
- Growing number of online shoppers



Although mobile, tablets and electronics as a category continue to be the dominant one in the online market of India, new breed of online players are targeting other categories like food & grocery, pharmacy etc. These will be the categories where we will see 40 percent plus year on year growth in the online space.



Factors Driving the Growth of Indian Retail Market

Indian consumption and retail market growth is largely supported by the following factors:

Burgeoning Millennial Population and Changing Outlook towards Spending

With median age of 27 years, India is home to world's largest Millennial population. With 440 million of them, they make 34 percent of the total population in India. Further, their contribution to the Indian workforce is significantly higher at nearly 48% in FY 2019.



This set of consumers are more confident of future success and earning at a much younger age than their parents. As they are more urban in their approach, these consumers are career driven and well-travelled people. They aspire high, with fewer things seems to be out of bound for them. Millennials no longer feel guilty about spending too much on self, instead they believe in investing towards fulfilling their needs more thoroughly. They spend on things that make them look good in a "selfie" world. They also spend on things that improve their lives and their "image". The focus is shifting from high capex items like house and cars that the last generation saved and spent on, to spending more on experiences and on day to day things, buying better products and brands in a more convenient way.

Also, Millennials are known to be marrying late, with average age of marriage for women in urban India increasing from 20-22 years to 25-26 years, while for men it has increased from 25-26 years to 29-30 years in the past few years. This has resulted in young Millennials having more disposable income to spend on "self", thereby growing various categories like personal gadgets, solo holidays etc.



Increasing Women Workforce

With changing societal mind set and increasing gender equality at office, women entering workforce has been on the rise in past few years. From FY 2014 to FY 2019, women workforce in India has increased from 5 million to 7 million respectively and is expected to reach 10 million by FY 2024. This has led to the increase in earning members and family income, thereby giving rise to discretionary spending. Today, women in India are getting independent in terms of their purchase decisions. This coupled with increasing time pressures and aspirations to spend on self-development, is giving rise to the consumption of new categories like personal care, readymade products etc. 'Convenience' is again a theme that comes up very strongly here. Across categories, products and brands that can make the consumer life more convenient will continue to grow very rapidly.

Growing Wallet Share and Price Trade-Off

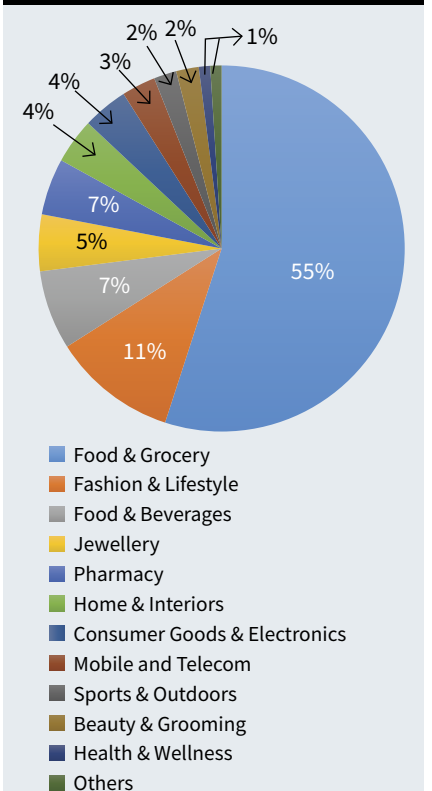
With growing GDP per capita and higher disposable incomes, consumers have become more aspirational and are open to buying new categories. This has led to a change in wallet share of Indian consumers. Earlier wallet share of Indian consumers was largely dominated by food and clothing only, but with evolving buying behaviour, new categories like mobile and communication, beauty & grooming, personal gadgets etc. have now become a part of Indian consumer's wallet share.

Many new categories of spend have thus emerged in the last few years and many others have redefined themselves.



Consumers have traded "durability" for "price" and "fashion". E.g. in the 80s and 90s, consumers purchased a TV or a refrigerator or furniture only once or twice in their lifetime, largely when the older product became irreparable. However, Millennials buy these products every 5-7 years as products with new features and designs are launched. Thus, the market for these products has grown tremendously,

FIGURE 6: WALLET SHARE OF INDIAN CONSUMERS



Source: Industry Reports

as first-time buyers purchase these products driven by greater affordability and there is a high replacement driven demand. There is also a great growth in the second-hand market, which is also becoming online with many online players entering the market.



Growth of Markets

With online players now delivering to the smallest of towns, consumers in these cities are aware of many international and indigenous brands available in the market. This spells a big opportunity for the modern retailers who are looking to enter into Tier III & IV markets. Many consumers living in Tier III & IV towns have now experienced the brands, through online purchases. Leading national brands are now looking at 500 plus cities as their market and are already opening stores. Other international and indigenous brands are planning expansion into these cities based on factors like changing lifestyle, digital connectivity etc.

Growth of Malls

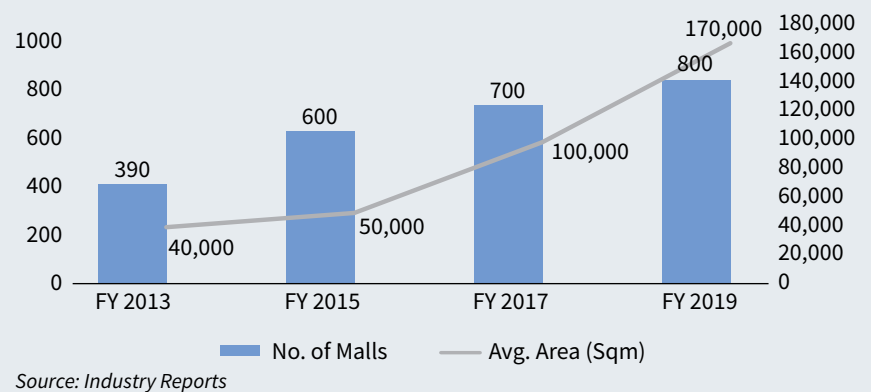
With wide variety of international and domestic brands available and with growing consumer desire to own these brands at a more organised, better and bigger destinations, there has been a sharp rise in the number of malls operating in India. Earlier the mall development was confined to top tier cities like Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune etc. However the next round of mall development is expected to come from Tier III cities like Allahabad, Coimbatore, Jamshedpur, Panaji, Udaipur etc.

Malls have also progressively become bigger and are considered to be destinations or experience centres instead of just shopping or transactional places. Today, malls are focusing more to become a community or public interaction centres by creating meeting places, entertainment areas, providing better shopping experiences through enhanced



ambience, brand selection etc. By bidding farewell to the categories like books and music, and mobile, that have moved online, malls have started to focus on the growing significance of offering a good line-up of experiential categories like food and beverage, entertainment options like multiplexes, gaming centres along with other amusement options to encourage greater footfalls and more return visits.

FIGURE 7: NO. OF MALLS VS AVERAGE AREA OF MALLS



Digital Disruption

The advent of technology in the retail space has disrupted the traditional business models, having transformed the earlier rules of engagement to a “Phygital” experience with an in-built mechanism to understand the customer needs like never before. This has been made possible through continuous consumer interaction with digital platforms wherein reviews, suggestions and AI based product assortments have made in-store digitization possible, shaking up the entire structure in which the retail

industry operates. These techniques have now allowed the retailers to influence consumer behaviour, as they can now connect with the consumers at all possible touch points.

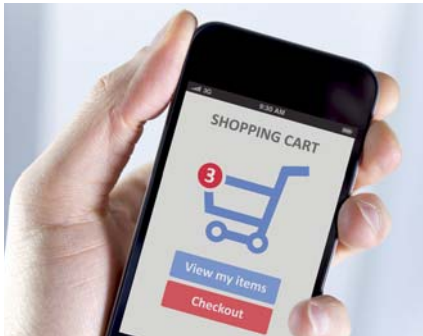
Technology is now considered to be the major factor in driving engagements and experiences in consumer’s shopping journey. It is enabling retailers to acquire new customers, engage better with existing customers thereby increasing sales and to reduce the cost of operations. As customers become more aware, retailers



are compelled to respond using data-driven technologies to meet the growing expectations. Emerging technologies like AR, VR, Artificial intelligence, IoT, bots, drones, cloud platforms etc. have thereby, become indispensable in enhancing the buyer's journey.

To further this experience, retailers are coming up with various innovative technologies which have been in demand, supported by growing consumer consciousness and greater preference for choice and convenience. Some of these technologies are discussed below:

→ **Smart Shopping Carts:** Many retailers have started introducing smart shopping carts and self-checkout options to achieve new benchmarks of convenient shopping experience. These carts serve as a direct response to online shopping, as they guide consumers to their products in their shopping list.



→ **New Payment Gateways:** With the advent of online payment companies or fintech companies, touchless commerce through contactless payment methods have increased exponentially. With the rise of internet and other payment methods including net-banking, online cash transfers, mobile wallets, single touch payments,

payment through scanning code, etc. have shown an exponential increase in the country.

→ **Beacons** in outlets are used to send personalised recommendations and suggestions to consumers who are near the store. They are battery powered devices that transmit coded messages by pairing through Bluetooth. This technology has been leveraged by



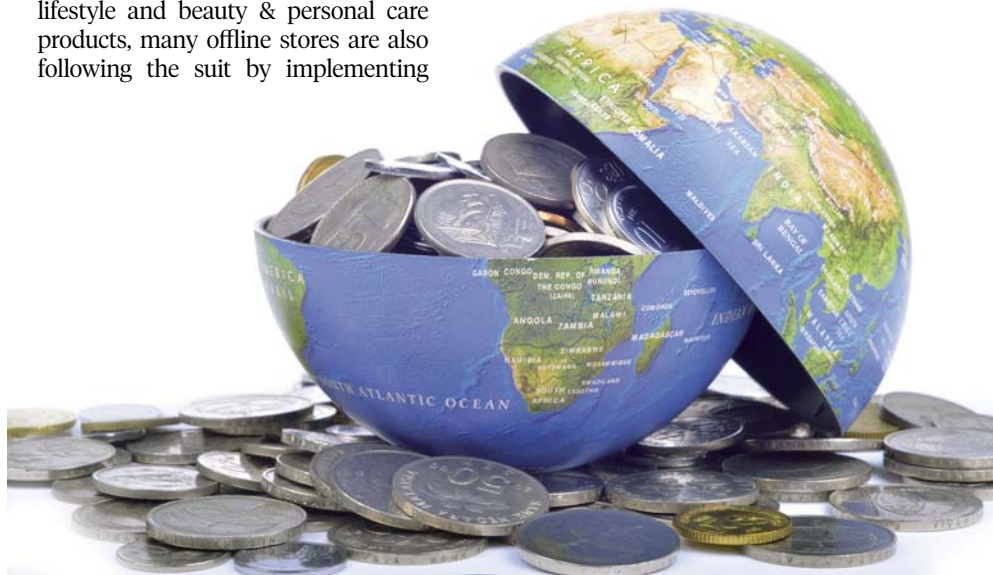
brands for proximity or close area marketing. Recently a major global fast food chain installed beacons at select restaurants and partnered with a shopping app to distribute coupons amongst the app users, resulting in increased sales.

→ **Immersive Technologies:** While online players are rapidly embracing the concept of experience-based shopping using AR/VR, especially in fashion & lifestyle and beauty & personal care products, many offline stores are also following the suit by implementing

this technology in their stores. These stores are redefining convenience for consumers. In these stores, consumers are required to just walk in, choose their preferred products from a wide range of assortment through a virtual inventory. Then enter the trial room and try all the outfits via virtual mirror without actually having to perform all these tasks. This combination of technology in stores are facilitating seamless experience to the consumers. The buying experience is engaging and unique in value for the consumers.

→ **AI & Bots:** With excitement around artificial intelligence running high, customers are getting more and more comfortable communicating with robots. AI's impact on retail in future will grow in the area of smart speakers and chatbots. These voice-activated virtual assistants will be involved in majority of all business to consumer interactions. Retailers in future need to tap this obsession around AI to provide a better personalized experience to their customers.

Robots have started to become the first customer touch point in many retail outlets. Their impact is multi-dimensional, starting right from logistics, customer handling, warehousing to back end office work. Robots have replaced humans to an extent that they are performing the same tasks more efficiently by reducing





errors and saving both time and cost, thus increasing productivity and profit margins. Robots are now performing many tasks related to retail sector:

→ **Inventory management by Robots**
- Robots are proving to be immensely successful in increasing operational efficiencies by achieving zero logistic defects, product picking, delivery, observing customer path and analysing it. E-commerce giant Amazon has deployed an army of 45,000 robots in

its warehouses in US. Retail giant Tesco has robots, scanning their inventories with increased efficiency and far less errors.

→ **Enhancing in store experience** – Robots are being used to enhance shopping experience for customers by welcoming them at any outlet, guiding and helping them around the store and making it hassle free for customers. In order to deliver better shopping experiences, few techniques like use of 3D scanner for frame detection of a human body or engagement with customers through speech recognition, are being taken into practice by the use of robots.

The use of technology to bring about efficiencies in retail may drive job losses, but at the same time, it may introduce new types of workers as stores become less about concluding transactions and more about creating a good customer experience. Stores in the future are expected to be staffed with sales associates and their role will be like a personalised consultant for each customer with basic jobs like billing etc. getting robotized.

→ **Social Commerce:** Going forward, the technology will continue to change the rules of engagement. With consumers getting more demanding with time, getting their brand noticed amid all the noise will be a huge challenge for retailers in the future. Significance



of 'S-commerce' or social commerce will significantly increase in the lives of today's connected consumers. More and more pictures and videos of products or brands will be posted by consumers on social networking sites, while sharing their experiences and stories on the web, giving ratings, writing reviews and recommendations.

Key Learning for Retailers Going into the Future

Consumers in India have far evolved and expect their shopping experience to be seamless across every channel be it brick and mortar, an e-commerce website or a mobile app. With these changing consumer demands and expectations retailers are required to work continuously towards gaining a competitive advantage. This can be done by using innovative retail formats




and next gen methods to yield growth throughout various channels of distribution.

The expectation from a modern retail store has transformed completely, as consumers are no longer visiting these stores just to buy the products, but to experience a journey from a soothing entry to a satisfying exit. The idea here is not just the optimization of the experience but also the ability to offer guidance towards the right purchase decision by projecting an understanding of the customer profile.

The effect of digitization on retail has already begun where futuristic retail outlets are expected to be digital kiosks with virtual trial rooms enabled by augmented reality. The capability to break through the status quo with new innovative possibilities is where the future of retail is headed.

Having realised the scope of mass digitization of the retail ecosystem, retailers are required to proactively take steps to fine tune their day to day operations to achieve enhanced customer value. Therefore, retailers need to invest funds towards revitalising the customer experience to build loyalty and stem churn by providing individualised experiences at scale.

With the above and given the great potential in the Indian retail, the future holds a very exciting and rewarding time for all stakeholders in the retail industry. 

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SEPTEMBER 2019 Shopping Mall Special: IMAGES Retail September 2019 issue will bring a special feature on shopping malls of India. The edition will highlight everything which a shopper would want to know about the India's best malls.

OCTOBER 2019 Payment Checkout & Loyalty Programs: IMAGES October 2019 issue will bring a feature on cashier less/self checkout technology which is in trend currently. It will also focus on 'Innovative Loyalty Programs' done by the retailers and brand for better consumer experience. The issue will also be highlighting the technology used by the shopping malls to make shopping easy at their stores.

FUTURE OF BUSINESSES ANALYSING THE BUSINESS OF ORGANIZED RETAIL IN INDIA.

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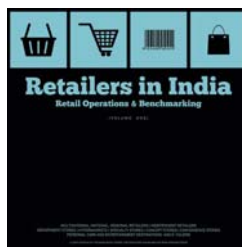
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Trivandrum, The Next Big Retail & Real Estate Destination

With the coming of Taurus Zentrum, at downtown Trivandrum which is poised to be one of the largest malls in the country as well as a hub for major international and national brands making a debut in India, Trivandrum is all set to be the new retail destination of South India...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

India's southern part is largely recognised as the birthplace of modern retail. Across all the middle and high-income classes, except the super-rich, the highest growth in retail has been witnessed in the South of India. The Tier I cities of the regions, namely Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Chennai, are growing at an exceptional rate, with the retail buzz in these cities becoming more pronounced by the day. Aside from this, the emerging Tier II cities with the likes of

Trivandrum, Coimbatore, Kochi, Vizag, Vijayawada and Madurai are contributing more than \$7,000 million worth retail activity to India. One city which has made a deep impact on this growth is Trivandrum.

Referred to as 'Evergreen city of India', Trivandrum is on its way to becoming one of the most definitive retail markets in India as far as Tier II cities are concerned. With a population of 2 million people in the urban areas and 2.5 million in the agglomeration core, Trivandrum has an extended

KEY MALL FEATURES INCLUDE:

- Zentrum will feature a wide range of international, national and local brands for shoppers of all age group.
- It will host Kerala's largest multiplex, operated by Cinepolis, having 15 screens including the state's first IMAX.
- Landscaped and waterscape large open spaces .
- Facilities also provided for a clinic, pharmacy, childcare and gym which will be operated by leading names in the industry.
- A huge food court along with fine dining restaurants will serve a plethora of cuisines and it will be can be directly accessible to the Non-SEZ office building as well.
- A Hypermarket for shopping, grocery will also be made.

catchment of over 10 million people. It recently bagged the tag of top-ranked 'Smart' City and constantly receives federal and state funding for its urban development.

What Makes Trivandrum Special

A huge retail revolution is all set to storm the city. New shopping malls housing outlets of various international brands are planning to open their facilities in the capital city. Apart from this, the other distinctive features which are making Trivandrum the new retail hub are:

TECHNOLOGY HUB: In the last 5 years, Trivandrum has seen some massive and explicit technological changes, which have paved way for it becoming a major technology hub in India today. Trivandrum is now home to some of the big names in Technology like Oracle, Nissan, EY, Allianz, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, TCS and Hitachi. In the year 2017-18, Trivandrum went through a whopping \$2 billion worth of IT export transactions; a CAGR of over 20 percent, while the overall tech industry has successfully expanded at ~10 percent. It has also seen the emergence of over 350 firms in diversified segments of the BPM industry, from start-ups to Fortune 100/500, serving all key markets including Asia, North America, Europe and the Middle East. Currently, there are 65,000 technology professionals in the city; and it is expecting to reach up to 100,000 by the year 2020.

TRANSPORT: Being the second busiest rail hub in the southern hemisphere of the country, it strives to provide great connectivity to all major Tier I and Tier II cities across the longitude. As a matter of fact, it houses India's eighth biggest international airport with hassle-less connectivity to all major Indian cities and to major global hubs. Due to its congestion-free road network, it has been the recipient of numerous international awards for its innovative execution as well.

LIVEABILITY QUOTIENT: According to a report by Jaanagraha, Trivandrum packs a punch with a great Liveability Quotient. When compared with Tier I south cities of Bangalore or Chennai, it has significantly

lower costs of living for employees and lower total cost of operations for employers. The quality of life here is viably better as it has lower congestion, minimal pollution, better safety and infrastructure and ensures higher employee engagement and thereby, lower levels of attrition. It was in fact been ranked the #1 city in India for Urban Governance based on a composite score study.

WELL-DEVELOPED TECH ECOSYSTEM:

Trivandrum accounts to be one of the earliest start-up ecosystems in India and also one of the first incubators that started in the early 2000s. It caters to a well-developed tech ecosystem including major verticals such as: IoT, SaaS, robotics, Artificial Intelligence, enterprise applications, biotechnology and medical technology. Additionally, it has been getting funds from investors including Blackstone Carlyle, Accel Partners, Schroeder Capital Partners, Incubators and Accelerators, along with various academic and industry linkages.

was the first State to establish a technology business park, in 1989. The Policy is revised annually based on the industry inputs

→ Government has prioritized the further development of key infrastructure facilities including a metro system, commuter rail stations, a 80Km Outer Growth Corridor project with multiple satellite towns, roads, power and water supply and the expansion of the International Airport to support the ongoing development of the technology industry, with an investment of over \$2 billion.

Taurus Zentrum at Downtown Trivandrum


Taurus Zentrum, an upcoming mall in the city is going to be the next big thing for the people of Trivandrum. The mall, which is owned and managed by Taurus Investment Holdings will be one of the largest malls in the country with a total built-up area of 1,200,000 sq.ft. The mall is



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT: The government also has played a key role in making Trivandrum reach its current state with key reforms by the state government including:

→ The Information Technology department is directly overseen by the Chief Minister – the top Executive of the State
 → Kerala has a very supportive Information Technology Policy and

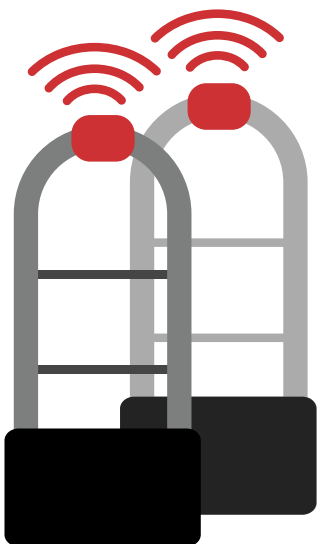
designed by the international architectural firm, Benoy.

Zentrum is part of a mixed-use project, Taurus Downtown Trivandrum, based on the live-work-fun concept. The mall is surrounded by a non-SEZ office space of 4 lakh sq. ft., a hotel of 210 keys, co-living space of 114 units and 187 units of serviced apartments and an SEZ office space of 3 million sq.ft in a joint venture with Embassy Group 

Artificial Intelligence, CCTVs Help International Retailers in Loss Prevention

According to the Sensomatic Global Shrink Index survey that was carried forth in four regions, 14 countries and 12 retail segments, the loss of inventory due to shoplifting, employee theft or other errors collectively cost retailers almost \$100 billion worldwide. In the US alone, the percentage of sales loss stood at 1.85 percent. Here's a quick look at finding out the steps being taken by names worldwide when it comes to taking care of loss prevention...

By Zainab S Kazi



Unlike in India, in the US and UK and other global destinations, a customer is not required to submit his handbag / shopping bag at the entrance. It would be unimaginable for any store in the UK to go to the extent of using a fastener for a customer's handbag the way it is done in a few supermarket stores in India. Besides infringing on the customer's basic right of having his / handbag open for him/ her to use, this would be considered as an insult to the customer walking in the store.

When we look at some of the global chains present in the India like H&M and Zara, a similar policy is adopted where the customer is not required to submit his hand / shopping bag at the baggage counter. Loss prevention is a subject dealt differently by different countries where a majority of them would rather trust their customers and respect their rights rather than having their bags checked or fastened without any provocation.

A consumer, Abhay Singh recounts how his bag was checked by the guards while he was exiting a popular bookstore at Kemps Corner in Mumbai. "I had been to the store with my child. We did not pick anything up and after a short stroll at the store we decided to move out. It came as a shock when I was stopped at the exit by the security guard who demanded that I open my bag for her to check. I was taken aback but she insisted that she was only doing 'her duty'. I had to oblige but I decided never to visit the store again. If you cannot trust your customer, it is better not to have a physical store for them to visit you. It is the day and age of online shopping. One might as well just have an online presence. What is the point of humiliating your customer this way?"

This incident puts into context how loss prevention methods in India stand starkly different than the ones adopted globally in international countries. Most common amongst the methods used would be using RFID that retailers like Sephora, Target, Levi Strauss and Lululemon use.

According to leading retailers, the RFID technology deployment not only helps deter thefts but also provides better inventory accuracy.

CASE STUDY: MYER

Australian super chain Myer has adopted the method of having store detective to 'battle a steep jump in shoplifting'.

Myer's Chief Financial Officer, Nigel Chandwick was quoted by a leading Australian daily as saying: "We have been doing a lot of work in this area. It's too early to say how many physically will be brought into the company but the payback will be many times what they cost."

The retailer in the past had a trial of this with plain clothes store detectives and taking a lead from its success, they would now hire permanent store detectives. Apart from store detectives, Myer also plans to use other measures including more tagging of products and better checks of stocks arriving at warehouse and stores.



Sunflowerey / Shutterstock.com

CASE STUDY: WALMART

Jumping on the bandwagon of retailers using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for its innumerable advantages, Walmart makes use of AI to catch checkout cheats. The use of AI has been helping the chain spot people who plan to take the items out of the store without scanning them at the tills.

According to a report in the BBC, Walmart has been using image recognition cameras powered by AI to narrow down on customers would skip paying for items by avoiding the scanning part.

According to the report, the company has invested over half a billion dollars in an effort to prevent, reduce and deter crime in their stores and parking lots.

One of these loss prevention methods is the "Missed Scan Detection" cameras, which focus on items rather than people and if they spot an item in a bag that has not been scanned, they send an alert to the staff, which then carries out further investigations.



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DID YOU KNOW?

In Dublin, post Storm Emma – hit Ireland at the end of February and start of March 2018 – a Lidl store had to be demolished and not because of the storm. The burglars used the storm to their advantage and with a stolen digger, they peeled off the supermarket roof before looting food, alcohol and cash.

The Result: The store had to be demolished.

According to www.VoucherCodesPro.co.uk, £3.2 billion worth of goods is stolen through self-scan checkouts every year. The most common excuse that customers have when caught is: "I thought I had scanned it." This makes it difficult for the retailer than to prove whether the person intentionally missed scanning it or was it indeed an error.

One Australian woman was in news globally for sticking photocopies of the barcode for 65-cent noodles on to more expensive items and scanning through the self checkout facility at the store. She was accused of stealing £2,760 worth of groceries.

CASE STUDY: TESCO EXTRA IN CENTRAL HULL UK

At this particular store, the store manager has played an active role to keep theft / loss at bay. With the means adopted, he was able to bring down the shrinkage from £1.1 million to around £600,000.

He ensured that tagging is done right where the tags were visible to the customers (according to him this deters a lot of opportunistic thieves). He altered the store layout to help prevent shoplifting. He dubbed this 'reducing shrink by design'. The open space allows the staff a clearer view of the store and more valuable or easy to shoplift products were put up at prominent positions.

Apart from this, the security manager of the store holds a monthly meeting with the police and other security staff from the town. The local security is also invited to the store to use staff facilities like having a cup of coffee. Their uniformed presence too helps deter potential shoplifting activities.



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CASE STUDY: SAINSBURY'S

The second largest chain of supermarket in the UK, Sainsbury's has installed CCTV cameras and mirrors above the self-checkouts in 300 of its stores. This helps customers become wary of leaving the store without scanning the items purchased.


Other security measures include, staff headsets for them to have instant communication with their central security team, having security guards, additional training and 'hi-tech CCTV'.



Willy Barton / Shutterstock.com

CASE STUDY: ASDA

UK's Asda uses body worn cameras by Edesix to catch hold of any person shoplifting items from the stores. To quote, Richie McBride, Managing Director – Edsix, "These cameras act as a confrontation preventor and greatly speed up the handling of incidents."

A robust CCTV spread including the ones at the till to having RFID tags and a very alert and highly trained staff, loss prevention at the store level can well be controlled. Having bags checked during entry and exit simply isn't the best solution. Internationally the practice isn't practiced and with time, hopefully Indian retailers too will beef up their internal security system rather than putting the onus of all the customers walking into their stores. 



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DID YOU KNOW?

Lingerie brand Victoria Secret has dozens of instances of customers engaging in shoplifting but surprisingly the staff at the store is not allowed to intervene when they spot a shop lifter. Though this is to save their store staff from any possible aggression from the shoplifter that they may have to encounter.

Vaak, a Japanese startup, has developed a software powered by Artificial Intelligence that can hunt for potential shoplifters. This is done by narrowing down on any person either fidgeting, or showing signs of restlessness and other suspicious body language that is captured from the security camera of the store. The solution has been tested in a few dozen stores in Tokyo area. The company has a target to cover 100,000 stores across Japan in the next three years.



RATNADEEP FACT FILE

- The stores enjoy a superior advantage in terms of navigation of products, identification and user-friendly product planogramming.
- Stores have multiple billing points for faster check-out, thus offering a superlative customer convenience and a pleasant shopping experience.
- Stores are located on high-streets and main streets keeping in mind the focus on customer convenience.
- In the past three years, Ratnadeep has opened 30 new stores in Hyderabad and added 2 lakh sq. ft. to its retail area.
- At the same time, its revenue has almost doubled during the same period, climbing to ₹620 crore in FY18-19 from ₹390 crore in FY16-17.

Ratnadeep Super Market Aims to Become National Chain, Plans 500 Stores Pan India

Ratnadeep follows a 'glocal' merchandising model, which is a combination of global and local merchandise and has a unique merchandising strategy, keeping in mind the availability of products as per the location of stores and their catchment segmentation...

By Charu Lamba

H yderabad-based food and grocery retailer, Ratnadeep Super Market, has entered Bengaluru with a 5,000 sq. ft outlet in Indiranagar. The store, which is betting big on fresh fruits and vegetables, has 11,000 SKUs to offer.

"As far as private labels are concerned, we are only into staples with our private label 'Excella'. However, in next six months to one year, we will be launching private labels in bakery, spices, flour, cleaning products and processed foods like sauces, honey," says **Manish Bhartiya, Director, Ratnadeep Super Market.**

Ratnadeep stores are known for their high assortment. The retailer follows a 'glocal' merchandising model, which is a combination of global and local merchandise in foods/ non-foods, grocery/ staples/ fruits regular/ imported and specialty fruits/ vegetables/ household items/ personal care, among others.

The merchandising strategy is uniquely planned, keeping in mind the availability of products as per the location of stores and their catchment segmentation. The assortment of all SKUs put together is over 20,000+.

"In spite of a number of national and international companies setting up supermarkets and hypermarkets in Hyderabad and Secundrabad, we have been able to increase our customer base at a steady pace, due to our quality assurance of our products," says Bhartiya.

Supply Chain Model

Ratnadeep stores are supported with strong backend integration facilities. The company-owned supply chain model offers a superlative advantage to its stores in getting the merchandise on time. The chain owns 1.5 lakh sq. ft. of warehousing area and its stores are equipped with the best systems and processes.

Future Plans

The brand, which has robust expansion plans, is eyeing 5 more stores in Bengaluru – Indiranagar, Koramangala, Whitefield, Mahadevpura, and HSR Layout.

"We have earmarked around ₹75 crore to almost double our network to more than 100 stores, which will be spread across Bengaluru and other cities in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. At present, Ratnadeep has 54 stores spread across Hyderabad and Secundrabad," says **Sandeep Aggarwal, Managing Director, Ratnadeep Super Market.**

The brand is open to lapping up the right opportunities in different formats and is looking at expanding across the Tier II cities pan India. The food and grocery retailer is planning to open 100 stores nationwide by the end of 2020. It has plans to open at least 500 stores across the country over the next 3 years. It is also looking to venture into the affordable gourmet format, with a strong ROI-based model. [R](#)

The Scale of Store Rollout: How Are Retailers Managing?

Store rollout entails keeping the capex and opex low, improvising on store design concept, keeping the design ID scalable, forging strategic alliance with the rollout vendors, faster and wiser store network expansion plan...

By Satarupa Chakraborty



the country a lucrative destination for several international brands to anchor on its shore, but has also expanded Indian customers' view of in store experiences.

Today, the world's biggest fast fashion brands are penetrating smaller Indian cities, homegrown brands are turning their private labels into single brand retail identities and several unorganised retail brands are hobnobbing at an urban mall with larger store footprints. At present, over 14 million retail outlets operate in the country and there is a surprising slew of reasonable strategies that is making these stores profitable. Starting from developing a store design ID, to regularly improvising them to stay abreast of customer expectations, to keep the capex commensurate with the opex to managing much fast-paced rollout scenario, the list is impressive.

So, what has really come out of the growth story is the undying spirit of brick-and-mortar retail?

Even as India is slated to become a major e-commerce market, the country is, ironically, a testimony to the fact that brick-and-mortar is here to stay. According to a report by Anarock Retail, organised retail in the country – which is only 7 percent right now – is expected to cross 10 percent by 2020, growing at a CAGR of 2- percent-25

percent annually.

Amounting to be only 7 percent of the overall market size right now, organised retail is expected to become over 10 percent by 2020, growing at a CAGR of 2-25 percent annually (Source: Anarock Retail Report).

The rapid growth of organised retail in the Indian market, armed with liberalised FDI and GST policies, has not only made

Design & Demographics

If we look at organised retail in India, brands with over 100 stores usually have various design derivatives depending on the market they cater to. Mostly, debut stores and urban catchments are selected as flagship stores or premium store design IDs, while every brand has a concise version of design ID for smaller markets.

However, this trend is changing as more Tier I & II markets are coming into the limelight, becoming as good as metro markets. Cities like Pune, Coimbatore, Chandigarh, Guwahati etc. are increasingly hosting flagship / first-cut design IDs of many brands. These brands also argue that space is not a major constraint in smaller cities as compared to their metro counterparts. Therefore, it's easier to justify capex and thereby the sale-per-sq. ft.

However, when it comes to crafting store design ID, a stronger focus is what customers demand and what brands need to deliver. Interestingly, many debut brands and stores take a lot of initial years to fine-tune their IDs before they finally find the right design.

Vishal Kapoor, Group Chief Design Officer, Future Group, explains: "As a retailer, one must understand the essence of the brand and what you want to communicate to your customer as a brand story. These two must be aligned. There are many cases where the brands are able to do justice, but the customers can still not connect to the brand. Parallely, we must look at the socio-cultural space that we live in. If for an elite customer, I create a clean, touch-me-not space, even if it's for the 5-10 percent of the economic power of the urban population, the lack of excitement may mar the design objective."

Kapoor's idea is reflected in most store designs that international brands are creating in India. Although many of them are global latest design IDs, these are tweaked due to space constraints in the country (globally, the store sizes are much more expansive while in India, this is at least 30-40 percent less). Also, India's retail space generally offers 50 percent lower ceiling height calling for different facade design and window space disbursements.

Value Engineering and Costs & Control

According to an Anarock report released late 2018 named "Rebirth of Retail Malls: New, Improved & Revitalized", India generated 91 percent of retail sales through brick-and-mortar stores, ahead of China and the USA.

But will more stores mean more business for retail brands operating in India? Clearly, no. In fact, retailers are taking cautious steps towards not only avoiding loss-making store ventures but also keeping the capex cost low.

In this fast-paced store rollout era, the rollout period of each store becomes a key factor in store profitability. Over last 5 years, rollout time has been reduced by about 50 percent by all brands



"As a retailer, one must understand the essence of the brand and what you want to communicate to your customer as a brand story. These two must be aligned."

- **VISHAL KAPOOR**
GROUP CHIEF DESIGN
OFFICER, FUTURE GROUP

"As we refine design IDs and go ahead with store rollouts, our execution cost has come down after a few initial stores. For Ruosh, we are working on the third version of retail design."

- **MRIDUMESH KUMAR RAI**
GROUP PRESIDENT, SARA
GROUP

"Four years ago, the traditional execution time used to range between 90 to 150 days but today, across all our brands, no store takes more than 2 weeks to 30 days to get operational."

- **SUDHIR SAUNDALGEKAR**
DIRECTOR - PROJECTS,
RAYMOND

depending upon store sizes. Store sizes ranging from 500 sq. ft. to 80,000 sq. ft., take about 30 to 90 days between the completion of civil work to complete execution.

Mridumesh Kumar Rai, Group President, Sara Group – which operates two international brands, Love Moschino and Florsheim, and one in-house footwear brand Ruosh – shared, "As we refine design IDs and go ahead with store rollouts, our execution cost has come down after a few initial stores. For Ruosh, we are working on the third version of retail design. The retail designer's fee has certainly gone up compared to the earlier design execution. However, since the brand base is not too large and is about adding 4-5 stores a year, the capex certainly comes down."

Sudhir Saundalgekar, Director – Projects, Raymond says, "Four years ago, the traditional execution time used to range between 90 to 150 days but today,



“Overall, the market inflation is about 4-5 percent, but we are aggressively integrating technology at the store level across all brands causing our capex to go up.”

– **SASIKUMAR RAMASWAMI**
PRESIDENT / GROUP HEAD -
STORE DESIGN & PROJECTS,
LANDMARK GROUP



“Overall, the market inflation is about 4-5 percent, but we are aggressively integrating technology at the store level across all brands causing our capex to go up.”

– **TYRONE LI**
INDIA HEAD OF JAPANESE
LIFESTYLE BRAND MINISO



“In terms of Visual Merchandising, the earlier format that we used to follow was a vertical layout of our products. After observing how this layout was working in the store, we decided to change it up.”

– **ASHISH GOEL**
CO-FOUNDER, URBAN LADDER



across all our brands, no store takes more than 2 weeks to 30 days to get operational. Moreover, we have been able to keep the capex cost constant, in some cases, even lowered it. The answer lies in value engineering in all aspects of design. We have largely moved to modular fixtures, lighting system etc. We have also moved maximum of offsite work into onsite, resulting into saving on our time frame hugely.”

Saundalgekar manages store rollout for all 9 brands of Raymond.

Amongst three lifestyle brands by the Landmark Group operating in India, in the order of store capex value, the lowest is Max, followed by Home Centre and finally Lifestyle. While the group is gearing up to revamp Home Centre's store design ID in India first, over the last 10 years it has reported a 10 percent increase in the overall capex value. Why? **Sasikumar Ramaswami, President/Group Head - Store Design & Projects, Landmark Group,** explains this saying,

“Overall, the market inflation is about 4-5 percent, but we are aggressively integrating technology at the store level across all brands causing our capex to go up.”

Interestingly, a large part of design components has moved into plug-and-play systems. Specially display fixtures and lighting systems are more modular today, adapting to all sorts of properties and retail spaces. In many cases, these plug-and-play systems are self-installable, saving even in the manpower and logistics investments.

Post the LED boom about a decade ago, lighting fixtures are much more adaptable offering lowered opex cost through technologies like tunable LED, automations, Bluetooth-enabled, Li-Fi etc.

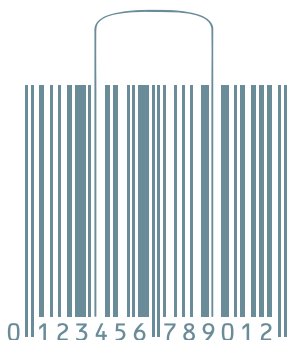
There have been many advances in both display fixtures and lighting, and today there is a series of integrated display systems up for grabs for retailers, which are smart not only for display purposes but also come with the promise of reducing opex costs.

Although there's a mixed opinion on which design element incurs maximum budget after the cost of civil interiors, retailers have agreed on the reducing cost of lighting fixtures along with their optimised efficiency. However, **Tyrone Li, India Head of Japanese lifestyle brand Miniso,** which registers an exponential growth rate of 80-100 stores each year worldwide including their relatively new market India, has a different opinion to share. “Each and every element is an important and integral part of the store design and format. A budget is created and divided in accordance with specific needs of the business. However, lighting and fixtures form a major chunk where budgets are allocated. Further, depending upon the requirements and different needs the budget is disposed appropriately to other sections,” he says.

Raising the Visual Merchandising Bar

Out of 14 million retail outlets that operate in India, only 4 percent of them are more than 500 sq. ft. Recently, one of world's largest fast fashion retailers, H&M was in news for their plans to reduce store size in India. Globally, India's organised and to some extent, unorganised retail too are waking up to the value of an efficient store than sheer largeness of store space. This is when Visual Merchandising often drives store efficiency.

More and more retailers are waking up to the fact that Visual Merchandising is no longer refrained to windows and seasonal displays but



has a large role to play in order to drive brand proposition, footfalls and sales conversion. Many notable large format retailers agree that merchandise on mannequins sell at least 50 percent faster than stacked merchandise. And that's not all. Visual merchandisers today are optimising the roles of fixtures, lighting as well as focal areas of stores.

More interestingly, Visual Merchandising is fast becoming a priority for non-apparel category too. Rai agrees, saying, "Visual Merchandising has been underplayed in the footwear category for many years. For Ruosh, we have lately added a series of product-led Visual Merchandising schemes and they have done wonders for our new products launches in terms of customer education as well as sales conversion. Apart from these, we have sincerely started adding Visual Merchandising space in our stores like Craftsmanship walls etc., which have

to change it up. Therefore, we switched the layout to showcase a mini-living room. This attracted many more customers and showcased how our products looked in the overall picture. Also, we first started by incorporating many items that were not for sale. These elements helped to brighten the space and create a certain mood. Soon after, we began selling these elements



thereby increasing our return per sq. ft. We also altered how we displayed our window merchandising. We incorporated a living room setting in a narrow space."

Managing the Rollout Spree: Key Takeaways

Home to the shopping practice where 90 percent retail sales take place in physical stores, India's length and breadth is sure to be explored by more malls, more brands and thereby more stores. While the scale of rollout is inevitable and store numbers are going to beef up in period shorter than expected, the success of brick-and-mortar will largely rely on the profitability of each square feet of the store. Therefore, every retailer is drafting strategies to keep the store design relevant to customers, innovate on modularity of store design and are looking for more opex-friendly design options.

What that is expected to parallelly bring is the opportunities for rollout vendors in fixtures, lighting, signage, design consultants etc. We can see that the vendors are working sincerely on developing easy-to-install logistics-friendly products, often with international benchmark along with bringing the price down drastically.

Almost every retailer today agrees that opening more stores is bringing their capex down. All they are applying is better vendor management, focus on value engineering and developing design strategies which is extremely customer specific. **IR**



contributed to narrate brand legacy."

For a category like furniture, which is highly populated by unorganised players, it was pertinent for India's Omnichannel furniture behemoth, Urban Ladder. **Ashish Goel, Co-Founder, Urban Ladder**, says the brand's learning as far as Visual Merchandising goes. "In terms of Visual Merchandising, the earlier format that we used to follow was a vertical layout of our products. After observing how this layout was working in the store, we decided

Home to the shopping practice where 90 percent retail sales take place in physical stores, India's length and breadth is sure to be explored by more malls, more brands and thereby more stores.

Managing a Large Workforce in a Variable, Demanding Retail Environment

Going by the current industry situation, retailers have two choices – cut other operating and non-operating costs or pass on the cost through price increase – either of which will compromise the customer experience and negatively impact sales in the longer term...

By Rajat Tuli, Senior Principal, AT Kearney India

Steeply rising manpower costs has become the boardroom agenda in most firms including retail, employing large semi-skilled workforce – be it retail chains, food service stores or manufacturing setups. India has seen exponential growth in opportunities for semi-skilled manpower over the last decade with sharp rise in number of start-ups and small & medium scale industries. This increase in opportunities has also further complicated the staffing challenge due to high attrition creating nightmares for managers who are finding it extremely difficult not only to staff but also to hire and retain manpower.





With higher than optimal manpower staffing, hiring crunch and steeply rising minimum wages across India, **“rising manpower cost is becoming the next big issue for retailers”** (Figure 1)

Taking the case of retail, the Indian retail industry is expected to cross US \$900 bn this year. Wages cost an average retailer 20 percent of total sales – which is expected to go up by 10 percent as wage increase year over year. Given this mounting cost, retailers have to find another US \$18 billion every year to continue to stay profitable.

Retailers have two choices – cut other operating & non-operating costs or pass on the cost through price increase – either of which will compromise the customer experience and negatively impact sales in the longer term.

If we analyze the pattern of manpower more carefully, we find often that there is large variation in demand based on seasonality – be it month of the year, day of the week or hours of the day.

For instance, in a grocery retail store most of the business happens during weekends and evening hours of weekdays. Optimal manpower staffing in such variable demand scenarios becomes a major challenge and organizations often undertake staffing based on “peak demand” to avoid a “perceptible sales or output loss” thus holding excess manpower during lean hours. (Figure 2)

Retailers with high variability in demand pattern and large workforce can manage manpower cost through a two-pronged strategy of **optimising manpower deployment and ensuring supply of manpower that mirrors demand**. (Figure 3)

FIGURE 1. BALLOONING MANPOWER COST

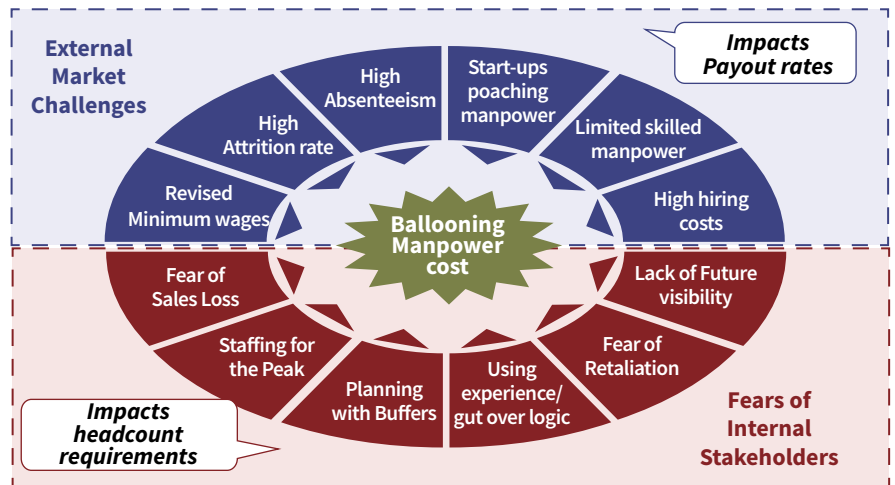


FIGURE 2. STAFFING MANPOWER FOR PEAK DEMAND

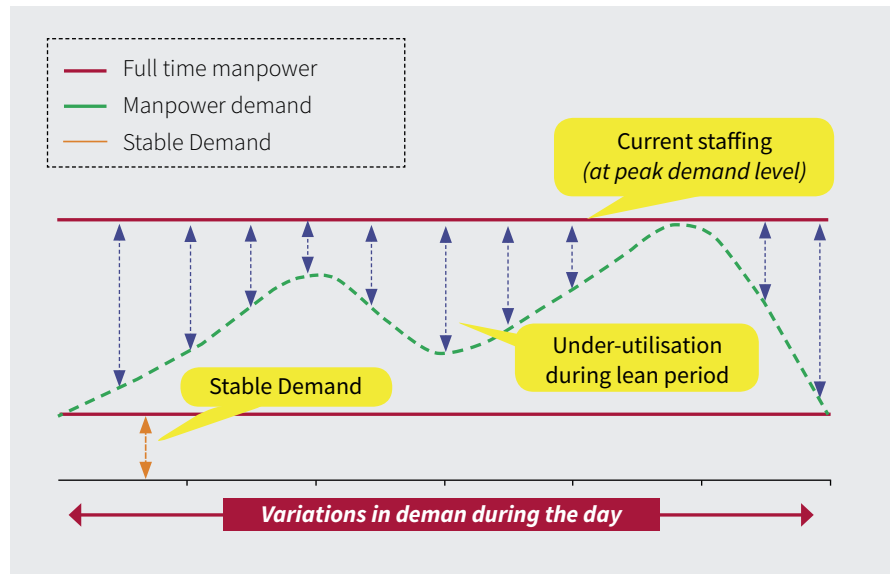
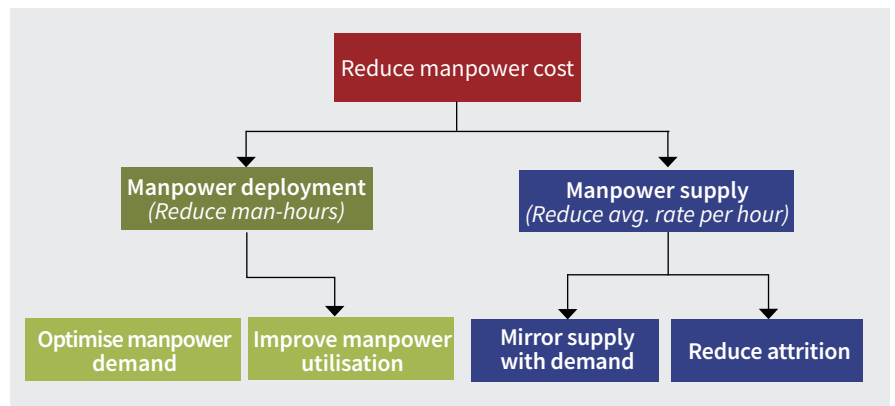


FIGURE 3. FRAMEWORK FOR REDUCING MANPOWER COST IN VARIABLE DEMAND SCENARIOS



Optimising Manpower Deployment

Optimise Demand: Managers develop staffing basis the “forecasted manpower demand”, which is a function of amount of work per unit activity forecasted.



Many organisations today have sub optimal staffing due to incorrect workload estimation as well as demand forecasting.

With the advancement in technology, digitisation and changed external context, the amount of work required per unit activity has undergone a sea-change. Many activities have become redundant while others take a fraction of what it used to, a decade earlier. Undertaking a comprehensive time-motion assessment can fundamentally correct this anomaly and remove sources of inefficiency. In addition, there are digital tools and algorithms which can also fundamentally improve forecast accuracy based taking into consideration multiple influencing

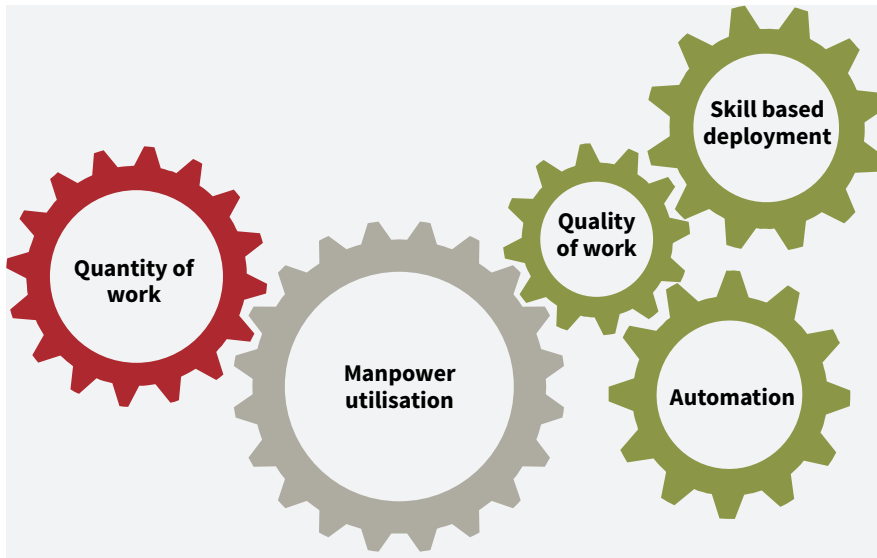
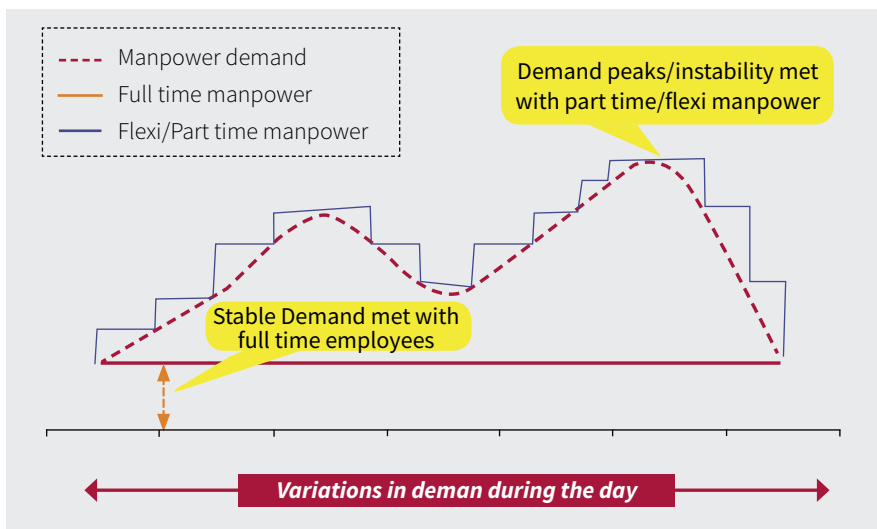


FIGURE4. STAFFING METHODOLOGY FOR A VARIABLE DEMAND SCENARIO



NOW HiRING!



factors (in many cases 10+) and historical data / patterns.

Further retailers can tackle the problem of suboptimal staffing, using a scientific tool that allows to plan manpower for slots as small as half hour. The scientific tool breaks down demand into smaller time slots and ensures manpower is staffed as per requirement closely mirroring demand. Digital rosters are then created and leveraged for on-ground staffing

Optimise Utilisation: Many retailers view utilisation only from the lens of sweating its resources viz. ‘quantum’. However, the quality lens mostly gets skipped *‘are we utilising the resources in the right way?’*

There are two key factors that impact quality: automation levels and skill-based deployment. Retailers that adapt to latest automation techniques and digital solutions reap benefits of improved utilisation levels of manpower. Further, skill-based manpower deployment yields the maximum ROI and hence it is imperative to develop the skill matrix of each employee and map the employee to the right workstation.

With the advancement in technology, digitisation and changed external context, the amount of work required per unit activity has undergone a sea-change. Many activities have become redundant while others take a fraction of what it used to, a decade earlier.



MANPOWER

allow spread over of shifts beyond 8 hours with break in between, a portion of fixed manpower can be deployed in flexi-shifts across two peaks of the day.

Reducing Attrition

Rapid disruptions in ecosystem with emergence of start-ups have also resulted in higher employee turnover rates. Internal factors can be (not limited to) due to culture, compensation, stress or growth opportunities. Companies should invest time and energy in capturing on ground feedback to improve the work culture. External factors are mostly linked with employment opportunities with other players. Established organisations need to communicate a clear value proposition in terms of job stability, career path and enhancing skill set. It has been observed that firms who provide a clear picture of career growth have seen that employees stick with the organization for a much longer period.

On the Road to Perfection

“Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection”- Mark Twain.

The path to becoming a leaner and fitter is full of challenges, but technological solutions have emerged that can make this journey possible in an economical and effective manner. A lean operating model focused on core functions along with flexible, technology-backed processes that balance control with efficiency and a capability development framework can drastically improve productivity. Forward thinking retailers have already upped the ante by deploying such technologies throughout their supply chain and are reaping benefits of a much lower manpower cost. [R](#)

Optimising Manpower Supply

Ensuring supply of right skill manpower at right time is the biggest challenge for any recruiter and the challenge becomes even more difficult in a variable demand scenario. Hiring plans should be developed to match the manpower demand suggested by the model. Ideal state for any recruiter would be to exactly mirror the supply of manpower with the demand and ensure there is minimum attrition in the system.

Mirroring Manpower Supply with Demand: Most retailers deploy manpower for peak demand. In multiple situations, ~30% of the time spent by such manpower goes into non-value adding activities.

Using outputs of manpower deployment tool, managers can predict the exact amount of manpower required to mirror the demand pattern and hence weed out

inefficiencies. Retailers should factor two nuances while preparing their recruitment strategy- constant demand should be met using *fixed manpower* resources whereas the seasonality related peak (day, week, month) should be met using *part time/ flexi manpower*. (see figure 4)

The last decade has seen a paradigm shift in the acceptance of part time jobs across the country. People from all walks of life are accepting part time job offers to make that extra buck. This has unlocked a vast ocean of opportunities for the firms in India that can deploy part time manpower. Such employees can be deployed during the peak hours of work thus adding the same value as that of a full timer but at almost half the cost.

Further, retailers can “variabilise fixed manpower” by leveraging flexi shifts and technology. For instance, states which

Decathlon Introduces Self-Checkout Technology in New Noida Store

With Decathlon Scan & Go, customers can simply scan and pay for items using their smartphone, automatically disabling the RFID security tag to leave them free to exit the store without any need to queue or wait at the checkout...

By Charu Lamba

The world's largest sporting goods retailer, Decathlon – which has found a growing audience in India in recent years – has further expanded its presence in the National Capital Region with its biggest store, spanning across a sprawling 3,000 sq.ft. in Noida.

The fitness trailblazer, which has redefined the way people buy sportswear through its highly involving and experience centred stores, has already been operating around 12 outlets in NCR and 70 outlets across India.

At its newly launched store in a mall in Noida, the brand banks upon digital services such as self-checkout counter,

scan and pay app for billing to improve the buying experience.

“With Decathlon Scan & Go, customers can simply scan and pay for items using their smartphone, automatically disabling the RFID security tag to leave them free to exit the store without any need to queue or wait at the checkout,” explains **Sylvain Deschamps, City Sports Leader, Decathlon Noida**. Eliminating the need for queuing has been one of the key competitive advantages driving the success of online retail over the last decade.

Retail-cum-Experience Centre

With its new retail cum experience centre, Decathlon aims to boost the buying experience, through its dedicated activity and community zones for fitness and sports enthusiasts.

“The reason why people have loved the Decathlon experience is the high level of engagement and the involvement we provide to consumers before they actually buy our products. We have dedicated activity zones that engage the community around the stores to participate in daily games and fitness routines such as playing basketball, badminton, etc. It has

been seen that offering such community zones helps people become more active and fitness conscious,” says Deschamps.

The store has dedicated sections for women, men, children and teenagers. Its dedicated space for fitness aficionados adds another dimension to this outlet, while the community space provides customers an opportunity to practice their favourite fitness activities – be it augmented reality golf, simulator zone or skating rink. It is nothing less than a sportsman's paradise offering 50 sports and more than 5,000 sports products under one roof.

Store Design

In an era where the retailers are testing the powers of e-commerce, Decathlon still places its faith in brick-and-mortar stores. Explaining the reason for opening huge stores, Deschamps says, “We want our consumers to test the products before buying them. The real-time experience redefines the need of the product for specific purposes.”

In the new store, product is the king. Each and every element at the store – design, lighting, floors – highlight the visibility of the products. **IR**



WHAT IS NEW?

DIGITAL SCREENS - The digital screens highlight the sporty story of the employees of Decathlon. The brand hires only sportsperson as its employees.

AUGMENTED REALITY GOLF - The brand has brought the fun of playing golf inside its store by introducing augmented reality golf. It gives the same pleasure of playing golf as in the golf course.

ACTIVITY AREAS - The store has dedicated

areas for various sports activities like Basketball, Cricket and even an elevated bridge to check the grip of trekking shoes.

COMMUNITY AREA - The consumers can get engaged in various discussions related to sports along with participating in activities like Zumba, Hula Hoop, Football Freestyle and Rep wars to name a few.

PRODUCT STORY - Highlights the technicality of the products, its usage and durability along with the price.

Personalise Your Customer Experience & Increase Profits with FusionRetail

RanceLab assists retail businesses in their growth by helping them make early profits, reach breakeven stage faster and open new stores quicker...

By Navin Ladha, CEO, RanceLab®

With the increased availability of e-commerce platforms, the task of physical store owners has become very challenging in terms of creating a personalised experience for customers.

Shoppers today are always looking for something extra, some unique experiences that delight and make them feel special and the one factor which sets a store apart from others is the service that it provides its customers. And customers value the personal experience that they get at these stores. That's why, despite the ever-increasing hype around online shopping platforms, the importance of physical stores cannot be undermined in the least.

The best way to establish superior customer service is to incorporate innovative technologies in the business model that would support a brand / retailer's growth and assist them in



enhancing shopping experience.

RanceLab® FusionRetail is a pioneer in providing world-class technology to the retail sector. Since 1996, it has been assisting business owners and retailers with its advanced tools and innovative modules that facilitate smooth business transactions, easy operations and gives better insights into a business that creates faster and higher profits for the business.

FusionRetail gives detailed information about each and every customer visiting the store, along with their buying history, detailed profiles, their buying patterns etc. that assist in formulating better strategies and facilitates better marketing decisions that help the store heads or salesperson in personalizing their sales pitch accordingly


and giving these customers exactly what they are looking for, thereby keeping their preferences in check.

According to a study, more than 80 percent of consumers prefer to shop from a company that offer convenient and personalised experiences. A well-treated customer always cherishes the brand and stays loyal to it. The loyalty points-based referrals programs ensure that the existing customers bring in more business to the company at the same time reap out some share of its benefits for themselves.

Interactive engagement is also always acknowledged by a customer and creates goodwill for the brand where the product becomes secondary to the overall shopping experience that they have received and instead, experience pulls them towards the brand.

FusionRetail helps retailers in staying connected to their customers through the effective use of loyalty programs. It automatically sends messages and SMS on birthdays and anniversaries. It also sends SMSes for promotion, new arrivals, store launches and season's greetings which help in driving constant and precise communication that facilitates repeated visits of these customers to their favorite stores.

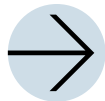
Adopting retail POS software for the retail system is the first step and the path of retailers for creating better customer experience and meeting evolving customer expectations. Discounts and sales may increase sales in the short term, but they will also decrease the profits in the long term. Creating an exclusive shopping experience will create brand loyalty which will always keep the profits high.

RanceLab assists the retail business in their growth by making them early profits, reach breakeven stage faster and open new stores quicker. This is done by implementing end-to-end FusionRetail software that offers POS billing, inventory management, customer loyalty program, supply chain management, financial accounting, payroll, store analytics and chain outlet management. 





ILC GROUP TO COME UP WITH GOOD EARTH CITY CENTRE 2 AT GURUGRAM BY 2022



After the grand success of Good Earth City Centre at Sector 50, ILC group of companies is now coming up with Good Earth City Centre 2 at Sector 69, Southern Periphery Road Gurgaon. The project is on a 2-acre site surrounded by soon to be dense housing and residential cum office buildings. The project is going to be the first organised high street of Gurgaon. It has excellent connectivity to NH-8, Faridabad Road and Sohna Road. Located on a 60-meter wide sector road connecting to the Southern Periphery Road, the site has great proximity to the proposed phase II of Metro on Southern Periphery Road. The GECC 2 will be a completely leased based project, with a focus on a vibrant mix, balance of brands, excellent mall operations and a firm support of a strong marketing endeavor to not only ensure consistency of positioning but also have focused mall promotions round the year.

Key Attractions

GECC 2 is positioned to be a bridge premium

About ILC

ILC brings a wealth of experience in executing & delivering prime commercial asset regeneration and development. The Good Earth city centre, a marquee project of ILC group is in itself a retail landmark in Gurgaon. This is one of its kind retail-led mixed used development with a new age high street-meets- shopping mall convenience. Some of the ILC groups other notable projects include Imperia Towers in Malibu Estate, Gurgaon and a 205 keys Hotel in Gurgaon. The group is presently managing retail, commercial and residential real estate with over 3.6 million sq. ft in prime location.

high street style mall, with a 6-screen cinema, a large food court, a supermarket, an electronics and fashion anchor stores. GECC 2 will also be focusing a lot on the F&B. The mall is zoned with international, athleisure, unisex fast fashion and personal care brands on the ground floor. First floor has Indo-western, men's formal and made to measure and electronics brands. F&B and FEC are the impulse of the second floor whereas the cinema occupies the third and fourth floor. Approximately 19 odd categories are being touched upon to create a vibrant, complete and wholesome neighbourhood shopping experience.

Retail Catchment

The catchment of the GECC 2, as per an extensive market research undertaken, is estimated to be growing at the rate of 18 percent CAGR. The residential areas in the immediate vicinity of GECC 2 are getting denser year-on-year. In 2 years from now, around the time when GECC 2 will get operational, the catchment would have grown considerably with housing societies and complexes hitting an occupancy of 80-90 percent. Industry Veteran Rehan Huck who has recently joined ILC after a long stint at DLF, will be leading the project from the front.

"I am excited about the project and I think we are moving in the right direction. We are ensuring that we not only put together a great product but also run it extremely well," says Rehan.

The leasing of the project has just started and the response has been overwhelming. The mall will be announcing the anchors and the category leaders soon and also have a grand launch of the project too. The construction of the project is in full swing and very much on schedule. The brand is hopeful of launching the mall by 2022 mid-year.

Kamal Kapoor, Founder and Managing Director of ILC Group

The words Inspire, Lead and Conquer have come together to create the foundations of the business house. ILC group, founded by Kamal Kapoor, a first generation entrepreneur who has successfully created some of the exemplary office and retail assets in the city that have garnered immense laurel and appreciation from its occupiers, investors and visitors alike. Kamal in an industry veteran with over 20 years of



experience in the real estate industry. He has successfully developed, completed and delivered retail mall, office buildings and residential group housing projects in Gurgaon. Kamal's acumen of balancing customer needs, market dynamics and investor sentiments has helped him to build an enterprise that commands significant respect and interest in the real estate circle of NCR. Kamal is an MBA from FORE school of Management in Delhi.

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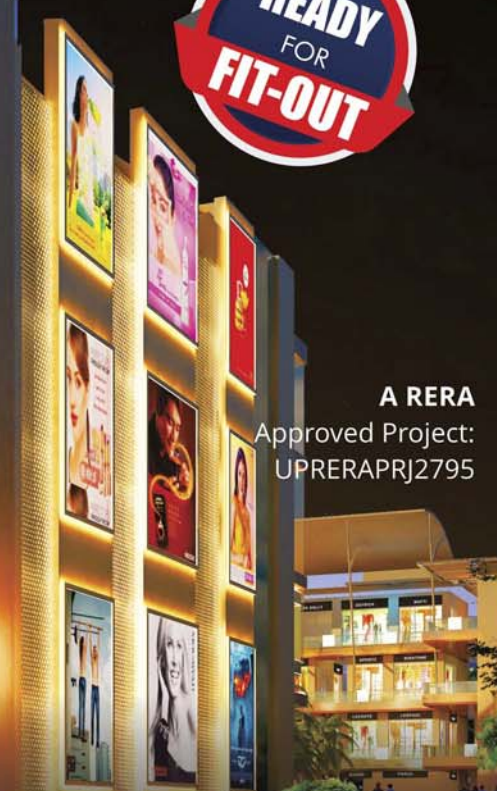
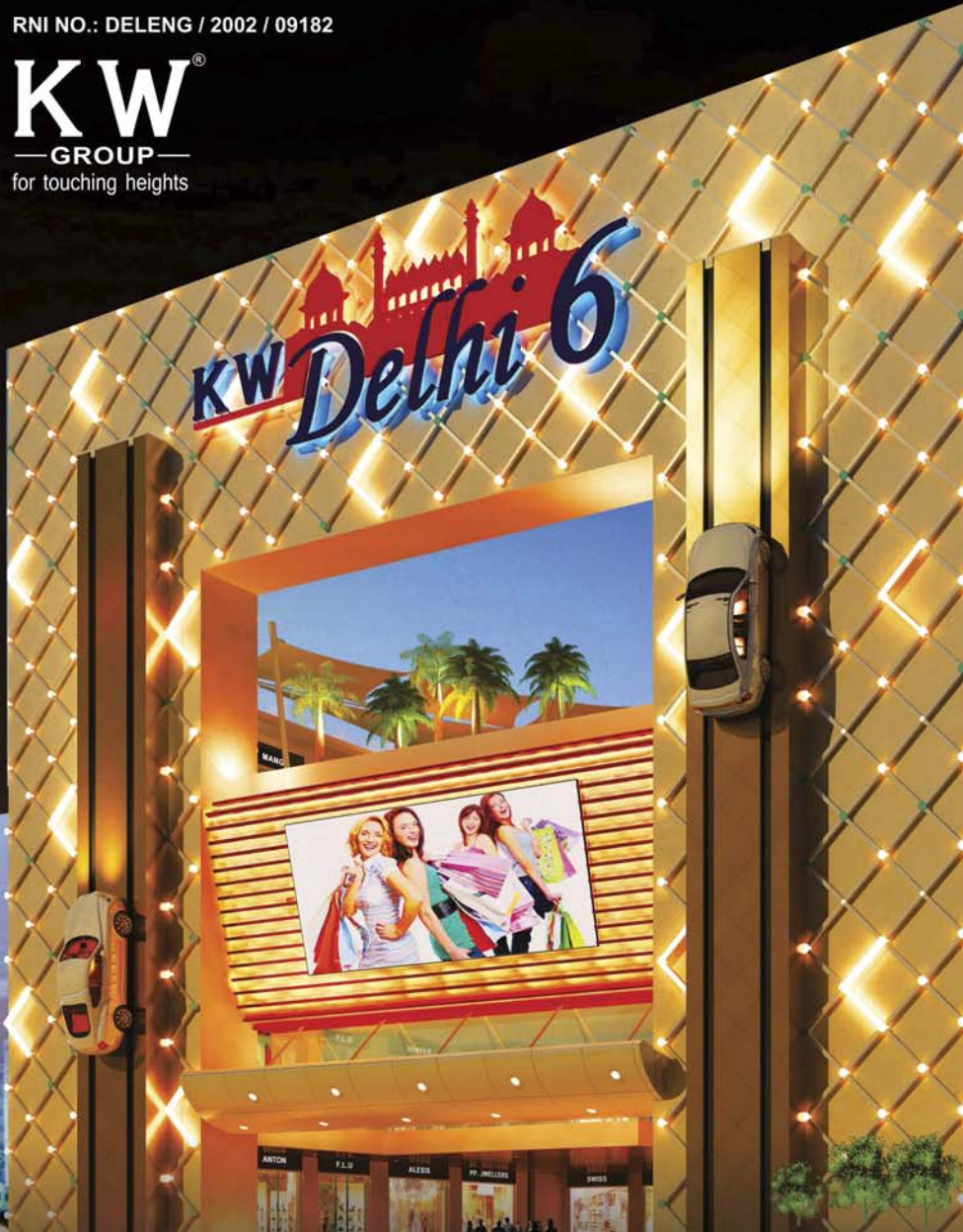
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